

THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOOK

If you want to succeed in the book business, it is imperative that you know how to think outside the book.

A recent PUBLISHERS WEEKLY article noted the following:

Number of books covered in an August 2005 issue of Washington Post Book World – 27

In LA Times Book Review – 11

In the NYT Book Review – 50

Based on a 52 week/year publishing schedule, that means that Washington Post Book World covers 1,404 books a year; LA Times Book Review covers 572 books a year; and NYT Book review covers 2600.

If you add them all together, that is 4,576 reviews a year in these three major review outlets. Bear in mind that this is NOT 4576 individual books as some books will typically be reviewed in all of these outlets. But still – 4,576 reviews sounds great – right?

Well, not exactly.

RR Bowker, the US ISBN (International Standard Book Number) agency, reports that there were over 190,000 books published in 2004 alone.

So, what happens to the other 185,424 + books?

This is where “thinking outside the book” comes in. One of the biggest challenges today is limited review space and all too often, publishers and authors place way too much emphasis on reviews and miss other great opportunities to get media coverage.

Thinking outside the book means thinking beyond reviews, it means getting creative, and it means being in the know about news issues. This is what savvy promotion is all about.

In order to really think outside the book, here are some questions to consider:

Is there something in the book that could make an interesting article? Suggest an article idea.

Could the author offer commentary on a topic in the news? Offer the author as an expert source

Could some tips or suggestions in the book make for a great informative short article? Come up with an idea for using some tips or ideas from the book to create an article.

Reviewers, reporters and broadcast journalists need a reason to cover a book. Give them one!

Explore such things as:

Why the book is newsworthy

How it can benefit, enlighten or entertain a publication's readers

How the book is relevant to a publication – is the author an expert, a native of the particular area served by the publication, or is the author appearing in that area

If your book is fiction, you may have to get extra creative to come up with these angles, but bear in mind – you can do it. Be open to all ideas.

By focusing less on reviews and more on other ways to solicit coverage, authors and publishers exponentially increase their chances of receiving coverage and generating sales.

