14 Things You Should Know Before You Release Your First Book

Get an email list set up

An email list is the most effective way to reach interested readers and will ensure that your book has a stellar launch right out of the gate.

Don't be a recluse

Tell people that you're writing a book! Get them interested and involved. The feedback will push you to improve and provide you with a base of early fans.

Have a budget

Know how much you can spend on your book. At the least, you'll need to budget for a kick-ass cover, and editor, and whatever promotions you want to run.

Watch out for promo/review lead times

Promo sites can be booked out for weeks in advance, so if you have a specific date in mind, get on top of it early. Some critical reviews can require you to submit 4 to 5 weeks before publication.

Get your Facebook fan page set up

Just as with your email list, your Facebook fan page will help the launch of your book. It's also vital if you plan on running Facebook ads.

Have ad templates/images that are easily resized

As reviews and awards come in, or you tweak your ads & platforms, having ads that are easily resizeable can save you a lot of time and effort.

Have a stealth period

When you release your book, have a stealth period of a few days to allow you to fix any issues and get some reviews from early readers in. That way, when it goes "live", the social proof is already there.

Understand the importance of reviews

Reviews can help sell your book, book some promos, or start the Amazon machine running in your favour. Verified reviews from sales or free periods are what count so try and get as many people as possible to leave one.

Watch out for KDP delays

Changes to KDP can take anywhere between 24 to 72 hours to take effect, so if they ask you to clarify anything, respond as soon as you can, especially if it's your stealth or launch period.

Decide which Amazon you're going to focus on

Reviews on Amazon.com will show on the other marketplaces but not the other way around, so if you're international, decide which one you want to focus on and direct people there afterwards.

Write out your Bio/meta/description beforehand

Between Amazon and different promo sites, you're going to be doing this a lot, so it pays to have different versions written beforehand. Rich text, plain text, 500, 250, and 50 character versions. Rich text descriptions are written on Author Central, not KDP, but get overwritten when you update KDP.

Author Central isn't shared

You'll need to create an Author Central account for each Amazon that you want to target, as the information isn't shared. The .com version is required though, as not all Author Central sites have the same editing options.

Length (kind of) matters

The word count of your book can affect the categories that you get listed in, as well as any eventual promos that you can qualify for. If you don't have a physical book, Amazon will work on roughly 300 words per page. You need over 50,000 words to qualify for the Kindle Scout program.

Keywords for categories

If you want to get listed in certain subcategories, you'll need to include the right keyword or phrase in KDP. As well as that, depending on the reading age selected, you can get listed in either Children's or Teen & Young Adult.