

Audiobook Marketing for (*frazzled*) Authors

*A companion to take you from **whaaaaaaaaat?**
to ... **It's selling!***

Audio is the fastest-growing corner of publishing.

In 2025, U.S. audiobook sales reached roughly \$2.43 billion - up about 9% on the year - with more than 750,000 titles available and a majority of American adults having listened to at least one title in audio.

That growth creates two practical challenges: helping listeners **find** your audiobook, and giving a new listener enough confidence to **choose** it. Reviews, recommendations, and other signals help close that social-proof gap.

Books find listeners through newsletters, reader communities, podcasts, cross-promotion, libraries, social media, search, word of mouth, and ads. You do not have to use all of them.

You don't have to do all the things. Pick what fits, keep it simple, set small goals, and skip anything that feels cumbersome. The important thing is that your book has a path to its listeners.

Where are you right now?

I'm headed into audio & nothing's produced yet.

Start here. Read the short pre-production note below, then follow the trail.

There's an audiobook. Now what?

Lay the foundation in Step 1, then work your way down.

I'm launching - or just did.

Build momentum from Step 2, then continue from there.

I'm ready for reviews & interested in awards.

Explore industry recognition in the online Reviews & Awards directory.

Before recording begins

Three choices are worth dialing in early:

- **Give the book room to be findable:** appealing cover, relevant categories, inviting description.
- **Choose a voice that's an asset, not an afterthought:** the performance becomes a marketing asset later - clips, samples, and a listen that feels like an experience.
- **Decide whether you will be distributing via Audible or not:** the path changes depending on where the audiobook will live.

1 Lay the foundation

Before you spend a dollar or a promo code, make sure the page a listener lands on is doing its job. This is vital and it quietly determines the return on everything that follows.

An author website. Give readers an interesting, informative, visually appealing place to find you and explore your work. Start with a clear page with professional cover art, a short description, an audio sample (or link to one), and current purchase links. A template-based site you can update yourself is perfectly workable.

Metadata & categories. Choose the most accurate, specific categories available to you, and write a description that opens with a hook while giving listeners a clear sense of the book. Strong, accurate metadata helps the right listeners find it.

The cover at thumbnail size. Most people first see your cover roughly the size of a stamp. If the title or author name is not legible at that size - or the graphics distort - correct that before you drive traffic to it.

Quick check: Can a new visitor understand the book, hear it, and find a current purchase link without hunting around?

Step 1

Distribution

This guide covers how to market an audiobook. For where it sells, what royalties you keep, and which contracts you sign, check current terms directly with the platform or distributor.

For author-first guidance, the live guide links to the **Alliance of Independent Authors' Self-Publishing Advice Center**.

Current platforms named in the guide: ACX, Spotify for Authors, Kobo Writing Life, Author's Republic, Google Play Books, and INAudio.

Full links + current details online

Seed early listener reviews

CODES ARE CURRENCY

Early reviews are a credibility engine. A handful of honest reviews in the first weeks can give a new listener confidence to try a new-to-them book. Promotional copy codes are available through some platforms and distributors.

Give codes through a giveaway, not a giveaway-away.

Something offered as limited or intentional feels more valuable than codes tossed around like confetti.

Build a small review team the way you would build an ARC group for an ebook. Audiobook reviewers can be a different audience from print/ebook readers.

Place codes where audio reviewers already gather: reviewer-matching sites, active audiobook communities, relevant Reddit or Goodreads groups, and genre communities.

Consider BookTube where it fits your genre. Follow each reviewer's stated policy, and never pay for a positive review.

One practical limit: codes are finite. Spend them where reviews are likeliest.

Simple number to watch: aim for 10 honest reviews in the first few months.

Find listeners for early reviews

StoryOrigin - audiobook review copies, reviewer matching, group promotions.

Booksprout - a large ARC/ reviewer community that can support an ongoing review team.

Audiobooks Unleashed - audio-specific promo-code listeners and reviews.

NetGalley - a larger, more formal review network.

Goodreads Audiobooks - free audiobook communities where authors and narrators can offer review copies or promo codes.

Good - Offer codes to a small circle of trusted readers and ask for honest reviews when they have time.

Better - Build a tiny review team or ARC group and send codes there first.

