

GSS236

Book Tour for the Digital Age: Doing it Your Way



**34th IACP Annual Conference
New York, NY USA**

March 31, 2012

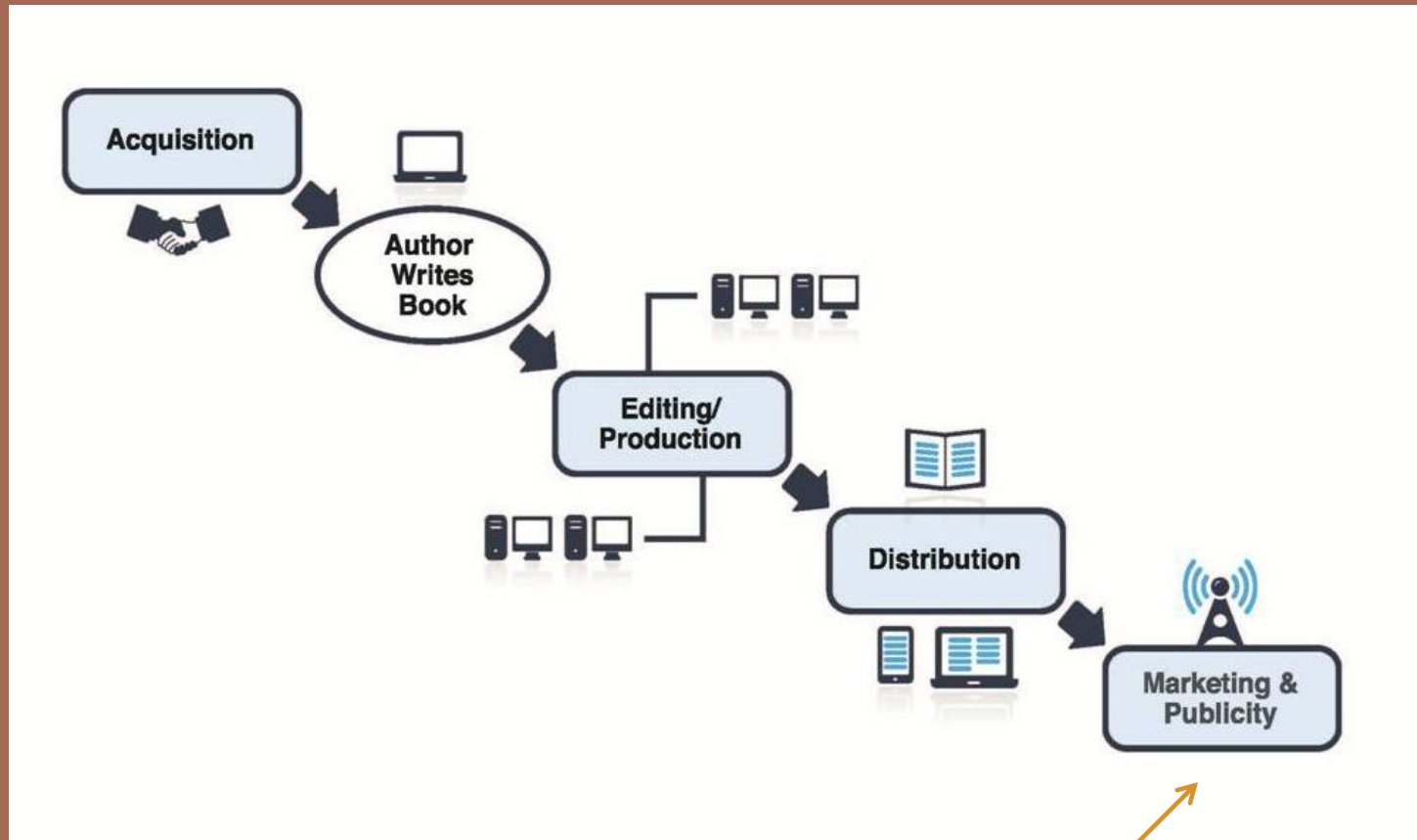
Prepared by Julia M. Usher

Today's Roadmap

- ◉ Why are we even talking about this?
- ◉ What do I mean by “multi-faceted tour”?
- ◉ When should you bootstrap one?
- ◉ How on earth do you do that?
- ◉ Epilogue: Would I bootstrap again?

