

# Marketing, Money & Motivation

by MV Ellis

**With a twenty-year career spanning advertising, marketing, social media, and life coaching, MV brings a unique skillset to the business of being an author.**

## Lights. Camera. Kindle!

**Marketing techniques authors can borrow from the movie world.**

I once read somewhere that authors should treat book launches like business startups, and I totally see that logic. In my former life as an advertising executive, I worked with a number of startups, and learned that they tend to be lean, hungry, nimble, and full of the kind of optimistic energy that gets sh#t done.

Startups attack the market at pace, and hit the ground running achieving goals that seemingly beyond their means, on tiny budgets and the smell of an oily rag, simply because they were driven by boundless passion and enthusiasm, and the will to succeed. All good stuff, and definitely qualities and characteristics that we as authors could benefit hugely from harnessing.

However, that's a post for another day, and as someone who "watches" my books like movies in my mind as I write them, I see a number of parallels in the world of movie marketing that we, as authors, can employ to help raise our books from B-movie to blockbuster.

I should make it clear that I am aware movies have in some cases, multi-million dollar marketing budgets - whereas most authors,

and even publishers are working with way more modest coffers. However, even scaling down the techniques significantly, there are still some great ideas we can pilfer to suit our means and make work for us, just like the startups I mentioned above.

The first is the build up. Have you ever noticed how movies are marketed many months, sometimes even years, in advance? The truth is, the first few trailers are normally in the market long before the movie is complete. Sure the final movie is subject to change, but it's unlikely to pivot enough to invalidate early trailers or other PR activities.

The same can be said for books. Don't be afraid to share sneak peeks and snippets as they leave your fingertips - even unedited passages, even if they don't end up making the final cut. This needn't necessarily be to the wider public, but to a targeted niche, such as your newsletter or readers' group, these work-in-progress updates can be the perfect way to "warm the pot," and start generating interest and excitement in a project, way before it will ever see the light of day.

In fact, there can be value to be had

simply in dramatising the journey - keeping readers up to date with progress, even asking their input in certain aspects of the work. Helping to name characters or places can work well - the equivalent of the Hollywood trend of offering a role as an extra a prize, or putting together blooper reels, deleted scenes, and other snippets from the cutting-room floor.

Speaking of niches, one thing Hollywood does well is researching and knowing the target audience/s for their products and marketing them accordingly. Movie-makers will go as far as changing elements of their films based on viewer feedback, and will also actively target different niches for the same movie. Likewise, knowing our audiences and the trends that appeal to them can (and arguably should) inform every aspect of our authorly endeavours - from the trends and tropes we write to, to the covers (and other imagery) we chose, to the formats and

platforms we distribute on, and in. Getting this stuff right - knowing who we're talking to, and how to talk to them - can dramatically affect the trajectory of our books, for better or for worse. The same book can fly or flail based solely on (not) finding the right niche for it, and marketing it accordingly.

**Don't be afraid to share sneak peeks and snippets as they leave your fingertips.**

ROMANCE WRITERS OF AUSTRALIA | MARCH 2020

...continued next page



A big element of movie marketing - especially Hollywood blockbusters is built around the star power of the actors - even cameo appearances can be leveraged to widen audience appeal. Obviously most books don't have the advantage of being associated with Brad Pitt or Sandra Bullock, and the borrowed interest these kinds of stars bring (side note: if Brad is ever thinking of volunteering to promote a book, I humbly offer myself...I mean my books as tribute), but there are still learnings we can apply in our work.

One I particularly love is to treat the lead characters as though they are famous actors, and to bring them to life accordingly. Selecting cover models/images that work to market plays a big role here, as does promoting images of them wherever and whenever possible - this includes the movie poster teasers, and the movie book trailer. There are also more obscure opportunities - such as character interviews - that can help readers get to know the characters before they "meet" them in the book. In this context, the author plays

the role of the director, seeking out opportunities to promote the craft aspect of project: author interviews, VLOGs, live feeds, guest appearances, and other reader-facing opportunities can really help

**The final piece of the movie marketing puzzle tends to be the premiere...**

to bring readers on the journey with us, taking them behind the scenes with us, so they can see how the magic happens on the other side of the fourth wall.

The final piece of the movie marketing puzzle tends to be the premiere - most movies live or die based on the first weekend's box office sales. And while again, most book launches don't involve a live event let alone one attended by Jason Momoa or J-Lo, we can still harness the power of the digital space

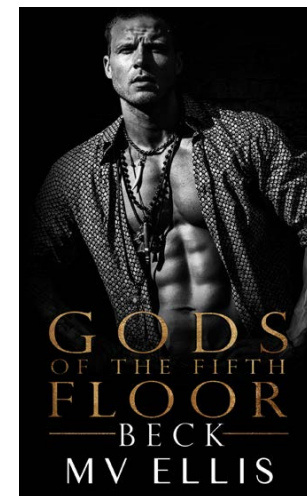
we operate in, to bring a touch of the red carpet hype to each release.

Whether this means blog tours, launch parties, big prizes, or stunts or gimmicks to really make a splash at release time, like a movie premier, these activities can really help to get a book on reader's radar - and prompt them to click to buy - in those early moments just after it's gone live. People have busy lives and short memories, so

any opportunity to remind those who have previously been aware but failed to commit (or new people who've somehow missed all of your other wonderful marketing efforts) is not to be sniffed at.

**MV Ellis doesn't just write romance, she lives it. She followed her heart halfway around the world to be with a man she sat next to on a wild 36-hour bus journey across sultry Brazil.**

Visit [MVEllis.com](http://MVEllis.com) to learn more. ♥



Use Code: SPARKRWAU

RWA is happy to announce that we've negotiated to extend the Ingram Spark On-Demand Publishing code. This means that when you upload a manuscript to be printed and distributed through the Ingram network, you won't have to pay a set up fee.

Ingram will also be visiting us this year at our conference to help educate our members about their services. We look forward to seeing them there.

ROMANCE WRITERS OF AUSTRALIA | MARCH 2020