

How to Use LBO Template to Promote KDP Free Days

To have lots of people download your Kindle book during your KDP free promotion days, you have to let lots of interested people know about it!

Using Word of Mouth and General Internet Sites

You certainly want to tell your friends and family that your book is available free. Announce it on your website, personal Facebook page, Facebook Author page, and other social media. Include a handy link to your Amazon book page, and ask your friends to share the link on their pages. Announce your promo on websites whose members and visitors would be interested in your particular genre or subject matter. Hopefully you are already frequenting those sites and participating in their discussions because of your shared interest. Authors can post free Kindle promotions on book discussion forums like Goodreads.com, LibraryThing.com, and Kindleboards.com.

Using Websites that Publicize Free Kindle Books

To take your promotion to the next level, you can use services that publicize free Kindle books to their subscribers by e-mail, Facebook, Twitter, etc. Many of these services are free to the author. A few require you to register with their site, which is generally free. After scheduling the free promotion on your KDP Bookshelf, you simply notify the services and they take it from there.

Each service has its own way of doing things.

- **Deadline** - How long before your first free day must you notify them? A few want two weeks advance notice, some a week or less. A few don't want to hear from you until your book is actually free.
- **Type of book** - Some sites specialize in a certain genre. Many have content restrictions regarding sex, violence, profanity, etc.
- **Selectivity** - Some sites list only books that have a minimum number of customer reviews on Amazon and a minimum average rating, usually 4.0 or higher. If your book has received fewer reviews than required, try to line up more before your free KDP promotion approaches. If your book's average rating on Amazon is below 4.0, stick with the sites that have no minimum rating requirement.
- **Guaranteed listing (or not)** - Some sites, including those prized for large viewership (PixelofInk.com and EReaderNewsToday.com) feature only a small number of the free Kindle books submitted to them. Other sites say they will not guarantee that your book will be publicized by them unless you pay a fee. Some promise extra exposure for a fee.
- **Notification method** - Most provide a form on their website for authors to fill out regarding their free e-book. Be prepared to provide any or all of the following:
 - ◆ Dates the book will be free
 - ◆ Book title
 - ◆ Genre and subgenre (for example, fiction/mystery)
 - ◆ Author's name

- ◆ Author's e-mail address
- ◆ Author's website
- ◆ ASIN (find it on your Amazon book page)
- ◆ URL of your Amazon.com book page
- ◆ URL of your Amazon.co.uk book page
- ◆ Book description from your Amazon book page
- ◆ Book cover image (different sites have different size specifications)
- ◆ Author bio, which you can adapt from your Amazon author page. (You have one of those, right? If not, set one up now.)

On my spreadsheet, I designated cells on the spreadsheet for you to enter the most commonly requested items on the list above. I also provided a hyperlinked list of the free notification services I've personally used. You will undoubtedly find more sites that meet your needs. Go ahead and add new links into your spreadsheet, and delete from my starter list any that don't suit you. If you're required to register with a site, copy the user ID and password into the designated area on the spreadsheet for future reference.

When you're ready to start notifying these services about a KDP promo you have scheduled, open your customized copy of the spreadsheet in a half-width window. Click on the hyperlink for the first notification site and look for the section inviting authors to list free Kindle books. Make sure your book meets the site's specifications. Arrange your browser and spreadsheet windows side-by-side. Using copy and paste from the spreadsheet cells, fill in the required information and submit it according to the site's instructions. Enter a check mark on the spreadsheet to record that this site has been notified. Enter any comments on the spreadsheet for future reference.

Do the same for all the sites on your list. You'll have to parcel out this job over several separate days because different sites have different timelines for notification. By copying and pasting you can speed up the process of notifying twenty or more sites, and ensure accuracy if you're a lousy typist like me.

Using Twitter to Publicize Your Promo

Another great publicity method uses Twitter and, optionally, a tweet management program such as TweetDeck or HootSuite.

My spreadsheet lists the twitter handles of services that publicize free Kindle books. Before your promotion, follow each of them on Twitter. While you're at it, you might want to create a Twitter list like "Free EBook Listers" and add each of them to it. Most of them probably will also follow you.

