



## Organising a successful in-person book launch

You have completed the writing and editing process – congratulations! Now you've reached the exciting stage of organizing a book launch!

An in-person book launch is a fantastic opportunity to celebrate your accomplishment, connect with readers, and generate interest in your new book. This guide will help you plan and execute a memorable and successful event.

### 1. Define your objectives

Before diving into the details, you should clarify your goals for the book launch.

- Are you aiming to sell signed copies of your book at the event?
- Is your main goal to build your author brand?
- Do you want to connect with readers?
- Do all of the above apply or do you have other goals?

Knowing your objectives will guide your decisions throughout the planning process.

### 2. Set your budget

You must decide on your budget for the event and stick to it. Be realistic and ensure that you factor in the following costs:

- venue;
- catering & refreshments;
- promotional materials;
- books;
- additional marketing costs;
- any rental costs for IT or audio-visual equipment;
- gratuities;
- your own travel costs.

Research sponsorship possibilities/opportunities. Also, some authors make their book launch a priced ticket event, particularly if they are including high-end catering and refreshments.

### 3. Build your guest list

There are several ways to invite people to attend your book launch event:

- Contacts spreadsheet: list all your personal and professional contacts (include everyone who has ever emailed you or who you have met, your car mechanic, local postmaster/mistress, butcher, etc) on an Excel spreadsheet, as follows: first and last name, email address; contact phone number.
- Eventbrite event platform: place your book launch event on Eventbrite and include the link in all advertising and social media posts.
- Print posters to advertise the event in your local area.

### 4. Select your preferred date & time

There are several things to consider before you decide on your preferred date and time.

#### Guests

- weekday daytime events may exclude most working guests;
- if the majority of your expected guests work in the town/city where your launch venue is located, you may want to consider scheduling the event for shortly after office hours. This will allow your guests to attend your event on their way home;
- weekend events may be more convenient as the majority of guests may have more available time to spend at your event.

#### Publication Date

- If you want to sell books at your event, you will need to schedule your book launch for at least 10 days after the book publication date to allow sufficient time for your order of author copies to be delivered to you.

#### Marketing

- If you want your marketing consultant(s) to do any “live” work on the launch day, then avoid weekends as they will either be unable to oblige or may charge an increased rate for weekend working.

#### Public Holidays

- Avoid public holidays as you may encounter increased venue rates, lower guest attendance, reduced public transport, etc.

#### Local & National/International Events

- Conduct research into any local events that might detract from your event and avoid those dates.
- Avoid dates which conflict with national events such as major sporting events, Eurovision, the Oscars, etc., as these may significantly detract from your event.

### 5. Choose a venue

Now that you have decided on your launch goals, budget and preferred date and time, you can turn your thoughts to the type of venue that fit within those parameters and will also align with your personality, your book and your target audience. For example:

- a bookstore;
- a library;
- a purpose-built event space;
- or an indoor or outdoor space related to your book’s theme.

Once you've decided on the type of venue, you need to consider the following before you select and book a specific venue:

- expected guest numbers;
- convenience of location;
- local transport links;
- venue or location parking;
- venue amenities;
- ability to meet your catering & refreshment requirements;
- ability to meet your IT and audio-visual requirements;
- date and time availability;
- any venue restrictions.

Also, when you are selecting a venue, if you have difficulty in getting callbacks, email responses or direct answers, move on to the next venue on your list. You need to have confidence in the venue's management and staff.

## 6. Plan the programme for your launch event

Outline the schedule for your book launch and consider the following inclusions:

- Refreshments on arrival: ensure that your guests are welcomed with tea, coffee, soft drinks on arrival.
- Publisher/Editor Introduction: ascertain if your editor/publisher is content to speak at the start of the event, either in person or via remote media, to share their views on your book and collaborating with you; singing your praises!
- Author Interview: consider having a local celebrity, an author within your genre or a respected colleague, conducting an interview with you about your writing inspiration, experience and your aspirations for your book.
- Author reading: Treat attendees to a sample of your work to pique their interest.
- Book reviews: Have your interviewer or someone else read any book reviews to the audience.
- Q&A Session: Encourage audience interaction by fielding questions about your book, writing process, and more.
- Book Signing: Allocate time for personal interactions and book signings. If you have designed bookmarks, enclose a bookmark into each signed book.
- Refreshments and networking: invite guests to stay and have refreshments during which time you can network, shake hands and thank your guests for attending.

## 7. Promote your event: Build anticipation for your book launch through various channels:

- Social media: Leverage platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn to create event pages, share updates, and engage with potential attendees.
- Email Marketing: Send invitations to your mailing list and encourage them to spread the word.
- Local Media: Reach out to local newspapers, radio stations, and community websites to promote your event.

## 8. Prepare materials

- Book Copies: Ensure there are enough copies of your book available for purchase.
- Signage: Create signs for directions, book display and other designated areas for book signing, etc.

- **Marketing Collateral:** Have bookmarks, business cards, or promotional materials available for attendees to take home. In terms of bookmarks, ensure that a call to action is included to encourage book reviews.
- 9. Set up Merchandise and Displays:** Design an eye-catching display for your book and related merchandise. Consider creating a visually appealing backdrop that reflects the theme of your book.
  - 10. Engage the Audience:** Encourage attendees to share their experience on social media using a specific event hashtag. Consider organising contests or giveaways to increase engagement.
  - 11. Follow Up:** After the event, express gratitude to attendees through social media and email. Share photos from the launch and continue promoting your book in the weeks following the event.