A Guide to Getting Attention for You and Your Book Through Mass Media

The Power of Publicity for Your Book

MARSHA FRIEDMAN
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About Marsha Friedman and EMSI Public Relations

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In The Power of Publicity for Your Book, I explain how publicity magnifies visibility for both fiction and non-fiction authors, including business and professional people using their book as a marketing tool.

I also share tips and tools to help you jumpstart your own publicity campaign, and strategies for maximizing the effectiveness of your results.

The Internet has opened up so many new opportunities for marketing, but at the same time, it has also vastly expanded the number of authors publishing every day. Publicity allows you to cut through the noise so that your message reaches your audience.

Perhaps even more valuable is the credibility you and your book gain with the implied endorsement of the journalists and talk show hosts who turn to you as an authoritative source of information.

Radio and TV personalities demonstrate their trust in a person when they interview him or her on their show. Print journalists do the same when they quote an expert in their articles. In essence, these media professionals are saying, “This is a credible, knowledgeable author with a great reputation.”

You just can’t buy that kind of credibility.

Publicity helps level the playing field, says one of our long-term clients, Dr. Harold Katz, creator of TheraBreath System oral care products.

“Publicity gives anyone the ability to reach the entire public,” he says, “It gives you as much clout as the big boys.”

I’ve been representing authors since I launched my company, EMSI Public Relations, more than two decades ago. We specialize in gaining great publicity for all of our clients, from household names to newcomers.

I know the challenges authors face in promoting their books, and I understand the passion that drives so many of them; I’m an author myself! I also know how crucial authors are to the well-being of our society.

That’s why I make it my mission to share the power of publicity.

Marsha Friedman
CEO/Founder of EMSI Public Relations
For many new authors, the answer to the above question is either “when the book is done” or “doesn’t the publisher take care of that?”

But unless you’re Suze Orman or Stephen King, the correct answer is -- before you start to write your book!

It’s essential to think about the project in its entirety, including developing a plan and budget for marketing and promotion, before you type the first word. Here’s why: Knowing who your audience is and your book’s position in the marketplace will not only inform your writing, it will help you when you’re ready to let the world know your book is available.

You may have the book that changes the way business is done, or the great American novel, but if no one knows about it, they can’t come looking for it. Marketing is the fundamental building block of any sale; it’s what drives sales, so it can’t be an afterthought.

To help guide your planning, here are a few questions to ask yourself:

**What do I want to accomplish with my book?** Is it a marketing vehicle grow your business? Do you want to establish your expertise on a topic and, if so, what do you want to gain from that? Speaking engagements? Credibility? Do you have knowledge that can help people solve a problem? Or perhaps it’s the novel you’ve had simmering in the back of your mind for years, or the children’s stories you’re sure will delight kids.

Your answers to this fundamental question will affect not only what you write and how you write it, but what kind of promotional effort makes sense for your book.

**Who do I want to reach with my message?** The answer is the first piece of any marketing plan and it can also help you define what you’ll write. When I decided to write a book about public relations, I had planned to write it for businesses in general. Then I thought, “That’s too broad. Who will my audience really be?”

I decided to write for individual professionals such as doctors, lawyers and financial...
planners. Not only would that put a face to the people for whom I was writing, it would also give me the first piece of my marketing plan.

If you want to write a book and you’re a financial planner working for baby boomers chugging toward 65, you might write about planning for retirement after age 50. Another audience might be the boomers’ kids – adults who may be helping their parents. Depending on the expertise you put in the book, you may find other audiences to target as well.

If you’re writing fiction, consider the genre, the demographics of the audience for that genre, and under what category the book will be placed. I know of a now best-selling author who, in writing her first novel, thought of it as historical fiction. But it ended up categorized first as romance and then science fiction. The confusion made marketing difficult!

What title and cover design will get book buyers interested in what I have to say? The title of your book can play a key role in its promotion and sales. And, with limited space available for the precise words that will effectively communicate how dynamic and interesting your book is, you can see how important that title can be.

