

The Author Marketing Task Map

Who actually does what, and what you can stop stressing about

A quick, clear breakdown for traditional, hybrid, and self-publishing.



Feeling confused about book marketing? You're not alone.

A lot of marketing advice online leaves out one huge detail: **your publishing path changes what's actually on your plate.**

This map shows what's typical, not what's required. Use it to stop guessing, stop overdoing, and make calmer decisions.

Publishing contracts and publisher support can vary. This is a "most of the time" guide.

Your Actual Job as an Author



No matter how you publish, your core role stays the same:

- Write the best book you can
- Communicate like a real human
- Make it easy for readers to find you
- Choose marketing actions you can sustain

Everything else is support, amplification, or optional.

Traditional Publishing

You still matter in marketing, but you're not the whole machine.

Usually the author's role

- Basic author platform (website, email list, or one main online home)
- Showing up consistently (not constantly)
- Reader engagement (replying, connecting, being human)
- Sharing publisher-provided launch materials when asked
- Participating in planned launch moments (ex: cover reveal, release day posts)

Usually handled by the publisher

- Distribution to retailers
- Metadata and catalog listings
- Sales team pitching to bookstores
- Retail placement processes
- Some publicity and review outreach

Depends (gray area)

- Paid ads (sometimes yes, often no)
- Book tours, events, conference travel
- Media pitching beyond the publisher's plan
- Extra promotional campaigns
- Influencer outreach (varies)

Hybrid Publishing

Support ranges a lot, so expectations can feel blurry.

Usually the author's role

- Platform building and maintenance
- Audience engagement and visibility
- Launch support (often more proactive than traditional)
- Sharing content across your channels
- Coordinating your own outreach if desired

Usually handled by the hybrid publisher

- Editing + production coordination
- Cover + interior design (depends on package)
- Distribution setup (depends on package)
- Some marketing tools or guidance (varies widely)

If it's not clearly written down, assume it's yours.

Depends (gray area)

- What "marketing support" truly includes
- Whether ads are included or recommended
- PR outreach and media pitching
- Bookstore placement and event strategy
- Review team setup / street team strategy
- Long-term marketing after launch

Self-Publishing

You're in control, but you're not required to do everything yourself.

Usually the author's role

- Platform setup and growth
- Launch planning basics (timeline, promo plan, goals)
- Reader communication (email list, socials, updates)
- Ongoing visibility (keeping the book discoverable)
- Choosing what marketing methods fit your life

Usually handled by hired help or tools (if you choose)

- Cover design
- Formatting
- Ads management
- Newsletter tech setup
- Scheduling + automation tools

You're responsible for decisions, not for doing every task manually.

Depends (gray area)

- Paid ads (optional, not required)
- PR, podcasts, and media outreach
- Bookstore placement and event strategy
- Wide distribution strategy choices
- How aggressive your launch needs to be



Myth/Pressure Release Band

Tasks authors stress about that are NOT universal requirements

Some of these can help in the right situation, but none of them are "you must do this" rules.

Posting daily on every platform

Running ads nonstop

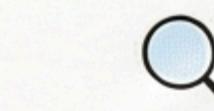
Going viral to be "successful"

Being everywhere at once

Chasing media features constantly

Trying to copy another author's strategy

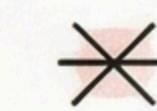
How to use this map without burning out



Pick your publishing path.



Highlight what truly applies to you.



Cross out what doesn't.



Choose 2-3 focus areas, max.

Marketing works best when it's sustainable.

Want Help Building A Marketing Plan That Fits Your Publishing Path and Your Life?

Visit www.darlagdenton.com and contact me to let me know.



Darla G. Denton | Author Platform Coach