Best - Try matching sites and review communities if you enjoy that kind of outreach. If you don't, stay at Good or Better.

Pull the discount lever

WIDE DISTRIBUTION AND DIRECT SALES

If you distribute wide: use retailer discounts, Chirp submissions, and other time-limited promotions where available.

If you sell direct: use coupons, launch pricing, bundles, and limited-time offers from your own store.

If you are exclusive to Audible: skip ahead to Step 4, because you do not directly control the retail price.

Discounting can become a visibility event. For wide audio, a well-timed price drop can put a book in front of deal-hungry listeners; for direct sales, you can create your own offers.

Chirp lets eligible wide titles apply for featured deals at a steep discount for a limited window.

Strategic discounts or giveaways on retailers that permit promotional pricing can create visibility and sometimes lift store ranking.

The idea is simple: use a limited discount as a visibility event, then let momentum and series listen-through carry value back to sales.

Simple number to watch: run 2-4 meaningful discount or giveaway promotions per year.

Selling direct

Direct-only tends to reward authors who already have an established audience. It can be high-margin, but it is not easy-mode.

Google Play Books, Kobo, and Spotify accept direct audiobook uploads; Apple Books generally receives audiobooks through approved distribution partners.

Upside: more control over price, bundles, and the customer relationship.

Tradeoff: you are not relying on a retailer to surface the book. Your engine is your own clips, ads, and list.

4 Make clips (advantage: audio)

This is the step where the audiobook format shines. A short narration clip is native, shareable content that costs nothing but attention.

Use 15-60 seconds of a dramatic moment, plot twist, or lively multi-voice dialogue. Reels, TikTok, and BookTok-style posts give audio a natural home.

The hook is everything. Lead with the most gripping few seconds, not context. Curiosity, not explanation.

Turn clips into audiograms - a clip paired with a moving waveform and captions - using tools like Headliner, Wavve, Canva, or Book Brush.

Place them where they can work: your book page, your newsletter, social posts, and anywhere a retailer or author profile permits video content.

Simple number to watch: choose one or two places to share clips and aim for one clip a month.

If you worked directly with a narrator, this is a natural place to collaborate - the performance is the marketing asset here.

All paths meet here

Whether you're Audible-exclusive, distributing wide, or selling direct, Step 4 applies to you.

You may not control every retailer's price, but you do control the audio you share.

Clips give every audiobook author something uniquely theirs to market.

Good - Create one strong clip and add it to your website or retailer page.

Better - Share that clip a few times over the next few months in different places.

Best - Experiment with different clips or audiograms and notice which get saves, comments, or clicks. Do more of what works if it still feels fun.

Use the ebook-to-audio ripple

KINDLE + AUDIBLE ONLY - SKIP IF YOUR AUDIOBOOK ISN'T AVAILABLE ON AUDIBLE

Some committed listeners will pick up a Kindle ebook while it is free or heavily discounted specifically so they can then buy the Audible audiobook at the lower **Read & Listen** (formerly Whispersync for Voice) upgrade price.

The strategy: run a discounted-ebook promotion - a BookBub feature is the classic engine - and let the audio upgrade ride along behind it.

This can work for both exclusive and wide titles as long as the audiobook is available on Audible and paired with the Kindle edition.

Simple number to watch: beat your usual audiobook sales during the ebook promotion and the week after. If audio sales lift above your normal level, the ripple is working.

Stressed?

You don't have to do every step perfectly for readers to find your book.

If your cover is arresting, your book page is clear and inviting, you gather some early reviews, and you give listeners a simple way to hear about your next release, you've already done the most important work.

Everything else in this guide is bonus credit, not a test.

One useful distinction: Step 3 uses a discount on the audiobook itself. Step 5 uses an ebook promotion to create an Audible audio-upgrade opportunity.

Paid Ads: Start Small

Consider paid ads if they make sense for your budget. A few principles can help regardless of which platform happens to be popular at the moment.

Target audiobook listeners deliberately. Meta (Facebook/Instagram) and BookBub Ads offer useful audiobook-listener targeting options.

Know roughly who you're talking to.