There’s also the design of the book cover to consider. It can potentially quickly convey a compelling key message, but it can also be confusing or downright dull.

A powerful title with a well-designed cover plays an important role in marketing your book.

What kind of a budget do I need for the entire project? Regardless of whether you plan to self-publish, work with a small, independent press, or you hope to attract the interest of a major publisher, you need to budget for marketing and promotion. If you choose to hire professionals, you’ll be thinking in terms of a financial budget. If you plan to do the work yourself, consider a time budget, such as how many hours a day you can devote to social media, or to developing content to elicit media publicity.

I’m reminded of Ralph Waldo Emerson’s quote, “Build a better mousetrap, and the world will beat a path to your door.” It sounds great, but it’s not true. The only way the world will beat a path to your door – or to bookstores, to your website or to your listing on Amazon.com – is if people know your book exists.
Publicity: A Primer on the Basics

By definition, publicity is not advertising; it’s coverage by the media of people, events and issues deemed to be of interest to their audiences. Getting publicity should be one prong of your marketing plan, which might also include doing speaking engagements, gaining followers on social media and buying advertising.

The nice thing about publicity, also referred to as “earned media,” is that you don’t buy it; you earn it. If you can get a journalist or talk show host interested in your story idea or topic, you might be interviewed for an article, asked to write an article for publication, or invited to be interviewed as a guest on a radio or TV show.

The endorsement of traditional media, even if it’s simply mentioning your name, has always been marketing gold to anyone trying to build a reputation as an author and gain visibility for their book.

Thanks to the Internet, the value of that gold is through the roof. With the boom in self-publishing, potential readers have more books than ever from which to choose. What can make one business or fiction author more appealing than another? The implied endorsements of TV and radio show hosts, newspapers and magazines – and now, bloggers, news websites, and followers on social media, too.

You can hire PR professionals to help you get publicity, but you can also work at getting it for yourself. Here are some general tips applicable to any mass communications medium:

The media pitch. A media pitch is your written communication to editors, reporters, bloggers, and TV and radio producers and talk show hosts telling them what you have to offer their audiences. Press releases are one option, but we prefer content the media can use as is. So, for a newspaper, you might write a short, bona fide news story, or a list of tips that address a problem relevant to your book. For TV and radio, briefly describe the topic you can address and what you will contribute.

Say you sell luggage and other travel gear, and you’ve written a book about traveling the world. You would look for events and issues involving global tourist destinations and develop some tips for traveling there under current conditions. Your email would briefly
describe the issue, your credentials and what you have to offer, plus a link to a news story about it. Your headline might read, “Author of ‘Flying the World’ Shares Tips for Navigating Today’s Hot Spots.”

**Contact information.** I can’t emphasize enough the importance of having your contact information clearly visible and accurate. Don’t weave it into your pitch, and don’t rely on your recipient hitting the email reply button. Include a telephone number that you can answer at any time, or one for daytime and another for evenings and weekends. You may get just one call from the editor or producer interested in your pitch, and if you don’t answer, he or she may very well lose interest.

**Be professional.** Make sure your email is free of typos, grammatical errors, and other mistakes that make you appear less than authoritative. Never write a pitch and hit “send” without carefully re-reading it to be sure it’s clean, makes sense, and is as concise as possible. If there’s no urgent need to send it immediately, give yourself 24 hours, then look it over again before sending.

**Pay attention to the news.** Most mass media are focused on issues and events in the news today, so you’re much more likely to get publicity if you can speak to something going on now. That’s not as difficult as it sounds, but it does require creative thinking. If your company manufactures doors and home invasions are in the news, you might suggest an article or talk show segment about the safest types of doors. Psychologists and physicians can address all kinds of issues, from the latest bizarre crime to the newest health craze. One of our clients wrote a novel about bootleggers during Prohibition and earned lots of publicity by comparing the repeal of Prohibition to the legalization of marijuana use in Washington and Colorado.

