



SO EASY

MARKETING YOUR COOKBOOK



- Your Cookbook Style
- Timing Your Sales
- Your Target Audience
- Pricing Your Cookbook
- Promotions & Using the Internet



Where To Start

Community cookbooks are very popular for a reason – people love to eat and personal recipes evoke memories and traditions. Most of our customers discover cookbook sales come very easily; in fact, word of mouth is often all it takes to sell to family, friends, and organization and community members. Recipe contributors are the first to buy, purchasing an average of three cookbooks each. For groups engaged in fundraising, many people will buy to help support your cause. If sales are brisk and you're concerned about selling out, call us at **800-445-6621** and we can assist you with a reprint order.

Your Cookbook Style

Marketing your cookbook involves identifying its most valuable assets. Your cookbook style will spark buyers' interest. Traditional and themed are the two basic cookbook styles; however, they are not exclusive and are often combined. Below are a few case studies to get you thinking about features and events to capture sales.

Traditional Cookbooks

Traditional cookbooks can be found in almost every home. Most community cookbooks are traditional and feature a variety of recipes, ranging from appetizers to desserts. Traditional cookbooks appeal to the local, grass roots American market, and they often reflect the regional cuisine, as well as the character and ethnicity of a community. They include easy-to-follow recipes with common ingredients. Traditional cookbooks appeal to the masses and can be sold to most anyone.

Sometimes a few recipes are all it takes to make your cookbook a must-have. Recipes from local celebrities or award-winning recipes on a national, regional, and even local level can generate sales. If you have included these types of recipes in your cookbook, be sure to make buyers aware.

Themed Cookbooks

Like a traditional cookbook, a themed cookbook can feature a wide variety of recipes; however, the recipes often focus on a certain concept or idea. Themes can be centered around an event, an organization, a worthy cause, a cooking style, a time period, a location/region, an activity, etc.

One such example is the *Paradise Chocolate Fest Cookbook*, which was published by the Paradise Boys and Girls' Club in conjunction with their annual Chocolate Fest. Every recipe contained chocolate – even the main dishes. The event appealed to all lovers of chocolate, so cookbook sales were easy to make during the group's Chocolate Fest.

Wild-N-Tame, Fish-N-Game, The Hunter's Cookbook, by Lynn M. Moore, is another themed cookbook. It included information about field dressing, preserving, cooking, and freezing fish and wild game. The cover, fillers, and dividers featured photos and drawings of wild game and fish. This cookbook sold well to men via hunting and fishing retailers.

The "100 Men Who Cook" was a unique fundraising event with proceeds going to local programs and projects. The event included raffles and a live auction while local men celebrities cooked, waited on tables, and got tipped. The ticket purchaser received a *100 Men Who Cook* cookbook that included recipes from the night's menu. Because of its huge success, there are many of these events going on across the country each year, with revenue generated well over \$50,000 per event.

Combination Traditional & Themed

Often a traditional cookbook includes a category of recipes that help incorporate a theme. For example, a church known for its annual Christmas Cookie Walk included an entire section of cookie recipes. Sales were effortless during their cookie walk event.

Timing Your Sales

Careful timing can make a significant impact on your cookbook sales. Sales can be timed around events, such as an anniversary or a community event – anything that draws a crowd is an opportune time to make sales. Sales can also be timed around holidays. The months leading up to Christmas and Mother's Day are profitable selling times, as cookbooks make excellent gifts.

Presales

Presales are a great way to earn funds. Morris Press Cookbooks offers *Advance Sales Coupons* and *Gift Certificates* to take early orders – print these items from our web site’s Download Center. Build momentum and encourage early orders by letting people know about your cookbooks before they even arrive. Post announcements in places where people gather, use your organization’s newsletter and web site, use social networking sites, such as Facebook, and post a video on YouTube.

For inspiration, watch a fun marketing video (found under “Featured Videos” in our online Video Library) created by the ladies of Madison Church of Christ. Their creativeness helped them sell many more cookbooks than the church ever felt was possible. Always tell potential buyers how funds will be used. People will quickly support a good cause.

Your Target Audience

Along with timing sales comes determining your target audience – the people most likely to purchase your cookbook. If you are part of an organization, many sales will come from group members; however, identify others in the community that may be interested in your cookbook. This is the group to whom you will direct the majority of your promotions and public relations.

The following characteristics are common among cookbook buyers: 3 out of 10 women collect cookbooks, 68% of all cookbook buyers are women, and women with a higher income will spend more for cookbooks.

When trying to determine your target audience, consider the style of your cookbook. If your cookbook is traditional with a good variety of recipes, there are many ways to sell to a broad audience. If your cookbook contains specialty recipes, such as slow cooker, low-fat, gluten-free, or wild game, it will appeal to a smaller, more specific audience.

Once you’ve determined your target audience, sell your cookbook at the places frequented by potential purchasers. For example, sell a cookbook containing healthy recipes at a fitness center or local gym. A cookbook with slow cooker recipes may be just what the busy mom needs, so sales could be made at daycare centers. Perhaps you live in an area that attracts tourists. Visitors often buy souvenirs for family, friends, or themselves. If your cookbook contains community history or memorabilia, local retailers may be willing to carry it for tourist sales.

