

# Reader Ideas

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Dear Reader,

When I asked readers for their help, I never dreamed so many people would respond. Thank you very much. I really appreciated your help.

Below is a copy of my original column that inspired readers to share their ideas. . .

This coming Saturday I'm heading to New York City for a marketing meeting about my upcoming book. Don't look for it yet, it won't be out until June 2010. I'm sure my publisher has a lot of ideas about how to get the word out about my new book, but I don't want to show up empty handed. In addition to baking chocolate chip cookies for the meeting (chocolate is terrific brainstorming fuel) I've been making my own list of marketing ideas and I was wondering if you would like to help?



What makes you choose one book over another, when you're perusing through the library or bookstore shelves? What do you think are the best ways to make the public aware of a new book? My book is a memoir that I think will make readers laugh and cry, and of course there are recipes, too. We're still tweaking the title, but since readers like you have been my encouragement and inspiration throughout the writing process, I thought maybe you'd like to share some of your marketing ideas and I'll take them along to my meeting. Thanks for your help. I sure do appreciate it.

Thanks for reading with me. It's so good to read with friends.

—Suzanne Beecher

# Reader Ideas

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*A note from Suzanne: It appears that people really do judge a book by its cover! Thank you to book club member Diane Fields, for tallying up reader responses.*

Hi Suzanne,

One of my passions is numbers... I thought it was interesting to see the top 10 marketing suggestions from your readers. I looked at 83 emails and came up with roughly the following:

Cover Art - colorful and intriguing 49  
Catchy Descriptive Title 38  
Summary of Book 26  
Book Club 18  
Recommended by others 15  
Cookies 11  
Author Photo 8  
Meet and greet readers 8  
Recipes inside 7  
Internet facebook, blog, YouTube 6

Naturally the totals are a bit subjective since I read the ideas and created the categories. Some other folks eluded to "recipes", "cookies" and the book club. But basically this is what the totals came to. Best of luck with your marketing. I know I truly enjoy the "Dear Reader" columns.

Have a great day!

Thank you!

Diane Fields

# Reader Ideas

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Hi Suzanne;

First you need to determine you is your market & then focus on that area. I think you need to come up with a catchy title. Something that really grabs a potential reader. Also the cover art/photo etc must also be attention grabbing. I think word of mouth through various groups (ie: your online book club) would be a great way to market your book. Several recent books who had small or nonexistent marketing budgets were very successful by utilizing word of mouth campaigns (book clubs). Some examples of that are The Help & The Art of Racing in the Rain.

Best of luck!

Karen

**Karen Stigers**

Hi Suzanne,

The physical book itself: If I'm just browsing in a store, all I can see on most books is a title. So the title has to be intriguing or catchy or unique.

If you're lucky, your book's cover is also exposed, so a great cover is a must. I don't know exactly what your book is about, but it seems like it probably should have something about baking and reading and cats and grandkids (or some combination) on the cover. Photos of women seem to be really in now, particularly taken from the back or from the shoulders down (hmmm, what's up with that?).

I really like a short summary of the book on the inside flap or back cover. Blurbs from famous people are fine, but on the actual book I really want to read what the book is about more than mini-reviews.

But I do want to have access to some reviews and/or excerpts: So you need to get it out there pre-release so that reviewers and bloggers can talk it up. That seems to be where most of my long list of books to read comes from: someone I've never met has read the book and recommended it in a blog or other electronic review. Most of us will be content to wait until it comes out to buy/read it, but we have to know that someone else likes it.

Hope this helps. I look forward to your book. I'll even buy it instead of checking it out from the library! —Carol Dirks

# Reader Ideas

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**Sent:** Wednesday, September 09, 2009 9:41 AM

**Subject:** marketing ideas

Hi Suzanne,

In response your email on marketing ideas for new books, just wanted to let you know that in the Spring, I received a package of seeds marketing the book: Garden Spells by Sarah Addison Allen. It was a great idea and I selected it for the West Babylon Literary Club based on that freebie. I was able to request extra seed packages and was sent enough seeds for everyone in the reading group, plus extra. I have planted the (wildflower) seeds in a pot and will take the results to our group meeting in September and hope that others will bring in their wildflowers also.

We read the book in May, and we LOVED it!

Sincerely, Millie Scott

West Babylon Public Library

P.S. Thanks again for sending me some free books and the Penquin book bag for my Adult Summer Reading Club - "Reading is Just Ducky" theme. Patrons had a choice of a reading duck or a free book from you. The books went faster than the "reading Ducks".

Since there are thousands (even millions?) of people who read your columns daily online, why not mention that? I, for one, would notice that on the cover.

Good luck with the meeting.

Margie Reed

I like bright and current looking covers. However it is the summary on the back of the book that brings me to check out the book.

# Reader Ideas

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Hi Suzanne,

I'm so excited about your book and can't wait to read it next year. The wait is unbearable – I understand these things take time, but I REALLY would love to read it tomorrow. You don't need a free-lance-never-done-this-before-extra-editor, do you?

Anyway, good luck in New York! In your column you're wondering about what makes people buy books. I think along with a catchy cover and title (I think some people go for certain colors, and I don't like elaborate pictures, but that's just my opinion), some people buy books just because they know and/or like the author's name. I think your name should definitely be displayed prominently on the cover. Don't make it small. Just think, if just everyone who reads the book clubs bought only one copy of your book, it would already be a best seller. (Which it will be anyway, I'm convinced.)

That's just my 2 cents – hope it helps! Thanks for all you do, you inspire all of us!

Sabine

Suzanne

Here are a few things that make me pick up a book

Do I know the author?

- Does the title grab me? I was introduced to a wonderful writer, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, when I picked up a book of her short stories entitled "The Unknown Errors of Our Lives." Something about that title made me want to read the book, even though I don't usually like short stories. But this was a winner, and now I have read almost all of her books. You could say her choice of title made me a fan.
- Cover art. Is it colorful? Is the picture intriguing?
- Please put somewhere on your cover that your book includes recipes. It doesn't have to be part of the title, but I think if many people picked up a book that said it included recipes, they would be more interested.

I hope this helps. The chocolate chip cookies can't hurt, either :) Best of luck with your book.

Candice Michalik

# Reader Ideas

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Dear Suzanne,

You wanted to know how your readers select books to read. I usually have 2 books going at the same time. One is the traditional hardcover, and the other is an audio book. Almost all are books from the Johnson County (Kansas) Library, which is fabulous.

I maintain a list of books that I'd like to read and sometimes designate how I learned of that particular book. I select and cut from the top of the list and add to the bottom. Currently, there are 182 books on my list; the oldest was added in July 2008.

Of the 182 on the list, 36 (or about 20%) are books that I learned about from your club. However, the 20% figure is way too low. If I read (or listen to) a book and I like it, I then seek out another book by the same author and add it to the bottom of the list, without designating that I originally learned of this author through the club.

Therefore the number of authors on my list that I learned about through the club is much higher.

Thanks for your help. Good luck with the new book!

Jim Warner

Hi Suzanne,

You asked for marketing suggestions for your new book: This will sound awful coming from a librarian, but when I am cruising the bookstore an interesting cover makes me want to read the flap to see what the book is about. Of course, that depends on the bookstore displaying the book face out rather than spine out.

If you can get it reviewed by LJ or major newspapers, that will help. We read those. . . (and your column!)

Jane Darling  
Librarian Supervisor, Access Services  
William T. Cozby Public Library

# Reader Ideas

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Hi Suzanne,

I'm a sucker for a lovely cover:) But I'm sure you've already thought of that.

One idea that hit me is having a readalong? Brene Brown recently did this with her book, I Thought It Was Just Me, on her blog and we all loved it:

<http://www.ordinarycourage.com/my-blog/category/itiwjm-read-along>

You have such a strong readership here that I bet a lot of folks would be into it and would tell their friends. Just an idea, but I LOVED doing Brene's readalong and would definitely be interested in doing one with you!