Remember -- focus on the basics. The concepts are simple but the execution can be challenging and it takes practice. Don’t get discouraged if you don’t have the media blitzing your phone lines on the first day!

Above all, keep the payoff forefront in your mind.
When people ask me which of the four media outlets I think is best, I tell them each has different strengths depending on your goals.

Some media are better suited for certain messages, or for reaching certain target audiences. But many authors can combine all of them – TV, radio, print (offline and online) and social media – in a 4-dimensional public relations campaign that ramps up potential exposure by using one medium to spark interest in another.

Get a mention in a newspaper article and share a link to the online version of the story on Twitter. Your followers retweet it to their followers, who post it on Facebook, where someone finds it and mentions it on a talk radio fan page and, before you know it, you’re a guest on a show!

Here are some ways to leverage each of the elements of a 4-D PR campaign.

**Print/Online.** I categorize print and online news together because the content is often shared – just about everything that appears in print is republished online. That means every article or column that includes a mention of you or your book is likely to appear online, turning up in search engine results and other news aggregators. For this reason, print/online interacts beautifully with just about every other medium.

That can be helpful if you’re trying to get booked as a guest on TV and radio shows. Producers who
do a quick search for your name online will see the articles that have featured you as a source, which helps establish your credibility as an expert in your field.

Articles are also good fodder for sharing on social networks. Sharing links to interesting news stories inspires interaction among users – and all the better if those stories feature you! Circulating the links on your social network drives more views and boosts your credibility.

**Radio.** On talk radio, the audience gets to hear you engage in provocative, informative and/or entertaining conversation, which can leave a lasting impression.

“Talk radio is a major platform for people seeking publicity because it literally puts your message right in the mind of the listener,” says Michael Harrison, founder and publisher of *Talkers*, the leading talk radio trade publication, dubbed “The Bible of Talk Radio” by *Business Week Magazine*.

“Radio has a very dedicated audience, and they’re paying attention,” he says. “They are an active audience and a large audience. If you’re trying to promote anything, it’s worth gold to be in front of them.”

Now that most stations are streaming live on the Internet, talk radio interviews have even greater value. Alert your social network followers about when your interview will occur and they can hear it no matter where they live. After the interview, post a link to the archived version or your own MP3, for anyone who missed it.

**TV.** TV, as with radio, used to be a fleeting experience, because once the interview aired, it was gone. Now, many news stations keep links to programs on their websites for a short period of time.

Of course, you always want to obtain a digital copy to post on your own website, both to enhance your credibility and for the benefit of journalists and producers who may be vetting you for potential coverage.

**Social media** – It’s easier to get publicity if you have a “platform” – something that elevates you in the eyes of the media. Elected officials, by virtue of their office, have a platform. So do movie stars and champion athletes. Now, thanks to social media, the rest of us can have one to.
Your thousands of followers create an attractive platform that tells journalists and show hosts you not only have a built-in audience, but also a message that resounds with a lot of people.

Remember to use your social media networks to cross-promote any time you’re featured in traditional media. If you’re getting bookings on talk radio, for instance, promote the upcoming shows on social media, then visit the stations’ websites for links to their Twitter accounts and Facebook pages.

Join their networks, friend their friends, and plug the upcoming shows there, too, i.e. “I’m so excited to be chatting with [host’s name] here on Friday about topic here.” You’ll make new connections from among the stations’ listeners, which certainly won’t hurt the next time you pitch them with an interview idea.
Many authors have a hard time envisioning helpful publicity beyond news stories that are all about their book or themselves.

“Publicity is about getting visibility, credibility and exposure – it’s not about selling.”

While that kind of coverage is terrific, it’s not easy to get and it’s impossible to sustain. And sustenance is crucial: to stand out in a crowded marketplace, you’ve got to stay in front of your audience.

But good publicity is any coverage that casts you and your book in a positive light and puts you both in front of more people.

So, how do you get journalists and talk show hosts to tell people how incredibly awesome you and your book are? You don’t.

