

# **All Aboard the Blog Tour, Leaving on Book Launch Day! An Interactive Launch Promoting a New Title**

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Many authors and publishers are jumping on board the blog tour to promote their latest books. A blog tour increases sales of books and makes your author or publisher name highly recognizable. It can also be a great way to reach thousands of successful bloggers and their followers, and reach many more new readers in your genre than you can count. It takes some intensive planning over the period of a month and a half or so, but it's well worth it. You are about to reach the entire globe with your blog tour and traveling book launch! Hop on board, and let's go on tour!

## **What is a Blog Tour?**

A blog tour is an intensive publicity period of about one month during the launch of your new title. The concept is like traditional book signings in bookstores, but instead of going from store to store, the author is going from blog to blog. The book travels and the author joins the tour from home.

For this intensive book launch period, a predetermined number of blogs will feature the new book and author. Each blog owner will receive a review copy before the tour. The participating blogs will review your book, interview the author, and provide some kind of give-away, anything from T-shirts to free downloads, but the most popular give-away is a signed print copy of the book to a winner or two at each blog stop.

*Online publicity services can arrange a blog tour for you, or you can do it all yourself. A personal connection of arranging your own blog tour has the added benefit that these blog owners will become important people you will work with time and time again in the future on other kinds of promotions or events. Building trusted colleagues and new connections happens if you arrange your own blog tour.*

## The Pre-Tour

Though the actual tour is during the first month of your book launch, the footwork must be done two to four weeks before the tour so that everything is prearranged, a period of time called "the pre-tour".

### Things to do:

#### **1. Locate blogs in your genre who will host your blog tour.**

You may already have many favorite blogs, but if you don't, do a search to find blogs related to your book subject or genre. For example, someone who writes books about art for children would include the top artsy-craftsy mommy and kid blogs like *The Artful Parent*, *Picklebums*, *Nurturestore*, *Simply Kids*, *The Imagination Tree*, and *Tinkerlab*, to name just a few. Someone who writes cookbooks would find the top cooking blogs, and so on. Each of these blogs has its own "blog roll" listing their personal favorite blogs, so in no time, a list of many possible highly traveled blogs can be established. A blog roll is found on all quality blogs.

*Take note: Some highly traveled blogs have anywhere from 10,000 followers on up, or lesser traveled on down to 50 or less. Imagine the reach of interested potential readers from a blog tour!*

#### **2. Decide how many blogs to visit in one month.**

There's no right or wrong number of blogs for your tour; there's simply the number you feel you can handle well. A good number is 14, which

means you will be featured on a blog every other day. Have more than fourteen on your list in case some are not interested.

### **3. Contact and schedule each blog.**

Go online to each of the chosen blogs. The owner will have a contact link on the blog so you can easily contact each one. In the contact email, give the owner a warm but brief overview of your tour and how to make it easy for them to participate. Mention that you wish to have: your book featured on their blog, your book reviewed, the author interviewed, and a give-away of one or two free signed books offered to their blog followers. Next, schedule the day each blog will be on the tour stop schedule. Schedule each blog on a different day to span the entire month.

### **4. Set up the interview and provide what the blogger requests.**

Some blog owners are very savvy, and others are more traditional, but either type will want an interview to post on the blog tour day. Arrange an interview ahead of time. Some bloggers will send the author questions in email to answer, and others will prefer to talk directly on the phone. Save your answers to questions, because many of the blogs will repeat identical questions, and you can save yourself time if you have the wording on hand.

### **5. Video and Audio Files.**

Often a blogger will want a short video of you speaking or demonstrating something from your book. Others like an audio you may have recorded for another interview, or one you create especially for this blog tour. You can do this easily with your mobile phone device. No one expects the video or audio to be anything more than short and focused...a way to get to know you in a more personal way. Even if it appears home-grown, it is valuable and appreciated.

## Finalizing the Pre-Tour

During this two-to-four week pre-tour, you will finalize fourteen or so interviews, mail books, schedule tour stops, and keep track of what you have sent to each blog owner.

- It is imperative that you keep a rock solid spreadsheet listing the blog names and links, the owners' names, contact info, and calendar dates of each blog stop. In other words, all information will be kept on your spreadsheet.
- Check off the exact date you mailed each review copy, when you have scheduled and completed your interview, and any other details on your list, like providing a book cover image, an author profile image, perhaps a short video or audio file you would like to share.
- If you have a book distributor or fulfillment house, let them know about the tour so they are prepared to deal with orders. In fact, let everyone know who does business with you.

