

# AUTHOR VISITS IN EXPORT MARKETS

## BEST PRACTICE DOCUMENT

*“Planning and executing successful author visits internationally”*

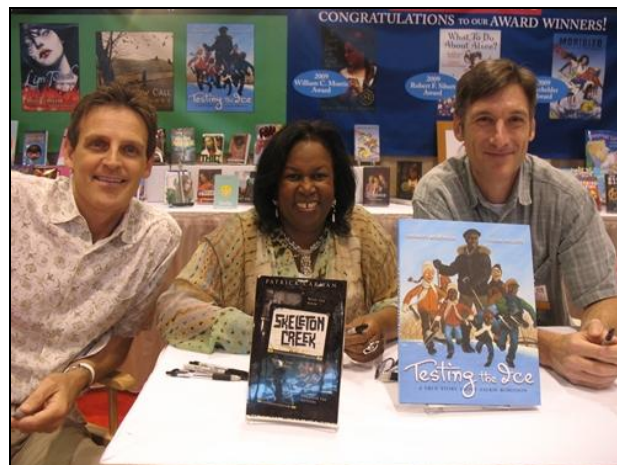
**SpiritedRogue (Branch: Tomas):**

“Me and my mom think that It would be amazing if one of the authors could come to the military bases in Europe.”

**AquaTesting (Branch: Lucian):**

“Okay, I live a city somewhere in the Middle East, and I am a HUGE fan of The 39 Clues series. Too bad you can't come here for a signing, Mr.Lerangis!!! \*cries\* The world *is* a large place, whatever they say! Anywho, *my* question is,...well not really a question, but sort of like a request... Pleeeeeaaaaase can't you visit?”

*The 39 Clues US Messageboard*



*Patrick Carman, Sharon Robinson and Mark Teague*

Dear Sales Representatives,

Author visits play an important part in domestic marketing strategy designed to help drive awareness and sales of a particular product as well as forge strong ties with local communities and schools. They are not currently an established part of Export's marketing strategy.

To apply author visits internationally is evidently not so straightforward as the domestic process largely owing to the additional travel and costs involved. This document has been put together to support you in the planning and execution of a successful author visit. It has been designed to:

- 1. identify what a valid event or location for an international author visit looks like**
- 2. highlight the timelines and processes to attract authors to your territories**
- 3. showcase how to work with the NY Marketing Team to organize the visit**
- 4. share best practice to ensure that the visit is a success**

## 1. Identifying an appropriate event or location

Selecting the right type of event or location for authors to attend is a fundamental part of ensuring a visit's success.

Some key features that you should be looking out for when determining whether an event or location is suitable for an author's visit are:

- **Heavily promoted event or location with very high footfall**
- **Well-established with history of good attendance**
- **Keen and motivated organizers or owners**
- **Happy to host visit in a minimum of six months' time**

## 2. Contact New York Office to determine author availability

As soon as you have identified an appropriate event or location for an author to attend, please provide dates and details to Robin Theakston ([rtheakston@scholastic.com](mailto:rtheakston@scholastic.com))

The NY Export Marketing team will then work with the domestic publicity team to draw up a shortlist of available authors. Authors that have previously expressed an interest in attending International events include Maggie Stiefvater, Dav Pilkey, Jeff Smith, David Shannon and R.L. Stine. You can also make a request for a specific author at this stage of the process.

Please note that the nominated day of the event must be **at least** six months away to give the greatest opportunity of securing an author. Please also consider that while you may have a list of authors in mind, their attendance will be heavily dependent on individual availability and travel plans.

### **3. Liaise directly with the author or author's staff**

Once you have received confirmation of an author's attendance, you will start working directly with the author or the author's staff to plan the details. Regular communication leading up to the day will play a key part in the event's success.

The fundamental aspects of the visit you will want to cover are:

- **Travel and accommodation arrangements**
- **The day's schedule (number and length of any presentations, breaks and meals)**
- **Content and type of presentation (if applicable)**
- **Any equipment that the author may require**
- **Autograph policy (you may wish to factor in whether the author is willing to sign copies of their book when contemplating number of samples to order)**



*Dan Gutman*

## 4. Preparing for the day

Ensure the event organizers have all assets they require to assist in the promotion of the author's visit, and identify any additional opportunities to publicize the author's visit prior to the event. This publicity should also include social media to raise awareness of the event where relevant. You will also need to:

- **Order sufficient samples of the author's work at least four weeks prior to the day of the event**
- **Identify whether there are any additional promotional materials including Discussion Guides and Activity Kits related to the author's work that could be distributed on the day**
- **Order generic Scholastic marketing products from Brokers to be given out on the day**



*Scholastic Author Michael Northrop*

## **What makes a successful event?**

With many years of experience behind them, the domestic publicity team has identified several common themes that factor in most successful author visits:

- **A strong willingness on behalf of the organizers to reach out and embrace the event**
- **High level of promotion in the lead up to the event**
- **Great prior author engagement (eg. on social networks)**
- **Events that feature immersive games or a strong interactive element tend to be the most successful**

## **How can an event's success be measured?**

There are a number of ways in which the success of an author visit can be measured. The most common are:

- **Foot traffic**
- **Sales**
- **Public Feedback**
- **Author Feedback**

## **Forward Planning**

Arranging an author visit internationally demands a good level of forward planning.

When delivered successfully, author visits are a proven powerful way of developing great relationships with your distributors or customers, generating high levels of product and brand awareness and driving sales.

Identify opportunities within your territories that would benefit from an author visit so that we can deliver a series of successful author events in 2012 -2013.

## **Costs**

Owing to the high costs of securing attendance of authors at international events, it is often more feasible to share the costs with the hosting distributor or school. When working with larger international conferences, the organizers of the event should normally cover all costs relating to the author visit.

## **Alternatives to author visits**

While the main focus of this document is on physical author visits, there are a number of less expensive alternatives that can be arranged with key authors at various points in the year, including:

- Online chat
- Webex
- Q&A via email
- Video message