The Old Marketing Model

Linear and Publisher-Driven

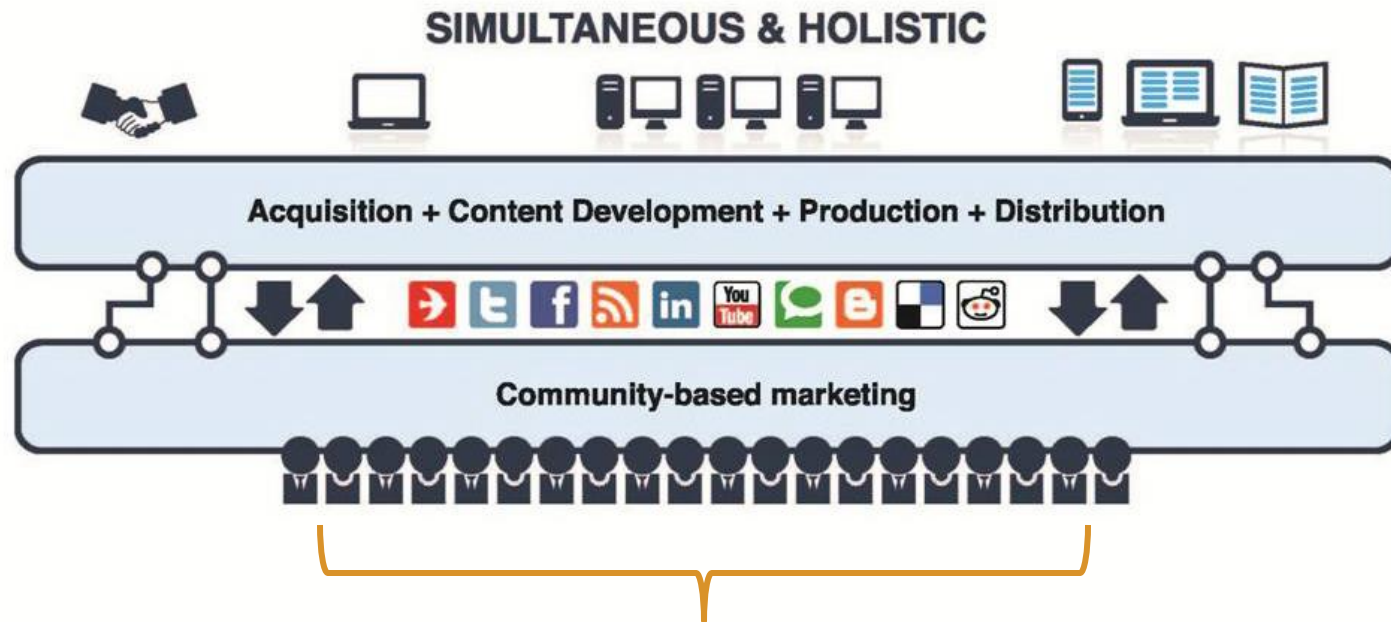


Author plays relatively passive role

Source: Gibbs Smith, Publisher

The New Marketing Model

Simultaneous, Online, and Author-Driven

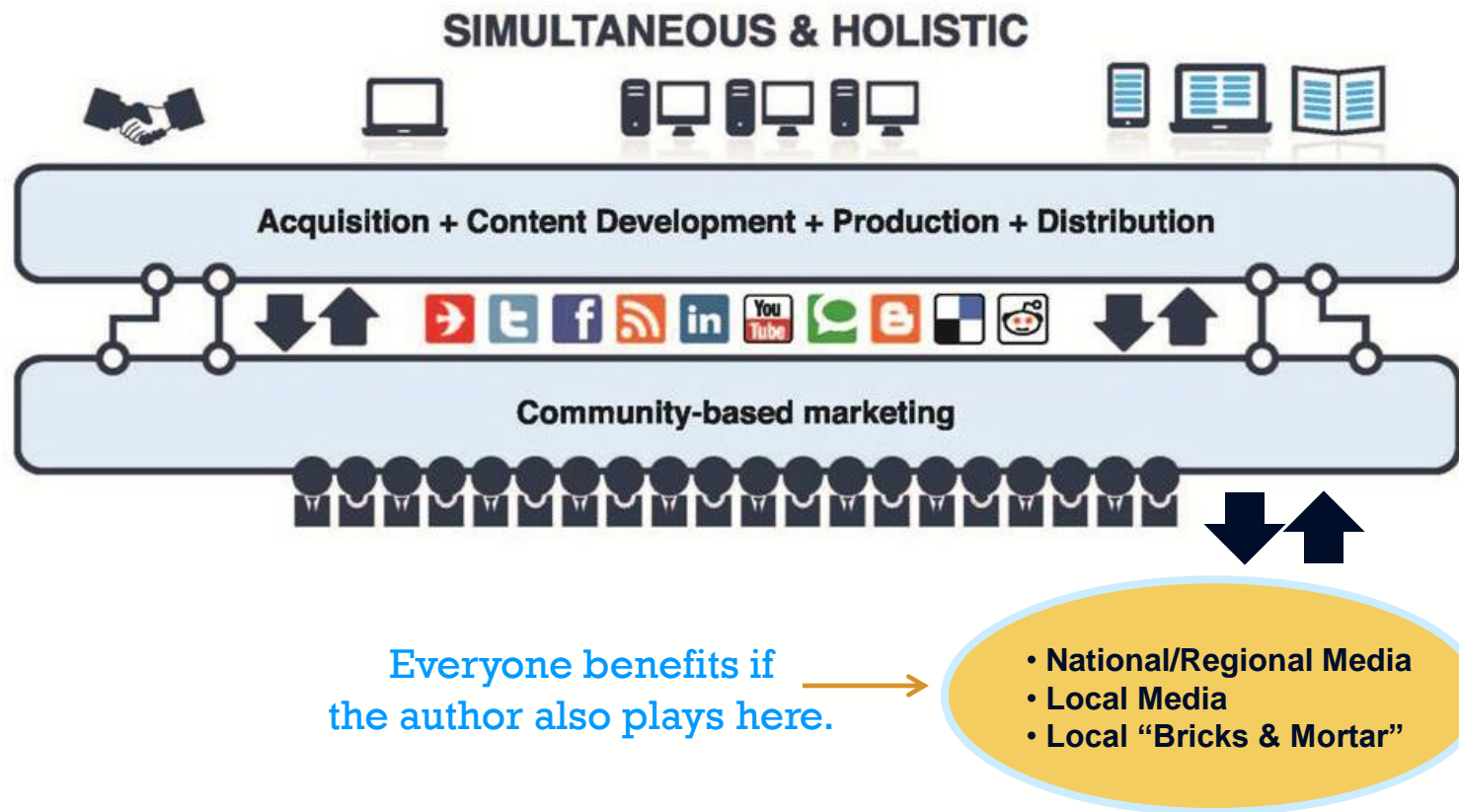


“As the author, your efforts are indispensable.”

