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Thousands of books are released from publishing houses and self-publishers each year. So how do you stand out from the rest and get the publicity you deserve? Follow these simple steps to get your work in the news before it even hits the shelves.

Send out a pre-release copy of the book. Understandably so, most writers and editors will refuse to publish a summary of a book they have not had the chance to read it in its entirety. So sending a press release or an in-house article about your book's upcoming release will not be enough to get on the editorial calendar. Most publishing houses have the equipment and staff to put out a pre-release of your book, stamped with the author's contact information and the fact that text is subject to change during the final editing process. Otherwise, especially if you are self-publishing, send out sample chapters or a pre-release copy printed off of Microsoft Word placed neatly in a binder or folder.

Specialize press releases for recipients. Whether it's a magazine, newspaper, broadcast news station or website, each business receiving your press release should feel the book you are promoting applies directly to their audience. A publisher whose readers are predominantly young parents, for example, will be interested in different aspects and messages in the book than a publisher whose readers are predominantly retired seniors.

Remember that each news outlet has a niche market. If your book does not reference the Bible or the Christian faith, for example, or your reason for writing the book did not stem from a church experience, you may have trouble getting featured in a Christian magazine or on a Christian radio program. If your book does not have any ties to the state of Tennessee, you may have difficulty getting featured in a Tennessee arts and culture publication. Find the markets with which you do fit well, find unique angles to make your book appeal to more publications, and focus on them.

Provide sample interview questions and high-resolution photography. When sending out your pre-release book and press releases, these two additions will save a writer time and money. A writer who originally thought he or she did not have time to do the legwork to feature your book may realize that without having to spend too much time preparing for an interview--and without having to invest in a professional photographer--it can indeed be done.

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Use who you know. Networking is key to publicizing any new product, and word of mouth can be a powerful tool. Ask neighbors, friends, classmates, family and other acquaintances if they have a peer who works in media and publishing. All it takes is one name to get your foot in the door.

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