Take care! And Congratulations!! -Liz

Dear Suzanne,

Not sure what I know about marketing, as I am a piano teacher! But I am a reader, so here goes. I love to browse for books at the library, but am overwhelmed at the going up and down the stacks - too many choices! I love it when the librarians separate out books into sub-categories, so I can just browse through 20-30 books to find a couple to bring home. I LOVE books with recipes in them, so I would definitely suggest you highlight that aspect! If you could include food in the title somehow, that would be another good clue for someone searching for a book - much like Diane Mott Davidson's mystery series. Also, I am definitely drawn to covers with bright colors and fun fonts. Hope this helps - and good luck with your book!

Regards, Chris Hudson

Suzanne – can you make the cover scratch & sniff cookies? That would guarantee a best seller! Best of luck with the book...can't wait to read it!

Ellen Narain

# Reader Ideas

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I find that the best way to bring a new book to my notice is from the emails that are sent by the different publishing houses with a bit about the book, the author and a sneak peek at a chapter. I check these out, look up the book on [fantasticfiction.com](http://fantasticfiction.com) ( a great site to check for new books and authors) and then add it to my list. Sharon Grow

Hi Suzanne,

My suggestion: "SUZANNE - Memoirs of an Incredible Entrepreneur"

What a gal you are! Please don't ever give up the book clubs tho, no matter what else you take on!

Fondly, Helen

One thing that interests me about a new book is all the statements by people who have sampled it, e.g., other authors, etc. and when they say really positive things about it or make it sound interesting, it "tickles my fancy."

I think visuals are great. When there's a picture of the author and a little capsule about the author's life which is usually very interesting, that makes me want to read the book. I notice that some authors include a pic of their family and/or their dog! When it tells where they live, what kind of family they have, etc, they seem more real and the book then seems more real. An interesting cover also helps. A nice one, not the slobbery kind that romance novels use. Yuk. Maybe take a scene from one of your memoirs and display that on the cover. You could even put the quote under it in small print, depicting what it's about. A funny one would be great.

Also, maybe invite the readers to contact you after they have read the book, with a memoir moment of their own, or to make a comment on your book. That brings life to the book, then it becomes more a part of the reader.

Well, I guess I've blabbed enough for one night, so happy marketing! Dorie I just thought of one other thing--kind of far-fetched, but who knows?.....Invite readers to comment about their own "memoir moments" and tell them you will put the most interesting ones in your sequel/next book----everyone else's memoir notes next time, instead of yours. People love to read and talk about themselves. That would give them an incentive to read the book and who knows, you may want to do the sequel. That could be fun. It would be the readers' reminiscences. Don't forget to have some good kaiser rolls, eastern style pretzels, yum, Tastykakes/pies, and real honest to goodness bagels and egg creams while you're back there. I don't know if NY hucksters sell waffle ice cream sandwiches, but we used to get them on the street corners in Philly, hot waffles with ice cream inside and powdered sugar. Wish I could go with you! Bon-bon voyage!

# Reader Ideas

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Well, Suzanne, you don't have to worry, all us dearreader.com fans will be chomping at the bit for your book! But for those who don't know you - how to hook them? Well, I was at a Barnes & Noble a couple of years ago, I saw a poster of a man with a trumpet standing there and the title of the CD was "Italia". I had never heard of Chris Botti before, but I put the headphones on, listened and I was hooked, I am now an avid Chris Botti fan.

So what I'm saying is that I think it was the simple poster and the simple word "italia" that drew me in.. I know that doesn't apply to your book, but mainly: something simple. Maybe you in your business-go-to-meeting suit and your sneakers and lacy socks, just standing there, with your eyeglasses on and some books in one hand and a wooden spoon in the other? Simple, but to the point. Make people ask, who is this woman? What's she doing? What does she have to say? Simple.

Just like what you do for us readers every morning, you bring simple things to our attention, make us think of simple ordinary happenings in our lives, how special they are!

Have a good day, Suzanne!

I hate to say it, but the first thing I look for in a book is the cover. The picture gives me a sense of what the book is going to be about. Since this book is going to be directed toward purchases by mostly women (I presume), I would suggest emphasizing the "laughter" part of it. I always search for words like "laughter", or "uplifting," or "riotous fun" when I buy a book, because my life has enough drama and I certainly don't need any more.

Love you, Suzanne.

# Reader Ideas

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Hi Suzanne:

I wish I was going with you, on your NY trip. My daughter lives in Queens and works ..mostly in Manhattan. She is Director of Marketing.. for a major timeshare/hotel company. She was unemployed over the summer...had enough severance money and unemployment..and of course her parents, to survive.

I am so glad she was able to get this job, considering the working climate. The pay is very good...but I miss her and her daughter misses her too. You see she needs to save a little money to bring her daughter to NY. So her dad and I ...are taking care of our precious granddaughter.

I have an idea to market your book...how about putting one of your book club flyer's in hotels and motels rooms...advertise your book and the Club Start local and then spread to other places. Once people get settled into their room...they have time to kill.

I look forward to reading your book. Have a safe trip.

Lora

Suzanne:

I have an independent bookstore in my town that encourages their employees to read books and write reviews. I only select books which have a hand written review attached to the display. Too many books too little time, I need a book that at least one person thought worth reading. You should send your book and personally ask one of the workers to read it, they are great people. Everyone goes to Anderson's because the staff is quick to give recommendations when asked what to read.

This book store also has many guest author events. Philippa Gregory is coming next week. Not all the authors are this well known so don't feel unworthy. Philippa will present in the local college auditorium but many authors hang out in the store and speak to small groups.

The bookstore is Anderson's in Naperville, Illinois - population 144,000 (just southwest of Chicago). Call them up, come visit - I would love to meet you in person. What the heck, you never know!

Betty Ference

# Reader Ideas

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Hi, Suzanne,

One of the first things that draws me to a book (I am visual) is the cover. For instance (though I cannot name the authors) like the covers on the books by our author friend who uses chocolate in her beach story titles.

Or the books about the ladies in the quilting club who also solve mysteries. Or books about cats who help to solve mysteries. The cover and the titles are what drew me to these books as well as the fact that they were mysteries...my favs. And, I love cats, chocolate and the beach!

Other things that draw me to a book is when it is recommended by a family member or friend, especially if they have already read it and loved. That is how I came to read the Mitford series by Jan Karon. And then I was blessed to create the whole town of Mitford complete with buildings, houses, people, vehicles, trees, etc for our church library in celebration of the release of one of the books of the series.

And, last but certainly not least, is to see the book listed on the Best Seller's list or New Arrivals at our public library. So, keep on writing, Suzanne. We want to see your name out there on all those books that you have stored in your head.

You have a wealth of stories to tell and one that I would love to own would be just a compilation of all of your blogs over the years. You could title them individually, a chapter at a time.

Or, you could have definite subjects for your chapters and subtitle different blogs to fill each chapter. An idea here would be a Food blogs section and please add your story about the restaurant serving "Boiled Tongue"!

Let me know if you ever find a job in your company for a "wordy" person to join your group. Sitting in front of my computer sharing my thoughts fulfills me in ways nothing else, short of prayer, can do.

Your friend and devoted reader, Jean

Jean Brady  
www.DearReader.com  
Five minutes a day to a great book!!

# Reader Ideas

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Suzanne,

While reading your column this morning the first thought that came to mind was a catchy title. "Suzanne's chocolate chip memoirs". Here are the following things/ideas that happened when I buy a book. Sometimes the book will be discussed on NPR radio, or a friend might have read the book and passed it on. When I am at Costco browsing the book section, since my husband does the serious shopping. I go just to browse around, my first stop is the book section, then the flower stand. If there is an author I like to follow who has a new book out I will read the inside cover and back cover to see if this book might interest me. I am also a sucker for a pretty cover and a MUST a paperback book, the weight of hardcover is too much. I carry my book with me everywhere so it will be handy for any reading opportunity that might arise and I ride the bus to work at least 3 days a week, I do not want the added weight of a hardcover. You know another thought just popped into my head it would be a treat if the book had a attractive scent, this might be tricky, but what a treat it would be. I can just imagine carry a book in my bag that smells of chocolate and months after I finished reading the book there will still be a whiff of chocolate scent lingering when I reach into the book bag.