Publicity is about getting visibility, credibility and exposure – it’s not about selling. You gain publicity by looking for ways to provide useful, valuable content for the media that is, ideally, tied to something in the news.

Here are some recent examples of how we got great publicity for some of our clients with books, which should help get you thinking about your own possible angles:

1. **A veteran international businesswoman** wrote about best management practices for a book that would serve as a marketing tool for her consultancy. She got great press in major mainstream and business-oriented publications with articles featuring tips on the skills U.S. business leaders need to compete globally, and the five critical areas they must focus on to adapt to a global economy.

2. **A very successful real estate salesman** used his book to share how he pulled himself out of poverty and substance abuse as a teenager and earned his first million dollars in his 20s. He got local, regional and national publicity in print and on TV and radio talk shows with angles ranging from how to set and achieve goals to tips for first-time homebuyers.

3. **A woman who’d worked as a senior executive** in a high-end department store during the 1980s drew on her experiences for a series of novels about intrigue and deceit among fictional fashion mavens. She’s now a go-to for the media on topics ranging from fashion to the retail industry to launching a new career (as an author) late in life.

If you want valuable publicity for your book, you need to offer something valuable in return. For TV and radio talk shows, that’s an informative and entertaining interview that will engage the audience. If you do a great job as a guest, the host will have no problem promoting your book and website in return, and you can casually work in a mention or two during your interview as well.

In print, your book will be included as a credential. If the article is published online, it may include a link to your website. If you write an article that’s published in traditional print, it will likely include a bio that mentions your book and website.

All of this will provide more visibility and credibility for you and your product while building a brand consumers can fall in love with.
When I launched my PR business more than 20 years ago, we relied a great deal on our personal contacts in the media. We’d give them a call and, if they were at their desk, they’d answer the phone. Today, you need an office number and a cell phone number but, really, they’d rather you make your pitch in writing so they can consider it at their convenience.

Today, we straddle both worlds. Yes, we still telephone some media contacts – but only after we’ve emailed our pitches to them and thousands of other journalists, talk show hosts and producers.

What does all of this mean to you? When seeking publicity to get visibility for your book, it’s important to consider the changes and make sure you’ve adapted your strategies accordingly.

Here are some points to consider.

**Email levels the playing field.** I love email because it opens the door to all sorts of people most of us didn’t have a prayer of reaching 25 years ago. Back then, if you didn’t have a direct number and a way to get past secretaries and receptionists, your chances of at least getting your pitch heard were minimal. Email gets you in the door.

The downside is, if you can’t craft a brief, compelling subject line, and if your writing isn’t clear and professional, you’ve lost the advantage.

**Because of the digital age, traditional media have changed.** It may sound like I’m stating the obvious, but how that affects you may not be so evident. Newspapers and radio stations are operating with less staff than they did just five years ago. That means the hosts, producers, editors and reporters screening emails are much busier, moving more quickly, and far less patient. If you want to get their attention, you need a headline that grabs their interest immediately. It should be clear, catchy, and easily understood. (Avoid clever word plays and puns.) The text of your pitch should be to the point: a brief description of a newsy topic or a problem their audience may have and the valuable information or insights you can contribute. Remember, there are also fewer talk radio shows today, and fewer newspapers, so more people are competing for less time and space.
Media follow the media. Now, more than ever before, one TV, radio or print interview is likely to be heard or seen by far more people than the original audience. There are a few reasons for that. One is that, on talk radio, 50 to 75 percent of the shows are syndicated. Your interview with the host in Atlanta may be broadcast on stations in Duluth, Phoenix, Hoboken or any of the hundreds of others that carry the program. Newspaper and news websites pass around stories like infectious diseases. (I wish I could think of a happier metaphor because that’s definitely a good thing!) TV and radio hosts see them and get ideas for their own shows. We’ve had any number of clients get invitations for radio show interviews because a host saw the newspaper articles we wrote for them. And, of course, when you share links to your interviews and articles on your website, you not only enhance your credibility, you expand the audience that much more.

