

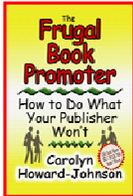
Bookfair Blues? Twelve Tips to Make Book Booths Better

By Carolyn Howard-Johnson

The spring season for book promotion will soon be upon us.

Don't rent a booth at a book fair.

Don't host an event.



Don't do anything! Not without assuring its success with a savvy marketing campaign. Here's how:

1. Join with other authors to cross-promote.
2. Send out invitations to readers and to the media.
3. Produce a catalog or brochure to give to the press in attendance and attendees. Try to give your gift more substance than a mere flier. It will be less likely to get tossed.
4. Tie sales to a charity relevant to writing or literacy.
5. Schedule book signing times even though you will be manning the booth for the full day. It adds credibility to your appearance.
6. Use signs, lighting and other effective display techniques.
7. Give a gift to those who purchase your book. Go to <http://redenginepress.com> for a journal that can be used to increase your profits as an add-on sale or as a gift-with-purchase.
8. Offer snacks to those who drop by.
9. Take photos for use in post-publicity.
10. Design a media blitz including queries, releases, and personal phone calls.
11. Schedule a special offering or entertainment in your booth. For example, at the 2008 LA Times/UCLA Festival of Books **Rey Ybarra** will produce introductory mini videos for authors at a special price. You could also offer a children's story hour or a poetry or a performance.
12. If you can afford to do it, give out totes or bags with your bookcover, logo, and website printed on them. Toss in your bookmarks or business/postcards.

Oh, it's always good to give a customer a little more than they expect. So you're getting one extra tip. Get a video of your event to post on your website, blogs and YouTube and your social media sites. That gives you after-the-fair value (and credibility!) for the work you've gone to. Learn more about a professional service at www.BestSellingAuthorTV.blogspot.com.

And, of course, get a copy of THE FRUGAL BOOK PROMOTER: HOW TO DO WHAT YOUR PUBLISHER WON'T for practical suggestions for hundreds of other ways to brand yourself and promote your book. Look up book fair related words in the index including "book fairs," "book signings," "book expos," but don't neglect related subjects like "media releases," "building a contact list," and more.

To help you prepare, follow the planning of a couple of Authors' Coalition's book fair booths—both successes and disappointments—at my book fair-focused blog, <http://www.authorscoalition.blogspot.com>. Learn more about book fairs and other promotion on the resource page at http://www.carolynhowardjohnson.redenginepress.com/book_fairs_tradshows.htm.

Sign up for my newsletter, "Sharing with Writers" to see how you can participate in the next LA Times/UCLA Festival of Books no matter where you live. Simply send me an e-mail at HoJoNews@aol.com. Put SUBSCRIBE in the subject window. Or go to www.authorscoalitionandredenginepress.com.

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Carolyn Howard-Johnson's first novel, *This Is the Place*, won eight awards. Her second book, *Harkening: A Collection of Stories Remembered*, creative nonfiction, won three. An instructor for UCLA Extension's world-renown Writers' Program, her book *The Frugal Book Promoter: How to Do What Your Publisher Won't* is recommended reading for her classes, was named USA Book News' "Best Professional Book 2004," and was given the Irwin Award. Her second book in the How To Do It Frugally series is *The Frugal Editor: Put Your Best Book Forward to Avoid Humiliation and Ensure Success* is also a USA Book News award-winner as well as the winner of the Reader View's Literary Award in the publishing category. Her chapbook of poetry *Tracings*, was named to the Compulsive Reader's Ten Best Reads list and was given the Military Writers' Society of America's Silver Award of Excellence. She is the recipient of both the California Legislature's Woman of the Year in Arts and Entertainment Award and American Business Women's Association's Woman of the Year award., Her community's Character and Ethics Committee honored her for promoting tolerance with her writing. She was also named to *Pasadena Weekly's* list of 14 "San Gabriel Valley women who make life happen." She is a popular speaker and actor. Her website is [www.howtodoitfrugally.com](http://www.howtodoitfrugally.com).