One publisher's marketing toolkit

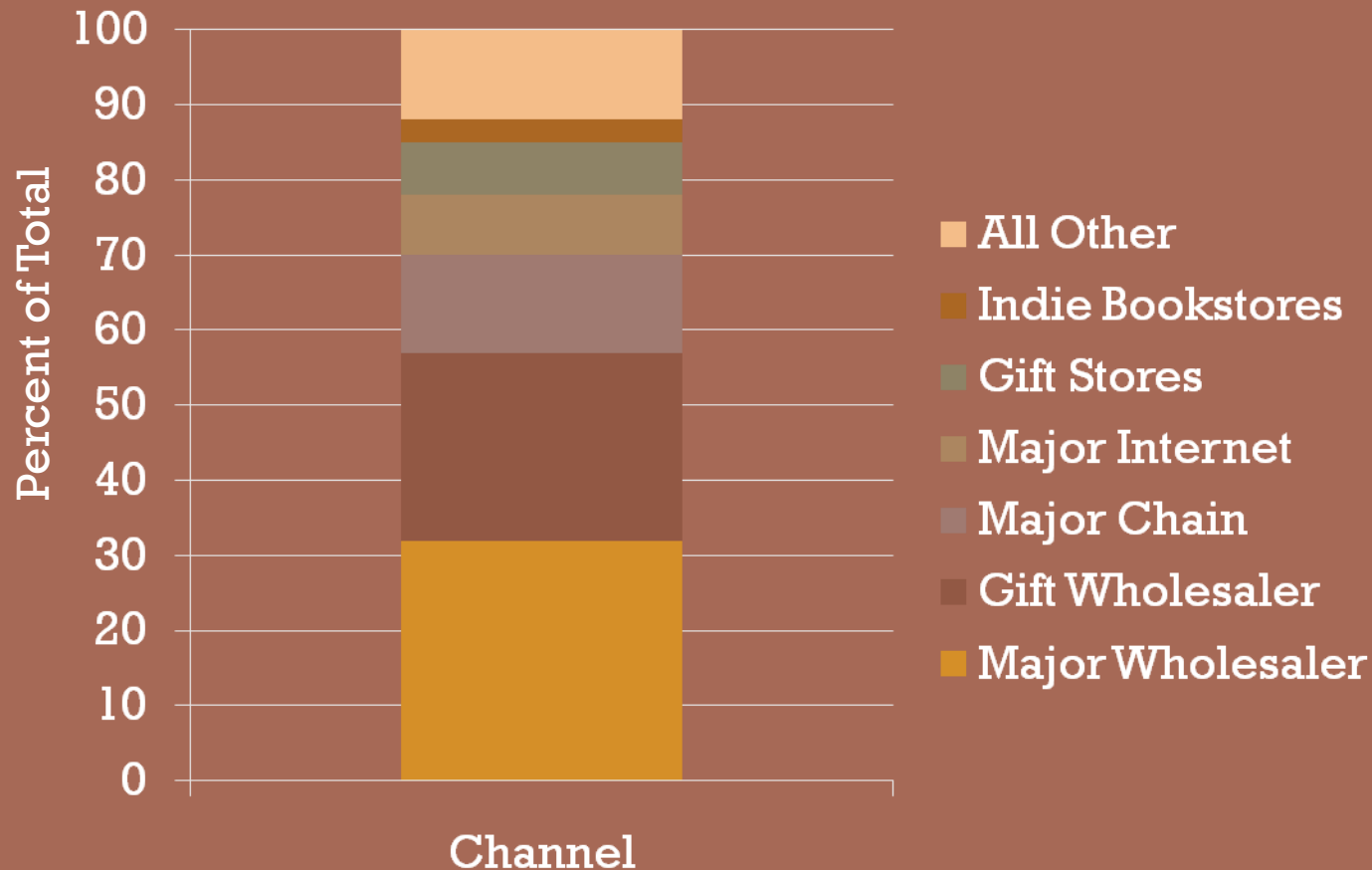
My Marketing Model

Multi-Faceted



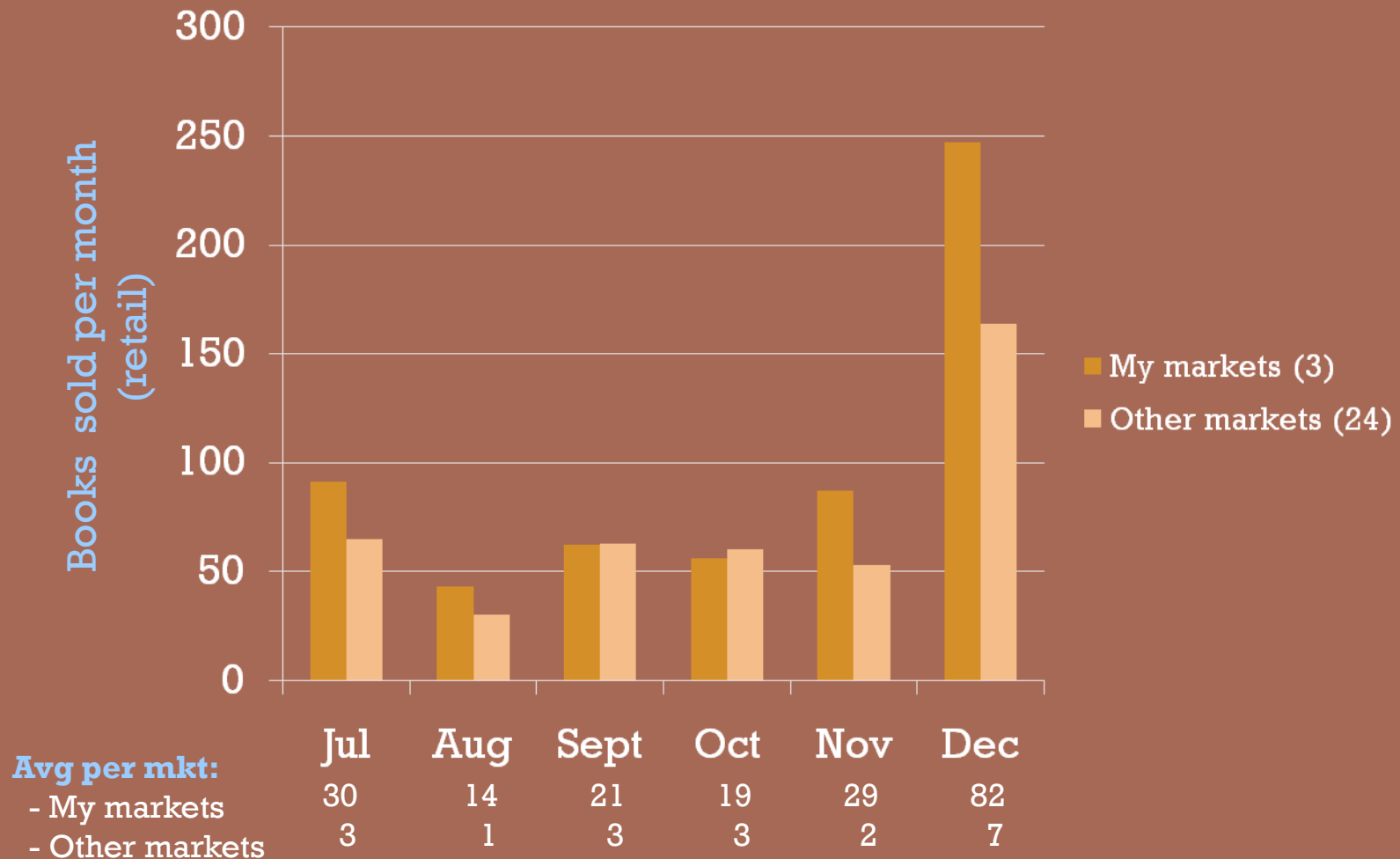
People still purchase offline

Cookie Swap sales by channel:



