

Writing, publishing, promoting, marketing and distributing books.

**The Self-Publishing Manual: How to Write, Print & Sell Your Own Book**

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# 1

## Your Publishing Options

### *Why You Should Consider Self-Publishing*



*Books are the main source of our knowledge, our reservoir of first faith, memory, wisdom, morality, poetry, philosophy, history and science.*

— **Daniel J. Boorstin, Librarian of Congress Emeritus**

Nearly every one wants to write a book. Most people have the ability, some have the drive, but few have the organization. Therefore, the greatest need is for a simple system, a road map. The basic plan in this book will not only provide you with direction, it will promote the needed drive and expose abilities you never thought existed.

Magazines devoted to businesspeople, sales reps and opportunity seekers are littered with full-page advertisements featuring people with fabulous offers. Usually, these people discovered a successful system of business in sales, real estate or mail order, and for a price, they are willing to let the reader in on their secret. To distribute this information, they have written a book. Upon close inspection, one often finds that the author is making more money from the *book* than from the original enterprise. The irony is that purchasers get the wrong information; what they need is a book on how to write, produce and sell a *book*.

## The Self-Publishing Manual

Writing a book is probably easier than you think! If you can voice an opinion and think logically, you can write a book. If you can *say it*, you can *write it*. Most people have to work for a living and therefore can spend only a few minutes of each day on their book. Consequently, they can't keep the whole manuscript in their head. They become overwhelmed and confused, and find it easy to quit the project. The solution is to break up the manuscript into many small, easy-to-attack chunks (and never start at page 1, where the hill looks steepest). Then concentrate on one section at a time and do a thorough job on each one.

People want to know how to and where to, and they will pay well to find it. **The information industry** — the production and distribution of ideas and knowledge as opposed to goods and services — now amounts to over one-half of the gross national product. There is money in information. To see how books are tapping this market, check the best-seller lists in the back of *Publishers Weekly*, *USA Today*, the *Wall Street Journal* or the *New York Times*.

Your best sources for this salable information are your own experiences, plus research. Write what you know. Whether you already have a completed manuscript, have a great idea for one, or need help in locating a suitable subject, this book will point the way.

Since poetry and fiction are very difficult to sell and, even when sold, have a short sales life, we will concern ourselves with nonfiction. Writing nonfiction doesn't require any great literary style; it is simply a matter of producing well-researched, reorganized, updated and, most important, repackaged information. Some of the recommendations here can be applied to fiction, just as the chapters on publishing, promotion and the mail order business can be taken separately and used for other products and businesses. However, all the recommendations are written toward, and for, the reader who wishes to become an author or an author-publisher of useful information.

*Writing ranks among the top 10 percent of professions in terms of prestige.*

— Jean Strouse, *Newsweek*

## **BECOMING A CELEBRITY AUTHOR**

The prestige enjoyed by the published author is unparalleled in our society. A book can bring recognition, wealth and acceleration in one's career. People have always held books in high regard, possibly because in past centuries books were expensive and were, therefore, purchased only by the rich. Just 250 years ago, many people could not read or write. To be an author then was to be an educated person.

Many enterprising people are using books to establish themselves in the ultimate business of being a celebrity information provider. Usually starting with a series of nonpaying magazine articles, they develop a name and make themselves visible. Then they expand the series of articles into a book. Now with their credibility established, they operate seminars in their field of expertise, command high speaking fees and issue a high-priced business advice newsletter. From there, they teach a course in the local college and become a consultant, advising large corporations and commenting on legal briefs for lawyers. They find they are in great demand. People want their information or simply want them around. Clubs and corporations fly them in to consult, because it is more economical than sending all their people to the expert.

This dream product is the packaging and marketing of information. Starting with a field you know, then researching it further and putting it on paper, will establish you as an expert. Then your expert standing can be pyramided with interviews, articles, TV appearances, talks at local clubs, etc. Of course, most of this activity will promote your book sales.

*Books through the ages have earned humanity's high regard as semi-sacred objects.*

## 2

# Writing Your Book

### *Generating Salable Material*



*Write on a subject you love. Your profit center should also be your passion center.*

**W**hat are your talents and what do you want to do? Do you enjoy writing, or do you want to be a published author but find writing painful? Analyze your abilities, motivations and overall agenda. Do you want to write, publish or sell books, any combination of these activities, or even all three?

In this chapter I will cover all three areas to help you make an educated, personal choice. First, I will discuss how to get your thoughts on paper. Then I will look at both sides of publishing: as seen by the author and as seen by the publisher.

*I love being a writer. What I can't stand is the paperwork.*

— Peter de Vries

### **PICKING A SUBJECT**

This is the first step. Consider the elements necessary for selling nonfiction:

- **The subject is interesting to you.** What subject do you want to be talking about three years from now?

- **You have the expertise** (education) **or experience** (you have been there, done that).
- **The subject interests others; it must be salable.** If you build it, will they come?
- **The subject matter is tightly focused.** Readers want specific, narrowly-targeted information today.
- **The market is easy to reach.** You know *who* your potential customers are and *where* your customers are. You know what stores they visit, what associations they join, what magazines they read and what events they attend.
- **The market of potential buyers is large enough.**

*There are three rules to successful writing:(1) Have something to say,(2) Know how to say it, and(3) Be able to sell it.*

— David Hellyer

The book should be on a subject you are interested in and on which you are an expert or on which you would like to become an expert. You have spent years working at, specializing in and learning something, and there are thousands of people out there willing to pay good money to get the inside information from you. Write what you know! If you select your hobby, there are a number of advantages: you know what has been written in the past, you have the contacts for gathering more information and your further participation in that hobby will become tax deductible.

