

Six Ways to Give Your Favorite Authors a Boost!

By Cheryl Alldredge

One of the great joys of being a member of RWA® is that you get to know lots of writers—many of them published. You might be thinking that there is little you can do to help your published author friends, but there are actually a lot of really easy things you can do. We all know that it is hard for books to make a splash in the very crowded book market. Why not throw a few pebbles to help improve the odds for your favorite authors? Here are a few quick and easy things you can do.

1. View their book on Amazon!

Did you know that just by viewing a book while you're shopping you're contributing to the vast data Amazon uses to recommend books to other Amazon customers? It's true. As you're shopping Amazon notices what books you view and recommends similar books you might like. No one knows all the secrets of the Amazon algorithms but it is safe to say that the more data they have on a book, the more likely it will show up in their recommendations. One of those data points is what books people are viewing.

2. While you're shopping, like a book!

Do you shop at Amazon or Barnes & Noble? Online retailers now represent a huge chunk of all book sales. If you're already there and shopping then you have an account. If you have an account, you have the power to like a book. You don't even have to have read it (though it would be best if you at least liked the premise). Just click the like button. You will also have the option to share that like using Twitter or Facebook, but that isn't required. The down side of using the like button is that it is also used to shape the recommendations YOU receive, so liking books you don't actually like could make your own recommendations less accurate.

3. Or vote for a favorable review!

As a registered customer at an online retailer you can help move favorable reviews up to the top of list by clicking YES beneath the review to indicate that it was helpful. Again, you don't have to have read to book. You can also like reviews on GoodReads. Liking the review will make it appear in your update stream and might encourage people who follow or friend you to check it out.

4. Create a list!

This one takes a little more thought and time, but creating lists that include a book with similar books on Amazon or GoodReads is another way to help expose a book to more readers. Make sure your title is catchy, clear, and likely to be relevant to the target readers for the book. Include more established books on the list so the list has a better chance of appearing to browsers more often.

5. Consider rating or reviewing any books you have read and enjoyed.

Amazon, B&N, GoodReads, Fictionwise—whatever booky places you hang out online, they probably allow reviews and/or ratings. You don't have to write a lengthy review. Just a few positive words and a rating can be a big help. Ratings and reviews can help others decide whether or not to buy the book and, on Amazon, they are also believed to factor into those recommendation algorithms that can propel a book to a higher level of sales and recognition.

6. Talk it up!

Authors have to be careful about talking up their own books, but you can spread the word with more credibility. Twitter, Facebook, blogs—anywhere you can mention a book is a plus. Mention it on release day. Mention it when you've read it. Mention it when it wins the RITA®! No author expects all of her writer friends to read all of her books. Nor does she expect them to sign up for the street team. In fact, anything you choose to do will likely be enthusiastically appreciated. Give it a try. You might find it is fun and painless to send some positive energy out into the booky universe!

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Cheryl is a fan of love, adventure, and happily ever afters. Her short novel, *Ladybugs and Fireflies* is out now from Highland Press.

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