Pricing Your Cookbook

Setting the right price for your cookbook is important, especially if you are raising funds for a good cause. The price should cover all your costs, attract buyers, and make a good profit. At a minimum, you should double your costs – if your cookbook costs \$5 to make, sell it for at least \$10. Many organizations are able to sell for 3–4 times their book’s cost.

Your costs, your target audience, the cover style, and your cookbook’s features are the primary factors in price setting. To help, Morris Press Cookbooks offers suggested selling prices with our price charts. Adding certain features, such as a hardback cover or custom full-color dividers, will give your cookbook a higher perceived value; therefore, you should set a higher sale price. A good rule of thumb is to double a feature’s cost and add it to the cookbook price. When your cookbook has a higher perceived value, buyers feel they are getting more bang for their buck.

When setting your price, consider the dynamics of your target audience. If the market is older and more affluent, chances are buyers won’t hesitate to purchase a thick 3-ring cookbook for \$25. In fact, underpricing your cookbook to this group may give the impression it’s not all that great. On the other hand, if demographics for your market are young families, they have more careful spending habits. In this case, a cookbook in the \$12 to \$15 range is more appropriate. Regardless, when a product is being sold to benefit a good cause, many are willing to make the purchase to give the fundraiser a boost.

If you are still unsure of how to price your cookbooks, compare other community cookbooks to yours in size, style, number of recipes, artwork, type of cover, and price. With this information, you will be able to determine what the market would be willing to spend for your cookbook. To create sales momentum, consider offering discounts for early orders or purchases of three or more cookbooks. As long as you have set the right price for your cookbook, you will still be able to make a good profit.

Promotions

Once your target audience and cookbook price have been determined, the next step is making sales. Free promotions should always be the primary focus; in fact, most groups rarely need to spend money for advertising. Free promotions you can easily use include press releases, public service announcements, contests, and more.

Press Releases

The press release is the most accepted method of conveying information to the media. Its purpose is to spark interest, so by providing the facts, you are inviting people to discover more about your cookbook and fundraising endeavor. The information to include in a press release is the who, what, when, where, and why of your cookbook. Write your release as a story – not as an advertisement – as the media likes personable human-interest stories.

Mention your cookbook's special features and include any photos that help tell the story. Be clear about your cookbook's price, as well as where and when it will be sold. If you host an event for your cookbook, consider the timing of your press release to make sure it is effective. You can promote your event and raise the level of interest before your cookbooks even arrive.

A press release can be sent to local or regional newspapers, magazines, radio stations, and TV stations. The fastest method is via e-mail; however, try to find a direct contact. Otherwise, your e-mail may be deleted, end up in a spam filter, or simply go unnoticed. Check the media's web site or call to get a name and e-mail address. Press releases can also be sent to area organizations or clubs, as many have a monthly newsletter in which they could include information about your cookbook.

Some magazines, newspapers, and newsletters may have a column devoted to cooking or local fundraising efforts. If you want to be listed in a column like this, you should include a letter regarding the specific column in which you want your information to appear. If you send a press release to a radio or TV station, be prepared if the station calls to set up an interview. Designate a cookbook spokesperson and request the station send you the list of questions they'll ask beforehand so that you can be prepared, reduce jitters, and sound confident during the interview.

More tips for writing a press release:

- State "For Immediate Release" or your intended release date at the top of the page.
- Include a contact name, address, phone number, and e-mail address near the top so reporters can contact the appropriate person if they have more questions.
- Provide a snappy headline to catch readers' attention.
- Write in third person (as if someone else were writing about the cookbook). Use first person only if you are being quoted.
- Use short, concise sentences and paragraphs; try to keep the press release under one page in length.
- Include the most important information in the first paragraph to hook readers into the story.
- Include sample recipe titles and a footnote indicating sample recipes are available for publication.
- Request to be placed in the food, "What's New," or social section; you will reach those interested in cooking.
- Aim to have the release printed in weekend editions, as people have more time to read and get to your sales location.
- Send releases to newspapers, radio stations, and TV stations two weeks ahead of your intended release date.
- Send releases to magazines at least two months ahead of your intended release date.

Public Service Announcements

A public service announcement (PSA) is another way to let people know about your fundraising cause through the media. PSAs are offered free of charge, as the media donates their space and time. By using a PSA to promote your cookbook, you can gain more exposure and increase your sales potential, as well as promote the cause for which you are raising funds. Plus, people are more likely to buy your product if they know the proceeds are going to a charitable cause.

Cookbook & Recipe Contests

To gain prize-winning recognition, enter your cookbook and/or certain recipes from it in contests. If your cookbook becomes an award winner, you can market it with another press release. If any recipes help you win a contest, be sure to emphasize that they can be found in your cookbook. Any winning recognition will spark interest and add great value to your cookbook. Many contest opportunities exist locally, regionally, and nationally.