If you need help evaluating your project, contact author– publisher Gordon Burgett at [Gordon@sops.com](mailto:Gordon@sops.com). He will read your manuscript and make recommendations on market targeting, manuscript rework (if necessary), publishing and marketing.

## **FICTION VS. NONFICTION**

There is a difference between entertainment (fiction) and information (nonfiction). Every nonfiction book is unique. The buyer interested in raising llamas is not necessarily a good prospect

for a book on skydiving or wastewater treatment.

Fiction, on the other hand, is related to all other fiction in its category. A reader who buys one mystery is a prime candidate for another mystery. Consequently, as entertainment, fiction must compete for a person's leisure time. They must choose not only between reading this book of fiction and reading other books but between reading this book and engaging in other forms of entertainment, such as going to a movie, renting a video or walking on the beach.

Nonfiction does not compete for time. Nonfiction is information that people buy because it will save them time or money. It is much easier to convince people to buy nonfiction than fiction. Consequently, the unknown poet or fiction writer is at the same point as the unknown painter or musician.

*Fiction writers can't be trusted -- they make things up.*

**Poetry** is even more difficult to sell. Since we receive so many requests for information, we have assembled an Instant Report 606, *Publishing Fiction and Poetry*, at <http://ParaPublishing.com>.

At Para Publishing, we specialize in coaching nonfiction book publishers to sell more books. We do not claim to have any expertise in magazine or newsletter publishing, fiction or poetry. There are many kinds of publishing. Some of our programs, ideas, leads and resources will work for creative literature, but that is not our specialty.

*The how-to article is to writing as McDonald's is to restaurants; it enjoys no epicurean status. Nevertheless, McDonald's advertises billions and billions sold, a point the writer might keep in mind.*

— Leonard Bernstein

# 3

## Starting Your Own Publishing Company



Forming your own publishing company is not difficult, and many of the requirements can be postponed until you are ready to send your manuscript off to the printer. But you do need a system and must get into the habit of using it. Publishing your book is, after all, a business.

*Writing a book is a creative act. Selling a book is a business. A finished book is a product.*

Having a business is just good business. Tax laws favor businesses because they can deduct goods and services that the wage earner must pay for with after-tax dollars. If you don't have a business, you don't get to deduct very much.

Gross --> Taxes --> Net

*Job*

Gross --> Expenditures --> Net --> Taxes

*Business*

If you own a business, a lot of what you are already buying becomes deductible because it is part of maintaining your business (car washes, membership dues, magazine subscriptions, travel, taking

people out to dinner, the business portion of your home, etc.). Your own business will improve your lifestyle.

*My take-home pay won't take me home anymore.*

## **BUSINESS STRUCTURES**

There are three forms of business: **sole proprietorship**, **partnership** and **corporation**, and each has advantages and disadvantages. You do not have to make the choice right now. If you do not file for corporation status, you will be operating as a sole proprietorship anyway. All you have to do is say, I am a business, and file a Schedule C (Profit or Loss from Business) with your tax return. Schedule C is where you list your deductions.

Here are a few things to keep in mind while you are focusing on your most important concern: *your manuscript*.

- ◆ As a **sole proprietor**, what the business earns is yours to keep; what the business borrows is money you owe. The business is you. In a book publishing sole proprietorship, you have the choice of keeping your financial records on a modified *cash basis* or an *accrual basis*. The cash system is easier to understand, allows you to defer more income and requires less bookkeeping, which makes more sense for a small business. You can always switch to accrual when you grow larger; however, you must get IRS permission to make the change. And once you use the accrual system, you cannot switch back to cash. Most accounting software programs such as QuickBooks operate only in the accrual system.
- ◆ Many business consultants discourage the formation of **partnerships** because their success rate is not much better than that of marriages — for a lot of the same reasons. It is a rare pair who complement each other well enough to divide the work so that both are happy. If two or more people want to form a company, they should consider a corporation.
- ◆ In a **corporation**, you are an employee of the corporation, not the company itself. This means more accounting, payroll

deposits, taxes, paperwork, annual meetings with published minutes, corporate taxes and possible annual registration fees. Incorporation may lend an air of permanence, but it can also be expensive to form, and saddle you with unwanted paperwork, meetings and legal bills.

Incorporation limits liability. Although the corporation can be sued, the individual stockholders, employees and officers are normally protected. However, the attorney for the plaintiff will name both the publishing company and the author as defendants, so incorporation may not protect all of those with interests in the book.

There is a recently popular business structure that also limits your liability a **Limited Liability Company (LLC)**. This may be less expensive to form, less complex to manage and offer better tax aspects than a corporation, yet provide many of the same benefits.

There is also a corporate structure called a **Sub-S Corporation (S-Corp)** that allows corporate income and deductions to pass directly to the individual shareholders who then pay only their individual taxes rather than also being taxed at the corporate level.

All these business structures offer benefits and drawbacks and should be discussed with your lawyer and accountant.

### **WHERE TO LOOK FOR HELP**

**The Small Business Administration (SBA)** provides a toll-free answer desk at 800-827-5722 to provide information on free counseling, prebusiness workshops and many other SBA services. The national office is in Washington, D.C., and can be reached at 202-205-6665. You may find your local office more helpful, however. Look for its number in the U.S. Government section of the white pages of your telephone directory under Small Business Administration. Its Web site is also helpful: <http://www.sba.gov>. They have numerous educational, business development and loan guarantee programs.