Brainstorming is so much fun. I do enjoy starting the day at my desk, reading with you.

Loretta Price

I love great titles! Charles Martin has some of the best — When Crickets Cry, Wrapped in Rain, etc. Also, you can't go wrong with a great cover — colors that pop or whisper to you according to the the tone of the book — and who can forget the font used in printing the title and author name - speaks volumes to me! Sometimes I am more interested in a book if underneath the title there is a "piece" of writing in smaller font...might make me look closer - like "A Thousand Summers.....a jaunt through rolling tides" -- with the title big and bold and the description in cursive and italics.... like it was hand-written.....makes it seem personal — and so rarely do we think about paper — but I once bought this great book about hymns and who wrote them and why — the paper used was thick and ivory...the edges slightly frayed — I loved it just b/c I wanted to feel the paper! —Elisa

# Reader Ideas

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Dear Suzanne,

Of course Dear Reader will give you a huge audience, a great built in tool for you.

When I'm scanning shelves, if the colors on the cover or type face stand out, I'm more likely to pull it out and give it a look (vs an academic facade).

If yours has humor, you can capitalize on that with a bright, cheery cover and modern font. The cover could include a photo of you as child, perhaps? A charming one, of course.

The newest thing seems to be including questions at the end for book clubs, so if you live in an area where there are lots of those, you might consider doing that and then offering yourself to one of the larger ones for a talk/sale, or ask your library to host you for a signing/reading and make sure many of the book clubs are invited.

Of course, none of this is new and you've probably thought of it all~Have fun during the process~this is work but also the FUN part!

Best regards, Marni Graff

Hi Suzanne!

I love your 'dear reader' column. What makes me choose one book over another? Usually the cover is the first to grab my attention. Stay away from black. It needs to be bright, like a nice new handbag, one that will not get lost in the bustle of busy life. I am notorious for loosing handbags or leaving them where I should not and walking off without them. In fact, the female side of my family has a terrible habit of losing purses. We've decided it is a genetic defect. When we all get together, we tell 'lost handbag' stories!

My advise is to keep it bright...I could see you and your cover in pink or orange (very popular now!). Hope this helps...looking forward to your book release!

Reading Rocks! Karen Rarden

# Reader Ideas

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when i travel i look for only paperbacks. and not the romance novel size either, the larger and more modern size. then i look at the back and description. if there are only rave reviews from second-tier newspapers, i put it down. the description draws me in: vampires, romance stories, grisly murders of young women... not for me. then if it looks interesting, i read the first page.... it's a lot of pressure on you!

Dear Suzanne,

About your marketing question: I have been reading books since I was a child. We didn't live close to our grandmothers, so many times, to keep in touch, they sent us a package in the mail, which always included a book. One grandmother, as she became really old, would write us a card, including a pretty handkerchief inside. A white lacy one was so lovely, I carried it on my wedding day. She had already created a bond with the books, and the hankies were a sweet touch when she wasn't able to mail packages. My parents used to buy the little Golden Books for us, which I love to this day, reading them to our five grandgirls. Can any of us forget *The Poky Little Puppy*? I think the title had something to do with that, as I never forgot it!! I recall how I wanted to read the story to find out how he was poky! Reading has been part of my life forever, and wise parents introduce children early to our friends, books. When in grade school, the bookmobile would come to our school once a week. Choosing a storybook was such a fun experience. I have loved books from the beginning to now. Love the smell of a book filled room, thinking about all the adventures inside them, wondering what the writers have in store. Writers, to me, are so special, I revere the good ones. Here are some ways I choose a book to purchase, or bring home from the library.

To me they are more important than whether or not a famous author wrote the book, as I have found many times they don't always have best sellers. First the title is all important. That is the major hook. Makes you want to pick up the book in the first place. Second a really cool cover. That does the same thing as a great title, also makes you want to pick up the book. Size of the book matters. I love a novel that isn't a big fatty. If I wanted a dictionary, I would choose one. Then, when you open the book, and the first few pages so capture your interest, you have won my heart. It has to be that way, beginnings are key. It is not the time, on the first few pages, to keep some of your good lines waiting inside, put them up front! Take us right away. With a million books out there, you have to make the people want to keep reading. So, that is my opinion. Hope I didn't get carried away, but books and the subject of books do that to me. Suzanne you are such a dear person, I pray you will be successful with this first book of yours. Also your book needs to be displayed up close, out front. If hidden on a shelf, we may never find you! Your "treasure" can be more discrete after you sell hundreds! I am counting on you to do just that. Yours Very Sincerely, Bonny Conway

# Reader Ideas

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Hi Suzanne, There are many reasons why I pick a book to buy, especially when there are so many to choose from written by great authors.

If I have read the author before and have liked all of the books, it is a given I will buy that one.

If a friend raves about a book and she reads books along the line that I read I will buy that or borrow it, what ever comes first.(lol)

I search the Best Seller List on line from book stores and also in the newspaper.

Of course there are the books that you have posted on line. I really liked some of the authors that wrote your guest column, so I went to their web site and read up on them and their books.

My Book Club, the books we read are chosen by one person so we have no choice but to read it, More then half of the time it is not one I would of chosen so I know not to look for that author.

I look for design or sometimes a Cook Book just catches my eye either with how the cover is designed or the Title of the book and of course the type of recipes it has in it.

As Always it is a joy reading with you,

Dee Clark

What makes you choose one book over another, when you're perusing through the library or bookstore shelves?

I love to wander in the library or book store. In my Palm Pilot, I have lists of books I am interested in. Maybe I saw an interesting review. Maybe I started the book in your Web club. Maybe I have read other books by the same author. Then I scan the new release tables for interesting titles and covers. I scan the information on the leaf and maybe read a bit of the first page. For non-fiction I like to check the table of contents.

# Reader Ideas

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Dear Suzanne, I am an avid reader and thought I'd share a few things that attract me to a book. I, of course, first go to my "favorite authors". But when I am looking for new authors and books I look for a vivid cover that jumps out at me. Big letters always draw my attention. I also like a book that has a juicy tidbit inside the flap about the book. At my library the newly released books are in one section so I always peruse those first. I feel like I'm getting the "heads up" on new releases that way....if that makes any sense.

I hope some of this helps! I love your column by the way so I will for sure be looking for your book in June!

Have a great day Suzanne and its always great reading with a friend!

Dianna Williamson Malvern, AR

Hi Suzanne,

1. I think the biggest thing to realize about your particular book is that you are your own brand. ***Suzanne Beecher is a brand***. You have a **ton** of readers via Dear Reader and the libraries and your blog(s), and you will be amazed how many books will be sold to your faithful readers, via your emails and website and blog.

2. Don't underestimate the chocolate chip cookie aspect. You are famous for those. How much is your book supposed to retail for? \$19.95? \$29.95? Market it as a gift basket featuring a dozen chocolate chip cookies and your book for \$39.95. (Or whatever price, you get the idea.)

3. Your main readers/buyers will be women, and many, many of these books will be given as gifts.

4. The title is half the battle, so make them come up with a good one.

I'm very proud of you for finishing this project!

Good luck to you,

Leslie Parsons

# Reader Ideas

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Dear Suzanne:

Oh. My. Gosh. Heading to New York for a marketing meeting for your new book...how exciting is that?!?!?

I'm so happy for you, and can't begin to imagine how thrilled you are at having your dream come true.

The cookies are a great idea, by the way. I'll bet they don't get very many authors showing up with cookies in hand!

