

[E-BUSINESS]

MAKE MONEY THE E-MARKETING WAY!

We'll show you how to generate quick cash, from using your e-mail signature to pushing products on MySpace.com

Mal Hopkins knew she would have to get creative when marketing her new supernatural suspense novel because her print-on-demand publishing method limits distribution to Internet book-sellers. So with nearly all of her sales channels on the Web, the Naperville, Illinois, writer decided to generate big-time buzz online for *Sleeping with a D-man* so she could hear the ka-ching of her virtual cash register.

Hopkins crafted an aggressive, but affordable e-marketing campaign that has helped sell 200 books in six months. She spent just \$200 to generate \$3,200 in sales of the book at an average retail price of almost \$16.

Hopkins, who owns The LeadStory, a media communications firm, developed an e-marketing strategy that promoted



her novel while giving impulse buyers the option to purchase immediately online. This combined approach also eliminated the need to purchase advertising online, which can be prohibitive for small business owners. Will this strategy work for you?

HOPKINS DISCOVERED CREATIVE WAYS TO SELL HER BOOKS ONLINE.

Here are the simple, inexpensive tactics and tools Hopkins used to ring up sales:

Add a "buy" button to your e-mail signature. Hopkins' e-mail signature includes book information and a "buy now" button linked to a product purchase page at her publisher's Website. Are you selling multiple products? Rotate them in and out of your signature.

Create a blog in an online community. "The best way to be found online is to join a blogging community," says Hopkins, adding that popular sites such as LiveJournal.com and Blogger.com aren't communities so they are less useful. She prefers social networking sites MySpace.com and Xanga.com because as communities, they allow members with shared interests to connect more easily.

Hopkins' Xanga blog connected her with another member who is now "hand-selling" *Sleeping with a D-man* offline. Hopkins points out that her MySpace page (www.myspace.com/nickyjett) attracted a promotions consultant who invited her to sell books in-person at a Chicago event showcasing the work of local authors. "The key to using these sites is to join the community to widen your circle of influence rather than do a hard sell," she says.

Make it possible for people to purchase your product on your Website. "I use PayPal because it's safe, convenient, and easy to use," says Hopkins.

Learn the latest technology and use it to help you sell. Hopkins used Windows Movie Maker, a video editing software program, to turn a PowerPoint presentation into a commercial hosted on the popular video Website YouTube.com. Creating a link to her YouTube.com video lets Hopkins post the commercial anywhere online or in e-mail messages.

Use interactive tools to help you identify niche markets. Hopkins originally targeted young African American women with her online marketing efforts but soon learned that men liked the book, too. "High-tech guys seem to love it," she says, adding that the positive feedback she received from men who were reading her blogs influenced her to consider this market segment.

Getting others talking about your product on popular blogs is an effective promotional strategy, according to Havelock Nelson, an account executive at New York-based public relations firm Goodman Media International. "There are many literary blogs geared toward readers," he says. "Their writers might interview Hopkins or review her book."

—Sandra Beckwith