# 4

## Producing Your Book

*Designing Books*  
*Typesetting*  
*Layout*  
*Book Printing Materials*  
*The Printing Process*



Now we'll go into what you can expect when your book enters the production stage. This explanation of the design, typesetting, layout, materials and the printing process is meant to be brief and yet provide you with enough information to turn your words into an attractive product. Also see *Writing Nonfiction* (on prepress: composition, layout, editing and design) and *Buying Book Printing* the Appendix or at <http://ParaPublishing.com>.

Book production is entering its third evolutionary change in modern times. The first was the migration from hot lead type to offset printing in the late 1960s. The second was computer typesetting in the late 1980s. Both saved a great deal of money and both speeded the process. The computer also gave the author more control over the output.

In the early part of the third millennium, the new publishing model is the electronic book that the Web makes possible. Since producing an electronic book involves much more than typesetting, layout and reproduction, more coverage will be found in Chapter 11. In addition to the production of the *eBook*, we will discuss *ePromotion* and *eCommerce*.

Books as we know them will be around a long time, so the chapter you are reading is not just historical padding. You will still have your book printed, but the electronic edition will be in addition to the dead tree version, not instead of it. Besides, to understand new ways, we need the knowledge of the old as a foundation.

### **INFORMATION PACKAGING**

Do not think of yourself as a book author or book publisher. You are an *information provider*. People want your information but may not have the time or desire to read a book. They will gladly pay more to get the same information presented in a form convenient to them. That's why you see the exact same information sold as a \$20 book, a \$60 audio series, a \$100 noncredit course, a \$150 video set, a \$200/year newsletter, a \$200/hour consultation or a \$500 seminar. Each client learns best in different ways. Some need to read, some prefer to listen, some require a classroom setting and so on.

The information in each edition is the same; only the format is different. You will provide your core information in any form your customer wants and needs. Wring maximum value out of your information. Let's start with books.

This book will concern itself with square-backed softcover and hardcover books, those you normally see in a bookstore. If you have a book-length manuscript, one that will fill a book of 100 pages or more, it will sell best as a clean, sharp, professional-appearing product. You want a book you can be proud of, and you want it to be acceptable to the stores and the customer.

### **PRODUCTION AND PRINTING TIME**

For a 100-page book, the typesetting and layout should take less than a week if you do it yourself on a computer, and about three to five weeks (depending on the complexity of the book's design) if you give the work to a typesetter. Copyediting may take a week and proofreading will take a few days.

*Proofread. It is less expensive to put ink on paper*

*than to take it off.*

You can figure on about five weeks to print, bind and deliver softcover books to you (slightly longer for hardcover books, because of the binding process), but the work may take longer if your printer can't do all the work in-house and has to farm some of it out. For example, many book printers have to send books out for hard bindings, or duplicating a CD and affixing it to the inside cover. Subcontracting can add a couple of weeks to the schedule. Softcover reprints usually take about three weeks. Trucking may take two to six days depending on the destination. Overseas color printing and shipping to the U.S. can take up to 10 weeks.

### **BOOK DESIGN**

Go to a bookstore to search for a book you can use as a *model*. Look for books in your subject area. If you can't find a book in your subject area that you like, try other subject areas that would appeal to your intended audience.

You will find that most books in each category have their own look and feel. Give your customers what they want, expect and deserve. If this is a business book, it should be in hardcover with a dust jacket; if it is a professional reference book for doctors, lawyers or accountants, it should be in hardcover without a dust jacket; if it is a children's book, it should be oversize, in four-color, hardcover and have a dust jacket.

Consider paper, binding, layout, everything. Buy that book design you liked and place it above your desk; it is your model. You will use it as a guide for typesetting, layout, printing and binding.

*A book should not be just something to read, it should be something to possess.*

— Lee Collins

Book printers can produce an acceptable book, but that book design

# 5

## Announcing Your Book

*Telling the World  
You Are an Author and a Publisher  
Getting Listed*



*Write on a subject you love. Your profit center should also be your passion center.*

**B**efore you run off to promote your book to potential readers, you should announce it to the book industry and register it with government offices. (Make your book and your company easy to find.) Some of these announcements must be made before you go to press. For a clear understanding of when each of the following should be done, see Appendix 1, Your Book's Calendar.

As you use this chapter, remember, if the people at some registration offices and directories reject your application, do not give up. Try to figure a way around their objection and file a new form. It is very doubtful they will remember rejecting your initial application.


Since these people may not have a lot of confidence in publishers with a single title (who may never publish again), it is best to represent yourself as being larger. After all, this will not be your only book. Use different names for your company, publisher and author. Burgett Publishing, Gordon Burgett Publisher and book by Gordon Burgett is a sure tip-off that you are small and new.

## The Self-Publishing Manual

Names and numbers change as people and companies move. For a free, current list of contacts, see Document 112, *Poynter's Secret List*, at <http://ParaPublishing.com>.

### INTERNATIONAL STANDARD BOOK NUMBER (ISBN)

The ISBN is a worldwide identification system that has been in use since the late 1960s. Use a different ISBN for each edition of the work: softcover, hardcover, audiotape, CD, online version, etc. The number's use avoids errors in identifying the products ordered, shipped, invoiced and received. The ISBN makes the books and tapes flow faster and more accurately through the book industry. Many of your dealers will not accept your book without an ISBN.