As far as marketing the book, You Tube videos seem to be doing quite well for many writers and, since you're so warm and bubbly, having you featured in a short video, discussing your book, seems like a sure winner in my opinion.

There are many, many book bloggers out there and if you can get them to review your book, that will get you "out there" to hundreds, thousands, of people. Plus the people they will forward the review to.

Do you have a Facebook page? If not, you should. You can use the "Notes" section like a blog, talking about the process of getting your book published, what it was like to receive that notification, details of your trip to New York, holding the uncorrected galley proof in your hands, seeing your book in a bookstore for the first time, etc.

Twitter about the forthcoming release of the book.

Or you could create your own website. Many authors have them now, and the cost has come down considerably. With your own website, you'd have complete control of content: your bio, details on the book, recipes, etc. You could make it as inclusive and expansive as you want. Your warmth and openness comes through so vividly in whatever you write that I think this could be a great way to market. All the same advantages I mentioned about Facebook. And you could have your You Tube video on your Facebook page and/or your website, too!

You have contacts among booksellers, libraries, your readers, etc., which should help in whatever marketing avenues you choose to pursue.

I'm so excited for you...I suppose I'm enjoying your experience vicariously because I've always dreamed of publishing a book. (I've started three, but haven't finished any of them!)

Way to go, Suzanne! I hope you'll share some of the details when you return!

With congratulations and best wishes for a fantastic time in the Big Apple,  
Bobbi Hahn, Gallery Director The Linda Hartough Gallery  
140 Lighthouse Road Hilton Head Island, SC 29928

Suzanne, In answer to your question in today's read, I choose one book over another by the brief description on the book cover; I love when there is a "grabber" that gets my attention; one that makes me want to start reading immediately. I will ALWAYS buy that book.

Bernita Kersey Dental Receptionist St. Clair College

# Reader Ideas

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Suzanne,

I love your column and look forward to reading it everyday. You make it okay to be human, to love, laugh, cry. When I read your column asking how readers choose a book, I thought here is a way I can give something back for all the moments Suzanne has shared with me.

If the author is known by me - that is a no brainer. Just like your book will be a no-brainer for me to pick up at the book store. If I am looking to try something new, I look at the title. I read the blurb about what the book is about. Sometimes I read the author bio at the back of the book.

Sometimes I turn to a page in the book and read a few paragraphs. The art cover on the front is not necessarily a factor except when glancing at all the books on the shelf. I also look for books based on whatever I am in the mood for - mystery, romance, etc. So placement in more than one genre may be an idea. I would hope your book would be placed at the front of the stores so that those who are not book club members can discover your book.

The abridged version :-) If I had to pick the two most important things they would be: art work and title that catches my eye so I will pick up the book and what keeps it in my hand is what I learn from reading the "blurb".

Have a wonder - full weekend! Good Luck on your New York Trip! —Edy

Suzanne,

I read your column today and would like to share what I look for when I'm at the library or book store...

I do base a book on it's cover (even though I know I shouldn't). Bright colors get me every time! I like to read funny, lightweight, inspirational, and love stories. The bright colors clue me in that this book should be a fun one to read. Then I read the title and if it's catching I'll pick it up and read the summary and go from there. One of my favorite books is Snowed In by Christina Bartolomeo. I followed the steps above when picking this book up at the library. The red plaid colors on the cover were different and caught my eye. Then the "o" in Snowed is a heart. I was sold right then and there and checked it out, finished it in three days and fell in love with it. I read this book once a year now!

I really suggest the colors on the book jacket/cover stand out from the other books. When you're going through shelves and shelves of books just reading titles or looking for author names the monotonous navy blue and black that are often on the outside of books start to run them altogether, colors definitely help catch the eye!

I hope this helps! Good Luck, Shirley

# Reader Ideas

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Hello Suzanne:

You asked: "What makes you choose one book over another, when you're perusing through the library or bookstore shelves? What do you think are the best ways to make the public aware of a new book?"

The first thing that catches my eye is the book jacket. There is nothing better than a classy or well-designed book jacket. And, I look at the Title. It doesn't have to be clever or catchy.....just interesting.

Next, I look at the author. Do I recognize the name? I like to see the author's photo on the inside back cover or the back cover. That is important to me. It gives a feeling of familiarity.

Then, I read the complete inside cover about the book.

Also, I read the title page, verso for publication date, Table of Contents if there is one, other books by that author, etc.

I do read the first page to see if it "grabs my attention" and I like to check out the print. And, I do check out chapters and their length.

Usually by this time, I know if I want to buy the book, or check it out.

Sometimes, I will read what others have said about the book or the author if it is listed on the back cover, but it isn't something that is necessary in making my choice.

As far as making the public aware of a new book.....

I think that what you are doing in your book reader and new author emails is so important. That is one of the best ways that I learn about a new author or new book. I will research any new author or book on the internet, and then, I do purchase books of interest or check them out at the library.

I don't watch TV talk shows and don't care for the circuit that authors make in presenting their new publications.

When I go to the library, the first thing that I do is review the New Book shelf.

Also, I like to read the Bookreporter online among others about new books and authors.

Hope this helps. Have a wonderful trip.

Rita Rae Rogers

Suzanne:

What makes a book interesting enough to pick up off the shelf? i would definitely say the title and cover to start.... maybe your title will have something to do with "chocolate chip cookies"?? That would make anyone pick it up!!!!

Sheri K. Ramirez Staff Assistant Residence Life Department

# Reader Ideas

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Dear Suzanne,

How about There'll be Chocolate Chip Cookies (and Maybe a Few Tears) for your book title or at least for the promotional tour that you will end up doing. Here are some marketing ideas to keep your book and you, who are its biggest advertisement, in the public eye:

- - a bookmark with a recipe and synopsis on it. Your photo too if it will fit.
- - if you know which bookstores have the best demographics and sales in your category, go there first with a truckload of chocolate chip cookies to do a signing and to get the word of mouth started.
- -talk shows love people who have something to talk about - so you are a perfect fit. Just do not accept any shows whose values you find questionable - your potential market shares your concerns but won't know that about you if they first discover you in iffy company (and I suspect that alot of people still watch snippets of the wrong shows because humans find the salacious hard to resist)
- -magazines often excerpt books. Again, you would be well advised to avoid magazines whose covers betray a value set that doesn't fit yours. They can survive without you and you will not meet your readers through them
- -write magazine articles that have only a peripheral connection to your book. People who admire an author will often seek out their previous work
- -there are alot of on-line venues that tout literary works and like you they offer excerpts as a way of demonstrating the work's interest to readers. Consider doing some cross pollination with some sites that have comparable values. That might include featuring information about the site in one of your newsletters or on your site. In fact, you could do a series that directs your readers to other sites. We are always interested in good advice about good books. There is no time to be wasted on anything less than the inspiring - life really is too short for the mound of mediocrity that makes it into print these days. So you would be doing us a favour by giving us that further guidance. Yet, we will never leave your newsletter behind because your choices are sound and the real attraction is you, your good sense and your amazing ability to find teachable moments in the everyday, along with your inimitable sense of humour and humility.
- -patience. Word of mouth can happen over night but it may take years for a book to reach its potential - and then it will stay there, steady, modest and real, whereas many bestsellers are forgotten forever within a few years of publication.

I wish you all the best (although I think you have it pretty good right now with a caring husband, great kids and delightful grandchildren who live close enough to see often or who come visit for a few weeks a year). The best things in life are not things. Still, good luck with getting your book out there since I know that what you seek is not fame and wealth but to help others through your insight into lifes challenges.

Carpe diem, Alexis

# Reader Ideas

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Suzanne, all I know is that a great cover design can be the key to healthy pre- and post-pub date sales. An attractive (eye-catching-from-across-the-store) book cover and memorable, snappy title can boost book purchases first at the bookseller/chain store buyer level, and then at the consumer level. Who is the targeted readership? Presumably women...if you are going for "boomers", graphics/typestyle/color scheme that are reminiscent of the late fifties and early sixties with a contemporary twist might make sense. This would provide a visual hook, hopefully getting everyone eager to scan the pages and take the book home with them.