- **Start with the book.** What kind of book is it? Who already reads books like this? Think genre, comparable authors/books, tone, and themes.
- **Describe that reader in ordinary language.** For example: readers who like quirky, funny mysteries with older characters. That is enough to start.
- **Give Meta some clues, then let it help.** Suggest interests or audiences to start with. As the ad runs, Meta learns from who responds and helps find more people like them.

Start small. Test before you scale. Before putting your budget behind one ad, try a few versions and see what earns attention.

Track audiobook sales separately. Tools like ScribeCount can help you see returns by format, so audiobook results do not disappear into overall book sales.

Simple number to watch: ROAS. A ROAS of 3.0 means \$1 spent generated about \$3 in author revenue. Below 1.0 means the ad is costing more than it returns; roughly 2.0-3.0+ is a healthier range to aim for.

Note: ad platforms change quickly. Check current options before starting a campaign.

Try First

1. Choose one thing to test.

An image, headline, or opening message.

2. Make 2-3 versions.

Change only that one thing.

3. Set a small test budget.

Decide what you're comfortable spending - and stop there.

4. See which one gets the clicks.

More clicks means that version did a better job of getting attention.

5. Then check your sales.

Clicks prove attention. Sales get the final vote.

Grow the audience you already have #lists

Your email list is the one audience you host - the people you can tell about every new release without an algorithm in the way.

Make it easy to join wherever a reader or listener meets you: in the back matter of print and ebook editions, on your website, in your clips, and in the final moments of the audiobook itself.

Add a track, add a subscriber ... A brief bonus at the end of the audiobook can point listeners to a simple page where they can sign up for a free first chapter, a bonus scene, or news about the next book.

Hi, this is [Author Name] - thanks for listening. To hear the first chapter of my next book, [The Title], visit [MyWebsite/audio].

Keep the web address short, memorable, and easy to understand when spoken aloud.

Creating demand for the book

Anything that helps readers discover your book can ripple across every format - including audio.

And as readers and listeners find you, give them an easy way to stay connected to you.

Need a little help marketing the book itself? The live guide links to four simple, low-cost places to start.

Before recording begins - Add the short invitation to the manuscript now, and include the first chapter of the next book in the narrator's recording materials.

During production - Ask your narrator to record an author-written bonus message and, where appropriate, the first chapter of the next book as part of the existing session.

Already published - If your distributor permits updated audio, create a brief end track that meets its technical requirements.

Use smaller promotions to grow your list and sales. Low-cost networks such as AuthorsXP can help seed newsletter growth and early sales.

Let the series do some of the work. A listener who follows a story into the next volume may also follow a voice they have come to know. A consistent narrator can help preserve that continuity.

Simple number to watch: glance at your email list once a month. If subscriber count is slowly going up - even by a few people - you're doing what you need to do.

Good - Add a short invitation at the end of your audiobook that points listeners to a simple sign-up page.

Better - Mention that same link in print/ebook back matter and on your website.

Best - Email your list when you have actual news. You never have to email on a rigid schedule if that doesn't suit you.

Tools & resources mentioned in this guide

Distribution guidance

Alliance of Independent Authors' Self-Publishing Advice Center

Distribution & wide reach

ACX; Spotify for Authors; Kobo Writing Life; Author's Republic; Google Play Books; INAudio

Reviews & reviewer matching

StoryOrigin; Booksprout; Audiobooks Unleashed; NetGalley; Goodreads Audiobooks

Ads

Meta Ads; BookBub Ads

Keeping track

ScribeCount

Website

Wix

Further reading

Reedsy's audiobook marketing guide; Karen Commins' Audiobook Marketing Cheat Sheet; Audio Publishers Association industry data

Discount promotions

Chirp

Clips & audiograms

Headliner; Wavve; Canva; Book Brush

Book marketing

Written Word Media

List & promo

AuthorsXP

Community

Wide For The Win; Marketing Audiobooks Wide

Audiobook industry news & reviews

AudiobookRush

Online-only: the current Reviews & Awards directory, live links, and platform-specific updates remain at christalewis.com/marketing.

You've Got This

You can do any step in this guide yourself - really, you can.

If you're not sure where to start, pick one step that feels doable this month. When that's done, come back here and pick the next one.

There's a piece you don't have to do solo - and that is the audiobook itself.

If you'd like a partner for the recording, production, and promo clips, I would be delighted to collaborate with you.

Let's talk