

THE 21 DAY AUTHOR PLATFORM - Derek Murphy

Here's the full email newsletter series with 28 email prompts – just delete my comments and then fill in each spot with something unique for your book.

Base rules:

- Ideally, one link per email, repeated several times.
- Want to get them back to your website or social media.
- WOW readers with something new/unexpected.

Surprise them. Overdeliver on expectations. Joey Coleman, talking about the Buyer's Journey, says "Build in moments of delight" whether it's through little gifts, samples, favors or information.

Ask them for feedback. "Did you like the book? Would you recommend it to friends? If so I'd be eternally grateful if you could you do me the small favor of writing a quick review on Amazon..."

12 week marketing plan

Or speed it up if you want – this 12 week plan followed by the 8 day launch series would put you just under the 21 day goal. 😊

1. Confirmation email

Thank them for signing up. If it's a giveaway, let them know you'll announce the winners soon, and to keep sharing for more entries. If they're signing up on your website or for a free book, send it to them right away. Briefly introduce yourself and hint at what value you'll be providing, ie "I'm partnering with some major scifi authors this summer, stay tuned for more awesome giveaways and free books!"

2. Welcome email

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First, offer value – another free book, a bonus surprise or offer, another giveaway etc. Something MORE they didn't expect.

Tell them who you are and what you're working on in more detail.

Ask them who THEY are (where they live, favorite kind of books to read, best book they've ever read, etc.) This should mirror what you've told them about yourself. I usually ask them to comment on a specific Facebook post, which increases engagement on my Facebook page and is easier to start a "real" interaction. They comment, you like or thank them for their comment.

3. What you're working on

– tell them what you're working on now and why you're excited about it. Offer them a sample or preview if you can. Ask them for feedback (You could even post a full chapter on Facebook and then have them comment below it with thoughts). You're trying to get them to take small, easy action to increase engagement. You want to get them talking to you, so you can start a dialogue.

4. Giveaway

more value, I would do a Gleam giveaway this time or something that increases Twitter and Facebook activity, shares and follows. You basically want to get your list to also follow you on Facebook, Twitter and Bookbub. You might want to do individual giveaways for each of those. A \$50 gift card + a free book or two is a decent prize.

I also like to do multi-author giveaways or giveaway bestselling, traditionally published books similar to mine for branding and positioning (I want them to mentally place my books on the shelf with those other books; I also want to increase my also boughts.)

Another way to do this is share one of the posts you created, like "if you liked my book, check out these other books – which ones have you read? Comment here (link to Facebook post)."

5. Share an embarrassing moment

...or personal anecdote. This should be a funny or engaging story that humanizes you. It can be a big mistake or screw up you made, or something about your writing process/history/why you write. Don't try to sound awesome or professional – you want to sound vulnerable (but not whiny or complaining). Include embarrassing pictures if possible. Then ask them if they're brave enough to share their own most embarrassing moment/greatest fear, etc. (greatest fear might be too dark/personal... steer clear of genuine trauma, keep this fun and light.)

6. Surprise and delight them

...with another free gift, free book, etc. It could be a coloring book page based on your characters, ideally something digital that they could just print out. If you can coordinate with other authors in your genre, it could be something like “5 free books from friends of mine” – linking to their offer or Instafreebie page.

You could also just share something really cool/fun/interesting related to the genre. If you write sci-fi, you could giveaway a standing up cardboard cut-out of the Star Wars characters, or VIP movie tickets for a new release. (Make it personal, like “I'm going to see this movie and I want to share the experience with friends, so I'm giving out 2 free tickets.”)

7. Ask for a favor

By now, the people still on your list should know who you are and want to support you. Ask for a small favor, this could be following you on Twitter or liking your Facebook page. Set a specific goal, like I'm trying to reach 1000 likes. Offer a reward, like “If I meet my goal I'll share a sneak peak of the book I'm working on with everyone. Asking for something easy and small (low-effort) actually builds rapport – it's science.

8. Thank everyone

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... for supporting/helping you.