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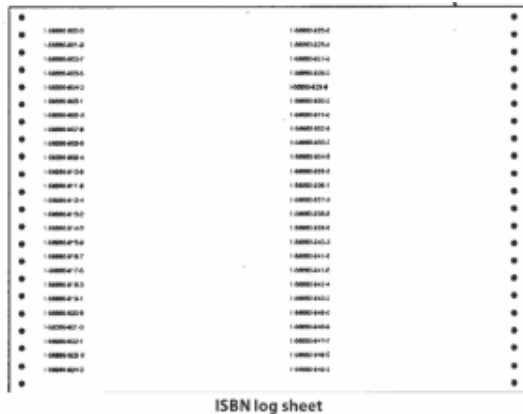
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## 6

# What is Your Book Worth?

*Prices, Discounts, Terms, Collections and Returns*



**B**ook pricing is a complicated affair that strikes a compromise between a price high enough for the publisher to stay in business and low enough to overcome customer price resistance. There are perhaps three major reasons people write books: reward (fame and/or fortune), love of writing and a desire to disseminate important material. While you may want to get the word out, your first book is usually for recognition, and once that is out of your system, the second is for money. Consequently, the author is likely to under price the first book but work with a very sharp pencil on the price of the next.

*The higher your price, the more mistakes you can afford.*

### **THE LIST PRICE**

Many first-time author-publishers ask themselves whether they want maximum financial return or maximum distribution, feeling they can't have both. Usually they wind up with a price on the cover that is too low. As a result, many small publishers have a garage full of books that they cannot afford to market effectively. Without a high enough price, there is not enough money for promotion, and without promotion, the book will not sell. If the book fails to sell, there is no money for promotion, or even to pay the printing bill.

One major reason small publishers stay small is their failure to think objectively about pricing their books. Low prices make you work harder for less and limit your growth. You must also consider that the price printed on the cover is not what you will receive for the book. Dealers require a percentage for their selling efforts. Everyone in the book-selling process takes a cut: distributors, wholesalers, bookstores and other book sales outlets.

Your promotion costs— to let people know the book exists— are likely to be much higher than you originally anticipated — around 25% of the list price. Some 10% to 20% of the books may be shipped out as review copies, and 10% may come back from bookstores damaged. Discounts, advertising and returns take a big chunk out of the list price.

It is normal to invest 20% to 30% of the gross back into letting the world know your book is available. Depending upon the subject matter and the size of the potential audience, we often send out more than 500 review copies to appropriate magazines, newsletters, newspaper columns, news syndicates and opinion molders. Reviews are the most effective and least expensive promotion you can do for your book.

Books are becoming more and more expensive; visit a bookstore and compare prices.

In a how-to book, you are selling exclusive information, not entertainment or stacks of paper. Your book is unique. Like you, it is one of a kind. While customers will not pay more than what they figure is a fair price, if your book is a good one and they want it badly enough, they will pay what you ask. The selling price is not nearly so frightening to the buyer as it is to the author.

Under pricing a book to increase sales is a big mistake. In fact, it may even undermine the credibility of the book. And remember, price has a reverse impact when a book is purchased as a pngt.

According to *Publishers Weekly*, women are more resistant to book prices than men. Women buy most of the books on cooking, health, diet and gardening, as well as fiction. In fact, women buy 68% of all trade books.

### **THE PRICING FORMULA**

Here is a formula for pricing your book. You must look at price from the bottom up and from the top down.

**BOTTOM UP:** Books you intend to sell through bookstores and mail order should be priced at a minimum of 8 times production cost, textbooks at 5 times. Production costs include typesetting, printing and trucking in.

The 8 times formula does not fit every case; there may be a few exceptions. Consider your audience and the cost of reaching them. If you write a pictorial history of your town, and the chamber of commerce is buying all the books to give to tourists, your promotion and distribution costs will be much lower. For nonfiction aimed at a small target audience that continuously sells, you may be able to justify 7 times. If 8 times seems like a lot, you should know that audiovisual materials are often marked up 11 times.

**Direct Mail:** If you plan to sell your book through direct mail advertising, you will get the full price of the book by avoiding book trade discounts. However, your list price will have to be higher, not lower, because direct mail is so expensive. A direct mail offer will cost more than 50¢ each for bulk rate postage, envelope, cover letter, mailing house stuffing, etc. Your expected response may be 2% or less. Conventional direct mail industry wisdom says you can't profitably sell a book through direct mail advertising unless it is priced over \$35.

Yes, I know, your book has no competition...however, *all* authors feel their book is unique.

**TOP DOWN:** The price you put on your back cover, embed in your

# 7

## Promoting Your Book

### *Making the Public Aware of Your Book Without Spending for Advertising*



If you intend to be a successful author, you will measure your success with money. To make a profit, you will depend on good promotion. This chapter covers promotion: those methods that require some time and effort but no big advertising dollars. Of course, there will be a certain amount of overlap.

*It does not matter if you sell out to a publisher or publish yourself; the author must do the promotion.*

Your most important reference book will be *Literary Market Place*. Although you can use the copy in your local library, this book will be used so often that you should buy one for use at your desk or get an on-line subscription to it.

The secrets to book sales are (1) to produce a good product that has a market and (2) to let people know about it. Many small publishers receive very little publicity for their books. This lack of attention is not because of any great conspiracy between the big (New York) publishers and the media; it is simply because the neophytes do not ask for coverage. Many small publishers are good at publishing but haven't any experience in promoting. They seem to have little interest in their books beyond the editorial work and production. They do not want to promote; they just want to create. Some beginning publishers feel the marketing end of publishing is too

commercial, and this becomes their excuse for neglecting the most important part of any business: informing the buying public of their wares. For, obviously, if you don't sell your product, you will not be able to afford to produce more editorial material.