There’s a lot I miss about the good old days, but I’m glad there’s more opportunity now for almost anyone to be heard. Sure, that also means there are more voices clamoring for attention, but if you know how to stand out from the crowd, you have a big advantage.
Chapter 6

Using the Good Ol’ Home Field Advantage

There’s nothing like the good old home field advantage when you’re looking for publicity. Local TV stations and talk radio shows, hometown newspapers and magazines, and locally oriented blogs and news websites are all looking for the same thing: local content.

“If pitching to the media requires research, creativity and persistence, but once you’re familiar with the local players, it gets easier.”

If you can offer them useful information or a great human interest story – particularly, if you can link it to something currently in the news – you just might become the next media darling.

Once you land the interview, it can be as simple as a telephone conversation with a radio show host or journalist. Being a TV guest is a bit more involved because it’s visual, but TV is a powerful medium and well worth the effort of buying a new outfit and heading to the studio. For print, you can also offer to write something yourself, free of charge, for the publication.

That’s the easy part. The bigger challenge is identifying the show hosts and journalists who will be interested in what you have to offer, and then giving them a pitch that gets their interest.

So what are some tricks for landing local media coverage?

If you normally listen to your favorite FM rock station or your iPod while you’re driving around town, it’s time for some new auditory scenery. Unplug the iPod, push the AM button, and tune into the local talk radio shows. Who are the hosts? What’s their subject matter? Are they talking about something related to your book? (Keep in mind, your topic is not your book itself. It’s the helpful information you can provide as an author with an area of expertise.) Identify some shows that would be a good fit for you as a guest. Write down the station and the show host – after you’ve safely pulled over, of course – and look them up online to learn more.

If you usually read national entertainment magazines and novels, it’s time to meet your hometown newspaper and other locally produced publications. (If you’re not aware of other publications, look for them at newsstands and near news racks at shopping centers.) You can also search online for community news websites and blogs. Start reading! Take note of the topics particular reporters write about, and which editors are in charge of what sections. The more you can tailor your pitch to an individual, the better your chances of getting his or her attention. Are all of the publication’s columns and articles staff-written, or does it appear they publish content contributed by readers and freelancers? In the
latter case, you may want to offer up your own article.

**Local TV stations generally broadcast news shows a few times a day.** Look for guest-oriented segments by watching the morning news. See which anchors are interviewing guests and the topics they’re covering, such as consumer interest, health and fitness, and parenting. Do some anchors have particular interests? Which ones are relevant to your book? Learn more about them by visiting their websites and social media pages. Look for the names of producers, too, and their areas of responsibility. You’ll want to pitch them as well.

Once you’ve identified those people, look for a news hook – local news, issues and trends that you can plug into. A person who’s written about real estate, for instance, likely knows the status of the local market. If home sales are up, cite the numbers in your pitch and offer tips for what to look for when shopping for a new home.

You can also plug into holidays and special days, weeks and months, just about all of which you can find on the Internet. If you’ve written a handyman guide as a marketing tool for your hardware store, National Chimney Safety Week might be a good time to offer homeowners tips for getting their chimney ready for winter. If you’ve written a children’s book, you might have suggestions for National Keep Kids Creative Week.

Pitching to the media requires research, creativity and persistence, but once you’re familiar with the local players, it gets easier.

And it should get easier still after you’ve given their viewers, listeners or readers useful information that helps them solve their problems, or provides them with insight or information. Avoid being an infomercial trying to hawk a service or product, and focus on sharing your expertise in a helpful way. If you do that, who knows? Next time, the media may be calling you!
7 Ways to Get the Most from Your Publicity

Too often, I talk to authors who’ve gotten publicity for their books in the past and say, “I saw a bump in visitors to my website the day the TV interview aired, but after that, nothing.”

Or, “Yeah, my local paper ran a great article about me, but except for a few people who still find it on the paper’s website, it hasn’t done me much good since then.”

