



## March Madness - Marcia James

### Marcia James' 10 Favorite Niche Marketing Tips



The audience for genre fiction, particularly romance, is vast. And the promotion of a single author is easily lost among the thousands of authors working hard to catch readers' eyes. So niche marketing — reaching those readers especially interested in your books — can make the most of your promotional dollars and time. As a romance author myself, I call this “thinking outside the heart-shaped box.”

First, you need to analyze your books and your author brand to find elements that might appeal to specific readers. For example, one of the elements in my books is Chinese Crested hairless dog characters. So I joined an international message board about “crestie” dogs and Friendened many of them on Facebook to chat with people who are not only great subject matter experts on cresties, but are also interested in buying books that feature that breed.

[**A quick note:** The sensuality level of your writing can limit the places and ways you can market your books.]

Here are **10 Niche Marketing Tips**, starting with a list of possible marketable book elements:

#### **1. What are your hero and heroine's vocations?**

What are your protagonists' professions? If your heroine is a special events coordinator, there's a professional association for people in that field. If your hero is a veterinarian, you can look into marketing to the veterinarians' professional association.

#### **2. What are your hero and heroine's avocations?**

What are your protagonists' hobbies? You might have a character who collects vintage cars, and there are many groups of vintage car owners. Your hero or heroine might knit or quilt (okay,

your Beta hero might do these things!), and there are knitting and quilting groups online and possibly in your community.

### **3. What are your hero and heroine's sports/physical activities?**

Do your protagonists play softball or volleyball, fish, jog, hike, canoe, etc? There are groups devoted to all sorts of sports.

### **4. What are your hero and heroine's charitable activities?**

Do your protagonists volunteer for Big Sisters, Special Olympics, homeless shelters, or animal rescue? Is your hero or heroine dealing with a medical challenge, such as cancer, or a physical disability? Charities — and the people who support them — love to know when their causes are mentioned in a book.

### **5. Do your books include any four-legged characters — not counting shape-shifters? 😊**

There are many, many organizations for those who love animals. And there might be marketing opportunities at a Humane Society fundraiser (e.g., you could donate a themed basket with a signed copy of your book) or a pet adoption fair.

### **6. What is the timeframe and location of your novel?**

If you write historical novels, there are groups interested in specific historical eras. E.g., there are Renaissance Fairs and Civil War reenactments that might offer a chance for promotion. If you set your books in a certain city, state, or country (and maybe feature things specific to that location), there might be events that offer marketing opportunities, such as a state bicentennial celebration, the Kentucky Derby, or a jazz festival.

### **7. Do your books have paranormal, science fiction (s/f), or fantasy elements?**

Quite a few authors whose books include these subgenres promote their books at s/f or fantasy cons. There are also groups who have paranormal interests, such as vampire, shape-shifter, or dragon lore.

### **8. Does your book contain elements that would appeal to specific fans?**

For example, do you have an Elvis impersonator in your book? Is your heroine a Bruce Springsteen fan? Does your hero love film noir or NASCAR? There are groups for all of these.

### **9. Now that you've identified your book elements, where do you locate potential niche readers for your books?**

There are library reference books offering information (contact name, email, address, phone, website, whether the group has a member newsletter, etc.) for every conceivable type of association and club. Here are two good reference books that are often available online through

library websites: *The Encyclopedia of Associations* and *Associations Unlimited*. Many of the groups listed in these books would be happy to hear from an author who's written a book of interest to their members. As I mentioned, however, this does work better for books that have a sensuality level from G to PG-13.

**10. Another PR “angle” is tying your promotions to specific holidays based on the elements in your books and author brand.**

Romances most often tied to February, thanks to **Valentine's Day**. And many paranormal romances are promoted around **Halloween**. But there are lots of holidays that would work, depending on your book elements. E.g., I reinforce my dog logo and brand by guest-blogging about responsible pet ownership on pro-animal holidays like National Spay or Neuter Your Pet Day. A good resource for some of the more obscure or funny holidays is *Chase's Calendar of Events*. You can also Google national holidays that fit your book elements and/or author brand.

**Thinking Outside the Heart-Shaped Box** is a matter of opening your mind to the possibilities beyond traditional author promotion. It means considering yourself as not only an expert on fiction writing but also fluent on your genre or subgenre – and on elements within your books. All it takes to do niche marketing is the same imagination you use to write your books.

Happy promoting!  
Marcia James



BIO: Marcia James writes hot, humorous romances and finished in eleven Romance Writers of America contests before selling her first comic romantic suspense, *At Her Command*. Her latest release is *Sex & the Single Therapist*, a comic romantic mystery. In her eclectic career, she has shot submarine training videos, organized celebrity-filled nonprofit events and had her wedding covered by *People Magazine*. In addition to writing fiction, Marcia presents author promotion workshops. After years of dealing with such sexy topics as how to safely install traffic lights, she is enjoying “researching” and plotting her novels’ steamy love scenes with her husband and hero of many years.

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*Sex & the Single Therapist* is the first of the “Dr. Ally Skye, Sex Therapist” comic romantic mystery series. Ally helps her detective boyfriend solve crimes in Sin City — much to his dismay. This series features humor, an amateur sleuth, cute dogs, and a super sexy romance!

***Sex & the Single Therapist:***

**A crime of passion...**

To clear an innocent friend, sex therapist Dr. Ally Skye investigates a patient’s murder. Soon she’s trading heated words and hot kisses with a sexy cop. Can this free-spirited amateur sleuth and her posse of Vegas insiders solve the crime before the killer targets her?

**A sexy complication...**

Cynical homicide detective Zack Crawford has the murder to solve. The last thing he needs is a red-hot sex therapist who haunts his dreams. Ally is trouble and, given her job and his luck, she’d probably grade his performance in bed.

**A dynamic duo...**

Zack and Ally form an uneasy and sexually charged alliance. Murderers, extortionists and psychos are no match for these reluctant partners. Crime-solving was never this sexy or this fun!

**Drawing:** Three lucky commenters will be randomly chosen to receive a copy of Marcia James’ comic romantic suspense *At Her Command*. So leave a comment for a chance to win!

**Gabriella Note:** I bought *Sex & the Single Therapist* last night and couldn’t put it down. The dialogue is sharp and witty. It’s a clever mystery that has you guessing until the end. Most of all it is filled with engaging characters that keep you entertained throughout the story. This is a gem of a read that will go on my Kindle “keeper’s shelf” and one that I’ll pull down when I want to read something to put a smile on my face. I hope it’s true that this is the start of a series because I look forward to a second Dr. Ally Skye & crew story and will certainly buy the next book.