Source: Gibbs Smith, Publisher (sales from 5/01/09 to 4/19/11)

Hand-selling still has impact



* From *Cookie Swap* Bookscan cash register sales data; markets beginning with A-D only

** In August, Portland, ME sales (my market) exceeded NY (not my market) by a factor of 6 (204:35 books)

The personal touch still matters

- “If things continue on their current trajectory, book tours will become striated by class. Elite authors will go where they can reach big audiences, while others will have to work the angles to propel a trip on the road.”
- “It’s a shame because . . . we get turned on by trusted friends, by the local bookseller, by a reading, even by a newspaper review.”
- “Technology can help, but it has limits. Reading an online Q&A . . . isn’t the same as hearing him [the author] speak or waiting in line to shake his hand.”

“Book Tour? More Like a Safari,” *LA Times*, Carolyn Kellogg,
March 7, 2010

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A Multi-Faceted Tour

What publishers used to provide some authors, plus a healthy dose of online activity:

National/ Regional Media

- Pitches to:
 - long lead magazines
 - trade publications
 - syndicated food columnists
 - food editors at top 100 daily/weekly newspapers
 - nationally broadcast media (TV, radio)
- Satellite media tour

Local “Bricks & Mortar”

- Local bookstore signings and other events

Local Media

- Pitches to:
 - TV
 - magazine
 - newspaper
 - radio

Multi-city book tour

Online/Social Media

- Basic presence (website/blog)
- Social networking groups
- Blogger and site reviews, interviews and giveaways
- Promo video(s)
- Webinars and other online events

All or something(s)?

Cherry-pick, but be cautious about lost synergies ...

- ◉ No local events → Difficult to interest local media, especially outside home market
- ◉ No online presence or limited following → Difficult to secure financing for a multi-city tour
- ◉ No local events → Difficult to build personal stories and fuel other online content (i.e., event calendars, video, etc.)
- ◉ No online presence or limited activity → Difficult to expand reach and ensure success of local events

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Slim Resources

My publisher's situation:

- ◉ Reduced in-house publicists from 3 to 2, just prior to book release
- ◉ My publicist was handling 40 authors, Fall 2009 season alone
- ◉ Only time/resources enough to:
 - - launch traditional press releases to national/regional media (follow-up was a ?)
 - - handle book fulfillment (100+ review copies, for events, and to channel)
 - - sell into channel
 - - print 500 postcards for special promo at my alma mater
- ◉ Advance was \$15K ...
 - - minus photographer's fee of \$7K
 - - minus food expense of about \$7K
 - - minus props and other incidentals exceeding \$1K
- ◉ Nothing left for PR!

+ Motivated Author

My situation:

- ◉ First book - wanted *Cookie Swap* to make a splash
- ◉ Writing was a lonely process – wanted to meet my readers
- ◉ Information is power – wanted to learn as much as possible about book PR and how my book was received
- ◉ Fully supported at home – husband willing to let me run amok
- ◉ Personal funds to deploy – willing to invest in my future, as long as funds could be recouped over time (target: 1 year post release)
- ◉ Fiercely independent (often to a fault) – **NOT** willing to pay a publicist for what I could do myself

Cost of Hiring a Publicist

National/ Regional Media

- \$3000-\$6000

Local “Bricks & Mortar”

- \$1000-\$1500 per market, excluding travel, accommodations, food, food styling, and other support

Local Media

Online/Social Media

- Up to \$3000 for 15 to 20 blogger giveaways, only

Multi-city book tour



For a 12-market tour: \$18K to \$27K,
plus an estimated \$1K per market for travel, etc.

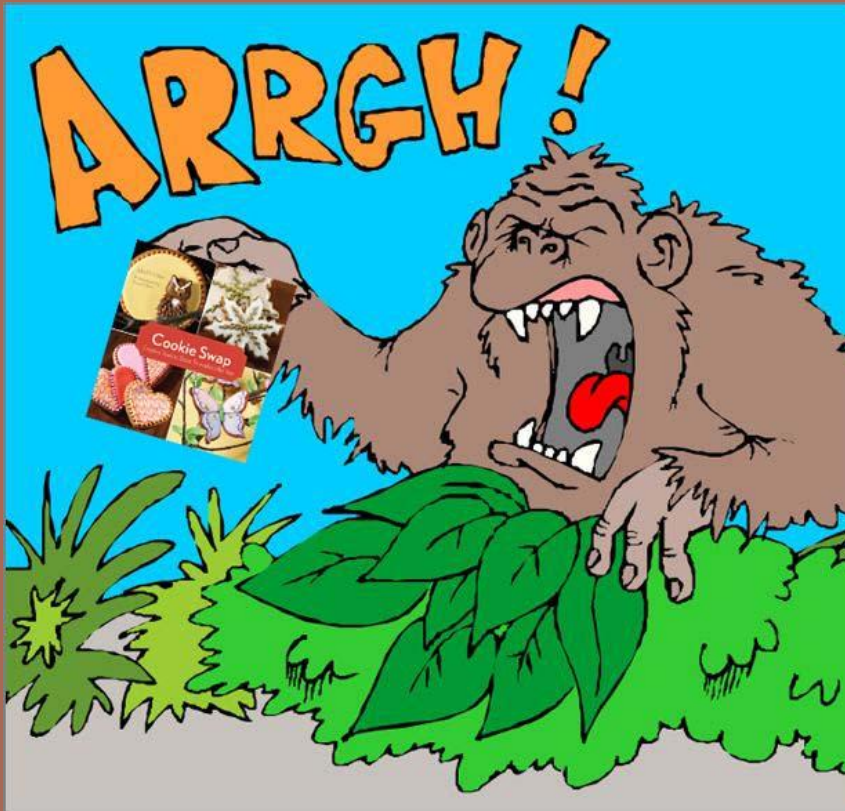
+ Time

A lot, in my case:

- ◉ 2/09 – finished editing book
- ◉ 2/09 – 7/09 – planned “tour,” nearly full time
- ◉ 7/09 – book released on Amazon
- ◉ 8/6/09-12/19/09 – traveled continuously except for 2 ½ weeks (12 metro areas and lots of places in between!)
 - 133 days
 - 97 signings and cooking classes
 - 16 local TV and radio appearances
 - 70-plus bookstore drop-ins
 - About 75 other “significant” media mentions
- ◉ 1/10-3/10 – started second book; travel and local media scaled back
 - local TV (1 per month)
 - 4-5 local cooking classes (1-2 per month)
 - national TV/radio pitches surrounding holidays
 - other interviews, only as approached

= Guerrilla Media Tour (not a new concept)*

Brute force, imagination and time, but not big budget.



