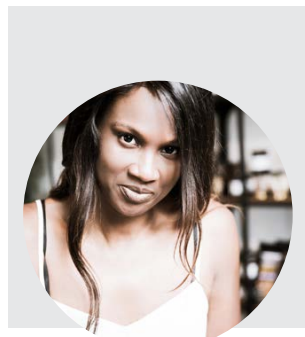


Marketing, Money & Motivation

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.



How to ride out the bad times with writing

It won't have escaped anyone's notice that the world is going through a bad patch right now. Sadly, even once the physical aspects of the virus no longer represent as much of a threat, the after-effects may be felt for some time to come – one major area being the global economy. As we brace ourselves for the inevitable economic downturn, there are some ways we can seek to reduce its impact on our writing businesses.

In the weeks since the world has been gripped by the COVID-19 crisis, I've seen a number of comments stating that "books are recession-proof." I'm not an economist, but I would beg to differ – to my mind, it's inevitable that anything that counts as a discretionary purchase – which books definitely are – will be impacted by a reduction in discretionary spending across the board.

However, where I do agree is that (fiction) books have the propensity to be less affected by a recession than other discretionary purchases. Why? Because books offer a much-needed and somewhat affordable,

if temporary, escape from reality. This has probably never more been the case than in these times when many people are, or have been, isolated in the confines of their homes.

Nothing is guaranteed in an economic downturn, but here are ways you can help futureproof your author business, to help get through the lean times.

Give people what they want

As I mentioned above, books offer a ready form of escapism in hard times, and you can make your books appeal to this sentiment with a few easy tweaks to your existing marketing messaging to highlight those elements that tick the right boxes.

Got a book about a millionaire or billionaire? Make sure you play up these themes in your content to emphasize that fact. Likewise if your book features travel to exotic climes make sure you bring this to the fore. While everyone's stuck indoors, reading about them is as close as they're going to get to the far-flung destinations on their bucket lists.

Reuse, repurpose, recycle

While writing and marketing something new is always great, in

these times of frugality, upcycling, and making do with what we have, you can also apply the same principles to your work to

get more bang for your buck from your existing material. This could be as simple as packaging an existing series into a box-set, and (re) marketing it that way, or giving some of your backlist titles a facelift with new covers. Another good idea is mining your WIP file and dusting off a book that's been sitting for some time, but which ticks some of the boxes in the paragraph above. There's never been a better time to get creative with ways to

get more mileage from what you have to hand.

Redouble your efforts

As mentioned above, while book spending may not fall off completely during times like these, it's very likely that people will reduce their book budgets, and pause for thought before making what in the past may have been an impulse purchase. This means that as authors, we'll need to work harder to capture readers'

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attention and prompt purchases. If in the past you've been meaning to get your marketing ducks in a row, do it now!

This means things like improving your newsletter and list-building activities (or putting them into place if you don't already have them), developing a reader magnet, and refreshing your website. If you've ever thought about advertising but never gotten around to it, jump to it.

Likewise, if there are marketing skills you've wanted to build, or courses you've wanted to take, there's no time like the present. The learning could be invaluable as the economic situation unfolds.

Diversify

For someone who's spent around 15 years in the marketing and advertising industries, I have a near-irrational aversion to marketing jargon. I've been seeing a fair bit about the need to "pivot" in these tough times, and while the word makes my eye twitch, I agree with the sentiment.

Although in times of uncertainty, it's tempting to hunker down into the familiarity and comfort of what we know, I'm of the opinion that actually, it's better to go b#lls out with new ways of working, and more importantly, making money. This could be trying a new platform or format for your work – experimenting with Kindle

Unlimited if you're not already there, offering audio books if you don't currently, looking at foreign translations, or alternate sales platforms.

Likewise, if you have other "side" skills, especially those that can help other businesses make money, dust those off too – editing, copywriting, social media, marketing. Don't be afraid to wear many hats to get the bills paid.

Share the love

If you've ever harbored a secret desire to write with another author, why not bite the bullet and approach them about it? Working with a creative partner can halve the time and money required from you to get a book to market, and will most likely also help increase your reach and relevance to a whole new audience.

If partnerships aren't an option, then anthologies can offer an even quicker and more cost effective way to get your words out there, with the same advantages of potentially increasing reach and relevance to new readers.

Similarly, reciprocal arrangements such as newsletter swaps, author ARC reviews/blurbs, social media "hops," and other activities where authors pool resources, can also help increase your reach without increasing our tight marketing budgets. Even in good times, anything that helps amplify our

own efforts and extend to new audiences is worth its weight in gold.

In short, though we're likely to be in for a bumpy ride for the next few months and beyond, there are ways in which we can not only ride out the adversity, but even potentially come out the other side fitter and stronger (figurately), and hopefully, with a tighter and more viable writing business to show for it.

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 to learn more. ♥



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