

# Get Published

A first-time writer's guide to publishing



by **Infinite Ideas**



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First published in 2011 by

**Infinite Ideas Limited**

36 St Giles

Oxford

OX1 3LD

United Kingdom

[www.infideas.com](http://www.infideas.com)

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A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN 978-1-906821-66-1

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Cover designed by Cylinder

Text designed and typeset by Nicki Averill

Printed and bound in Great Britain

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# A state of the book industry address

1

‘After being turned down by numerous Publishers, he had decided to write for Posterity.’ George Ade



## **The benefits and pitfalls of publishing**

The publishing industry never really gets a good press. It's full, so popular wisdom tells us, of risk-averse number crunchers who have replaced instinctive publishing geniuses such as the George Weidenfelds and Allen Lanes of old.

On the supply side it's dominated by the big houses that only want to back the safe bets of celebrity-led publishing. On the retail side it's dominated in the UK by just a couple of national chain retailers, the supermarkets (who are only really interested in bestsellers and often use them as loss-leaders) and the big boy online retailers (you know who).

So we end up with the bizarre situation of a well-known but literately challenged TV gardener topping the bestseller charts for fiction. Similarly, a pneumatic former topless model commands a massive advance for semi-pornographic airport novels that demean the semi-pornographic airport novel genre.

Models doing cookery shows on TV have bestsellers, their books piled up in high street bookstores and all the time real writers, true artists obviously, struggle in attics and garrets, their fingers bleeding from hitting the typewriter keys day in day out until they die in abject poverty undiscovered, unappreciated and unread.

OK, it's a bleak picture, and probably exaggerated. After all who uses a typewriter any more?

We all know that JK Rowling was turned down by 48,159 agents and 54,100 publishers before Bloomsbury took a punt on her. (They only did this because they knew nothing about children's publishing. Fat hardback novels about wizards – preposterous! It goes to show that writing and publishing a bestseller is pretty much a matter of luck and that no one can predict accurately what will work and what won't.) But this is not a new phenomenon. Beatrix Potter, Kenneth Grahame, William Golding, HG Wells and that literary giant Wilbur Smith all received rejections from the publishing world at some time in their lives.

Anyway, back to grim reality. There are some staggeringly depressing figures around. According to the Society of Authors the average author earns less than £7,000 per annum. So statistically you'd earn more money down at McDonald's rather than knocking out your *magnum opus*.

So while we're on the reasons-to-be-miserable track, let's look at some more wrist-slitting statistics. According to a report in *The Times* approximately 200,000 books were available for sale in the UK in 2007. Of that total 190,000 titles sold fewer than 3,500 copies.

But there's more bad news:

- Of 85,933 new books published in 2007 as many as 58,325 sold an average of just 18 copies.
- The top 5% of titles by sales volume account for over 60% of total book sales.

The message? It's tough out there. The book industry has been hit over the last few years by seismic changes. Just look at the bookstores. In fairly recent years chains such as Claude Gill, Dillons, Ottakers, Sherratt and Hughes, Borders, Books etc and Menzies have all disappeared or been swallowed up. Why?

Well, one can argue at length about the commoditisation of books that means that more people read just bestsellers. The result of this is that the high street becomes a bloodbath of discounting, with every retailer trying to sell the same books more cheaply than their competitor and everyone - publisher, retailer and the good old author, losing out on profit. You can actually blame the demise of the Net Book Agreement (NBA) for this sorry state of affairs.

For the anoraks amongst you the NBA was an agreement set up on 1 January 1900 between booksellers and publishers that guaranteed the fixed retail price of books.

Arguably this led to better stocked shops and a thriving specialist independent bookselling sector. Here's a challenge – speak to any publisher over the age of forty-five, buy her a glass of wine (a good ploy usually) and ask her to talk about the good old days of the NBA. She'll be reminiscing tearfully within four minutes, we promise.

The publishing and bookselling world has changed from the slightly befuddled gentlemanly industry of yore. Accurate stock control software dominates buying decisions and removes a lot of localised bookselling expertise. Supermarkets are now major players, discounting heavily, piling them high and selling them cheap. They aren't concerned with literary merit – they're supermarkets for God's sake.

