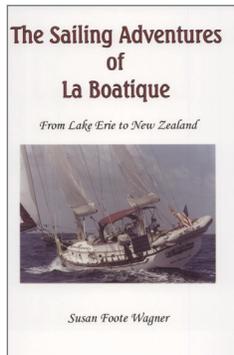


Author Susan Foote gains exposure, builds her readership and revives sales



“When my book appeared in Google Book Search, I had a wave of new orders I didn’t expect, and started receiving email from buyers who said they found my book on the internet. I hadn’t been doing any other kind of marketing for about a year, so I knew they found me through Google.”



Susan Foote always dreamed of seeing the world by boat. What she couldn’t have predicted was that a sailing trip that took her from Lake Erie, Ohio to the coast of Opuia, New Zealand would change her life and lead to a budding second career: book author.

In 1998, Susan and her husband, Peter Wagner, set sail on a 41-foot classic sailing ketch named *La Boatique*. Before long they were watching a humpback whale and her calf swim alongside their boat, battling a rogue wave in Bermuda and witnessing leatherback turtles lay eggs on a secluded beach. Eager to share her experiences with family and friends, Foote used a single-side band radio to send email and began posting one or two “chapters” from her travels on her personal website at least once a month.

“I have very inquisitive friends, and they kept asking me to turn my story into a book,” says Foote. “When I realized I had thousands of people following along with me on my adventures, I decided to listen. I talked to some published travel adventure writers, and they told me a good way to break into the market would be to self-publish – so that’s exactly what I did.”

Four years after setting sail, Foote returned home to embark on a new journey: marketing and selling her newly published book, *The Sailing Adventures of La Boatique: From Lake Erie to New Zealand*.

“I get letters from people telling me how happy they are to have found my book, and how it’s made a big difference in their lives...I’m happy to know that by writing about the second chapter in my life, I’m inspiring other women to start their own.”

ABOUT GOOGLE BOOK SEARCH

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For more information, visit <http://books.google.com>.

Challenge

As a self-published author, Foote’s greatest challenge is reaching her target audience of nautical enthusiasts with only a limited budget for marketing.

“Few people choose the cruising lifestyle, much less spend four years straight traveling like I did,” says Foote. “It takes passion for adventure, and that’s a big part of the audience for this book – people who dream about doing it themselves.

“The question is, how do you make sure they find out about your book without spending more on advertising than you bring in from book sales?”

Another challenge for Foote is time. In 2002 when the book was first published, she spent hours calling boating magazines, nautical clubs and local radio stations, newspapers and bookstores, offering to do talks, interviews and book signings.

“I worked the niche market as best I could, and in the beginning, sales were good, even considering my high expectations,” explains Foote. “But when my husband Pete and I began planning for a new trip, we got worried. How would the book sell without us there to do the footwork?”

Solution

Foote heard about free marketing via Google Book Search in 2005 through an email newsletter for self-published and freelance writers. At the time, she was no longer doing any specific marketing for her book beyond providing details, excerpts and purchasing links on her website. As a result, sales had dropped off considerably. But after submitting her book to Google, Foote saw a sudden increase.

“When my book appeared in Google Book Search, I had a wave of new orders I didn’t expect, and started receiving email from buyers who said they found my book on the internet,” says Foote. “I hadn’t been doing any other kind of marketing for about a year, so I knew they found me through Google.”

In addition to increased sales and exposure, Foote has gained insight into her audience.

“I get letters from people telling me how happy they are to have found my book, and how it’s made a big difference in their lives – very often from older women,” explains Foote. “As I point out in my book, there are many books written by men who convinced their loves to go cruising, but few books written by the loves who did it. I’m happy to know that by writing about the second chapter in my life, I’m inspiring other women to start their own.”

