

Bookmark Marketing Power

By Karen Whiting

Bookmarks are inexpensive and make great marketing tools. Each one is a blank canvas that you design to showcase you, your books, and your brand or services. Plan the content carefully to get the best mileage out of it. That can vary depending on how you will use the bookmarks.

Content and design

Bookmarks need some basic information to showcase the book and connect you to the readers:

- Book cover and ISBN
- Your website and social media links
- Your email and logo or tagline
- Release date if the book is not yet available

Everything else is optional. If your publisher is well known you might include their logo. Blurbs can be helpful, especially for fiction.

A bullet list of benefits may be better for nonfiction. I often use an acrostic to list benefits such as an acrostic for P-R-I-N-C-E-S-S for *The One Year My Princess Devotions* with the P for praises God, R for remembers God's word, I for improves her mind, etc. Or provide some trivia related to the book's topics, how-to steps for a self-help book, recipe or recipe index for a cookbook, or jokes for a kid's book.

To showcase your services list your other titles with a few bullets below. So, list speaker and a few of your top talks. Or list editor or certified writing coach (if you are one) and a sentence about services provided plus link to sign up.

If you're multi-published, add a list of titles or a few other book covers. If this is your first book, add something relevant such as an endorsement from someone well known, mini testimony or passion behind the book.

Consider something that gets readers excited to connect. Offer a link to your newsletter with the promise of a freebie when they subscribe or entry into a quarterly or book launch give-away (add deadline if there is one)

Be creative and think of something fun that might grab attention. One of my publishers created bookmarks for a teen book I wrote that had a mirror image message. They could read it in a selfie.

Bookmarks as a Marketing Tool

Once you have your bookmarks, you're ready to use them to promote. There are many ways to use bookmarks and draw attention to your books and services.

1. Conversation starter and bridge

When you are at a book fair or other signing type of event a bookmark makes a great conversation starter. Offer the bookmark and mention one key fact or hook about the book. That

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engages people. so they will stop and chat. It's a good time to ask them to sign up for your newsletter or mention something about your writing. You can also pass one on when you meet people.

2. Small sales promo and reminder

Once a person has a bookmark they have a small advertisement as a reminder to buy the book. They may stick it in a book they are reading, and then look at it when they pick up that book.

3. Pass it on tokens

Offer a second bookmark for the reader to share with a friend who might be interested. Add two to each book you sign. These become free pass-it-on tokens to extend your reach beyond the person you meet. It provides the individual with a free gift to add joy to someone's day.

4. Bag stuffers and freebies for readers

Give a dozen or more to a retailer or librarian to pass on to readers. They will be doing the advertising for you!

5. Pin the bookmark

Beyond printing and passing them out you can share the bookmark jpeg or pdf online. My princess bookmark is one of my most popular pins and continues to be repined. If there's some good content on the bookmark you can use it to create a blog post or post it on a social network with a comment or question to inspire others to comment and share.

6. Additions to mailings

Whether sending a Christmas or Birthday card or paying a bill by mail, add in a bookmark. It sends it off to someone else who might be interested.

7. Go Wider

Beyond the stores, libraries, and your book table, consider how to reach out with bookmarks. Many places like to stuff event bags with something useful and a bookmark can fit that need. Send them to schools for events, meeting planners, and give some to your church for events too. Drop some off at a store that sells something related to your topic that's having a sale.

Be sure to be generous in using the bookmarks to get them out to as many potential readers as possible.

Bio: Karen Whiting (www.karenwhiting.com) is a certified writing coach and author of twenty-five books. She speaks n marketing at writers conferences around the country.