Cash-pressed students buy fewer text books, relying on the internet much more for the information they need. Libraries spend their budgets on DVDs and online resources, with book budgets slashed. And of course there are the retailing phenomena such as Amazon, The Book Depository and newcomers like Aphrohead. Finally you have a new generation of consumers who only want content (and books are just content after all) if they can access it from a screen and preferably don't have to pay for it.

## **Reasons to publish**

So why do people still long to write books in this digital, throw-away, screen-based, low-brow world where the craft of writing is so poorly valued?

Some still dream of the big time despite the evidence above. They're after the multimillion pound five-book deal, Spielberg on the phone daily upping his advance on the screenplay rights. And in our very humble opinion, there's nothing wrong with dreaming thus as long as you keep the day job going.

For others, writing is a hobby, a form of relaxation for people who don't like gardening or basket weaving. Sometimes the writing is for therapy, a release, a private way of expressing innermost thoughts that won't result in one's nearest and dearest reaching for the telephone number of the local lunatic asylum. Often a book will be for consumption by a very limited number of people – a family history for example.

But there is good news in amongst all the doom and gloom. Right now, it has never ever been easier to be published. So how has this happened?

## **New forms of publishing**

Let's just look at the digital environment that has grown up in the last decade or so. Everyone who posts something on Facebook about their varicose veins or their fab night out with the girls – ooh how drunk we were! – is in effect a published author. Ditto if you've ever tweeted about your fascinating bus journey to Croydon.

And think of the blogosphere. There are people out there whose blogs are read by tens of thousands of people daily, many more than might pick up a physical book by the same author. It's indisputable that being published has never been easier in the history of mankind.

That might sound like a big statement, but it's one that does not simply apply to the online sector. Traditionally, one would think being published meant Random House and the massive advance, small specialist presses or the sad ignominy of going down the vanity publishing (VP) route.

You've seen the ads in the back of the newspaper. 'Authors wanted, all manuscripts considered,' which is shorthand for 'If you're stupid enough to give us a big dollop of money we'll promise you front of store positioning in every Waterstone's in the country for your MAGNIFICENT work entitled *Fish Poems and Poets* – and can I just say how much

I liked the rhyming of Barracuda with Pablo Neruda? You'll sell a million, trust us ...'

The publishing market has changed. Yes, there are pure vanity publishers out there still, but they're less successful now than they used to be, principally because of the growth of digital publishing and print on demand (POD) technology. In effect what this means is that an author can produce just one copy of her book, and print going forward only to supply demand. And the costs will start from as little as £50 with some outfits, although you do have to be very careful about the quality of the book you'll receive.

This means that entry-level publishing is available to everyone for the price of a good meal (and a decent bottle of wine). With an ISBN – again cheap to get hold of – your book will be sitting in the top three million bestsellers in the fish poetry category on Amazon within weeks.

So, technology has democratised the process of being published in many different ways. With that in mind let's look a little at the author paid-for publishing sectors and what they're all about. There are two distinct sectors to consider here, namely self-publishing and vanity publishing, and they do often get confused, so read on and pay attention.

### ***Self-publishing***

The number of self-publishing businesses has risen dramatically in the past few years, mainly due to affordable POD technology. Self-publishing involves uploading a manuscript onto the website of a business such as Infinite Authors ([www.infiniteauthors.com](http://www.infiniteauthors.com)) or Lulu, choosing a cover and interior designs from a selection of templates, then through POD technology producing as few or many copies as you require. As the author you'll pay the self-publishing company to upload your book and then they will take a (usually large) slice of revenue from any further copies sold.

There's an important caveat here, something to watch out for with some of the cowboy operations. For a book to be truly self-published the *author* legally publishes it and therefore owns all rights in it exclusively. So you as the author will in effect create a publishing house through which that book is published. Let's call it Barracuda Neruda Publishing. That sure-fire winning name must now appear on the copyright page of your book as 'Publisher' and your book's ISBN number must be registered by the ISBN Agency to BNP Publishing (actually, perhaps we should rethink that name after all).

A brief interjection about the ISBN. While not a requirement, it is terribly important to have one if you want to achieve

some level of distribution (on Amazon for example) but it is a mind-numbingly tedious subject and so we'll refer you to the glossary of terms at the back of this book and say no more about it here. You'll thank us later. Honestly.

