

Write Subtitles that Help Sell (More) Books

If you've been browsing online for tips on **book publicity**, you've likely encountered plenty of advice about effective strategies. One of the most significant is right on your book's cover: the subtitle. While the main title is meant to intrigue and stand out, the subtitle's job is to clarify your book's subject. Subtitles are particularly essential for nonfiction, playing a vital role in both store sales and online discoverability. Publicists who pitch their clients' books to the media often use subtitles to make an impression. A good subtitle communicates what sets your book apart and why it matters.

PR professionals urge self-published authors to include a thoughtful subtitle. Editors and producers receive countless books along with requests for coverage, so they move quickly. Without a subtitle to immediately express your book's value, they may pass it by. Although creativity can strengthen a subtitle, clarity is even more important—your main goals should be to inform and pique interest. Brevity also helps, as readers can grasp concise subtitles more easily. Also, presenting your book's topic provocatively can help. Communicating the newness of your ideas is always compelling to readers.

Search engine optimization matters for authors today, so it's wise to include keywords in your subtitle when possible. Making it easier for target readers to discover your book online can spark sales and boost visibility. That's why it's so important to include specific details—those details are often the very keywords people search for in your subject area. Publicists also stress that it's not enough to describe your book's topic; you must show why your book stands out from others on the same subject. Book readership is up, but so is the competition. Differentiating your work is essential for success.

A strong book marketing campaign relies on several elements, and the subtitle is a critical one. With competition fiercer than ever, every detail must contribute to your book's success. As self-publishing disrupts the traditional industry, more titles compete for media and reader attention, raising the bar for quality. Today's successful books must meet high expectations. The good news is that overall book sales are growing, with more young readers joining the market—so make your subtitle count. If you're stuck for ideas, take a peek at other successful titles in your genre for inspiration, but don't copy them.