*Being an author is 5% writing and 95% promotion.*

— **Russ Marano, *Hi-Tek Newsletter***

## **THE COST OF ADVERTISING**

Selling books through space advertising is expensive, because books are a low ticket (low selling-price) item. If you were selling airplanes, one sale would pay for a lot of ad space, and if you were selling something less expensive like candy, you would sell so much to so many people that the ads might pay. It is tougher to break even when advertising a low-priced product to a small and scattered group of people. For example, a half page ad in a national book-oriented magazine might cost \$1,850. Using round numbers and assuming you printed the book for \$2 and are selling it for \$20, you would have to sell 102 books at retail, or 308 books at wholesale, just to break even on the ad. Experience tells us you will be lucky to get five orders.

*Do not spend money on advertising until you have exhausted all the free publicity.*

Use free publicity to find out which magazines are right for your book. Then spend your advertising money there. Always test before you spend money. Too many publishers start with large ads and blow their promotion money in the wrong places.

## **ADVERTISING VS. PUBLICITY**

The major differences between advertising and publicity are cost and control. Publicity is free, but advertising is not. On the other hand, you can control your advertising, but your news release (publicity) might be rewritten by an editor, drastically changed or not run at all.

Generally, book promotion is less expensive and more successful when you use book reviews, news releases and, if appropriate to your book, a limited amount of highly targeted direct mail advertising. Book reviews are editorial copy that is far less expensive and far more credible than space advertising. For most nonfiction books, there are over 500 appropriate magazines and newspaper columns that receive and review books, and the number of review sources is growing with the proliferation of online reviewers. Then you should follow up with news releases every month to the very same magazines and newspapers (especially when you can tie into your book a national breaking news story). Let these opinion-molding editors know what you are doing and why your book has the information their readers need.

Just as a parent's responsibilities do not end with giving birth, an author's do not end with publication. The *child* must be raised and the *book* must be promoted.

**EDITORIAL COPY VS. ADVERTISING COPY:** On the average, people spend seven minutes with their magazines. Obviously, they see very few of the ads. Of those ads they do see, they read very few. Of those ads they read, they believe very few. Of those ads they believe, they act on very few. People are skeptical of advertisements. On the other hand, readers tend to believe editorial copy. Now ask yourself: How much advertising space can you buy for \$1,500? Not much — and it won't sell many books anyway. For the same amount, you can send out 500 review copies, many of which will result in editorial copy (articles and reviews) that people will believe. The public is usually more receptive to publicity because editorial copy is viewed as news and advertising is perceived as self-serving. An industry rule of thumb is that editorial coverage is seven times as valuable as paid coverage.

*The main difference between marketing a book and marketing soap is that a book is a one-shot deal.... A book usually has only 90 days to make it or it is dead.*

# 8

## Who Will Buy Your Book?

### *Markets*

### *Distribution Channels*



Most people think of book stores when they ponder the idea of selling books. Bookstores are one outlet and there are ways to reach them effectively. But there are many additional places to sell books. First we have to identify the people most likely to purchase a given title and then we have to locate them. We have to make our books available wherever our potential customer may be shopping. It also helps to know who is buying books and where they are buying them, (see chart on previous page).

The pessimist might say the market is small and there is too much content. The optimist might tell you to look at the size of the untapped potential market.

In terms of where people buy books, no figures are available for book sales outside the book trade. It is suspected that a very large, unreported number are sold through specialty shops (e.g., parachute books in parachute stores, other special interest books in health food, office supply, computer, auto, garden and toy stores), catalogs, as premiums, etc. These nontraditional sales are usually easier to make, very large and much more lucrative.

The chain superstores have grown and stabilized somewhat (they build new stores and close others), the chain mall stores (with smaller selections) are shrinking, and many independent bookstores

are being killed off by the chains (for now, the very largest and also the small specialized independent bookstores seem to be surviving). More and more specialty stores are carrying books, as are grocery and drug stores, newsstands, hotels and airports. College chain and franchise bookstores are growing, taking the place of independent college stores. The largest growth has been among Internet book sites such as [www.Amazon.com](http://www.Amazon.com) and [www.BarnesAndNoble.com](http://www.BarnesAndNoble.com). The Internet is now about 6% of the market.

*Selection is directly related to sales.*

– **Jon Glazer, Little Professor Book Centers**

## **TARGET YOUR MARKETS**

Audience specialization is accomplished by concentrating your promotional efforts on those most likely to buy. Before you wrote your book, you analyzed your potential audience, and then you slanted your text toward them. In producing your book, you considered how it might be marketed and made your product attractive in this medium. Perhaps you put extra effort into the cover. The selection of your marketing channels is very important. For example, the chains seem to concentrate on fast-moving books. If your book is very technical and is aimed at a very narrow audience, you do not want to send them to the chains. The unsold books will only come back. Even if you get your book into a nonbook market where there aren't any returns, you want the books to sell, not to sit on the shelves forever. You want dealers who are repeat customers. So consider who patronizes each of the various outlets, and be objective in considering whether they are your buying audience.

*There is no secret formula. It is simply a good item for which there is a need, at the right price, offered to the right market.*

In analyzing the market, you will consider your principal marketing concerns, your customers (individuals, schools, libraries,

international markets, subsidiary rights, industry, government, etc.) and your distribution channels (distributors, wholesalers, bookstores, specialty stores, book clubs and catalogs). Your marketing tools are book reviews, news releases, direct mail advertising, exhibits, sales representation, etc.