Am sure that your cookies, writing, and personality will charm the publishing staffers you will meet next week.

Safe travels and best of luck with it all. Warm regards, Dianne Ochiltree

Hey Suzanne

Having read your book club for 3 years and getting to know you I cant wait to read your book. I choose a book by its cover first and then read the inside and back flap. If the cover catches my eye then I must pick it up and flip through even if it is not an author that I am familiar with. Your picture should be on the cover just being you like you are with the book club. Natural Honest and Inspiring. You always seem so happy and like you get so much out of life. You have an interesting life and are so willing to share with others. Sooooo just go to New York with your famous cookies and be yourself and blow them away with your wit and humor. Good Luck Enjoy your trip. Youll be missed as always.

Sally A St Charles MO

Hi Suzanne, you asked us what we look for when we buy a book. The cover is what impresses me. It must catch my eye. If I know the author I don't automatically buy the book unless I am a fanatic follower like of Alexander McCall Smith (The #1 Ladies Detective Agency) After looking at the cover I'll read the inside of the cover. There must be something in that text that makes me say "I must have this book" Price does not enter into the picture so much unless it is way more expensive than the others.

—Terry Kilian

# Reader Ideas

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Good morning Suzanne,

I am new to your column -- look forward to reading each morning. Your book sounds really interesting. It sounds like a book that I picked up by Pearl Bailey -- it is about 30 years old. The way she speaks in the book makes me feel like she is right beside me. When I'm looking for books, the front cover usually helps me decide. I enjoy the title of the book -- but if the cover is dark or cluttered, this reader usually moves on.

Thank you for sharing your unique self with us. Have a great day!!!!

Rose A. Stegall

Hey Suzanne,

I'm pretty simple minded I guess when it comes to choosing a book. I am drawn to bright covers and if the title or picture isn't alluring enough, the description on the back has to MAKE me want to find out more. Like instead of just saying that Lucy is a journalist who stumbles across a murder and before she knows it, her whole life is turned upside down. Well duh! lol

I need a hook, not just a description. Like... Lucy is a journalist who stumbles across a murderer woman, who it turns out is her sister that she never knew about. There are so many things about her life that Lucy never thought to question, until now. But will the answers to all her questions bring her resolution and understanding?? or be fatal??

Okay, super over dramatic and definitely RIGHT off the top of my head, but you get the difference. And even if it's a memoir, then how about a snip-it of one of the stories and promises about all the heart warming recipes inside to boot!

Who knows, just my sickly (I have a cold) ramblings :) Good luck at your meeting!! I'm sure the cookies will be a huge hit!

Bethany

# Reader Ideas

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Write a non-fiction first. Write a short book (350 pages max). Market to your audience (pick women) especially if it is a book we need. See the need for a book rather than have an idea and then look for the audience. Choose a title and cover that will create an image, so do it with care, be catchy. Don't repeat the title on the back, but describe what you will get into when reading this book and even have a picture of yourself with a short description of who you are. Have the back be a hook to stir emotions and hopefully a credit card purchaser. Think of how this can be a series or spin-off products can be next. Lastly, create a market plan now. Don't wait until it is published. Get on Oprah and she'll sell it for you. (ha ha)Spend as much time on marketing as you have on writing. You can do it Suzanne. Can't wait to see you in a book store near me soon signing autographs.

Your friend,

Debbie Futrell

For me, when I am ready to pick out a new book to read because my favorite authors don't have anything new... I look for something that peaks my interest on a book cover. I like bright colors. Yet, I am disappointed if the the story line doesn't match the image/picture on the cover.

I am looking forward to your book. I really enjoy your column so a book I feel would be even more awesome. :) Take care! Dawna

Being old is better than being dead! LOVE YA!

Hi loyal long time reader here so exciting that your book is coming out... what usually snags my intertests ( I currently have over 10 library books on my table) the cover photo draws me to the book then the inside flap makes want to read it and sometimes i read the first page so their has to be a good opening... but if your book is anything your e-mails you will be fine... get a great cover photo and you should be gold!

Christina DeMatteis

# Reader Ideas

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Thank you for your column. It is so much fun to come to work every morning and find a book to be read. :-)

Anyways on marketing, there are two ways I will make a couple of suggestions. I personally read tons. I know that for me it is a cover that can make or break the book. I know we are not suppose to judge a book by the cover, but it is the first thing that attracts the eye. I have found, and this is the second way I will come at this question for you, that with customers here at the store also. The only exception is it is an author we already love. I think that Francine Rivers could have a horrible cover and yet we will read it just because it is Francine. New authors don't have the luxury, their covers is only thing that most people can judge a book by.

Another thought is give out free copies, and not just to your friends. Readers from bookstores love to share what they think of books. Your publishing house will have the control over this, but I do have a couple of authors that tell their publishers to send me copies to make sure I read & review them before their release. Figure out the target audience and make sure you get readers from that audience to read it, not just reveiwers from magazines etc... I know they are important, but a fellow reader is more likely to get me to read a book that any review in a magazine.

Lastly if you can cause a controversy for your book. (think the Shack) Just kidding, but any publicity is not bad. A good title will help also. To long or to confusing will stop the ability of someone who does want to talk about it.

I don't know if this makes sense or helps, but I wish you the best of luck with you new book. Looking forward to hearing more about it.

Sincerely  
Chris Jager

How about "It's good to read with friends?"

"Chocolate Chip cookie musings"

"To be is to write"

"Reaching Out"

# Reader Ideas

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Suzanne, I just talked to my daughter in college and asked her how she decides on a book because she reads all the time. She said the cover is a major factor.

We both said the title is also important. I am really looking forward to your book and I am sure all your book club members are too. Have a great time in New York! You are an inspiration to all of us. Take Care. Kim

Hi Suzanne -

When I am in the library I first go to an author that I particularly like. Of course with a new writer, then I must widen my view a little. The title must jump out to me - something that moves me either by memories or a quirky set of words. Then as I pull it off of the shelf, the cover must really jump out to me. That will lead me to read the fly leaf. I probably miss a few good ones, but that is what I read at the book club for. Good luck and hope they love the cookies!

Mary Lee Muntz

USA Today and magazines frequently have little blurbs on new books. Many times I read these and then go to the library or books stores looking for the book. The title is important - and the artwork on the cover.

A pretty interesting cover, a catchy title and a good story all help sell a book.

I look forward to your book next year and wish you success. I know it will be interesting after reading your daily stories for years.

Dotty Orton

# Reader Ideas

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Suzanne, when I'm looking for something new (rather than by a favorite author) I pull out books with covers or titles that catch my eye. Bright, upbeat, chocolate chip cookie-type stuff. Make sure all the libraries know your book is out, as well as all of us regular readers. Maybe these ideas aren't new, but that's what works for me. Good luck.

Brenda Riding, AVON Ind. Rep/Beauty Advisor

Suzanne, when I'm looking for something new (rather than by a favorite author) I pull out books with covers or titles that catch my eye. Bright, upbeat, chocolate chip cookie-type stuff. Make sure all the libraries know your book is out, as well as all of us regular readers. Maybe these ideas aren't new, but that's what works for me. Good luck.

Brenda Riding, AVON Ind. Rep/Beauty Advisor

Hi Suzanne, You might want to get hold of Carolyn Howard-Johnson's The Frugal Book Promoter, How to Do What your Publisher Won't.

I'm sure you will get plenty of help from your publisher and have ideas of your own since you have a ready-made community of friends through your bookclubs, but Carolyn's book might give you a larger boost into the "wonderful world of marketing your own book...Her e-address is Carolyn Howard-Johnson hojonews@aol.com . Her books are listed in her newsletter and feedblitz newsletters... I've found that marketing is a whole nuther world altogether. You have a head start.

I'm so excited for you. Have a great time in NY!

