

What every writer needs to know about editing, publishing, marketing & author services

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Five key stages to successful self-publishing
Traditional Publishing versus Self-Publishing
Traditional Publishing
Self-Publishing
Marketing Plan
General steps to Self-Publishing success
Author Coaching & costs

In this document I define the stages, decisions, challenges and realities of publishing in today's environment; the most essential ingredient: marketing; and the assistance I offer, both in coaching and hands-on implementation.

With more than 25 years experience as a journalist and editor, freelance business and travel writer, and marketing/desktop publishing professional, I help authors:

- Craft, edit and prepare your manuscript for publication; non-fiction, fiction or poetry in any genre
- Determine whether to pursue traditional publishing or self-publishing
- Develop a comprehensive strategic and realistic marketing plan for both internet and traditional avenues
- Provide resources to help you implement and track your marketing plan

There is nothing like a well-produced book to establish your credibility and expertise in a particular field, or as a fiction writer or poet. It can also create demand for your other products/services (e.g., as a speaker, teacher, consultant, tour guide; with CDs, DVDs, workshops, teleseminars, etc.) and future books.

Consider this: What do you want your book to do for you?

Your answer(s) to this question will help determine the directions and efforts we might take together.

- Do you want to just “get it published” to accomplish that dream (or task) and be done with it?
- Share it with family and associates?
- Establish your credibility in your career or field of expertise?
- Make a valuable or important contribution to a field or genre?
- Become rich and famous?
- Create a long-term revenue stream?
- Use it as a steppingstone to other opportunities?
- Be the first (or one) of many books or create a series or franchise?
- Other?

Successful self-publishing includes five key stages:

1. Write your book
2. Amazon Publish
3. Kindle Publish (and other e-formats)
4. Internet Marketing
5. Traditional Marketing

Writing your manuscript, preparing it for publication and having it in print and e-book formats is just the beginning!

If you want to then see your book reviewed, receive awards and – most of all – be purchased, you will need a long-term commitment and plan to market your book (i.e., your product).

Your plan may also include creating demand for your other products/services (e.g., as a speaker, teacher, consultant, tour guide; with CDs, DVDs, workshops, teleseminars, etc.) and future books.

Traditional Publishing versus Self-Publishing

Traditional Publishing

If you are a well-known personality or expert, or the subject of your book is in high demand, you may be able to contract with a traditional publisher, directly or through an agent. If you do not meet this criteria, it is unlikely you will find a publisher; especially one that has the resources and will commit them to make your book a success.

However, it is common for many first-time authors to waste a lot of time pursuing this. Or, the author may get a contract only to find their publisher does not plan to do any marketing on their behalf and there will not be any revenues beyond a small advance.

I know a number of authors who have been published by well-known houses – without the support, income or prestige they thought they would receive – and subsequently opted to self-publish, with much greater results and satisfaction. The logical question is then: WHY BOTHER?

The answer: Hope of prestige and that “big time publishers” will do all the work for you. But to even get interest from a publisher (large or small) requires undertaking significant research to identify likely publishers and understand and fulfill their submission requirements.

Many publishers, but not all, require you to submit through an agent. Finding an agent who has faith in your product and the connections and expertise to adequately represent you can be valuable but can be time consuming and frustrating.

I suggest you read Michael J. Dowling's account of his experience with traditional publishing: <http://www.michaeljdowling.com/newsletters/2011-05-authors-beware.html>

In any case, you will need a compelling query letter and bio, and an exceptional marketing plan. Publishers want to know what you are willing and able to do to market and sell "their" book.

I help you pursue a traditional publishing contract if your goals are clear. I conduct and assess the research and craft these materials, or guide you in doing so. In any case, understanding your "competition" and having a workable marketing plan will serve your self-publishing efforts as well.

Case Study: one of my coaching clients, Jan Helling-Croteau, wrote Perform it! A Director's Guide To Young People's Theater (retail \$13.95). As a director of an established young people's theater, she saw the lack of resources for this niche, had developed her own replicable exercises and procedures for cross-curriculum education using theater, and sought to establish herself as a teacher. She was not concerned with income from sales.

I worked with her to structure the book and provided substantive editing, without changing her voice in any way. We identified four publishers of educational drama-related books and submitted queries. Within two weeks, she had invitations from two publishers to submit her manuscript and was under contract (with Heinemann Publishing) within a month.

While the book had three printings (approximately 7,500 books sold), she has received no royalties against her \$1,000 advance, (which we negotiated up from the publisher's offer of \$500). It has served to establish her expertise and land her teaching and consultant jobs. Keep in mind that this was in 2000.

In today's online world, had she self-published with her average Amazon book selling for \$10 x 7,500 copies x 70%, she would have grossed more than \$50,000.

Self-Publishing

There used to be a stigma about self-publishing, but that has all changed.

With Amazon as the largest bookseller in the world, and distribution, via Ingram (the largest book distributor in North America), self-published authors are now

on an entirely level playing field with traditionally-published authors. And there are advantages, such as control of design and release time, publicity and leverage, and unlimited income.

For both novice and seasoned authors, the greatest opportunities for book sales now exist in self-publishing, via Print-On-Demand (POD) and/or E-Publishing (Kindle, Nook, iBook). With a properly prepared POD, your books can be ordered by bookstores and you do not need to warehouse or fulfill orders. You can sell them worldwide, and you don't have to wait months or years to payback your advance and receive your "royalties".

