

Author Directions: Navigating your success with book launches

Advice and tips for organising your own book launch



Introduction

Having your book published is quite possibly one of the most exciting moments in your career. After many years of hard work your book is finally in front of your peers and the public. As an author, you may want to arrange a book launch to meet and engage with your audience – who'll hopefully purchase a few copies of your book!

Our resource guide will help you plan your book launch, with advice and tips from Taylor & Francis authors well versed in organising launches themselves.

6 Key Tips for Organising a Book Launch:

1. Planning your event
2. Audience (who to invite?)
3. Plan the agenda
4. Be your own marketer – share your event widely in your network
5. Get your materials from your publisher in plenty of time
6. After the launch

Planning your event

1

Venue

Making an initial plan of your launch will help focus your energies on delivering the event and making the most of it. Dr Anuradha Chatterjee author of *John Ruskin and the Fabric of Architecture* (2017), recommends you 'think about the venue, the guests, the date, and above all, the structure and length of the event, and the guest speaker who is going to launch the book!'

Another consideration for your launch is the type of event, should it be in a venue you have booked yourself or part of a much larger event such as at a conference? Author Prof. Godfrey Baldacchino of *Solution Protocols to Festering Island Disputes* (2017), highlights 'the basic tenet of organising a book launch is to piggy-back on a cognate event with its own captive market and audience. This widens and broadens the appeal of the book as well as its visibility and knowledge of its existence.' Prof. Baldacchino also points out you can keep costs down by taking part in an already booked event or venue.

If you choose not to piggy-back on another event, an alternative avenue is utilising organisations or institutions you have affiliations with, they maybe be willing to host the event for free or for a very minimal fee. Bookshops are sometimes willing to help authors with book launches, author Dr Chatterjee advises 'to plan your launch at a bookshop that can stock copies of



your books or the launch is pointless. Ask if the bookshop is able to provide a launch night discount (for the venue). Most bookstores will let you use a space for free as long as you self-cater.'

When choosing a venue, it may be tempting to book as large a venue as possible and splash out on catering, however from Dr Chatterjee's experience she points out a *'smaller venue with no more than 50 definite admissions is best, as you then get to know your audience.'* She also suggests you don't *'need a caterer, bring your own food, wine and get your glasses delivered.'*

Weekday & Length of Launch

Once you have decided the type of launch you would like, if not part of a larger event, then the day in the week you choose is just as important. If you are hoping to invite journalists as part of your guest list, according to Alison Baverstock (2015) journalists working on Sunday papers do not work on Monday and Tuesday as it is a little early in the week for them to be interested. Whether you are inviting journalists or not, she also advises Friday's are best avoided as it is the start of the weekend. For timings, Baverstock recommends after work as the most convenient, between 6-8pm if assuming guests will be going elsewhere to eat, however breakfast or lunchtime could also be an alternative. From Dr Chatterjee's own experience organising her own launch, she recommends the event should be no more than two hours from reception to closing.



Guest Speakers

Approaching guest speakers to speak at your event can feel daunting. After all who would be most appropriate to comment on your work and the subject? Editor of the *Handbook of Small States* (2018), Prof. Lino Briguglio chooses speakers versed in the subject and advises *'if you can have a well-known person it will of course attract the audience!'* Although if you are keen to have a well-known speaker or VIP attending as your main guest, Baverstock (2015) suggests the event may have to be organised around their diary. Dr Chatterjee recommends that ultimately the official launch speech should be made by someone important who has been invited by you, who knows and supports your work. Finally, to encourage guest speakers to speak at the event, Prof. Briguglio suggests giving your guests speakers a theme and a slot of no more than 20 mins.

As well as contacting guest speakers, it might also be worth having a person to chair the event. If your launch is not part of a conference it will give your launch structure, and is integral to the running of a round table or panel discussion, as mentioned below.

Activities

Book launches do not need to follow the format of just presentations, you can do a round table discussion where guests can participate. Guest speakers you invited could be on each table to lead the discussion on the book and the subject.

If space is limited, a panel discussion could be an alternative, with an invited panel discussing the book and its subject in front of the audience. There can be time following the discussion for audience participation and to ask further questions.