With a specialized nonfiction book, you can avoid the expensive, traditional, big-publisher methods of marketing to everyone, by identifying and locating only those people vitally interested in your subject matter. Work smarter, not harder. Define your core audience, and then get to work. Select your special audience and find a way to reach them. You will find that magazines, stores, catalogs, broadcast interviewers, specialized book clubs, columnists, associations, conventions and others serve your target group. For example, if your book is on skydiving, you know you can reach your customers through the U.S. Parachute Association, the Para-Gear catalog, *Skydiving* magazine and at the national championships. Who are your customers? What is their profile? Where can you find them? Where do they congregate with others who have like interests? Where is your customer?

You do not have to attack the whole group; you can go after just the cream off the top. Mail to the libraries with the biggest purchasing budgets; visit the buyers of the larger chain stores and select the wealthiest of the direct email purchasers. Mailing lists can be rented selectively by region, category, gender, income level, past purchasing history and other criteria; you do not have to buy the whole country or an entire category.

Hedge your bets by balancing your markets. Put most of your energy into selling your primary target group. Send out review copies, new releases, broadcast email messages and so on. Then attack your secondary group and your tertiary group and so on. Sell to anyone outside those groups who approaches you too, but don't spend a lot of time courting him or her. Invest your time and money where they will bring the greatest return.

# 9

## Advertising Your Book

*Direct Mail, Print, Broadcast*



It is said that advertising will make a good book sell better, but it can't turn a poor one into a success. First we will talk about advertising in general, and then we will discuss the details of your brochure, direct email advertising, classifieds, space ads and radio/TV. Much of the information is overlapping and can be applied to more than one area of advertising, so I advise you to read the entire chapter.

Remember, we do not recommend spending money on advertising until all the free publicity is exhausted. Advertising is just too expensive and rarely pays when selling books. When in doubt, do not advertise.

In each ad campaign, run a small test ad and then figure the cost of the campaign per sale, that is, how many books did this ad sell?

The cost per contact is interesting, but it is the cost per sale that tells you if you are winning or losing. Ads placed in magazines that will send buyers to bookstores must generate more sales than ads directing the orders to you (mail order). The difference is that you are giving your bookstore distributor 66% of the list (cover) price, whereas the mail sales come directly to you at full price. Do not run unprofitable ads! They waste money and make you work for nothing.

The people selling advertising talk about the number of impressions and cumulative impact when they try to get you to spend more on ads (or try to explain why your ad wasn't successful). A series of good, consistent ads are of some help, because prospects remember that they heard of the book before. But remember, you are selling a \$20 or \$30 book, not a \$20,000 or \$30,000 automobile. You have to sell a lot more product to pay for the ad and you can't even justify as much need to your buyer.

*The secret to successful publishing is not to publish more and more books but to effectively market those books already published.*

### **DIRECT MARKETING**

Direct response marketing is any promotion or advertising that provokes a measurable response or order from the individual it was targeted to. In book publishing, direct marketing consists of order blanks in books, catalogs, package inserts, radio, TV and direct mail.

*Every household in the U.S. receives 84 pounds of direct (bulk) mail each year. We each use three working days to sort and decide what to do with it.*

One book out of four is sold via direct mail advertising. Most of this volume goes to book clubs, but they don't get all the business; there are over a half billion dollars left. Direct mail offers the small publisher an opportunity to sell to the customer without competing with the big publishers. Mail provides equal treatment. However, savvy smaller publishers are abandoning traditional postal mail for faster and cheaper email.

*Don't confuse direct mail with mail order. Direct mail is a form of advertising that competes with space ads and television spots, whereas mail order is a delivery method or form of distribution that competes with storefronts.*

**TARGET MARKETING:** This is the Age of Specialization, of the narrow focus. For example, years ago, we had general weekly magazines such as *Look*, *Colliers* and *The Saturday Evening Post*. They are gone. Today we have specialized magazines such as *Graphic Arts Monthly*, *Publishers Weekly* and *Parachutist* magazine. We also have specialized newsletters, Web sites, ezines and cable TV shows. As consumers, we have the advantage of buying only those products that are specific to our wants and needs. As entrepreneurs, we *tailor* our products to special segments of the population and then we *tailor* our pitch to bring the product to their attention.

*A book will not sell unless people know about it.*

— Bob Greene, *Esquire*

Direct mail (including email) advertising allows you to pinpoint your target market with a specialized pitch. For example, the people you target with your mailing might be skydiving instructors. Skydiving instructors have different needs and desires than skydiving students, or jump pilots, or parachute riggers, or drop zone owners. Each is involved in skydiving in general, but each requires a different pitch.

Direct mail advertising is a targeted shot at the customer. This is not a shotgun blast at every household in the neighborhood, hoping to find a couple of people interested in your books.

### **ECONOMICS OF DIRECT MAIL**

Unless you have several related titles, priced over \$35 each, to share your brochure, you won't make money regularly in direct postal mail advertising. The smaller and newer publisher is only successful using direct mail for prepublication offers and occasional mailings to (often smaller) highly targeted lists.

One must understand the economics to put direct mail advertising of books into perspective. If you tell enough people about your book, a

# 10

## Fulfillment

### *Moving Your Book Out the Door*



**B**ook order fulfillment consists of invoicing, inventory storage, picking, packaging and shipping. These routines involve opening the mail, sorting it, gathering the email, fax and telephone orders, keyboarding the invoices, wrapping the books, affixing the shipping label, applying postage to the package, making the trip to the post office (or other delivery system) and maintaining a record of the sale. Inventory management includes storage and stock monitoring, so you will know when to order another printing.