While you could choose to figure it all out yourself, and can theoretically create and upload your books for free, you will save enormous frustration and time — and get it done right — if you choose to work with a professional. In this case, you will need to invest between \$2,000 and \$5,000, as a one-time expense, to set up your POD, e-Publishing books and related marketing, but will keep 30-70% of every sale. This deviation in percentage is based on the price of your POD and eBook.

Therefore, on the sale of 1,000 books at, say, \$10 each (at 70%) you would gross \$7,000, thus seeing a \$2,000 profit if you originally spent \$5,000 with your POD publisher. And that should be just the beginning of sales for your first and subsequent books (and possible other products and spin-offs).

Unlike traditionally published books which have to make a big splash on release (and then are back listed), or are often ordered by bookstores on release and then returned, your POD and E-published book has no set "shelf life" and can be "discovered" and marketed in various ways for years to come.

The process involves numerous steps (which most PODs offer as additional services, such as editing, formatting, cover design, assignment of ISBN number). There are also a number of choices in POD publishers, and I can advise on those and/or perform these for you in a more customized way, including more affordable interior color printing.

However, for your book to have a chance at sales success, the most critical aspect is **marketing**. You need to be willing to do — or hire someone else to do — a consistent amount of creative social media engagement, public relations and old-fashioned marketing (print, broadcast, PR, etc.).

Your Marketing Plan

Once you are clear on your publishing direction, you will need a **strategic marketing plan**. Traditional publishers require this in their query submission package, and it is critical for your success as a self-publisher.

Your marketing plan should address the following. But don't freak out — you only have to choose a few of these avenues, and then be consistent!

Social Media

Website/blog (in your name, for your book/books or otherwise branded), with subscriber capture
Facebook Page (business FB page for your book fans)
Blogs & Forums in which you participate
Possible Ads
Joint Ventures (JVs)
Amazon and Kindle community participation
Teleseminars & Webinars
Twitter
Affiliates

Traditional Media

Local magazines, newspapers, radio
Book Review submission sites
Public Relations opportunities
Contest Submissions
Articles
Other
Writers' Conferences
Speaking Engagements
Spin-off Products

15 Steps to Self-Publishing Success

As your author coach, I will work with you throughout this process.

1. Complete your manuscript and have it professionally edited
2. Write bio, jacket copy and other front and/or back matter
3. Send manuscript out for comments/endorsements
4. Create a comprehensive marketing plan
5. Choose your POD publisher (if you want a color interior and/or better international pricing and distribution, choose Ingram Spark)
6. Choose format, cover art/design (these can be provided for a cost by your POD publisher, or produced yourself or through your own sources; I can recommend)
7. Obtain an ISBN Number (free from POD publisher or purchase yourself)
8. Set up Amazon, B&N and Google Books accounts
9. Figure costs, royalties and fill in all relevant payment and author info
10. Create your author website (and Facebook, etc.); include it in book
11. Upload formatted manuscript to POD publisher

12. Upload formatted manuscript to Kindle, (which uses a proprietary format called .mobi) and also to Smashwords, for conversion to other eBook reader devices such as Nook, Apple, etc. (using a format called .epub)
13. Get the word out, i.e., implement marketing plan (JVs, PR, your networks)
14. Submit for reviews and to contests
15. Build your new business through consistent efforts

Why Coaching

The coaching relationship is collaborative and designed to provide you with sound advice and a reliable partner committed to your success. It will save you from wasting time and money, and create accountability for both of us to accomplish tasks and goals on time. As in starting any business or exercise regimen, those who employ a coach are much more apt to succeed in setting and meeting goals, and avoiding pitfalls.

Cost For “Get It Done!” Coaching

Due to the variables of each Author’s needs, a price for the services I offer depends on your specific project. A monthly retainer relationship (common in the coaching, public relations, marketing and legal industries), usually works to your advantage as an Author/Client in that it provides generous access to me, and you do not need to consider the costs of each and every conversation or action performed on your behalf. Retainers range from \$700 – \$1,500 per month with a minimum of three months.

Itemized Services

My hourly project rate is \$75. For those seeking assistance with specific tasks, I offer the following “ballpark” figures.

One-hour “What should I do?” conversation – \$175.

I give you answers to all your questions, clarify concepts and help ensure you understand the best directions and possibilities to pursue for your specific project.

Editing: Substantive Editing, Copy Editing and Proofreading (full line and copy editing/mark-up of completed manuscript) with comments: \$3.00/page – average 250 page book: \$750. For more on types of editing, see <http://www.edsguild.org/types.htm>

Consultation/Development of Marketing Plan – \$500.

Website/Blog Creation (WordPress basic, to match your book and/or create brand) – includes design, photo/graphic choices, copy writing/editing and complete set-up, instruction and support so you can modify it yourself at any time. \$1,000 – \$2,500

Facebook Business Page Setup and Auto Linking – \$200.

Print format conversion for eBook uploads as .ePub and .mobi files – \$350+ depending on length and complexity of your original print format.

Press Release and submission to 20 relevant on and off-line media – \$400.

How To Proceed:

Email: Editor@InhabitYourDreams.com
or Skype me: InhabitYourDreams
to discuss your author project.