*“I’m referring to the soul and essence of guerrilla marketing . . . achieving conventional goals, such as profits and joy, with unconventional methods, such as investing energy instead of money.”

Guerrilla Marketing, Jay Conrad Levinson (1984)

... or “More Like A Safari”*



“A cat peeing in an author’s bag? A writer waking up to discover that a complete stranger has left him a jar of delicious homemade preserves? Such things are not traditionally part of a book promotion. But. . .”

* “Book Tour? More Like a Safari,” *LA Times*, Carolyn Kellogg, March 7, 2010

My Safari Highs and Lows

☺ Incredible cookie boxes made by fans!



☹☺ My first signing – in the beginning, only one person there; later, the cutest fans!



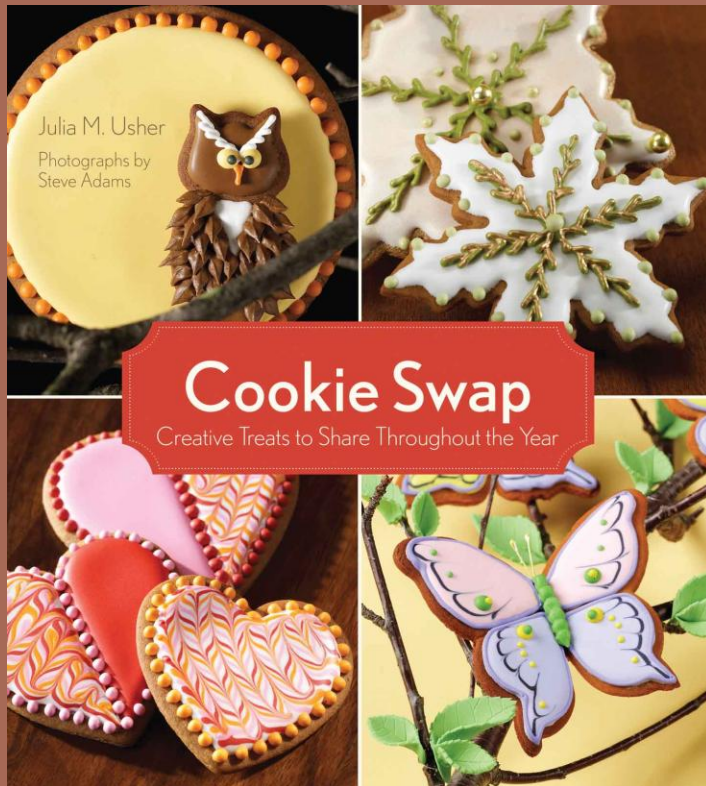
☹ Mixing icing in hotel bath

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The First Step

Don't be shy. Every interaction is an opportunity to promote. That said . . .



- Cookie swaps aren't just for Christmas anymore!
- Everyone loves a good cookie!
- Easy and economical entertaining!
- Move over, cupcake! The cookie makes a comeback!

Imagination or Brute Force?

I cut a wide swath in the book jungle:

National/ Regional Media	Local “Bricks & Mortar”	Local Media	Online/Social Media
<ul style="list-style-type: none">25-30 long lead food and lifestyle magazines (reviews and features)Top 8 TV shows*Radio*	<ul style="list-style-type: none">12 metro areas to which already travelingBookstore signings<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Indie- ChainCooking classes<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Vocational- AvocationalNon-traditional<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Farmers’ markets- Community cookie swaps- Private parties- Blogger eventBookstore drop-ins	<ul style="list-style-type: none">For each of 12 markets:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- TV- Magazine- Newspaper- Radio	<ul style="list-style-type: none">WebsiteEmail signatureNewsletterPromo video8 resource sites (book sales, reciprocal links)40-45 high-traffic blogs/food sites (reviews, giveaways, interviews)Booktour.comBig three: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube

* Shared task with publisher

Local: Safari Guide

Page 1

Step	Comments	Sources/Links
1. Get smart	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Even if you think you've got marketing savvy, it never hurts to read/listen up	IACP members (Kat Flinn) IACP Experts Are In sessions (Virginia Willis) <u>Publicize Your Book</u> , Jacqueline Deval Other resources (Slide 39)
2. Select markets	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Focus on markets to which already traveling or where concentrations of family/friends - to minimize costsConsider other markets that might be good fits - i.e., good media, venues AND distribution	IACP Membership Directory Other organizations' directories (LDEI, alumni associations)
3. Locate indie bookstores and cooking schools in markets	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Publisher may prevent you from approaching chains until they've sold book into distributionPlus, chains often don't produce the best events (more on this later)Plus, we've lost another chain since my <i>Cookie Swap</i> tour	<u>indiebound.org</u> IACP Membership Directory Google search

Local: Safari Guide

Page 2

Step	Comments	Sources/Links
4. Develop PR materials; then cold call, cold call, cold call!	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Minimum PR needs:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- photos: headshot, book jacket, BLAD- bio (different lengths)- press kit (w/ endorsements, interview topics)Keep a detailed digital call logPitch only 1 or 2 types of events	<p>juliausher.com For the Press page My call log (email for sample)</p>
5. Publicize your events	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Your site is the obvious spot, but there are other great places – like booktour.com and Amazon Author Central!Help your venues get the word out. Supply with downloadable postcards, invitations and posters.	<p>juliausher.com Book Tour page For the Press page My Facebook fan page booktour.com My Amazon Author Central page Online calendars for local TV, radio, and newspapers</p>
6. Pitch long lead national/regional magazines (start 12 months out)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Start early and don't hesitate to pitch simultaneously – everything from reviews to features to interviews, as they fit the publicationGlean contacts from mastheads and IACP Directory	<p>IACP Membership Directory</p>