First I tell them that their marketing efforts should never end with one TV or radio interview or one article in a publication. Effective marketing requires staying in front of your audience. Think of the successful business and fiction authors you know. They’re being quoted as expert sources in all the traditional media, and they’re on social media sharing their insights, commentary and advice, and gaining followers. They’re also speaking at seminars and conferences and other live events.

Likewise, fiction authors strive to remain visible. Most do not stop at getting critics and book lovers to review their newest project, rather, they find ways to stay in the news and in front of audiences. Harry Potter series author J.K. Rowling, one of the best-selling fiction writers of all time, finds countless inventive ways to stay in the public eye. Seven years after publishing the last book in the wizarding series, she whipped up a publicity tempest when she let it drop that she regretted her choice of which main boy character gets the girl in the end.

During talks at colleges and other venues, she divulges juicy details about paths she almost took with the books, for instance, telling one audience that Harry Potter was initially Harry Batt. Every nugget she drops creates a big splash.

The second thing I say to people for whom publicity “didn’t work” is, “What did you do with it?”

Sometimes the answer is a blank stare.

There are many ways to maximize the benefits of the publicity you get, and if you’re not doing these things, you’re getting only a small fraction of the value.

Here are seven ways you should be putting your publicity to work for you right now.
**Post it on your website.** The endorsement of traditional media is marketing gold. The endorsements implied by recognition from the media make you appear more trustworthy and credible – and thus more appealing – than your competition.

**Use it on social media.** Promote upcoming interviews – “Looking forward to talking with national radio host Jim Bohannon at 10 a.m. Tuesday. Love his show!” “Like” the show on Facebook, follow the host on Twitter, and look for other ways to cross promote. Once the show airs (or the article is published), you’ve got a new post: “Great conversation with Jim Bohannon on Tuesday! If you missed it, here’s a link.”

**Incorporate it into your sales and marketing materials.** Share links to some of your best coverage in your on-line marketing material and be sure to use it in flyers, brochures, direct-mail advertising and other promotions.

**Reference it when pursuing speaking engagements.** You’ll greatly boost your chances of getting the gig if the people vetting speakers know that you’ve gotten media attention. Make sure it’s on your speaker profile and in your marketing materials. Let’s face it, the more important you are, the better it makes them look.

**“It’s easy to get a great return on that investment and reap the rewards for a long time, providing you put it to work for you.”**

**Forward copies of print articles to clients to reinforce their confidence in hiring you.**

**Also forward those articles to prospective clients to persuade them to hire you.**

**Create a “wall of fame” in your office for all your visitors to see.**

Don’t neglect to keep your website, marketing materials, etc. updated with your most recent coverage. Sure, that article from 2007 can still impress today; but if it looks like that’s the last time the media sought you out, the effect diminishes.

Whether you’ve paid someone to help you get media exposure or you’ve done the work yourself, you’ve made an investment in PR. It’s easy to get a great return on that investment and reap the rewards for a long time, providing you put it to work for you.
I often talk to people who know they need publicity and want professional help to get it, but find hiring a PR firm to be a confusing and daunting task.

That’s understandable. Public relations companies differ in a thousand ways, it seems. For one, they use different business models – some charge monthly retainer fees while others are pay-for-performance, meaning you pay only for a quantifiable result. They charge for services differently. They also have a whole range of specialties, from crisis communications to public affairs to research and analysis. How can you possibly determine which is the right firm for you and your needs?

I shared some practical tips for doing just that in my book, Celebritize Yourself: The Three Step Method to Increase Your Visibility and Explode Your Business. I know how helpful hiring a PR firm can be in getting publicity, but it’s also an investment, so it’s important to be an informed shopper.

If you’re considering hiring a PR firm for the first time, or you’ve hired one in the past and were unhappy with the experience, these tips should help.

Find a firm that has successfully dealt with clients like you. If your book is about your expertise, find a firm that will understand your specialty’s idiosyncrasies, its jargon, and what it views as newsworthy. It won’t be trying to learn about your industry on your dollar, and it will already have relationships with relevant publications, blogs, and TV and radio shows. If you’re a fiction author, find a firm that has successfully gotten publicity for other fiction writers.