Fulfillment is expensive. According to John Huenefeld, most small- to medium-sized publishers spend about 10.5% of their gross on fulfillment. All costs, including labor, storage and shipping materials, average \$2.44 per order handled, or 66 cents per book. If your business is mostly wholesale (many copies of the same book to fewer customers), you may be able to drop your fulfillment percentage to 6% or 7%. If all your orders are for individual books at retail, your fulfillment costs may be as high as 14%.

**MAIL ORDER SELLING** offers you the opportunity to run a high-volume, worldwide business without a large cash investment in multiple facilities. To compete with larger companies, all you need is a better product and more efficient promotion. Since we are far from most of our customers, book publishing is primarily a mail order business.

Mail order businesses deal with their customers at a distance, without face-to-face delivery. The product might be delivered by the post office or a large shipment might go by truck. Mail order is particularly appropriate for the distribution of books. In fact, over half the business and professional books are sold and shipped directly from the publisher to the ultimate consumer.

Smaller publishers are attracted to mail order selling because it is easier than getting into bookstores. They ship to wholesalers and stores, but they don't spend money visiting them. In fact, there are many stories about books that had done poorly in the bookstores but, when properly promoted, sold well through mail order.

Mail order buyers probably do not frequent bookstores, and it is likely they do not even think of themselves as book buyers. Some of these customers are ordering from online bookstores and some get their books directly from the publishers. A *Publishers Weekly* article about Bantam noted that, geographically, mail orders equate proportionally to population figures. The majority of orders come from the most populated states, California and New York, not from the states with fewer bookstores. Mail order purchasing is a habit. Many people prefer to buy informational books this way. Once they begin, they often collect everything they can find on the subject.

### **ORDER TAKING**

Initially, you will take, process and fill orders by yourself to keep it simple. You want to streamline the workload to avoid any duplication of effort. For example, keyboarding an invoice and then typing a separate label is a waste of time and money (cost of label, etc.). Just print out three copies of each invoice and use one copy for the shipping label/packing slip. This one-time writing also avoids transposition errors in figures and addresses. Once your business grows to the point where you have several titles and employees, you will require a more elaborate fulfillment system.

To enable you to visualize the distribution system, the fulfillment process will be discussed in sequence.

**ELECTRONIC ORDERS:** Most of your orders will arrive electronically via telephone, fax and email. These orders are usually charged to a credit card. A few orders will arrive in the mail with enclosed checks or money orders. Since many orders will be received electronically, you will need merchant status: the ability to accept credit cards.

Many of your orders will be generated by your *Web site*. If most of your promotional efforts are on the Web, most of your orders will arrive via email and most of your correspondence will be via email.

Draft stock paragraphs that can be cut and pasted into an email to answer questions, announce new products and services and take care of routine business matters.

**POSTAL ORDERS:** Open the mail and check the contents, but do not take the orders and cheques out of their envelopes. Sort the stuffed envelopes into piles according to whether they are individual retail sales, book dealers (stores or distributors), libraries or special accounts (associations, sport centers, etc.). Make up a separate pile for inquiries—you will want to send these people a brochure. Other piles will be for accounts receivable, letters to be answered, etc.


When a retail order arrives without a cheque, make a note of the omission (such as cheque not enclosed ) on the envelope. Then send a brochure with a note requesting money in the correct amount. Occasionally, you will get a letter back, saying that a cheque was enclosed with the original order. But you will have your note on that envelope to confirm your suspicions and jog your memory. Make a photocopy of the envelope with the notation and request that the sender either recheck his or her records or send you a photocopy of the canceled cheque.

**TELEPHONE ORDERS:** Today, more and more people use the telephone to order. Not only is it easier and faster, if they are paying 10 cent/minute for telephone service, a three-minute call is cheaper than a stamp.

# 11

## Electronic Book Publishing and Promoting

*Electronic Books, Downloadable Books,  
Automated Printing, Print on Demand and  
Online Promotion*



Nonfiction book writing, production and promotion are changing due to the increasing demand for information and rapid advances in technology. Instead of investing money in long print runs and inventory space, books can now be delivered electronically and/or printed one at a time as needed.

This chapter is a recapitulation of the book writing and publishing process according to the New Book-Publishing Model. These pages will repeat some items from previous chapters but will also bring all the elements of writing, production and promotion together.

We have seen the future and it beeps. Welcome to digital smoke and mirrors.

### **INFORMATION @ THE SPEED OF THOUGHT**

The opportunities for authors are expanding so quickly that we are no longer sure what a book is. We do know that nonfiction authors are information providers, that the Web is facilitating rapid delivery of text and that there are new economical printing techniques.

To save money on book printing, many of the larger publishers have resorted to smaller type, reduced leading between lines and

narrower margins (resulting in a wider text block). These books are more difficult to read. The type size in an eBook, (electronic book), however, can be adjusted to suit the reader.

The electronic edition of your book will be far more useful to your reader. In addition to being searchable and less expensive, all the referenced URLs (Web addresses) will be hyperlinked for quick access. Online readers can just click on the address and go to the referenced Web site.

The only ink-on-paper ( dead tree ) books in the future will be coffee table books — books as an art form. These books will be used to decorate homes and offices. Information will ultimately be disseminated electronically without sacrificing trees.

*Publishing ink on paper is going to become a mere service to readers. The real product we're going to sell is the digital product.*

— **Bruno de Sa Moreira, *Zeroheure* magazine**

People need more information to make critical decisions, and they want their information fast. As an author, you have the information some of them need, and you can get it to them faster electronically than through traditional hand or Postal delivery.

We are not just in the information age ; we are in the electronic information age or, better yet, the communication age. Fortunately, authors deal in content that can be communicated. The world of knowledge is going from a paper culture to an electronic culture. It is only a question of how we want to package our information.

