

# **Author Platform Rocket**

## Email Marketing for Authors: How To Transform Subscribers Into Buyers

### **Handout for Session 12: How to Use Your New Mailing List to Have a Successful Book Launch**

This handout provides links and information referred to in the webinar taught on 10/25/2016.

### **Arial's Self-Publishing Book Release Schedule**

#### Arial's Schedule/Checklist

This is the publishing schedule I've developed—or the tasks in the order I do them to self-publish my books—and this actually takes off a lot of pressure during the publishing process while still leaving me enough time to do all my promotions with great results. The foundation of this publishing checklist not only comes from my own trial and error to with book release of my self-published novels, but they also encompass lessons learned from traditionally published novels, and my days as an editor and a cover designer.

- 1) NO PROMO until the book is DONE!
- 2) Send polished first draft to editor
- 3) Compose drip campaign messages – ONE MONTH OF PROMOS
- 4) Incorporate edits from editor & send polished ARC to BETA READERS
  - a) Set deadline for beta readers to return feedback
  - b) FIVE WEEKS after that deadline is release date
- 5) Notify Review Team ASAP of Release Date & ARC distribution Date
- 6) Incorporate changes from Beta Team
- 7) Distribute ARCs to Review Team
- 8) Put book on pre-order to go live on the set release date
- 9) ONE MONTH OUT – Start drip campaign
- 10) Two Weeks Prior to Release Date – Send reminder to Review Team w/links
- 11) Release Day

- a) Send list-wide reminder w/buy links (should be in the drip campaign)
- b) Send reminder to Review Team w/links to post reviews

### Self-Publishing Checklist with Notes

#### 1) NO PROMO until the book is DONE!

- a) Before I do ANYTHING related to promoting my book, I FINISH IT. I'm very strict with myself here because I'm very tempted to want to tell the world about my book and give a date to those readers who keep asking when the next book is coming out. I do not set a release date and I do not put the book up for preorder until the book is done. I don't set a date for anything!

#### 2) Send polished first draft to editor

- a) Once I'm done with writing my first draft and I've polished it to be the best book it can be, I send it off to my editor. She usually takes anywhere from 2 weeks to one month to edit, based on her current workload and the length of my book.

#### 3) Compose drip campaign messages – ONE MONTH OF PROMOS

- a) While she has the book, THAT is when I start working on promotions. I still don't set any dates, though. Not yet. Instead, I focus all my attention of drafting the messages in my drip campaign. And I set up enough messages for a solid month of promotion. I also set up my messages to be going out 3-5 days apart. That gives me about 6-10 messages to compose.
- b) Depending on what the email is about, I usually do a steady schedule like every Monday and Thursday. Or every Tuesday and Thursday. And I communicate that schedule very clearly in my messages.
- c) And here's my method to the madness: While I'm composing the drip campaign, I'm still keeping my mind on my novel, but I'm also clearing out my brain enough to distance myself from my book. This gives me a fresh mind when I finally get my edits back from my editor.

#### 4) Incorporate edits from editor & send polished ARC to BETA READERS

- a) When my editor gets her edits back to me, I stop promo stuff and I contact my beta readers just to give them a head's up, let them know the book is going through edits and recommend that they try to clear their calendars in the next few weeks.
- b) I then focus on incorporating those edits. And I take whatever time I need to do the job. Not setting a date at this point is GREAT for those rare moments when a major plot hole might need repairing (imagine fixing something like that when you have a looming pre-order deadline pressuring you...can you say writer's block??). Also, depending on the book and the edits, my editor and I may need to go another round or two. In between rounds, I go back to working on promo stuff and drafting the rest

of the messages in my drip campaign. Notice I still have not yet set a release date for my book NOR have I put it up for preorder yet. No pressure, remember? Just get the book edited and get your drip campaign composed.

c) Set deadline for beta readers to return feedback

i) Once the book is completely edited, I send it out to my BETA Readers. If you don't have beta readers, go to your Review Team and see who would like to volunteer. I would recommend you give them at least two weeks to return their feedback. Three weeks is usually an ideal span of time.

d) FIVE WEEKS after that deadline is release date

i) IF I have all of my campaign materials done—my drip campaign is set up and all my website materials and pre-posting on social media is set up—THEN I set a release date and I use the deadline for my beta readers as a reference point. I usually set my release date FIVE WEEKS AFTER the deadline I've given my beta readers. This gives me one week to incorporate their changes and one solid month of promotion. I'll give you an example with dates once I finish the outline of the publishing schedule.

5) Notify Review Team ASAP of Release Date & ARC distribution Date

a) Once I know the release date, I immediately contact my Review Team and give them the head's up on when they'll be getting the finished ARC and when they'll be expected to post reviews. I ask for volunteers – only those who know they can read the eBook in time and post their reviews the FIRST WEEK the book goes live. I usually only invite the team members who have shown a great turn-around on past reviews, but at a minimum, invite only those people who have actually left reviews.

6) Incorporate changes from Beta Team

a) Once I get the input from my Beta Team, I'll incorporate those changes and give the manuscript a final polishing.