Hire a firm that specializes in the right media for you. Most PR firms specialize in print media (getting editorial coverage in newspapers and magazines, both online and offline), and a growing number are focusing on social media. But your audience may be watching TV talk shows, or you may like the convenience and immediacy of talk radio. The firm should be able to help you determine whether a particular medium is appropriate for your message and audience, and it should have a strong track record in gaining clients exposure in whichever media they’ll be using.

Ask to see samples of a couple campaigns for clients similar to you. This is the...
only way to get a feel for the work the firm has done, and the quality and quantity of coverage it may be able to obtain for you. Keep in mind that a number of variables influence the success of a campaign and they’re not all within anyone’s control — breaking news events are a good example. Still, this should give you a good idea of the firm’s track record.

**Make sure you understand the fee structure.** Many retainer firms add charges for actions they take on your behalf. So in addition to the monthly retainer, you can expect to be billed for materials they write for the press, or time spent on research, phone charges, copying, postage, etc. This can make it hard to plan your budget.

**Try to find a firm whose fees are tied to performance.** One of the reasons I chose to make my company a “pay-for-performance” model was to ensure clients would leave satisfied. If they pay for 15 talk radio interviews, for example, that’s what they get. And if we can’t get them all 15 in a predetermined amount of time, we will return the money for those we can’t schedule or compensate them another way. I prefer this approach over the retainer fee model, which can cost you thousands of dollars a month with no guarantee of results.

Keep in mind the most important thing is to find a company that you feel understands you and your message, and that you will be comfortable working with. They should be as enthusiastic as you are about promoting your company, product or book.

If your PR firm heartily supports your cause and performs like a real member of your team, you’re both in for a truly rewarding experience.
Many fiction authors believe their only shot at publicity is through the journalists and talk show hosts who focus on books – the reviewers, book-related shows, book sections in newspapers and magazines. Sure, they’re worth pitching to, but book critics are a shrinking specialty in traditional media and you’re making a mistake if you limit yourself to that target audience.

Newspapers, TV and radio have been cutting costs wherever they can -- and that has included many book critics, sections and shows. They just don’t pull the audiences that crime, weather and sports do.

Here at EMSI, we reach out to reviewers for clients who are authors, but we generate far more publicity by establishing fiction and non-fiction authors as experts in their fields. We follow the news closely and watch for opportunities to offer up their timely input to journalists, and TV and radio talk show hosts.

In many cases, the expertise is obvious: A knowledgeable financial planner with a book about saving for retirement is a great source of information for almost any article or talk show related to the economy.

But what about the fiction writers?

Some read my book, Celebritize Yourself, in which I share how anyone can position himself as an expert, and they say, “That makes sense for people who’ve written how-to books, but I wrote a novel. How can I be an expert?”

To which I reply, “How can you not?”

Whether your story is pure fiction or a fact-based narrative, you likely did extensive research on a topic, place or character to make it more plausible. That is now an area of expertise for you. Perhaps your book is a memoir, or fiction loosely
based on your life’s experiences. Whether it’s memories of being bullied as a child or knowledge gleaned from your years as a caregiver, you are certainly qualified to offer opinions on the topics you’ve lived!

Or, you may feel passionate about the themes in your novel – they are, after all, your message. It may be that loyalty trumps virtuosity; that a single decision can influence lives for generations to come; that each of us must sacrifice some individuality for the good of society. These are the same themes we find in the daily news stories, and you can add depth and context to events and issues by identifying and expanding on them.