Show pictures of your success/triumph. Share celebratory gifs and a picture of you eating popcorn. Make it fun: teach people that supporting you is fun. (If you didn't meet your goal, thank everyone anyway and say you're still really happy/excited about the progress. Give the reward you promised anyway).

9. Give them a chance to raise their hands

Have something like an 'inner circle' or 'street team' that gets first crack at ARC copies or other stuff – only the most active followers can apply. People in that group will be expected to participate more. This could be a private Facebook group or just another email list (for me, this would be my “fan” list, as opposed to my “target readers” list I built with giveaways. So I'd ask them, if they want, to switch over to the fan list.

10. Activity/event/challenge

Up the stakes with another giveaway but make it harder this time. Make them draw a picture inspired from your book, or take a perfect promo shot with your book for instagram, or dress up as a character inspired from your book and take a picture. Something really fun but more challenging than just liking.

This could be a voting content, or just have them post their submission on your Facebook page and say the picture with the most likes or comments will win.

11. Call for reviews

You should have asked for reviews earlier, but now that you've had some fun together, it's a good idea to remind them. Set a specific goal, say you're trying to get to 100 (or something reasonable based on your list size). Remind them that you love writing but you really want to know what people actually think, which is why reviews are so important to you. Let them know it doesn't have to be a “book report” – just a simple comment about what they liked, what books it reminded them of, whether or not they enjoyed it. Give them links to specific books. I

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usually say “I’m working on several projects at once, so reviews let me know which books deserve more of my attention – make sure you leave reviews on your favorites so I finish the series faster.”

12. Thank everyone again, celebrate again

Maybe give some surprise bonuses to your favorite new reviews (\$15 gift cards and a free book, etc. That will motivate LOTS more readers to post reviews). You can’t offer before hand or pay in exchange for a review, but a surprise thank you gift after the fact should be OK.

***13. Force them to make a choice**

The 12-steps above are meant to provide 3 months of content (one a week) especially for authors who don’t publish frequently... so you can low-key be nurturing your list while you’re writing. And THEN as your list grows on autopilot you can run a real launch campaign – which will talk about in just a moment.

In the beginning you’ll probably want to keep all of your subscribers until you have a few books out and can turn them into fans. But then you may need to cut the deadweight.

Unlucky number thirteen is optional, but practical. If you’re like me, you’re squeamish about interrupting people too often because you don’t want to be annoying. But if you’re also like me, you follow a bunch of people you’ll never buy from but you don’t mind following (because you have good feelings about their brand and feel like you’re supporting them; or NOT supporting them by unsubscribing.)

If you email infrequently and never ask for anything, they might *like* you – but if you’re spending a bunch of money growing your email list and not selling enough to break even, that’s a problem: it means you can’t afford to continue spreading your message or platform.

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Once someone signs up for your email, you have a limited amount of time to build trust and rapport (by providing value, which could mean tips or short stories or reflections or anything: anything they don't mind reading that slightly improves their day for a few minutes is enough).

Eventually you'll cut all the inactive subscribers, but you don't want them to be removed by default because they became inactive... that's on you.

You can't force them to stay, but you can force them to *choose*.

You do this by occasionally emailing more frequently, with more enthusiasm, about a new book launch or product or partnership. You can even outright ask them to unsubscribe if they're no longer interested (or, send out the "re-engagement" email which is something like "it's not you, it's me." Something that gets their attention enough to open, and forces them to take action.)

You can also do this with:

- limited time offers
- countdown timers
- bonuses being removed
- limited prizes for the first to respond or most active

But the idea is, you're not only giving up power, but you're asking for more of their time by being just not-annoying enough to stay subscribed, because staying subscribed is less effort than unsubscribing, and people are lazy. So you're leaving the ball in their court, which helps nobody.

This doesn't mean you need to force them to put more into the relationship than they're getting however. In fact, it might be an indication that you're not providing value (if the offer was interesting enough, they would click and check it out at least. So focus on improving your emails and offers.)