On each day of your KDP promotion period, send out intermittent tweets announcing: FREE TODAY for Kindle: Title, #genre, link to book page. The hash tag (#) directs your tweet to the attention of people interested in that genre. Twitter limits the number of characters per message, so you might want to use TinyURL.com or a similar free service to convert your book page's full URL to a shorter link.

Copy and paste into each tweet one or two of the Twitter handles listed in the spreadsheet, naming each account once per day. This will get their attention and encourage them to retweet your message to their other followers. Thank the ones who do retweet. And check them off on your spreadsheet to record your efforts.

Intermittent tweets are more effective and less annoying to recipients than one mammoth barrage. But I can't interrupt my work every hour on the hour to issue a new tweet. This is where my TweetDeck comes in. I can compose a tweet on TweetDeck and click on the little clock button at the bottom of the composing box to schedule it for future release. If I highlight and copy the text of my tweet into the designated cell in my spreadsheet before clicking the Tweet button, I can use copy and paste to quickly compose and schedule a number of identical tweets and let TweetDeck release them at my specified times throughout the day. Don't neglect the overnight hours; people are up and around somewhere at most every time of day.

To avoid obnoxious repetition, pop in different enticing details about your book. For example, some tweets for my e-book *Songs for the Lord* contained the phrase "original hymns and faith songs." *Songs for the Lord* boasted a 5 star average rating on Amazon, so I added the blurb, "5.0 average Amazon rating" in some of my tweets. Part way through its first free day, it reached the number 1 rank among free Kindle books in both the Christian music and general music categories. So I mentioned that in several subsequent tweets.

"FREE TODAY" gives a greater sense of urgency than specifying the date range of a multi-day promotion period. On the final day of a multi-day promo, change "FREE TODAY" to "LAST DAY FREE" to increase the urgency to download the freebie before it's too late. If your promo is a one-day event, use "FREE TODAY ONLY."

No one likes people who only contact them to sell them something, even if it's free. If you're going to advertise your book on Twitter, be a sport and help other people by retweeting their messages and participating in discussions that aren't pushing a product. I personally have a hard time with this, because I don't take to Twitter as easily as I do to my Facebook groups. But it's the courteous thing to do.

Using Facebook Groups that Publicize Free Kindle Books

My spreadsheet also lists Facebook groups that promote free Kindle books. I used only a handful of these; no doubt there are many more you can add to your list if you wish. Join or "Like" the group ahead of time, and participate in the discussion of other people's books.

When you're ready to post your freebie, read the group's guidelines carefully and follow them. These may be in a Note or in the About section.

Monitoring Your KDP Promotion Results

During and after your promotion period, you can check progress in a couple of ways.

The Month-to-Date Unit Sales Report on your KDP Bookshelf will show you the number of paid sales, Kindle Owners Lending Library borrows, and free downloads for the current month or the previous month. Don't forget to click the dropdown box to switch from Amazon.com to Amazon's various European affiliates and check results for each of them. *Songs for the Lord* has been downloaded in Spain and Germany as well as the United Kingdom, so you never know!

Also look at the Amazon Best Sellers Rank at the bottom of the Product Details section of your Amazon book page. See where your book ranks among free Kindle books overall and in various categories. I like to print the page to a PDF file to save several snapshots of the rankings over the course of the promo. Remember, the rankings are relative to all the other Kindle books that are free on a given day.

Amazon also has line charts showing your Author Rank and Sales Rank. Remember, they show the trend in your rankings (relative to others) not the trend in your sales volume. You can access Author Rank and Sales Rank in the Author Central section of Amazon. I haven't found them to be terribly useful, but you might. I noticed that the best sales rank plotted on my line chart in Author Central was not as good as the best rank I'd observed on my book page.

After your free days end, continue to watch the rankings and paid sales. If you got a decent number of free downloads, they should compare favorably to your rankings and sales prior to the free promo. What's a decent number? It varies. Works of popular fiction genres can see thousands of downloads during free promos. Authors of niche books like *Songs for the Lord* might be delighted with two or three hundred. Again, it's all relative to the competition. You want your download volume to boost your ratings so that a buyer who searches for a book in your category will find YOUR book in the search results before she finds a competitor's book and quits looking. That success will be measured by the increased sales I hope you'll experience.

Good luck!

-Linda