



6 Steps to Build a Street Team and Promote Your Book

A street team is a group of volunteers who band together to promote an author and his or her book. Members of a street team are motivated by their love of an author's work to promote it to as many people as possible.

Street teams originated on the music scene before the digital age. Fans would promote musicians through word of mouth, demo tapes and handouts and be rewarded with concert tickets, backstage access and groupie status. Today, this same concept is used to promote authors and their books. A literary street team promotes a book by handing out materials such as bookmarks and fliers, posting reviews and book recommendations online, requesting the book from area libraries and bookstores, spreading word of mouth, and more.

Street teams are a cost-effective way to boost your book's visibility and build a name for yourself.

How to Get Started

You can choose to start a street team at any point in your book's life, both before your book hits the market and after it's been available. To assemble your own street team, simply follow these six steps:

1 Recruit volunteers:

If you're just starting to build your fan base, consider personally asking friends and family to help you promote your book and start small; you can grow your street team over time. If you already have a good numbers of fans, call out volunteers on your website, blog, social media networks and mailing list. Determine how big you want your street team to be (this may be dictated by how many people you think you can manage or simply by how many people apply). Also describe what it means to be a street team member, what kinds of things you'll have them do and how much of a time commitment it will be so they are aware of all the details before they apply.

2 Vet your street team:

If you are building a large team made up of people all around the country (many of whom will be strangers), consider asking them to fill out a short application using an online tool such as Google Form. You will learn more about the people interested in helping you and make sure they are a good fit for your team. Aside from the standard name, email address and location questions, you can also ask the following during the application process:

- On what social media platforms do you have accounts (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Goodreads) and how many followers on each?
- Are you on any other street teams?
- How would you like to see my book promoted?
- What were the last three books you read?

3 Create a "street team central":

Make a page on your website or a private Facebook group exclusively for your street team. Here they can access information, challenges, rules of conduct, give feedback, exchange ideas, collaborate and more. This is a great place for your team to chime in with their own ideas as well as tell you what did and didn't work during their tasks.

4 Mail starter kits:

You will want to equip your street team members with promotional items they can use while canvassing the streets and stores to hype up your work. Think about including such items as bookmarks, postcards, fliers, etc. that they can easily hand out.

5

Organize weekly challenges:

The possibilities are endless for challenges. Challenges can range from asking your team to provide honest reviews of your book on websites like Amazon, B&N and Goodreads, handing out fliers at a local event, tweeting about the book, leaving comments about the book on blog sites, etc. Prompting your team with weekly tasks will help keep them accountable and drive the team's momentum forward. It will help if you plan out your challenges in advance so you're not scrambling to come up with the next task for your team.

6

Establish a reward system:

It's imperative to establish clear expectations and clear rewards for your street team. Since challenges are voluntary, a reward system for completed challenges ensures the people who are putting in the most time and effort are the ones being rewarded. Decide whether:

- Each of your challenges will be worth a particular prize
- Each challenge is worth points that teammates can accumulate for the prize(s) of their choice
- You'll have random drawings to give team members who completed a challenge the chance to win a prize
- or a combination of these

Invest in Your Book's Future

The advantage of a street team is the ability to have people promoting your book in places you can't access. As the author and spearhead of your team, you should always be actively involved. In short, your street team starts and ends with you.

If you want the best out of your street team, it will require an initial investment on your part. You will need to supply street team members with the printed materials for their starter kits as well as the prizes you use to reward and motivate. Prizes may include signed copies of your book, e-books, signed paraphernalia, previews of your upcoming work, a video chat session with you or whatever you would like to offer. In addition to a monetary investment, maintaining your street team will also require the investment of your time, whether it's organizing your street team, coming up with new challenges or simply making yourself available to them.