Here are some real-life examples of novelists, our clients, who have become (or are becoming) established experts because of the research, life experiences or themes related to their novels:

A lawyer and novelist researched the history of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints – the Mormons – for his contemporary murder-mystery. He learned the basis for the church, the Book of Mormon, came from ancient text that founder Joseph Smith said was written on golden plates given to him by the angel Moroni in 1827. Our client’s novel focuses on those missing golden plates and weaves in rich detail about the church uncovered in his research. In the run-up to the 2012 presidential election, with Mitt Romney and other Mormons in the running early on, our client became a popular source of information for journalists and talk show hosts eager to learn more about this sometimes mysterious religion.

A former police officer with a love of dogs wrote a collection of short stories written from a distinctly canine perspective. He became a popular guest on talk radio, where he discussed current events related to animal welfare.

A woman who wrote her first novel later in life penned a tale revolving around three women aged from their 50s to their 70s. These three independent and disparate characters end up having to temporarily share a home, which becomes a transformative experience. We got the author publicity (including her own Huffington Post blog) by offering her up to the press to speak about new communal housing trends among seniors and following your passion in retirement, among other angles.

As you can see, all of these authors have plenty of expertise to offer. In exchange for the content they provide, grateful journalists and show hosts give their books a plug. When the authors post links to these media placements on their websites, they build credibility that makes them rise above the thousands of other authors publishing fiction.

So, yes, do what you can to catch the attention of the book reviewers and bloggers, but don’t stop there! Trust me; you have lots to give.
Marsha Friedman is CEO of EMSI Public Relations, the national publicity agency she founded in 1990. A pioneer in developing the pay-for-performance model of public relations, she is recognized for innovations that have profoundly influenced the industry.

She has helped thousands of fiction and non-fiction authors gain exposure and credibility through appearances on radio and TV shows across the country, editorial coverage in newspapers and magazines, and on social media.

Raised in New York City, Marsha became an entrepreneur at age 21, when she opened a Greenwich Village-style coffeehouse in Venice, Calif. She went on to become a principal in the American Economic Council, organizing large investment and financial conferences. Those business experiences led her to discover her true passion: marketing and public relations.

They also gave her a keen understanding of what’s required to grow a successful business in a competitive marketplace. That includes fostering a company culture with a positive family spirit and a business ethos characterized by caring, exceptional customer service and exceeding expectations.

Marsha is the author of *Celebritize Yourself: The Three Step Method to Increase Your Visibility and Explode Your Business* and publishes a popular weekly marketing newsletter, PR Insider. She also co-hosts the PR Insider Blog Talk Radio Show and frequently speaks at regional and national conferences.

Married for more than 40 years to her husband and business partner, Steve, Marsha is a mother of four whose son and daughter-in-law are also part of EMSI’s management team.

Marsha’s mission is to help authors achieve their dreams by introducing them to marketing strategies and by securing the publicity necessary to cultivate their brands.
EMSI Public Relations excels at quickly delivering superior publicity for clients, from well-known celebrities to virtually unknown newcomers.

It consistently outperforms other agencies, large and small, thanks to a unique business model. That includes a pay-for-performance guarantee, which incentivizes the firm to produce results within a contracted time; four media divisions staffed by veteran former industry insiders working in their specialty areas; and a News & Experts division that has become a trusted provider of high-quality content for local and national media.

EMSI's prominent clients have included:

• Michael Uslan, originator and executive producer of the Batman film franchise and author of the memoir, The Boy Who Loved Batman
• Michael Levin, New York Times best-selling fiction and non-fiction author, whose works include Model Behavior, a novel that became a Disney movie of the week
• Darlene Quinn, international award-winning author of the Webs series of novels, including Webs of Power and Twisted Webs

The company specializes in successfully promoting non-celebrities. EMSI's clients routinely appear on national TV, from FOX to CNN; national talk radio shows; and in publications from The New York Times to the Washington Post.

EMSI Public Relations has redefined public relations through innovation; creative, individualized campaigns; and, above all, genuine caring for each client.

“Your team is great. They’ve been enthusiastic, committed, welcoming to all suggestions and responsive each and every time we connect. It’s a delight working with them!”

Michael E. Gerber
World’s No. 1 Small Business Guru,” according to Inc. Magazine