7) Distribute ARCs to Review Team

a) The ARC goes out to my review team – those people who volunteered to say they would be happy to post the reviews during that first week of release. When that goes out, it should at a bare minimum be at least five weeks prior to your release date. However, some of you may have super-fast beta readers and you got all your feedback returned within the first week AND you incorporated your edit two weeks ahead of schedule. GREAT! Now your review team has more time to read and review your book! That will only work in your favor. OR you could announce that your release date was moved up by two weeks – or how ever ahead of schedule you may be. STILL make sure you have a solid month of promotion prior to that release date.

- 8) Put book on pre-order to go live on the set release date
  - a) At this point, go ahead and publish your book for pre-order with the already set release date or the new advanced release date if you're ahead of schedule. And the only reason I recommend putting your book up for pre-order is because people like immediate gratification. If they can't click a button to at least reserve a copy, you risk the chance of losing those sales. However, it is not mandatory you put it up for pre-order, so don't sweat it if you don't have the opportunity to do this. For those of you who might have a publisher who is not doing pre-order, you won't have a choice. It's okay, we can still work around that.
- 9) ONE MONTH OUT – Start drip campaign
  - a) One month out from the release date is when you'll turn on your drip campaign, which should already be set up.
- 10) Two Weeks Prior to Release Date – Send reminder to Review Team w/links
  - a) Two weeks prior to release date, I send a reminder to my Review Team with links to where they can find the book so it's easy for them to post their reviews when the time comes.
- 11) Release Day
  - a) Send list-wide reminder w/buy links (should be in the drip campaign)
    - i) On Release day – make sure your drip campaign includes a reminder for people to buy the book ON THE DAY OF RELEASE. And you might want to include a reminder for your review team OR send them a separate reminder with those links again so they have the location of the book to make posting their review easy.
  - b) Send reminder to Review Team w/links to post reviews

### Recommended Tools & Tasks

- TimeAndDate Website – <http://TimeAndDate.com> – to help calculate deadlines and release date
- Hootsuite – <http://Hootsuite.com> – can pre-schedule Facebook Timeline posts with images
- TweetDeck – <http://TweetDeck.com> – can pre-schedule tweets with images
- ClickToTweet – <http://ClickToTweet.com> – make it easy for people to Tweet
- Pre-post on Facebook – make it easy to SHARE
- Pre-post &/or schedule on blog/website
- Create a guest blog post – or a few of them – so you can easily distribute to bloggers

## New Release Ideas

- Pre-order pricing
- Step-up pricing...Example for a book full price at \$4.99
  - Week 1 - 99¢
  - Week 2 - \$1.99
  - Week 3 - \$2.99
  - Week 4 - \$3.99
  - Release price - \$4.99
- Coupons
- Exclusive content for purchases or pre-orders
  - WARNING: Upload a new file after the book goes live might update the book on their reader
  - Use Pretty Links or TinyCC
  - Use Smashwords coupon for extra content

## Ideas for New Release Promo Materials

- All goodies to List FIRST – Public posts 3-5 days later
- Cover Reveal
- Character Interviews
- Sneak peaks and teaser scenes
- ClickToTweet.com links
- SHARE links for Facebook posts
- RETWEET links for Twitter posts

## Ideal Publishing Schedule for a Series

- Outline all the books in a single series
- Write books 1, 2 & 3...but do not publish them yet
- Get a more modest drip campaign together for all 3 books
- Put Book 1 up for preorder – full price & launch drip campaign
- Start writing Book 4
- 1 month later, Book 1 goes live & Book 2 is up for pre-order – both full price

- 1 month later, Book 2 goes live & Book 3 is up for pre-order – all at full price
- 1 month later, Book 3 goes live full price & Book 1 is either dropped to 99¢ or permafrees
- Hopefully Book 4 is ready to go up for pre-order...continue with other books

### Pricing Strategies

- Pricing Considerations – word count & fan base – Sweet spot: \$3.99 leaning toward \$4.99!
- Wide Distribution (e.g., Amazon, iTunes, Kobo, B&N, etc.)
  - Full price until Book 3 is out, then first-in-series free or 99¢
  - Slight step pricing
    - Book 1 – FREE or 99¢
    - Book 2 - \$2.99
    - Book 3 & beyond - \$3.99
  - Use free days for other books to increase exposure
- Same as above but on KU (e.g., KDP Select) & after series is completed...
  - First-in-a-series NOT on KU & wide distribution
  - Release boxed set – Books 2-?
  - Drive ads to boxed set & reap the page reads
  - Use free days to boost page reads & exposure

### Questions?

Try as I might, I know I can't be 100% effective in my communications. What sounds clear to me might be really confusing to you. No problem! If you have any questions about the ideas I've shared above, just email us at [aprgiveaways@gmail.com](mailto:aprgiveaways@gmail.com) and either I, Brenda or Jonny can answer your questions.

I hope you found this handout helpful and you're enjoying the webinars.

Thank you!!

***Arial Burnz***

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