Love, Norma

# Reader Ideas

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Hi Suzanne,

Congratulations on your new book!! (By "new," I'm assuming that you have already written a book/s. Could you let me know the title/s? Or mention them in your column?)

As far as marketing... I have no experience in marketing, but I do know how I select a book to read:

1. I look at the cover. I know - you can't tell a book by the cover, but if the cover attracts me (beautiful beach scene, something bright/perky/whimsical, etc.), I will definitely open the book.
2. The cover should say something like "best selling author of "Suzanne's Cookbook" - something to let me know that the author is a good writer.
3. And, of course, intriguing rave reviews on the back from recognizable people/authors/newspapers, etc. in the genre.
4. I will also look at the synopsis on the inside cover - which could definitely be a deal breaker if it doesn't get my attention.
5. And, finally, I will open the book to check the print - too small (doesn't happen too often) and I will put it back.

Enough about the actual physical book.

Next I go to Amazon Books - my book bible. If I want to find out about a book I might want to read, I go to Amazon and read their review. I check to see how many stars the book received. I look to see what else the author has written and how many stars the previous book/s received. And finally, I read the reviews at the bottom of the page written by people who have read the book. There probably isn't much your marketing team can do about Amazon, but I know that Amazon sends free books to people who have registered with them to read and review books. So maybe your book could be sent out for pre-pub review.

Can you give all your book club readers a discount coupon or some kind of incentive to buy the book? They could then rave about it to their friends and add it to their book club reading list. Can you have a contest where you give away a book/s at the online book club and then ask the winners to write a review?

I guess that's all the input I have -I hope it helps. —Cindy Schaefer

# Reader Ideas

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A book, how wonderful! Just one suggestions:

-The title must be in large font on both the front of the book & the spine. With the graying of the population in the US, large type is necessary for those storming the bookstore looking for your book (they often forget their reading glasses). Also, if your book is sold to libraries (very lucrative), a large print cover & spine is very helpful.

That's it. If your book is anything like your daily blog, it'll be on the NYT best sellers list in no time! Good luck in New York!

Valerie Kocin  
Branch Manager, Cuyahoga County Public Library

The two best marketing ideas that will get me to read a book: 1) a great review! and 2) endorsements from people I already know I like and respect: could be other authors or in your case, for instance, since you are including recipes it could be from well-known cooks who do down-home cuisine. Hope that helps! Looking forward to reading your book next year.

Candy Bertelson

I use your column and any press to choose a book. I may choose a book based on the book cover, but a book has to speak to me, I love the contests that Author's Buzz and Fresh Fiction runs, also anything personal for example, I read your column so I'd be interested in your book, You have a good tie in with the cookies, you also have many common areas such as cats, marriage, cooking, grandmother, etc. Best of luck!

—Jeanne Pinkham

# Reader Ideas

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Something that works for our business clients might also work for publicizing a book:

Call several tv or radio stations and see if you can get on the air on a slow news day (when they're looking for stories). They don't charge you for that and it's like million-dollar advertising.

This can be good when the subject matter of the book ties in to current events.(Speak directly to news commentators that you like)

An author talking about their book always captures my interest.

Get a table at an event that gathers lots of people; autograph the book.

Can you get a celebrity to say a few words about your book?

Create a news flash: "Suzanne Beecher, local author, to speak at a fundraiser for the homeless shelter"

Visit your local Small Business Development Center and discuss marketing with a business counselor.

There's no charge for this. Best of luck!

Dear Suzanne,

Most of the books I read are suggested by friends and family, including you and your book club of course. I think by the time your book club friends read your book and tell their family and friends about it you will have a best seller. Sometimes an author interview on the news or in the paper will catch my interest. When I just browse for books, the information about the book and the author given on the cover help me decide if it is one I will like.

I'm looking forward to reading your book and I hope it is very successful.

Hannah

# Reader Ideas

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Hi Suzanne,

I have been an avid book club member for about 3 years and reading your letter every day. I am excited for you and your adventures with your new book. You had asked for marketing suggestions, so I thought I would make a contribution to your list. I like to read the covers on new books to see if there is anything about the author. I enjoy seeing their picture and reading where they live and something about their families. For some reason, it assures me that the book will be good.

The cover colors and design usually catch my eye before the title does, especially if it is simple with warm colors. A big chocolate chip cookie comes to mind (Just kidding :) . I can't wait to see and read your book Suzanne, I know it will be entertaining, poignant and charming.

Thanks for sharing your life with us.

Bonnie L. Johnson

Suzanne, When I am looking for a book to buy, I usually go with an author I know and trust. I recently purchased South of Broad by pat Conroy because I know I love Pat Conroy's books- some more than others. This may not be good news for a new author, but for your millions of fans, we will want to read your book because we love what you write every day. So the "tried and true" works. I know word of mouth will spread the good news of your book..

I was snuggled up to two of my four granddaughters the other day, reading some of their beloved books and it reminded me of why we love reading so much-- we associate it with the loving presence of someone who read to us, held us close, and passed on the love of reading.

Thanks for all you do to promote the love of reading.

Bonnie Bonnie Storm

# Reader Ideas

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Hello Suzanne;

Just like everyone else that is anticipating the release of your book, can I say that the wait is killing me! I'm sure that I'm going to love it just as much, if not more, than I love reading your blog every day. Sometimes, I feel like you and I are the same person! How could you possibly feel and experience the same things as me? Whenever I "feel the connection" I immediately forward your blog to my friends and ask, "do you recognize anyone in this blog???"

In answer to your marketing question from yesterday; the first thing that catches my eye when I'm scouting out a new book, is the title - both the words and the font, followed very closely by the cover. When the book is a chick-lit, I usually have to identify with the picture. That being said, how I choose whether or not I'll purchase the book is the synopsis on the cover flap or back page. Most times, if there isn't at least a brief description of the book's contents and the chapter titles don't indicate the story line, or I've never heard of the book or it's author, I'm more than likely to put the book back. One thing that I absolute love, is book readings by the author; something we don't have enough of here in the greater Toronto area. Maybe the library could do something along that line, but instead have the reading done by one of the librarians instead? Chapters/Indigo is one of our biggest book stores here, and it would really be nice if they had a book launching celebration of sorts, but with these economic times, the best we get now are "feature tables" in the stores. Oh well, at least they have a Starbucks at most locations and nice comfy chairs so that I can sit & sip while I choose my purchase from my huge stack of books!

I'm sure that whatever you choose will be as exciting and fascinating as you. Best of luck, and keep up the great work. And thanks for being there to start my business day in such a positive way. You're the best!

Carolyn L. Zinck

# Reader Ideas

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Dear Suzanne: You asked for our help with marketing ideas for your new memoir/recipe book coming out 2010. So, I am responding to your questions about What do you think are the best ways to make the public aware of a new book? 1. I am subscribed to the this website: [www.writerspace.com](http://www.writerspace.com) <<http://www.writerspace.com/>> which was founded in 1998. Writerspace is the home for over 550 authors, primarily romance and mystery, of the best fiction on the market today. Writerspace communities are familiar places for readers to gather, talk to each other, learn about releases and communicate with authors. Also, the authors have contests giving away goodies such as Kindle or Sony E-book reader, amazon, barnes and noble gift cards, etc. 2. A lot of the authors hire media wizards to create mini movie trailers for their upcoming book and attach a link of the trailer via [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) <[http://www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com/)> to the e-mail to their e-newsletter to subscribers. He is an example of one author's book trailer from her website: [www.sandyblair.net](http://www.sandyblair.net) <[http://www.sandyblair.net](http://www.sandyblair.net/)> 3. The authors have their own website promoting their books, crafts and etc. Also, Suzanne a lot of the authors get their publishers to have contests giving away Kindle or Sony E-book readers and free E-books promoting their books. I think I deserve a Kindle or Sony E-book reader!!! I hope this will help you.

