

Give Your Readers A Sample

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Self-publishers need to think like Frito-Lay. Realize that you, as a self-publishing and (probably) relatively unknown author, need to give your potential customers a reason to buy your book, and offering your readers free samples may be just the sales boost you need. The great part about your particular craft is that you don't have to hire merchandisers or deplete your resources; free sampling for writers is cheap or free, thanks to the Internet and current printing technology.

If you have your own web page (something I recommend), offer your readers a chapter or book synopsis as a free download. Your manuscript is probably already in .pdf format if you've worked with any of the subsidy houses. Extract your table of contents, the promotional copy from your back cover and the first chapter of your book, and create a link to them on your site. Be sure to back-link to your sales page, or the area on Amazon, Alibris, or other site offering your book for sale.

If you've written non-fiction and want to establish yourself as both an excellent writer and an expert in your field, submit short articles for use by other websites or ezines covering your area of expertise. You may want to use a synopsis of one of your chapters as the article, so your readers have a glimpse of the topic(s) your book covers. There are several websites which actively seek short, well-written articles covering a number of topics; some of the most popular are: home improvement, family and relationships, law, business (traditional and internet), financial management and investing, and religion (from a practical perspective, rather than theoretical - homiletically discussions.) Be sure to include the name of your book with a link to your sales site in the "Author's Biography" area.

If you are a poet or have written a screenplay, offer free performances of your work. In Indianapolis, one Starbuck's offers musicians and performers the chance to give renditions one night a week. Libraries, community playhouses, and even some restaurants may be open to this suggestion.

Finally, if you already have a book in print and it is selling, consider adding the first chapter of your other book, along with sales information or a prepublication purchase discount, as an "extra added attraction" at your second (and subsequent) printings. If your reader liked your first book, they're sure to love your second one.

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