Local: Safari Guide

Page 3

Step	Comments	Sources/Links
7. Pitch national and local TV/radio/newspapers (about 2-3 months out)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Publishers closely guard their national contacts, but offer to assist• Food is an easy sell to local morning TV, but must have local events first• Clean producer contacts online (see right) or, better yet, from colleagues• At the local level, make the local connection (sell public events, personal ties to the area)	<p>mondotimes.com IACP and other colleagues</p>
8. Seek sponsors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A great way to offset costs, but hard to secure sponsors as a first-time author without a huge online platform or an event line-up first• Also, start early – corporate sponsor decision-making process can be long	<p>Companies where co-marketing possibilities exist; needn't be large</p> <p>IACP and other colleagues (to get you in the door)</p>
9. Prep for travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Produce sales “accessories” (stickers, posters, aprons, etc.) and arrange travel (lean on friends and family)• Practice, especially for TV segments (time them!); consider media training (informal feedback is fine, too!)	<p>prinrunner.com IACP B&B Exchange couchsurfing.org IACP PR colleagues, for feedback</p>

Local

Preferred Event Types

Event Type, Mix	Pros/Cons	Books Sold
1. Non-traditional, 16%: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Farmers' markets- Community cookie swaps- Private parties	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• PROS: Many - Easy, low cost set-up; people in buying/party mindset; leverages who you know; books sell better on average• CONS: Unpaid, BUT you often have to sell books directly, so you capture full mark-up	6-60 (Avg: 23)
2. Avocational cooking schools, 33%:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• PROS: Paid (\$150-\$300 plus ingredients, \$4000 offset to costs); teaching is rewarding; books sometimes sold in associated retail shops• CONS: Time-intensive prep; class size is often capped, limiting sales on day of event	2-46 (Avg: 13)
3. Indie bookstores, 38%:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• PROS: Easy set-up; seasoned indies do a better job of promoting and cultivating local clientele; builds long-term bookseller relationships• CONS: Unpaid; unseasoned indies may need some promotions help	0-31 (Avg: 10)

Local

Not-So-Great Event Types

Event Type, Mix	Pros/Cons	Books Sold
4. Vocational cooking schools, 9%:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• PROS: Immensely rewarding• CONS: About 60% were unpaid; students and teachers not the most likely to buy; class size often limited; time-intensive to prep	3-28 (Avg: 12; excluding my alma mater, Avg: 9)
5. Chain bookstores, 4%:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• PROS: Not clear – Easy; great book visibility on shelves, but only surrounding the event; cultivates relationships with key booksellers??• CONS: Unpaid; chains do a poor job of advance promotions unless you're a big name (often just in-store announcements on night of event); poorest book sales on average	0-17 (Avg: 8)

Overall: 0-60 (Avg: 13)

Local

The Power of Personal Connections

Never underestimate it ...

The screenshot shows a Facebook post by Julia M Usher. On the left, a sidebar lists 'Likes' with a 'See All' link. The likes list includes: 'Craftsy' (with a red circular logo), 'Cookie decorating' (with a photo of decorated cookies), 'Layla Grayce' (with a brown square logo), and 'Where Women Create' (with a green square logo). The main post area shows the post by Julia M Usher, which includes a photo of her holding a sign and text about cookie baking in New Mexico. Below the post, there are three comments: one from Connie Moyers, and two from Julia M Usher. An orange arrow points from the 'Where Women Create' logo in the likes list to the first comment by Connie Moyers.


2,152
like this


216
talking about this


Likes [See All](#)


 **Craftsy**


 **Cookie decorating**

 **Layla Grayce**

 **Where Women Create**

 **Julia M Usher**
And the cookie baking begins for New Mexico - 100-plus assorted seasonal shapes, everything from Valentine's hearts to Christmas trees! Hope my cupcake caddies can accommodate the diversity.
[Like](#) · [Comment](#) · [Share](#) · 21 hours ago

 3 people like this.

 **Connie Moyers** Julia, I put out an email on Tuesday to a list of 230 addresses or so. I got my first call two minutes later. So far there is thirty on the list. Everyone who calls is so excited.
3 hours ago · [Like](#)

 **Julia M Usher** Whoa! That's terrific, Connie. Can't wait. Thank you so much for you efforts promoting this event.
3 hours ago · [Like](#)

 **Julia M Usher** Correction: youR efforts. Oh, how I loathe typos.
14 minutes ago · [Like](#)

Great response from a small, but connected list.

More tips for the road warrior:

- ◉ Trust your instincts when setting up events – if set-up is difficult, event is likely to be the same
- ◉ Schedule enough personal downtime (for me, 1 day off between markets, no more than 2 events per day)
- ◉ Drive if you can, and get a GPS
- ◉ Expect varied results (0 to 60 books signed per event)
- ◉ Sign as much of bookseller's inventory as allowed (books generally not returnable once signed)
- ◉ Again, info is power - collect contact and sales info at every event
- ◉ Put your publisher's book fulfillment person to work (have him/her call booksellers in advance to make sure they're adequately stocked)
- ◉ Actively redistribute books on the ground, if needed
- ◉ Do as many bookstore drop-ins as you can

Online/Social Media

Page 1

I started from ground zero:

Step	Comments	Sources/Links
1. Built site (the “hub”); avoided blog	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A long-term investment – focused on my branding as much as my book• Created an online book “hub”:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- press (info and mentions)- events- newsletter or email capture- book sales (Amazon Affiliate)	juliausher.com : For the Press page Kudos page
2. Established baseline social media presence (the “spokes”)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Did the big 3 – Facebook, Twitter and YouTube; Flickr is great, too, especially if your book content is visual• Joined/posted in related baking interest groups (i.e., mixingbowl.com)• Facebook was my surrogate blog - daily photo log during book tour• Drove interactions from “spokes” back to my “hub,” but varied my posts - too many URLs = spam; engagement comes through personal stories	Crush It, Gary Vaynerchuk My Facebook photo log My Facebook events My Twitter page My YouTube channel My Mixing Bowl page