Q&As with the audience are, in general, a great way to promote your book. Prof. Baldacchino highlights '*allowing time for members of the audience to field questions allows you to delve into some of the details of the book*'. This can also work if there are several co-authors or editors of the book, as the audience can ask questions to all those involved.

If you have the equipment, filming the panel session is also a great opportunity to create content that could be shared with your publishers. The footage you filmed can be edited by the marketing team and promoted via social media.

Audience (who to invite)

2

Planning who to invite to your launch is just as crucial as planning the event itself. The guests could be potential customers or even promote the book through their own networks. You should be aware of striking a balance between targeting your invites at the right audience, and inviting enough people to ensure a good turnout. Author Dr Chatterjee mentions from her own experience that '*I did have an audience in mind but if I had targeted a very select audience the launch would not have been successful as the turn out would have been thin. Because I used Eventbrite to create the invites and free tickets, it reached a much wider audience (especially professionals), and I sold many copies of the book, to people I had never met before.*' Whilst Prof. Baldacchino points out that the '*audience must be receptive to some of the basic tenets of the book's arguments*', otherwise you risk low turnout or an audience who are not familiar with the book's subject.



3

Plan the agenda

You have settled on the venue or event at which to hold your book launch, contacted the guest speakers, confirmed their attendance, and thought about your invite list. The next important step in organising your event is creating an agenda. This will be central to the promotion of your event and help guests know what to expect throughout the launch.

Dr Chatterjee shares an example of her own agenda:

6.00pm Book launch guests check in and drinks

6.30pm Author welcomes the guests and presents the book through a short PowerPoint presentation

6.45pm Author invites questions from the guests/audience

7pm Author introduces and invites guest to provide comments on the book and launch it

Finally: Give thanks and invite guests to mingle, and begin book sales.

Seasoned author Prof. Briguglio starts with a 15-minute book presentation, followed by inviting the guest speakers to come up and speak for an hour, and finishing with a discussion with the audience. In total the whole event he plans takes 1hr and 30mins.

The agenda is also important if you are having a chair or VIP attending the event, as they will want to know what to expect for the event and in the case of the chair they can ensure that the launch stays on track!

4

Be your own Marketer!

Create the invite

The venue is booked, agenda set and guest speakers are invited – now it's time to shout about the event to your network! A good starting point would be creating an invite and a good place to do this is using an event registration site like [Eventbrite](#), it is free for event organisers to use if you're not charging for tickets when choosing the Essential package. In Dr Chatterjee's own experience of using the service she found useful for tracking the number of possible attendees. There are many other providers that offer free services for free tickets, for example: [Ticket Source](#) and [Ticketing Hub](#).

Promote the event

The invites have been created, and now it is time to share it in your networks. If you have a social media presence, what better way to start than sharing the link for the event registration you created using a platform such as [Eventbrite](#), Dr Chatterjee (2018) used Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and Twitter to promote her event. She also highlighted when promoting her event '*Using public platforms such as Facebook or Eventbrite means that people who come live locally and they are also genuinely interested.*'

Prof. Baldacchino also highlights social media as the driving force behind promoting his event, using his own Facebook page, Twitter handle and even the signature to his e-mail correspondence. He also recommends that when using social media to promote the launch, that photos help a lot!

If you are new to using social media or need some tips, read our free resource [Navigating your success in Social Media: 5 Key Tips for Authors Using Social Media](#).

Another way to promote your event is to email the details of the launch and link to your event registration such as [Eventbrite](#), to people in your network. They could be colleagues, relevant contacts in your network or even professionals you have not met, but you'd like to invite. Taking time to craft an email to your contacts will give a nice personal touch, and promote the event appropriately – after all you planned the event and know its unique selling points! If you have well known guest speakers in the field don't forget to highlight their attendance to the launch.

Let your editorial contacts at your publisher know about the event, even sharing the event registration link. It will allow your publisher to promote it to their audience on social media for your books subject and reach an even wider audience.



Get Materials

Whilst getting your event planned and organised, don't forget to contact your publisher for promotional materials. Ask them for printed copies of your book's flyers with a discount for your book and a show card, but remember there may be a limit to the number of flyers your publisher can supply. Always ask for the digital file of the flyer, therefore if you run out of flyers you can print more at the event. Publishers often also supply a few copies of the book for display as well, speak to them to find out more.

