

# The Author's ADVOCATE

## Special Newsletter

April 2005

Published exclusively for the authors and associates of  
Infinity Publishing and Buy Books on the web.com

### Where's the worst place to sell your book???

This is a pop-quiz—not to worry, there's only the one question and it's multiple choice:

- A. In an elevator
- B. In a pro shop
- C. In a restaurant
- D. In a seminar setting
- E. In an independent bookstore
- F. In a national chain bookstore

During seminar presentations at our authors' conference, **Penny C. Sansevieri** stresses the need for every author to have a *60-second elevator pitch* that explains simply and clearly what your book is about. Penny sets up a situation where you're on an elevator attending a writers conference and the only other person on the elevator is someone who could do wonders for your book. Perhaps they're a senior editor with a mainstream house, or a well connected literary agent, or maybe a famous movie producer/director/actor. Wow!!! **Clint Eastwood**—and he's just asked you what your book is about. You're alone on the elevator with Clint, you have his complete attention, free of disruptions until the elevator reaches his floor. You have only a minute or less to hook his interest into your book.

What would you say to capture his attention to explore developing a project around your book???

First of all, don't get tongue-tied by being in the presence of a famous actor/director person. This is not the time to be awestruck and say something dumb. You've been acknowledged as an author and asked what your book is about. This is one question that all authors love to be asked, so you always need to have a short, concise answer ready to go.

Don't go dropping names or relating what others have said about your book. And don't get into the problems you've had with plot details. Don't dwell on how you've labored for years to write it or how impossible it has been to find an agent. Avoid the negative and keep what you're saying very positive.

You never really know when this kind of opportunity will occur—but chance meetings do happen when you least expect them, so always have your *elevator speech* ready. What are the three most important aspects about your book that makes it unique???. Write out your book-hook pitch and practice presenting it in a minute or less. Sometimes you'll only have moments with a captive audience to sell your concept.

**Pro shops**—Yes, golf courses, tennis and swim clubs, health spas, and other places that focus on exercising and individual sporting activities are excellent places to do a book signing if your book will help to improve their game or enhance their daily exercise program. You'll have a captive audience who will hopefully be interested in the topic and will want to buy your book.

**Dan Poynter** doesn't go to bookstores to promote his new book about skydiving. He goes wherever skydivers are gathering to talk about their rushes from jumping out of a perfectly good aircraft. Dan is so well known in skydiving circles that some of his fellow skydivers would surely trek to the bookstore to hear him. However, there would be a whole lot more of these gravity defying daredevils gathered around the rigging tables to hear Dan entertaining and informing them while he's selling his Para-publishing books.

Dan has rigged it for selling his books. He's presenting to his primary target audience, he's prepared with handouts, and he has an ample supply of books to provide instant gratification for eager buyers. Skydivers love the instant rush of gracious gratification that comes when their chute pops open. Having books-on-hand for purchase—signed by the author—does wonders when it comes to popping wallets open.

A few decades ago one of my marketing clients manufactured golf balls. A Pro shop scheduled their introductory free ball give-away on the same day a self-published author would be in the shop talking about driving with

greater accuracy as explained in his new book. The event was highly promoted to their members who were encouraged to bring guests. At the end of the day, the author had sold and autographed a nice stack of books—the manager bought a dozen signed copies for sale through the Pro shop, and the Marketing VP purchased several cases of books to be used to promote the new golf balls.

What *pro shops* would be interested in your book talk???

The retail price of most books sold today is about the same as dinner at a decent *restaurant*. People eat out more often than they go to a bookstore. Most restaurants have a slow evening when they'd appreciate a few more patrons. One of these nights is the perfect time to have you come in to do a reading while the patrons enjoy dining. This is like a dinner theater, expect the author is the star and the lines are read from the author's book.

The restaurant can do a mailing to their patrons promoting *Dinner-with-the-Author* night. Naturally, you'll promote it to family, friends and co-workers. Maybe a couple dozen will make reservations and actually show up. Whatever the number, it will be more than they usually have on a slow night. The author will benefit by having potential customers who will learn more about the book while they enjoy a good meal. The chef will have an opportunity to try some new offering or prepare special dishes that are only available on author's night. **Robert Pelton's** period cookbooks are perfect for a creative chef to prepare a historically correct meal from revolutionary times. The diners could feast on tasty treats while hearing Bob tell whose favorite recipe this was.

Not all topics are suitable for the dining room—we don't want the patrons to lose their appetite. Good taste in selecting material is essential in planning an author's night. Avoid negative and controversial subjects and become an entertaining storyteller. Fiction works well when you craft your telling to hook the audience into wanting to know more about how it ends. Make your novel a *must-read* with your skillful storytelling.

**Seminars** are sensational settings for selling topic books. Seek out local and national associations devoted to your book's topic. Bring your book to the attention of the organizers by letting them know you would be delighted to do a presentation about your book—available for purchase after your talk. Back-of-the-room sales are profitable. If your book sells for \$20.00, make sure you buy it from Infinity at 40% off retail for \$12.00—you'll earn a 10% royalty because Infinity pays royalties on all books sold. Say you order 24 books—Infinity pays for shipping on orders for 20 or more books—and your talk

is very well-received. You sell all of your books while handing out cards with information about how to order directly from [www.buybooksontheweb.com](http://www.buybooksontheweb.com).

Your profit of \$8.00 per book (from 24 copies sold at \$20.00 each) adds up to \$192.00!!! Offer a buy-it-now discounted price of \$18.00, and earn \$144.00 in profits!!! Your royalty check will include \$28.00 earned from this transaction. When those people who didn't buy at the seminar order from our online bookstore, you'll earn a 20% royalty of about \$4.00 on each book sold through our website.

So what seminar topic does your book fit into???

**John Dillinger**, the infamous bank robber of the 1930's, was once asked why he robbed banks. His reply was, "Because that's where the money is!!!" Today, most authors want to do signings in a bookstore because that's where the books are for sale!!! Bookstores are perhaps *the worst place to do a book signing*, because your book is competing with thousands and thousands of other books. All you have going for you is what you say about your book—so talk clearly with a proud passion.

More *independent bookstores* are ordering directly from Infinity because we give them the standard wholesale discount and because we have a liberal return policy. Many independents have an active calendar of in-store events featuring local authors. They'll usually order the featured book when they schedule a promotional event. A 10% royalty is paid on the wholesale price of books sold to the bookstore—and even though they're subject to return, Infinity authors are entitled to the royalty when the book is invoiced. You need to contact independent bookstores in your area to be considered for these events.

A *national chain bookstore* is the *worst place* to do a signing. They'll order your book through Ingram and your Infinity title will be produced by Lightning Source for Ingram's distribution. The deep discount of 55% cuts deeply into the author's earned royalty. And in addition to the ever-present tables of discounted books, you have even *the most recent bestsellers on sale at a 40% discount!!!* Some of the chain store managers are more flexible and will schedule local self-published authors for in-store events. However, be careful they don't charge you a fee for promoting your appearance. Accept the fact that you'll have the prestige of doing a bookstore event without much in the way of profit.

Yes, the greater profits for the author are often found far beyond the bookstores—no fooling!!!

Enjoy often...John