Working through a self-publishing company can be a good, cost-effective solution to getting into print. But there are some serious considerations, mainly to do with you as the author owning the rights in your own work. If you're tempted to pay money to a business that offers to publish your book under its own name or imprint, with its own ISBN, it's not self-published.

This may sound like a somewhat petty point, but it is important. You will have lost control and ownership of your own work. What this means is that, should your book be so successful that someone want to translate it into Tagalog for example, or buy the film rights, then legally it's the publisher, not you, who can grant those rights or otherwise.

True self-publishing gives you total control over your own work, so check the small print.

### ***Vanity publishing (VP)***

In this sector you as the author send the vanity publisher your manuscript and you pay all costs for the production of an agreed number of books, often as few as ten copies. Typically you'll pay between £1,000 and £3,000.

Problems arise because the sector is full of rip-off merchants who make extravagant claims about the certain widespread distribution of your masterpiece. The vanity publisher will give your book an ISBN that links it to their imprint. That simple action means the book will appear on Amazon and the wholesalers – end of story. *It doesn't mean that people will buy the book.* The marketing mystique of publishing is explained later on, but there's a lot more to it than getting it on Amazon.

Many vanity publishers will offer you distribution in one local bookstore and charge you for the service, with the vague promise that this will lead to national distribution. In 99.99% of cases it won't. It is the extravagance of these claims that has caused so much negative publicity for vanity publishing, so be warned.

Of these two options we'd advise that self-publishing is in most cases the best. It means that for a minimal outlay an aspiring author can see his book in print with (very limited) distribution while still retaining all rights to the work. Some self-published authors can generate significant sales for their book by building online fan bases, networking locally and working the internet. It's also not unknown for successful self-published books to be picked up by mainstream houses and published conventionally. It's unlikely, but it can and does happen.

Here are a few things we'd urge you to think about before parting with money for either self-publishing or vanity publishing:

- How important to you are distribution and marketing (see Chapter 6) and how sustainable are the claims the publisher makes? You can flush out the conmen quite easily by asking if they have a team of reps who visit key retailers, or if they have a presence at the major international book fairs (Frankfurt and London). There's a lot on the net about the worst offenders in the sector, so do some thorough research.
- Commit yourself to promoting your own book. That might mean getting to grips with the power of the social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. You might build a website (or the publisher might offer you one as part of the deal) but you'll need to get to grips with Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) so that people can find you. Think about press coverage: is your book of national media interest or local interest (newspapers and radio) only? Might your friendly local bookseller put on a window display and host a launch? It's entirely up to you but the more you put in the more you'll get back.
- How confident are you that your manuscript as it

stands can go straight in to book format without any editing or proofreading? It is highly unlikely that your book will be perfectly written – sorry, but it’s true. You may not think this matters, but frankly it should. Since the success of *Eats, Shoots and Leaves* there are plenty of grammar experts out there and your book will get torn apart unless it’s been professionally processed prior to publication. And that service will cost (see chapter 4).

- POD and digital printing can vary greatly in quality so ask to see some samples before committing.
- Check your contract! Make sure you fully understand what you’re signing up for especially when it comes to control of your intellectual property.

## **The conventional route**

OK, so you’re still committed to finding a conventional route to publication, despite the warnings above about the dire state of the market. We admire your perseverance.

There’s a great book that you probably already own: *The Writers’ & Artists’ Yearbook*. If you don’t know already this essentially is a listing of all registered UK publishers and agents, with information about what kind of publishing they’re interested in, how many books they publish a year, that kind of thing. It’s a good place to start.

Now have a look at the big names in fiction. Most in the *Yearbook* will say something along the lines of 'No unsolicited manuscripts'. That means in pretty stark terms, don't send us your book because we won't read it.

If your book is rather more academic or specialist then you can try going directly to publishers, assuming you do a little research beforehand. There are niche publishers in just about every area of interest and many will accept unsolicited approaches, especially if you're perceived to be something of an expert.

So how is the mighty publishing machine fed? Well, more often than not it's through contacts with agents.

Literary agencies vary in size and role (the major ones are all listed in the *Yearbook*). They are the gatekeepers; they understand (well, they're supposed to) the market, what publishers are looking for and most importantly of all they can get a manuscript onto an editor's desk.

So, the process is a breeze then. All you need to do is find an agent, then they'll do the selling for you. Simple.