Hi Suzanne,

I always thought that if I were to write a memoir, I'd entitle it, Butter on the Jam Side. That would refer, of course, to my family's preference in that all important recipe for Peanut-butter and Jelly Sandwiches. You didn't necessarily have to butter the peanut butter side, especially since the PB doesn't stick as well to a buttered slice of bread. But Mom, Dad, Sis and I always wanted "butter on the jam side."

I'm sure that you must have a similar story or situation in your book that would offer a ready title. I know I would pick up a book entitled Butter on the Jam Side just to find out what the heck it was talking about! :-)

Best luck in finding your title. Travel mercies for your trip!

It truly is so good to read with friends, Charli Scott

# Reader Ideas

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Suzanne--

What could be a better marketing idea than to showcase it in this book club?!!

Just a snippet from you, and I've been hooked on books I never would've seen or picked out on my own. Guaranteed your readers will want your book anyway, but posting on a forum or in other book clubs like yours is another great way to get the word out.

Enjoy your meeting! I'd wish you luck...but you won't need it! ;)

—Nichole

The book cover catches my eyes, then reading the insert inside the cover about the book and getting the library to put on the new book reading shelves in the library, as I always

Look each time I visit the library; good luck.

Suzanne,

Our library offers a free publication called Book Pages. You've probably heard of it. I pick it up every month and go through all of the reviews and recommendations. I've read some really good books that were highlighted in the Book Pages. And, of course, word of mouth is always one of the best ways to get the word out about a good book. I'll tell two friends, and they tell two friends, and so on, and so on..... :)

I love good cover art. I guess I'm like a kid, that way. If the cover doesn't look interesting, I often pass on the book.

Best of luck with your book! I'm looking forward to reading it.

Katherine Decker. Burlington, Kentucky

# Reader Ideas

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Suzanne:

This is so obvious but I just had to tell you that I had a discussion at work yesterday about why we choose what we read. The cover seems to be the draw for others as well as myself.

I confessed to them that I have always been drawn to a mystery with a cover showing a university or campus theme, ivy, old brick buildings, etc. Why? It communicates mystery? Others expressed the same sort of feelings. This is not news to you but I thought it was interesting coming from the group. I work at a library in the reference dept. and I was with staff from other areas, administration, housekeeping, etc. One thing I've noticed lately is the power of word of mouth. I actually refer to them as such in my book club. Some books we have read: Glass Castle, Water for Elephants, and others came to our attention because of a recommendation of another reader out there.

Just some early morning meanderings and some well wishes and support. Love reading with you. Have added some fish flower pots to my garden because I loved your garden photos.

Have a great day  
Barbara Kasper

Dear Suzanne,

The first thing that draws me to a book is the cover, then the title. I remember seeing the Tamar Myers books "A Pennsylvania Dutch Mystery (with recipes)" and I thought, I have got to try this book, and ended up reading them all. A title with a sense of humor!

Linda Poorman

# Reader Ideas

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Ideas for Marketing?

- The first thing popping into mind: relayed by our own emails sending the releasing text message with an embedded picture of the striking cover in it.
- Arranging an interview with Terry Gross from NPR on "Fresh Air."
- Front cover - A cup of coffee/tea with smoke coming out of it and, in the smoke, a lot of readers in front of their own computer screen flying in all directions.
- Back cover - A pile of books with a saucer on top with a still warm chocolate chip cookie plus text of course.

Best of luck with book and cookies, Thérèse

Hi Suzanne,

The first place I head when I am looking for a new book or new author — the tables displaying the new books - usually with a photo of the new author on the table, too.

And a brief summary of what the book is all about somewhere on that table.

Plain and simple - but it is my way. :)

Good luck and hope you sell a zillion books!!!

Best Regards & Hugs, Pat Swaney

Dear Suzanne as an avid reader when I am in a bookstore a really interesting title and cover will draw my attention, I am especially fond of memoirs so I always look there first. The next thing is there has to be a hook in the first chapter to make me keep reading the book, if it is all descriptions of scenery and places I lose interest quickly, there has to be character descriptions and some drama involved then I am hooked. I will then put the book on my book club list so it gets circulated. Just thought I would pass this along and I do wish you lots of luck in New York,

Wendy Pantony

# Reader Ideas

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What makes me choose one book over another? Many things, but mostly these:

1. The spine. The colors must be appealing enough to make me want to reach for it. The title must be clear enough to read with my head turned sideways, which renders my bifocals useless. The title and the author can't be interchangeable - I have to be able to tell which is which. "Ellen Foster Kaye Gibbons." That sort of thing. The title font must be block letters - please! - and not distorted. It must contrast well with the background colors. However, the title itself doesn't seem to matter to me. Some I prefer over others, of course, but I will read wonderful books with dreadful titles. In fact, it puts an added burden on the reader to figure out why a book was titled as it was. It's a relief to find the title words in a poem or outlined clearly in discussion before you are too far in to worry much about it.

2. The blurb on the book jacket. It has to pull me into the story without giving anything away. It has to be as well written as I hope the book is. It can't use the words "epic," "outstanding," or "lyrical language," even if all those things may be true of it. The characters must be presented as interesting but not perfect - they can't "have it all" and then risk it all because of a "fatal flaw." That's not interesting. No one does that in real life. We fritter our lives away.

3. The book jacket illustration. Must be decent art and/or graphics, but not contrived. Must be relevant. Don't you dare use a bloody knife on the cover if none appears in the story, or that author has lost a reader, probably forever. After all, don't authors have a say in what their books look like? Of course not. This is real life. In real life, things don't match up. In books, they must.

4. The language. The book must have the words that describe places, people and things so I can visualize them in my mind's eye. I have a good imagination, but I like to try and see the book as the author sees it. For that, the author needs to use all of his or her best words. Even police procedurals, with their stark descriptions and endless dialogue, can throw in a crow on a fence row to draw in the mind's eye.

What immediately eliminates a book for me? Family trees on the inside covers, because I know I'll never be able to follow along without flipping back and forth, which interrupts the flow of the story. However, it won't do to simply eliminate the family trees on the inside covers, because then I'll be forced to draw my own family trees as I go, and that will irritate me even more. So leave them there for readers who don't mind them.

Marlene Miller, Pittsburgh, PA

# Reader Ideas

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At our book discussion group last time, we agreed we didn't like long chapters in a book. If you have a good book, word of mouth is a great selling point.

A library show casing as a new book always draws attention.

Billie

Hi Suzanne,

I thought I would jump in with my two cents just in case you find it helpful. I look at the covers and the titles and if one of them catches my eye I pick it up and read the summary. If both of those things work for me then it goes on my to read list. I would also think that somewhere on the front cover or in the summary they should mention your tie to authorbuzz. I know how many of us love your daily story and talk to our friends about them, I have to admit I plan on checking it out simply because I am such a fan of your daily stories that improve my day. Hope this helps.

Jenn Doyle

Hi Suzanne,

I am so excited about your upcoming book! I'll definitely be getting a copy. I think your Dear Reader column is your best marketing tool. Promote that, and your book will sell itself. Your column is so wonderful. I love how we all get to know you through little snippets every day. I almost always buy the books of the blogs that I like to visit on a daily basis. It's kind of like you are part of a club or something. For example, I can't wait for Ree Drummond's (The Pioneer Woman) cookbook to come out. Then when she talks about it on her blog, and I have a copy, then I feel this extra connection to what she's writing about. Hope that makes sense. If you go on a book tour, hope you can make it to your old hometown of Madison! Have fun at your marketing meeting!

Angie Grogan McFarland, WI

# Reader Ideas

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Hi Suzanne,

Thanks for asking about what we like to read. I have been a subscriber to your book club since the beginning...well for ten years anyway and doubt if I have missed many of your daily columns.

Books that touch my soul and connect with my heart are the ones I just have to order. But there is also a writing style that attracts me.

The last two books that I ordered were: Alix Shulman's " To Love What Is" ( I could not bear to have it end) and "Against Medical Advice" by James Patterson.

