

The
Wow

e-newsletter

by Ken and Dahlynn McKowen

Principles

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Timing is Everything

In the business of everything media, timing is key. Which station scores the first news scoop, whose story hits the papers with aplomb, and which press release receives lots of play often depends on whether it's a slow news day—or not.

News media are ferocious beasts, as they have to come up with thousands of new stories each year. Knowing when to time your press release blast or announce your latest book so the news media pays attention is akin to being able to predict the future. Sometimes you get lucky, sometimes you don't. For the purposes of this article, we're going to share some personal stories regarding timing as it relates to two of our *Chicken Soup for the Soul* books.

Have you ever noticed that most new books, CDs and DVD releases come out on a Tuesday? This is a publishing industry standard so retailers can receive last-minute shipments on Mondays in preparation for the release. But sometimes a publisher will buck the status quo and release a book on another day, such as Harry Potter books, which are typically released on a Friday or Saturday.

Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows, the final book in this series, is due out on Saturday, July 21st. Our newest book—*Chicken Soup for the Soul in Menopause: Living and Laughing Through Hot Flashes and Hormones*—is due out three days later, on Tuesday, July 24th. While no book can compete with the mega-sales of a Harry Potter book, there is a way to take advantage of a phenomenon such as this: if your book is written for a different readership and you're able to get great placement of your book in a store, then schedule your book's release for the same time.

For example, the target demographics for *Chicken Soup* books are women, ages 24 to 54, which is the typical gender and age range for those purchasing a Harry Potter book. *Soul in Menopause* does not focus on the same readership as a Harry Potter book, but those purchasing that book are our target market. *Chicken Soup for the Soul's* brand name alone will catch the eyes of these buyers, so we're thrilled with the traffic the Potter book will bring into the stores.

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But our timing hasn't been so key for another one of our books, *Chicken Soup for the Fisherman's Soul*. Two of our celebrity contributors were Presidents Jimmy Carter and George H. Bush (senior), and their fishing stories were wonderful and funny. But it was Presidents Ronald Reagan, Richard Nixon and Bill Clinton that squashed sales of our title, and there was no way to predict two of those three "squashes."

Fisherman's Soul came out on May 18, 2004, and the main sales blast focused on June 20th, Father's Day. We were creating tons of media buzz around the title, especially with Carter and Bush and retired General H. Norman Schwarzkopf as guest contributors. Then June 5th came, and so did the passing of President Reagan. All of a sudden, the frenzy to buy Reagan books for Father's Day gifts was the rage. We couldn't get anywhere with the media. To top it off, President Clinton released his hardcover book "My Life" on June 22nd, two days after Father's Day. While we had predicted a sales drop because of Clinton's book, Reagan's passing was something we had a hard time recovering from.




"Higginson believes that timing is everything."

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So the following year, the publisher agreed to another media blast for *Fisherman's Soul*, again focused on Father's Day sales. Then in early June, a 91-year-old man by the name of Mark Felt came out of the shadows and announced he was "Deep Throat." Books about Watergate and the Nixon presidency flew off the shelves. It's fun telling this story about five presidents now, even though we had the wrong two presidents in our title!

Again, timing is everything. While we can never predict the future by the past, at least we have learned some lessons along the way, lessons we hope will help you in your success as a writer and author. 

VACATION TIME IS HERE!

Time to sharpen up that pencil and write some stories from your travels! Go to our website and check out three e-newsletter back issues to get you started:

June 2006: Travel Writing 1A

July 2006: Travel Writing 1B

August 2006: Travel Writing 101—Tips for Selling Travel Stories



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HOT STUFF! HOT STUFF!



Chicken Soup for the Do-It-Yourselfer's Soul

By Jack Canfield, Mark Victor Hansen, Dahlynn McKowen and Ken McKowen

Owning your own home is the American Dream, but transforming a house into your home—and doing it yourself—is what this book is all about. From decorating to demolition, painting to plumbing, pounding nails to pounding thumbnails, these stories will offer encouragement and entertainment to do-it-yourselfers, the novice and the experienced.

The deadline for story submissions is September 30, 2007. Send your stories directly to Publishing Syndicate at Story@PublishingSyndicate.com. **LIST “DO-IT-YOURSELFER’S SOUL” IN THE SUBJECT LINE OF YOUR E-MAIL SO OUR SPAM FILTER DOESN’T DUMP IT.** All stories must be true and written in first person. Also, please keep the story length at about 900 words. Submit stories in the body of your e-mail; no attachments, please.

For further submission guidelines, go to Publishing Syndicate’s website and click on “How to Submit Your Chicken Soup Story.” The release date for this book is 2008.

The following Chicken Soup books need stories from you!

IMPORTANT: We are not creating the titles below, only passing along the call-outs, so please do not send them to Publishing Syndicate. Submit stories for the following books to www.ChickenSoup.com.

Celebrating Moms: An all new collection of stories about moms. Deadline: July 15, 2007. Submit to www.ChickenSoup.com.

Runner’s Soul: The stories in this book will give us an insight into the runner’s soul. Deadline: July 31, 2007. Submit to www.ChickenSoup.com.

Father and Son’s Soul: Stories that celebrate the special relationship between a father and a son. Deadline: August 31, 2007. Submit to www.ChickenSoup.com.

Football Lover’s Soul: Stories of inspiration and resilience from football players and the fans who love football. Deadline: August 31, 2007. Submit to www.ChickenSoup.com.

Go for it! Get published!

www.PublishingSyndicate.com