Community Calendars & Programs

Community calendars announce events that are open to the public. If you hold an event promoting the sale of your cookbook, community calendars on local TV or radio stations are an excellent avenue to announce your event. Don't forget public television or cable TV as some incorporate community calendars. Send a press release to the station's community affairs director two weeks before your event. Be sure to include your group name, contact and event information, and a description of the event.

Using the Internet

There are many ways to take advantage of the Internet to stimulate sales. From creating an online cookbook listing to using social networking and video sharing sites, it's easier than you think to make the Internet an excellent sales platform.

Social Networking & Video Sharing Sites

Social networking and video sharing sites, like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, make it easy to connect with friends and family around the world. Use these sites to easily share information about your cookbook.

Use your own Facebook account to get the word out, or create a page for your organization and invite friends and family to "Like" it. You can share messages, photos, videos, and links to videos and other web sites. As other people see your page, your fan base and cookbook sales will grow. Twitter lets you post messages of 140 characters or less, so you can generate quick exposure about your cookbook and update your followers on purchasing opportunities.

Upload a YouTube video announcing your cookbook sales or an event. Videos also offer a creative way to promote your cookbook. In order to reach more people, share videos on other social media sites and encourage your followers to share them.

E-mail & Blogs

Sending e-mails to family, friends, and organization members can also help increase sales. Include links to information about your cookbook, especially if you create an online listing, social networking page, or video. Ask the e-mail recipients to forward your message to their friends and family members. This will create a domino effect, helping you reach more people. If you have a blog, discuss your cookbook and how profits from sales will be used to benefit a good cause.

More Promotional Ideas

Advertisers

Selling advertising space in your cookbooks is a simple and effective way to promote your cookbook early in the development process. While you pay the cost of printing the ads in your book, the ad sales will give you greater profit in the end. When you are selling advertising space, consider asking businesses to carry your cookbooks when they arrive or to underwrite your project. Remind businesses that having an ad in your cookbook will help their name get out to more people. For more information, print our *Advertising Kit* from our web site's Download Center.

Promotional Parties & Tie-Ins

Many organizations hold events to promote their cookbooks. Hosting an event is an excellent way to bring potential buyers to you. Samples of foods from your cookbook can be provided, which will encourage even more sales. Another way to boost sales is to tie-in your cookbook with another product. For example, if your cookbook has a prize-winning recipe for preserves, offer the items together for a discounted price. Potential buyers will be more willing to make the purchase.

Paid Advertising

If you want to use paid advertising, it's important to budget for this expense. While paid advertising gives you more control over how and when your cookbook is advertised, the cost can be prohibitive. For this reason, we do not recommend TV or radio advertising. Instead, we suggest you spend money on flyers or brochures that showcase your cookbook and can be used to solicit retailers to carry your cookbook.

Brainstorming Ideas

As you can see, the avenues of public relations and promotion are endless. This list of 17 promotions is just the tip of the iceberg. As you read through it and brainstorm with your group, you will likely think of many other promotional ideas that can be tailored specifically to your cookbook.

1. Set up a display table at a cooking trade show, your organization's convention, or a public event related to your cause. Consider sales at public events such as fairs, carnivals, craft shows, school programs, and church events.
2. Any local celebrities in your cookbook? Ask your local bookstores if they would be willing to host a book signing.
3. Put together a public service message in the form of a quiz, game, or puzzle on place mats at area restaurants.
4. Sponsor a chili feed, bake sale, garage sale, car wash, or another event which attracts the public. Be sure to have a display with plenty of cookbooks available for sale.
5. Host a fundraising dinner using the purchase of your cookbook as admission. Serve recipes from your cookbook.
6. Set up displays in banks, public buildings, and retail stores specializing in gourmet items and kitchen accessories.
7. Offer cookbooks to local hotels or restaurants and ask them to feature some of your recipes as specials (be sure they note where the recipes can be found). Have cookbooks available for sale at the restaurant hostess counter or gift shop.
8. Have banks give your cookbooks as a gift for every new account opened (let the bank buy cookbooks at a discount).
9. Place volunteers on the street to hand out literature about your organization, cause, and cookbook promotion.
10. Design posters advertising your cookbook and place them inside grocery stores, banks, churches, or your workplace.
11. Provide promotional flyers for local merchants to place inside customers' shopping bags.
12. Ask your local utility company to include your flyer with bills.
13. Ask about complimentary ads in local magazines or newspapers.
14. Trade advertising space with another organization's newsletter.
15. Ask about free printing and distribution of material by local corporations or ask them to underwrite your cookbook.
16. Compile a giveaway with sample recipes and preplanned menus. Include your cookbook's purchasing information.
17. Establish your cookbook as the community project of an advertising, graphic arts, or marketing class at a nearby college. Students can develop marketing strategies and graphic arts students can create posters, fliers, etc. Your sales will increase, and the students will gain valuable experience to enhance portfolios or resumé's.

Whether you are just beginning your cookbook or ready to sell, our goal is to point you in the right direction. We've reviewed numerous marketing methods – choose those that will work best for you and don't be afraid to try something new.