

Teri Case's Lessons Learned from the June 8th Book Signing:

1. Invitation:
 - a. I used Facebook's event tool and posted a public invitation and encouraged people to share it. I kept this invitation updated as opportunities developed; such as other authors donating books for the scholarship raffle.
 - b. I made a conscious effort to make the event about the readers, not me, so I didn't care how many people showed up. I just wanted to be there for those who did.
 - c. CON:
 - i. Of the Facebook invite, only 13 people confirmed; 33 said "interested", but while I didn't physically count everyone, attendance exceeded this combined amount easily
 - ii. You'll see under "Time" that I ran out of time because I couldn't better estimate attendance.
2. Professional Photographer:
 - a. I can't stress the value of having a professional photographer at the event enough. If you've seen my gallery or video, you already know why. Professionals can leverage light, angles, and they know how to become invisible in the crowd for awesome candid photos. They also are authoritative so when mine told me I had to take pictures and look at the camera, I did it. Normally, I avoid getting my picture taken.
 - b. CON:
 - i. I didn't give the photographer my phone's password so she wasn't able to continue to post live feeds via Instagram or Facebook. I will do this in the future. I might even hire a youngster (aka my nephew) who is hip with social media to do this beyond the photographer.
3. Posters and bookmarks
 - a. I used PrintRunners Online to create an 18x24" *Tiger Drive* poster including cover, description, and reviews.
 - b. I also created a poster that showcased my photo and bio up top, and on the bottom half, I revealed my upcoming book's cover, logline, and ETA.
 - c. I had two-sided bookmarks made. One side was about *Tiger Drive*, the second side about my new book, *In the Doghouse*.
 - d. I invited authors to send me postcards of their books to put out.
4. Inventory
 - a. I shipped more books than I could possibly need with the intention that I could leave inventory behind for a future trip to Nevada.
 - i. I only sold half the inventory at the event, most people brought their copies
 - ii. The other half ended up being sold by a local bookstore within two weeks, who read about the event after the fact in the local newspaper.
 - iii. I prearranged whom I could leave the copies with and who would be able to drop off books as needed. As of right now, my inventory is gone! The store just placed a new order directly with the publisher.
 - b. CON:

- i. Since the publisher is Print on Demand (POD), I had to pay cash up front for the inventory and shipping.
- ii. I didn't pass the shipping cost on to the buyer, so my margin was a little less, but not much.

5. Point of Sale/Process

- a. I brought a Square card with me so I could accept credit card purchases. I also practiced this in advance on my iPad and iPhone so I'd know how to do it.
- b. I brought a carbon receipt book with me where I not only wrote down sales, but the names of people as I signed their copies.
 - i. This also worked out as a great attendance record!
- c. I changed the price of my book to \$15. This made it easy to manage change for cash buyers.
- d. I brought \$50 in five-dollar bills. Between those paying with tens and fives, I was always able to cash out twenties and higher. I didn't expect the coffee bar to break change for me.
- e. I wore a waist apron to carry the cash (and extra pens).
- f. I made sure the location had Wifi I could use.
- g. CON:
 - i. I was trying to do it all myself. Even though I had a friend there to help, she got distracted seeing people she knew. Sometimes she handed out copies to people who already went through the line and decided they wanted more. She didn't write them down or collect payment. She figured I could work it out with them later via email or Paypal. *This is awkward!* And I don't know whom she forgot. I lost inventory that night.
 - ii. Next time I'd have one person handle the sale, another person, manage the payment, and I'd just take names and sign and focus on the person.
 - 1. I should have had a separate person manage raffle tickets and purchases.
 - 2. It would have been cool to collect email addresses for my newsletter.
 - iii. There is a small % fee for using Square which I absorbed.

6. Time

- a. I took my time with each person. When I looked up at the growing line, I took the *attitude of gratitude* rather than feel rushed. This seemed to keep the line calm. They knew they also wouldn't be rushed during their turn.
- b. I sat at a round table in the center of the room so we could sit together comfortably and talk.
- c. I greeted each person at the front of the line and brought them to the table.
- d. CON:
 - i. I didn't clearly communicate that I would not be "reading." Some people were disappointed. However, I'm also glad I didn't commit to it, because I would have never had the time. In the future, I'd do a short reading at the very beginning of the event.

- ii. I was so busy, I neglected to drink even a glass of water in the three hours. If you look at my photos, you'll see the same untouched glass of wine next to me on the table 😊

7. Location

- a. Using a coffee/wine bar was perfect for this evening event. My audience includes people struggling with addiction so I wanted an environment that was welcoming to everyone.
- b. I booked this well in advance.
- c. I made it worth their time by pre-ordering simple appetizers.
- d. I paid gratuity.
- e. I went an hour early to find good parking and to set up.
- f. CON:
 - i. I underestimated the time and turnout. I only had the location for two hours and it took three hours to get through the line of people. Gratefully, the bar was happy to stay and they did well on sales of coffees and wine.
 - ii. Next time, I'd move the appetizers near the line vs. after the signing table. This would make those in line more comfortable.
 - iii. I neglected to check on other events happening downtown that night so parking was a serious issue for some.
 - iv. This isn't a venue that can handle sales for you. This is both a pro and con. A bookstore can handle sales and state taxes for you and then reimburse you, but at the same time, I don't think it creates the same social feel.

8. Raffle and Author Donations

- a. Authors donated copies for the raffle. This was a huge hit!
- b. I set out bookmarks for authors.
- c. CON:
 - i. I should have hired someone (my nephew), to manage the raffle tickets and email addresses for the authors' newsletters. Again, a friend who volunteered ended up being distracted seeing friends. I don't blame her.

9. Attire

- a. I wore a shirt with a tiger on it to stand out. At the time I decided to do this, I thought I'd be mingling and it would make me recognizable if someone needed to find me. In the end, I never left the table, but I'd still do this again in the future. It was fun. I see dog shirts and outfits (but no collars) in my future. LOL