Having copies of your book to buy for your guests is an important element to your book launch. Dr Chatterjee highlighted selling copies of her hardback at her launch. Hosting an event dedicated to your new title, means it's the ideal place to sell copies of it.

If you are hosting the event at a bookshop it is possible, though by no means certain, that the bookshop will consider purchasing and selling copies of your book.

If the answer isn't positive or if the event is taking place elsewhere, Taylor & Francis have dedicated regional sales support teams to assist authors purchasing their books for a number of purposes, including events. As an author, you receive discount terms and furthermore the sales team can discuss purchase and payment options, as well as offering practical advice, to make sure you get the books to the right place, at the right time.

Contact the following mailboxes four weeks before the launch event on:

- ❑ North and South America: orders@taylorandfrancis.com
- ❑ Australia and New Zealand: books@tandf.com.au
- ❑ UK, Europe and Rest of World: cis@tandf.co.uk

After the launch

The hard work has paid off and you had a successful launch, but that is not the end of it. Guests who attended had taken their time to come and there is nothing more gracious than sending an email thanking all those who attended. Dr Chatterjee suggests not only thanking guests that attended but also circulating the book order form (usually on the digital copy of the flyer) to those who could not attend.

Following up with guests who attended, thanking them for their time, shows the guests how valued their time was. Also, if they missed out on purchasing the book at the event they can still purchase at the discounted rate. This also applies to those that did not attend, acknowledging their presence was missed is a nice touch and shows your genuine interest in wanting them to attend as well as letting them know they are entitled to purchase the book at a discount.

More Top Tips from our Authors

- Invite more people than you would admit as fifty percent of the people change their mind on then night and then you have the right number of people
- Do not restrict invites to a niche crowd
- Check dates with important people
- Do not plan it around key festival dates in the city
- Have more than one friend take photos and tweet during the event.

– **Dr Chatterjee**

- Communicate the wide interests and foci that would benefit from a read of your work
- Specialist audiences are small and they usually will not need much convincing to invest in a copy of your work. Anyone else does need that nudge.

– **Prof. Baldacchino**

Conclusion

Book launches are a special moment in an author's career, where you can take to the stage and have your time to shine. It also is a great opportunity to see often years of hard work come together with an audience who are interested in your subject area and eager to hear more about it!

You may not immediately enjoy being the centre of attention but take comfort that you are not alone! Many authors feel the same starting out, as Prof. Godfrey Baldacchino (2018) reflected he effuses more confidence today thanks to years of experience in publishing, and presenting.

Acknowledgements

While researching this snapshot's topic, we turned to Dr Anuradha Chatterjee author of *John Ruskin and the Fabric of Architecture*, Prof. Godfrey Baldacchino author of *Solution Protocols to Festering Island Disputes* and Prof. Lino Briguglio editor of *Handbook of Small States* (and many more titles!) for advice and guidance based on their professional experience. We are grateful to these contributors for taking the time to be interviewed and for sharing their knowledge with our audience.

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Interviews

Dr Anuradha Chatterjee (1st February 2018), Email Interview.

Prof. Godfrey Baldacchino (1st February 2018), Email Interview.

Prof. Lino Briguglio (31st January 2018), Email Interview.

References



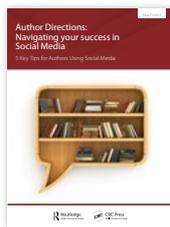
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Ticket Source www.ticketsource.co.uk/pricing

Ticketing Hub: www.ticketinghub.com

Published with Taylor & Francis?

As an author, you can make bulk orders of your title for book launches and events by contacting the following mailboxes four weeks before the launch event on:

- North and South America: orders@taylorandfrancis.com
- Australia and New Zealand: books@tandf.com.au
- UK, Europe and Rest of World: cis@tandf.co.uk

Additional Resources

John Ruskin and the Fabric of Architecture, 2017

Dr Anuradha Chatterjee

www.routledge.com/9781472449436

Solution Protocols to Festering Island Disputes, 2017

Prof. Godfrey Baldacchino

www.routledge.com/9781472475183

Handbook of Small States, 2018

Edited by Prof. Lino Briguglio

www.routledge.com/9781857439281