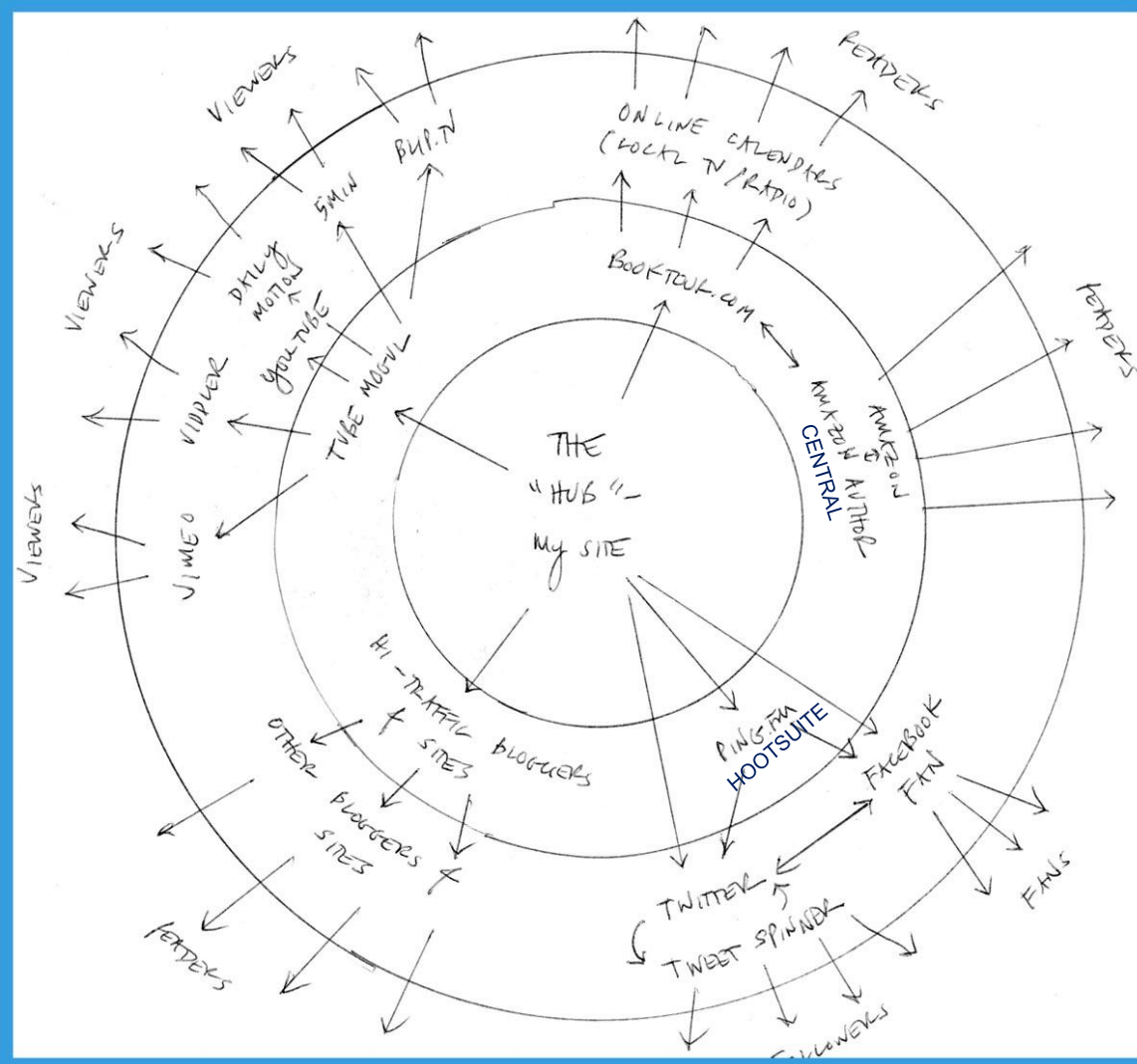
Online/Social Media

Page 2

Step	Comments	Sources/Links
3. Pitched high-traffic blogs and food sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Was selective – chose blogs/sites whose readers were also my ownApproached as I'd pitch a magazine - first checked whether they feature authors and cookbooksMade photo/usage guidelines crystal clear	IACP members alexa.com technorati.com
4. Advertised events online	<ul style="list-style-type: none">My site was a no-brainer, but there were other places, too	My Facebook fan page booktour.com My Amazon Author Central page
5. Adopted social media timesavers: mass distribution and spinning tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none">As time on social media expanded, I found ways to do it faster	TubeMogul Ping.fm HootSuite Tweet Spinner

Online/Social Media

My model:



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Costs vs. Results

(8-12/2009)

	National/ Regional Media	Local “Bricks & Mortar”	Local Media	Online/Social Media
% of Time:	<5%	55%	25%	15%+
Net Income*:	At publisher's expense	\$(12)K	\$(1)K	\$(5)K (website)
Results:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 magazine feature (<100K circulation) 1 radio (Martha Stewart Everyday Food) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 97 signings and classes 3000 books signed 1200 added to contact list 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 14 TV appearances (1M-5M viewers each) 2 radio 2 syndicated newspaper features About 30 other reviews/features 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site: 0 -> 1700 visits/month (up 20% in last mo) Facebook: 0 -> 427 fans Twitter: 0 -> 1572 followers YouTube: 0 -> 1743 views Google: 10K -> 252K hits on name About 40 other reviews/features

* Out-of-pocket expenses net revenue received for classes (\$4K), direct book sales (\$8.5K) and royalties earned (\$10K)

Book PR Breakeven

(2009-10)

Revenue (through 12/09):

- Direct book sales:	\$ 8,500
- Royalties (approx. due):	\$10,000
- Cooking class income:	\$ 4,000

Expense (through 12/09):

- Travel/hotel:	\$10,500
- Website*:	N/A
- Food, books, other**:	\$25,000

Net Income: \$(13,000)

Add'l Books Sold to Breakeven (over 2010):

- Direct (about \$9.70/book):	1,340 (impossible)
- Through publisher (about \$1.17/book):	11,000 (??)

*Removed from analysis; site supports/is supported by other lines of business

** Food includes food for events and also personal sustenance on tour, which might have been spent anyway

Local: Was It Worth the Time?