But your Dear Reader is what I must read every day even if I delete the read.

You write about EVERYTHING and are not afraid to bare your soul and your flaws and laugh at yourself.. When you write about the sweet things your husband does for you, I cry and pray you appreciate him, which I know do. You write about your Mother's love life in her final years, and memories of Grandma Hale. You send people aprons and bubble machines and crazy things found in garage sales. Once you wrote about finding a lizard in your tennis shoe and I had to write back and tell you about the frog I found in mine.

And those wonderful recipes and all that cooking you do...how do you find time to do so many extra special things? Then you take in stray cats, trap them and have them neutered and have time to sit with your grandchild and watch a parade.

I could go on and on but then this would be another book about the columns that have made me laugh or cry or lifted and inspired me. I should have written down the subjects of your stories that touched me the most...but why? They are written in my heart where they will remain.

How can your book miss being a best seller? Have you shared the title with us? It has to be something about "the heart" because yours is so full and so beautiful.

I am grateful you are in my life and yes, it is so good to read with friends.

With love and appreciation, Gayle Rice

# Reader Ideas

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Hi Suzanne,

I'm not a person to spend hours looking around bookstores for something to read. I usually go to the "new additions" area and then start looking around. Something on the cover needs to catch my eye so I would recommend a cover that talks to the viewer ..'look at me .. I have a story to tell'.

Whether this is color or a cover that has some exciting detail. Once I pick up a book I want to either look on the back (if it's a paperback or one with a removable cover) or at something just inside that has a short synopsis of what the book is going to offer. If I'm "hooked" then I'm going to buy it .. or at least write down the name/author and get it from the Library.

Your writing style should be a real hit so getting the buyer/reader to pick it up is all you need! ... besides of course those of us who read with you and just know what you're offering will be wonderful! :)

Cheers! —Pat

Hi Suzanne,

When I read today's column I didn't think that I could come up with any good ideas... until I got to the end. When I got to the part that said 'Thanks for reading with me. It's so good to read with friends.' I said to myself 'That should be the name of the book!' or at least part of the marketing for the book. I also think your marketing should include a picture of you... because you are so beautiful.

Best of luck at your marketing meeting this weekend!

Your friend,  
Nancy Nappi

# Reader Ideas

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Suzanne:

Good Morning! "Experts" always say be true to yourself when pursuing a new adventure. I think you should market your book in the same way you come to us each day - up close and personal. Of course promoting your book through the Online Book Club would be my number one suggestion — but that's practically a given. Another suggestion I would have would be to market your book through smaller venues - what about local libraries?

Parks and Rec facilities? Senior Centers? Local book clubs? Church book clubs? You encourage all of us to read by suggesting interesting books — why not continue by not only promoting your book at local libraries but also promoting reading! Although it probably goes against the "Big Wigs"

ideas of mass marketing in order to reach sales goals - like having a book signing at the biggest mall in America or the largest Barnes & Noble store - I think there are a number of people in smaller venues that would enjoy meeting YOU as much as we do every morning!

Just my two cents...for what it's worth...which is not very much these days...

-Chris Cook

Hi Suzanne,

I buy a book, first, if the subject matter is important to me and secondly if the book jacket tells me something. To me the book cover is a story in itself and I always look at it in-depth.

Good Luck!!!

Nina Lisenby

# Reader Ideas

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Suzanne,

I am so pleased that you will be publishing your book! It is a great accomplishment for you, and it is wonderful that you have been sharing your thoughts with your readers. I am sure that everyone else is as anxious as I am to see the result!

I think it is wonderful that you are asking your readers for suggestions regarding marketing ideas. Your questions as to how I choose a book when I go to the library really got me thinking. Usually, I go with several books in mind. I look through reviews in our local newspapers, as well as some of the trade publications I see at work, such as Library Journal and Publisher's Weekly (I work in a corporate pharmaceutical library). I also like to see what our local libraries are featuring in their monthly book clubs, as well as discuss with friends what they are reading. Recently, I have read several books I might not have selected because a local author was visiting a nearby library, and I was interested in hearing what she had to say, as well as supporting our local talents. I think an author's presence in a library or bookstore setting is very helpful, along with the usual posters, bookmarks, etc. I also find it interesting to read books that have settings in the community in which I grew up or where I now reside.

Since Dearreader.com is offered through many of our local libraries, it might be nice to have the individual libraries mount a campaign for your new book (a Dearreader Day, perhaps??) with posters or DearReader gatherings where your friends can meet and discuss your new book. It could be similar to a one-time book club meeting (with chocolate chip cookies!) and this would really get the word of mouth recommendations moving along. It would not only advertise your new book, but would also provide a forum for more individuals to sign up for the book club and widen their horizons, as well as providing some additional public relations for the local libraries! Another idea might be to have a webcast on the same day and time at libraries during these events so you can introduce yourself, the book clubs, and your new publication!

I wish you the best on the publication of your new book. I, for one, can not wait until next summer, and of course will recommend your book to all of my friends (who are not already book club members!!).

Cheryl Schwartz

Suzanne, I think something with "Chocolate Chip Cookie" in the title would be perfect. Of course, I can't think of anything creative using chocolate chip cookie right now - that's as far as I go, but that could get you started. I hope your chocolate chip cookie recipe is included in the book.....

From a fan and avid reader,  
Marianne Kopchinski

# Reader Ideas

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Suzanne,

The cover is what attracts me to buy a book. For example, if you are sitting in an Adirondack chair at the beach or on a porch swing reading a good book, that would attract my attention. The cover should be fun.

For historical romance books, I like a sexy cover of a man and woman.

I hope this helps. Good luck in New York. I can't wait to read your book.

Lisa

Suzanne,

I think with a memoir, the title and of course the person it's about are the strongest draws for me. If Chelsea Handler had called her book "Chelsea Handler: A Life" it probably wouldn't have interested me as much as "Are you there Vodka? It's Me, Chelsea"!

Catchy title to match a great writer...what more could one want?!

Lisë Chlebanowski  
Library Manager  
Sam Garcia Western Avenue Library

Dear Suzanne,

Can hardly wait until 2010 when your book comes out. I would like to see "reading with Suzanne" somewhere on the cover myself as that is how I identify you immediately. Have been reading with you for several years & absolutely love your intro in each column. You have introduced me to quite a few books that I would have passed by if not for your columns, thanks.

GOOD LUCK with your BOOK!!!

Your Fan, Jane Ashby

# Reader Ideas

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I'm basically lazy...what I love about my library is when you walk in, there are shelves up front that are all "new" titles, separated by genre. It makes it easy to do a quick walk around and see what's new.

I guess they are copying what the bookstores do, although I don't spend a lot of time in bookstores!! I prefer my library.

I like a blurb on the back that gives me a quick flavor of what the book is about. A bunch of fawning quotes don't mean much...hate to say it, but most of the time I think they probably paid someone or were owed a favor for the gushing quotes. Or there is one word (Awesome!) that makes me wonder what they left out!!

I like an informative title and a cover that reflects the style of the book...funky, romantic, serious. It's like cutting into a cake...you see the cake, your mouth starts watering and you pretty much know what to expect. Once in a while, when you cut it and it's radically different from what it looked like, it can be disappointing...a big surprise is usually not a good thing.

Have a great time in New York!! I was there last week--tagged along on my husbands business trip and "hosted" a couple of girlfriends in our hotel room so we could have a girls weekend, with a free place to stay.

(Yes, my husband is a really really good sport to put up with all of us!) On our way to make monkey faces at Al Roker, I tripped on a curb and fractured my foot at Rockefeller Plaza. Luckily, it was only a fracture and we were still able to get on camera and make faces on the Today Show and then did a 14 hour day seeing Manhattan top to bottom!

Wouldn't want to live there, but it's a lot of fun to explore!

Debbie Williams | Procter & Gamble Publix Team