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You want them to be just annoyed enough that ignoring all your emails causes friction, so they will finally open and check out whatever it is you're offering, and *then* make a decision (which will mostly likely be not to buy, or possibly to unsubscribe).

You'll always be running on a dissolving highway of reader intent and interest, converting some people into fans and allowing those who aren't interested an easy out.

Welcome Emails

This is an alternative list for people looking for a simpler newsletter welcome series, after someone downloads a free book offer. It's a 7-step template so you could do it all in one week, or spread it out.

- 1. Did you get the free book?**
- 2. Just checking in (reviews)**
- 3. Surprise bonus**
- 4. Personal anecdote (favorite books?)**
- 5. Geek out on something you love**
- 6. Excerpt/WIP**
- 7. Giveaway or call to action (time sensitive)**

Broadcast Email Newsletter suggestions:

- Free or deal books
- Updates/WIP/excerpts
- Industry news

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- Occasional free stuff
- Book launches

Book Launch Emails

This is a potential book launch email series. The key idea here is that you want to send out about 8 emails when you launch something new. There are many “course launch” email newsletter formulas I would check out, that are better at selling maybe, but I recommend something like this – a bit softer – for an author brand and book launch.

1. Cover reveal/premise

2. Personal story/motivation

3. Early reviews/excerpts

4. Reviews of similar best books in genre

5. Sale price or bonuses

6. Launch price / last chance

7. Thanks for the reviews

8. Celebrate successes

- Roughly 8 emails, either altogether or spread out.
- Occasional followups, when it’s on sale or you got a great new review or when the next book is out.
- If you need a booklaunch roadmap, grab my free [Guerrilla Publishing](#) guide and get some high-level marketing tutorials.

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Other ideas...

A running series – for example, instead of just sending them a free book, send them a chapter by email every week.

Videos – whenever you offer a challenge or giveaway, or announce winners/thank participants, you could also upload a video talking about stuff. Getting people to see you talking is a great way to build engagement and trust.

Other people's stuff – don't feel like you have to struggle to find content; you can probably find dozens of other authors writing in a similar genre who have their own giveaways, promotions, contests and events.

Things are more fun with bigger groups, and they also show your readers that you're not a loner weirdo. Share posts and books from "your friends" and be engaged in THEIR activities. As long as you're introducing your readers to more value or free stuff, they'll thank you for it (as long as it's good. Don't promote stuff that isn't).

Themed Days – another thing you should be doing on your Facebook page is having themed days or weeks. For example, maybe on the first of the month, you set a goal, like which book(s) you plan to read this month. You can ask your fans to comment on that Facebook post with their goals also; you could repeat that 3 times, at the first of every month.

The more repetition, the more people will start engaging with it. It doesn't HAVE to be book related. It could be, "what are you excited about this month?" or "What was the most exciting thing you did this month?" It's just a chance to show them that you're interested in their lives and care about what they have to say.

PS) It's probably a good idea to add in links and covers at the bottom of your emails – not promotion, just an "email signature" with small cover pics linked to Amazon. Even when you talk about something else, reaffirming your brand/books

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will probably lead to extra sales with every email you send.

How to promote multiple book series?

A last idea for authors with a bunch of content... soon I'll have multiple completed series and box sets, so my email list will probably – in theory – become much longer. Maybe instead of 3 months, I'll build a 1-year autoresponder. I would do all the same things, but each month introduce them to a new series and relaunch it. What is it, why I wrote it, personal related story, excerpts, reviews...

You can't really do a cheap deal because this would go out on autoresponder, but maybe your first book in the series is free or 99cents. Otherwise you'll just charge full price but you'll lose the impulse to take action now.

You could also soft-relaunch book one in any series later, maybe one a month with adstacking and book promos, but that would take some effort, so I'd automate it if you can. Automation generally gets less conversion, but also much less time and effort, so you can still focus on launching new projects, but I'd try to automate your backlist promotion.

Hope this was useful!

PS. This is something I posted [on my blog](#), so I don't mind you sharing if you have an author friend who could use help.