Tangibles

- ◉ *Cookie Swap* consistently in publisher's top 5 Fall 2009 books
- ◉ Earned out advance within a few months
- ◉ Sold about 20,000 copies in Fall 2009; 43,000 now sold (9th printing)
- ◉ Direct sales impact is measurable*
- ◉ Second book advance was about twice as large, for a simpler book
- ◉ Able to secure financial support for my second book's media tour
- ◉ Surpassed the breakeven point, but only after 1 ½ years

Intangibles

- ◉ Building platform and credibility
- ◉ Getting recognized in an airport – PRICELESS!

* I sold 640 books directly (Aug-Dec); *Cookie Swap* penetration of indie bookstores was about twice my publisher's average; markets where I traveled outsold other markets by a factor of 6 to 10 (Slide 6)

The Final Analysis (Then)

Page 1

National/ Regional Media

Local “Bricks & Mortar”

Local Media

Online/Social Media

Would I do
again?:

YES, one hit *could* have a large impact, but probably less than you think

YES, but . . .

YES, key to driving success of bricks & mortar-events

YES, limited additional cash investment once site or blog ground-work is laid

Plus, can have a huge reach

Caveats?:

Don't put all your eggs in this one basket

. . . more selectively, as highest cost:

- shift mix to more non-traditional events
- lean more heavily on friends/family
- seek sponsors earlier

None, except that you generally need local events to sell producers/editors on local coverage

Though watch time investment, as hard to gauge payback in book sales, especially with social media

The cookie is the next cupcake! (aka shameless plug)

Lounge Lizards



Pendant Perfect

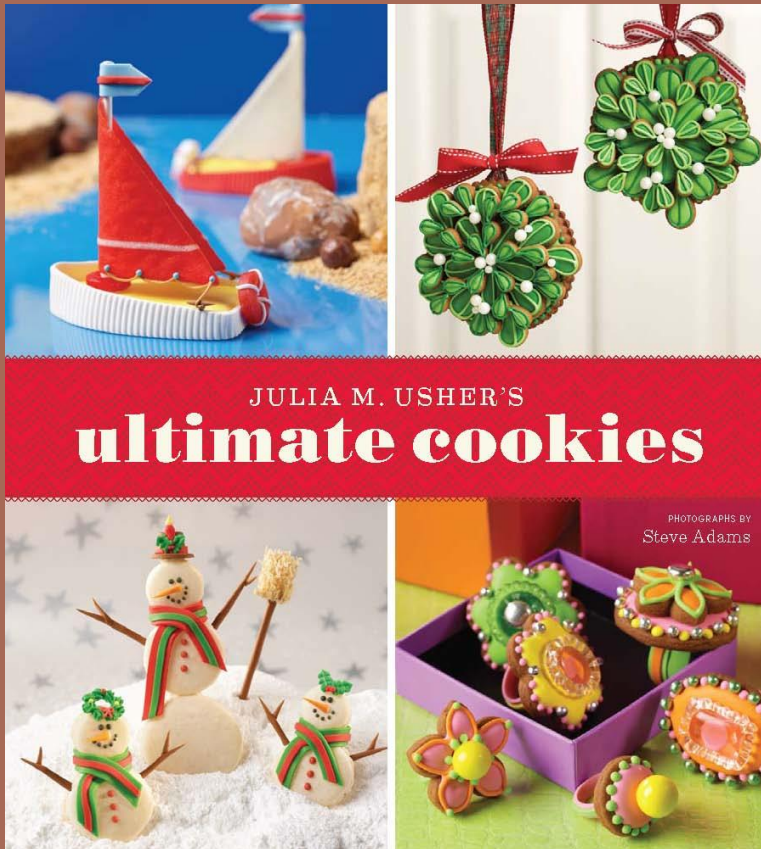
* Images from *Ultimate Cookies*, photos by [Steve Adams](#)

[Order now!](#)

The Final Analysis (Now)

Page 2

Would I do it again? **YES, but . . .**



- With help of a publicist
 - - \$13,500 for 5-city tour
 - - Online/social media outreach done myself (\$3000 value)
 - - More strategic market selection (good media, venues AND book distribution)
 - - Added focus and effort on national media, along with stronger contacts
- Why? Circumstances are different
 - - Not enough time to do myself (still writing the book)
 - - My past publicist (at publisher) was recently laid off
 - - More financial resources (all of above costs, but travel expense, are covered by various sponsors)
- I'll be exploring new promotional angles
 - - Co-marketing and product sales with sponsor
 - - Free online "Meet the Author" and/or "Cookie Connection" sessions (gotomeeting.com)
 - - Paid video-streaming of key classes (wmbly.com)

The Final Analysis

Page 3

Lessons learned:

National/ Regional Media

- Hit or miss – success hinges on who you know
- Publicists reluctant to be hired for national PR only
- Start pitching magazines at least 12 months out (I was too late)

Local “Bricks & Mortar”

- Hand-selling makes a difference
- Not all venues are created equal
- Engaging book-sellers in event prep (esp. food) is a plus
- Offset costs with:
 - piggybacking on existing travel
 - paid cooking classes
 - shacking up (I did not do enough)
 - sponsors (easier to attract with track record and events lined up)

Local Media

- Morning TV producers are hungry for content
- Approach TV/radio no more than 2 months out
- Direct demo content to your advantage - minimize prep time and setup costs
- Control the dialogue
 - script out talking points in advance
 - provide visuals, recipes, and event details
- always bridge to your book and site

Online/Social Media

- Social media can be a huge time sink, so leverage existing site content
- Drive interactions back to your book and site
- Yet, show the real you and the “inside” story
- Use online tools for mass distribution and spinning content, again to save time
 - Tweet Spinner
 - HootSuite
 - TubeMogul

Other Resources

- ◉ Publishing industry news:
 - - [Publishers Weekly Daily Newsletter](#)
 - - [Publishers Weekly Cooking the Books](#)
- ◉ Book marketing tips and forums:
 - - [tribalauthor.com](#)
 - - [bookmarketingbuzz.com](#)
 - - [thebookmarketingnetwork.com](#)
 - - [author-promotion.com](#)
- ◉ Miscellaneous:
 - - [free-press-release.com](#)
 - - [technorati.com](#)
 - - [alexa.com](#)
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