*If book publishers can't see the writing on the wall, it's because the writing is not on the wall. It's on a computer screen.*

**ELECTRONIC COSTS:** The costs of electronic delivery of

information are decreasing, while the costs of physical storage and delivery are increasing. That is why the fax has become a common office machine. We have learned it does not pay to give someone a letter and 34cents to hand deliver the message across the country. Fax will do it faster and cheaper.

We used to recommend a budget of \$12,000 to produce the pages and cover, print 3,000 copies and initially market a 192-page softcover book. Today, that book can be electronically produced, printed (500 copies) and launched in the marketplace for far less.

Be leery of electronic publishing services that claim they will provide you with a book cover and typesetting for a few hundred dollars. Most likely, you will wind up with a simple, unattractive generic cover that will be rejected by distributors, bookstores and buyers. The typesetting may be done overseas with a pre-set page layout and typestyle rather than a unique page design or type to match the book's content. They will not do proofing or spell-checking because they don't speak English and must grind out as many pages as possible. Ultimately, you get what you pay for.

*Books are going electronic. Some bound books will soon be as dead as the trees they are printed on.*

**DISINTERMEDIATION** is a new marketing buzzword. It means cutting out all the intermediaries such as publishers, distributors, wholesalers, bookstores and printers so customers can deal directly with manufacturers. In our case, readers can buy directly from the author.

Customers for many products are dealing directly with manufacturers. Dell does not assemble a computer until after it is sold and they receive the money. In fact, Dell gets paid before they have to pay for the parts going into the computer. Compare that production model with the Detroit style. The automobile manufacturers make cars and put them on lots. They often sit on 60 days of inventory. It would make more sense to allow people to

# 12

## Coping With Being Published

*Or What Do I Do Now?*



Once you become a published author, your life will change. Being in the limelight may not always be as much fun as you used to dream about. This chapter discusses some of the interesting challenges you will face and will provide some suggestions on how to deal with them.

**YOUR STATUS WILL CHANGE** from that of a private person, the writer, to a public person, the expert, possibly even the celebrity. Your friends will treat you differently once you are published. Some will be very happy for you, and some will be jealous—jealous because they did not write the book. People new in your field will treat you like an idol, while those who have been around for years may feel threatened and be rather unkind.

Many new authors do not foresee their new popularity, their growing celebrity status. There is little you can do about your new treatment except be prepared for it. Be nice, and in a few years your reputation will be so solid that no one will take swipes at you any more.

Gary Glenn spent 27 years working as a fire investigator. When he and his wife, Peggy, wrote *Don't Get Burned! A Family Fire-Safety Guide*, life at work changed. The new firefighters put him on a pedestal — they followed him around the

## The Self-Publishing Manual

firehouse, hoping he might drop a few pearls of wisdom — while some of his contemporaries in the very status-conscious firefighting community were very cool towards him.

Bob Johnson wrote the first book on the triathlon. When he was 62, he took off for Hawaii to practice for the Iron Man competition. Bob found himself followed by a covey of young groupies. This was quite a challenge, because he had an obligation to his public but he wanted to get away to practice alone.

**AUTOGRAPHING BOOKS** is something you will be asked to do both in person and by mail. It is surprising how many prolific authors have never given much thought to how they might autograph a book. Confronted with an admiring fan, they are suddenly at a loss for words. Most authors simply sign To Kathy with best wishes, add their signature and sometimes the date. At times, you want to be more personal, such as thanking a contributor for his or her help and support on the book. If there is something special about the buyer, include it in your autograph. Often there is a question of time. On a mail order book, you can dream up something special, but at a well-attended autograph party with people standing in line, it is difficult to think of a few well-chosen words while trying to give witty answers. And, by the way, especially when rushed, make sure you spell your buyer's name correctly. In all the hustle, it is easy to draw a blank and misspell the simplest name or word, ruining a book.

*To autograph your book to a stranger is easy, to autograph for a friend is difficult.*

— **Rex Alan Smith, *Moon of Popping Trees***

One author takes this sign to books fairs and book events:

Autographed books are more valuable. Have your book autographed by the author.

Some authors autograph a number of books before an event so all they have to do is add the name of the individual.

**WRITING ARTICLES:** Once your book is published and you become better known, editors will contact you for material. Usually they will ask you to write an article on your subject—something you probably will not have time to do. Additionally, once your book is in print, you will find new, pertinent information and will devise unique ways of explaining your program and methods. Your solution to these two challenges is the interview article.

*Other people are the pioneers and make the history. I just write it down—and sell it back to them.*

As you think of a point you want to make, draft it in the form of a question and answer. Let these questions and answers build until you have several pages of them entered into your computer. Then when an editor calls, just say you are too busy to generate a specific piece, but that you have this Q&A article with all the very latest information. Tell them they may select the Q&As most likely to be of interest to their readers, and to call if they need any more. Editors love this system and rarely can think of any more questions. Some editors run the Q&As is, while some reporters use them to generate an original article. What is important is that you have supplied an interview with written, well-thought-out answers. This system gets editors off your back, saves you a lot of time, fulfills your obligation to the media and generates a lot of publicity for your book.

**SPIN-OFF** is an important concept. Repackaging the same information for various markets or in various formats (expanded and condensed versions, various sizes and bindings, etc.) will bring in more money while promoting the original book. Magazine articles can be extracted from the book, book chapters can be used as a basis for conference workshops, a series of magazine articles can be combined into a new book, or the book can be rewritten and directed toward a new audience. With a computer, it is easy to pull

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