## Announcing the Blog Tour

How will you announce your blog tour? Who will visit the blog tour stops? Should you be doing something else during the tour?

### Announcing:

- If you have a blog of your own (if you don't, start one), that's the first place to announce the tour. List all the participating blogs and their dates, with hyperlinks to each blog. The blog owners appreciate that you will be bringing new people to their blogs and hopefully new followers.
- Facebook is a great place to keep announcing the blog tour as it goes along, and to list the entire tour before it happens. It's a good idea to add an author page or professional page to your

- personal page. A professional page handles your book life. Be sure to add the links to the blogs that have agreed to be on tour.
- Once you announce the tour on your professional Facebook page, be sure to "share" your announcements with others in your field, including the Facebook pages of the blog owners you will be visiting. Sharing is a powerful tool for reaching many people! Share the announcement anywhere you feel it is appropriate and you are comfortable doing so, but don't overdo.
  - Twitter, your blog, and LinkedIn add to the mix. Announce the entire list on the tour, and then announce each stop during the month as it goes along.
  - E-Newsletter: If you have a newsletter or a feed, be sure to include your blog tour plans there too. Ask colleagues who have newsletters to include your schedule.
  - Snail Mail? If you like, you can print up some post cards or flyers and mail to people you'd like to know about the blog tour. Some people respond well to receiving mail and often miss emails, so it's a consideration.

## During the Blog Tour

During each scheduled blog stop, visit that blog and participate in the ongoing comments followers will be leaving.

- Offer answers to followers' questions and suggest resources as needed.
- Share light and friendly comments and plenty of appreciation for the opportunity.
- Offer to return to the blog at a later date for an additional interview or other ideas you may have. Offer yet another thank you.

## Who Will Attend the Blog Tour?

### **Blogs Have Followers:**

Don't worry too much about who will visit or how they will find the tour.

- Each blog has its dedicated followers; they are loyal and check-in often. When there is a free-giveaway, you can be quite sure the tour will be attended.
- Blogs on your tour may have thousands of followers who are specifically interested in your book! Let the tour do the magic for you.

### **The Home Landing Site:**

A landing site for your tour is optional, but powerful. This one page can keep your tour organized, and anyone interested can be included in the ongoing update and progression of the tour at this site.

- If you have a website or a blog or even your professional Facebook page, you can create a landing site for your tour, which is similar to a press room.
- Include information on the book, the author, and a list of participating blogs with their links.
- Show a detailed schedule of where your book will be featured each day.
- Each time a review is posted on a blog, link it to your landing site page.
- The landing site is a good place to have your audio or video uploaded, a free download of some kind, and any other promotional ideas or items you may have. You can even have a drawing for a free book!
- Many publishers are putting together book trailers, so if you have one, be sure to include it on your landing site.

## Returning from the Blog Tour

### Ahhh, it's over!

You now have reached thousands of readers who are specifically interested in your book.

- You have hundreds if not thousands of new followers to your own blog or professional Facebook page.
- You have new colleagues and friends all over the world.
- Check your Google analytics and watch the visitor numbers and length of visits jump on your Facebook page, blog and website.
- Your book sales are jumping! Check your daily sales and watch the increase. If you take sales through your website, be prepared with boxes and shipping supplies to handle the increase.

### One last thing, the give-away books.

You will need to mail the signed give-away book directly to the winner(s) once chosen. On your spreadsheet, check-off as each book is signed and mailed.

- Collect the names and mailing addresses of the give-away winners from each blog owner.
- Autograph the give-away books, personalizing the book to the named winners.
- Mail out the signed give-away books.
- Include any other materials in the winner's shipment you wish, such as a catalog or a brochure on your speaking topics.

## Is it Really Over?

When the blog tour has ended, and all the give-away books are sent out, it's time to reflect on the experience, check sales, and handle new

orders. But most important, it is time is to say thank you to the blog owners.

- Mail a handwritten thank you note to each blog owner.
- Return to each blog and offer a post or comment thanking the blog owner and their followers for their participation in your tour.
- Visit the corresponding Facebook pages of each blog and post a cheery greeting and one more heart-felt thank you. Invite everyone to visit your webpage.
- Possibly offer visitors a coupon code for a discount price on the book.

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