But of course the problem is that agents are inundated themselves with writing hopefuls. They receive hundreds of

unsolicited manuscripts annually. How are they to sort the wheat from the publishing chaff? Often they don't - they just look to pinch established authors themselves from other agents. And, to be fair to them, they are as affected as anyone by the industry's problems and will only receive fees if they find you a publisher, so they're pretty risk averse themselves.

So the agent route is a tough one. If you have a very thick skin and access to A4 envelopes and postage stamps then do try by all means but be prepared for rejection (or, worse still, to be ignored). They'll usually ask for a one-page synopsis and the first couple of chapters of your *magnum opus* printed with double spaces on A4 paper. It's worth a try.

An agent should be there to look after your commercial interests, negotiating your contract and subsequent payments with your publisher. A good agent will become your friend and a mentor for your future writing career. Bigger agencies will also pitch film and TV rights on your behalf. But remember - they take a slice of everything you earn, so they need you to make money for them.

So, to conclude, it is a tough market for the aspiring writer attempting to break through. But the sheer number of new books being published annually should give you some encouragement. The right book from the right author can be commercially published and can generate income. It is a long shot of course, but it can happen.

The good news is that, should the conventional route not prove successful for a writer, self-publishing is a viable option. It can be cheap, and it should be relatively painless. New print technology should mean that it has never been easier to have your book published.

# Inside the mind of a publisher (careful now...)

‘As repressed sadists are supposed to become policemen or butchers so those with an irrational fear of life become publishers.’ Cyril Connolly



What prompts a publisher to choose one manuscript and reject another? How will he or she go about positioning a book in the market? And should you find yourself in the enviable position of receiving publishing offers from several companies how do you decide which one is right for you?

Most publishers specialise in subject areas or focus on particular channels. If you have written a book on the Peninsular War you would be much better off starting by approaching those companies that have strong military history lists rather than general trade publishers such as Random House or HarperCollins. Although these bigger general trade houses may well publish books similar to yours you'll notice that their authors are usually TV historians or celebrity academics.

One of the first questions any publisher will ask you (if you're lucky enough to get through to one) will be about your 'platform'. If she is satisfied that the book is good enough to stamp with the publisher's imprint she needs to know that you are marketable. She'll want to know about your radio and TV experience, if you are media savvy, what sort of endorsements you can gather for the book (they have to be from people potential buyers may have heard of, not your proud mum!), what your network is like, whether you have regular speaking engagements or other public

gigs, organisations you consult to and so on. She needs to know that she can sell you and that you can sell your book.

Some publishers have privileged access to a particular channel, gift book outlets for instance, or garden centres. A gift book publisher sells books mainly outside the traditional book trade but will publish a wide range of subjects provided they suit the gift book market. So there's probably not much point approaching such a publisher with your Peninsular War proposal; but if you have written a book based on cute photographs of very hairy cats it may be that the gift book market is exactly what you need to reach the widest audience.

Some publishers do publish a wide range of subjects for the general book trade. They tend to be large imprints but there are plenty of smaller, more approachable publishers covering a range as well. Infinite Ideas for example, the publisher of this book, publishes across a broad range of subject areas, from allergies to adventure sports, business to back pain, cellulite to cookbooks. A smaller general publisher like Infinite Ideas is more likely to be flexible to the needs of the author, although it is likely to be as rigorous in its selection of new titles as any of the big players. Smaller publishers also tend to focus on the chemistry between the author and the publisher, and

won't touch a new project if the relationship doesn't feel right. That relationship is usually key to any successful publication and when it goes wrong the disruption can be severe. Big publishers have infrastructures that can absorb such tensions; smaller publishers don't, so you may be surprised at the time a company like Infinite Ideas takes to feel you out.

Here are some examples of how Infinite Ideas has worked with authors with quite different needs.

### ***A book to be proud of***

Mary is a wealthy American with a quite startling family story that she wanted to tell. She had never written a book before but she secured some professional editorial help and her manuscript was beautifully presented. Mary was more interested in having a sophisticated and elegantly produced book than in reaching a mass market audience so Infinite Ideas invested heavily in design and production. They used a luxurious cream paper for the text and a high-quality coated paper to carry full colour illustrations and endpapers, and they commissioned a stunning cover design. The result was a riveting story in an outstanding package that was sold to a high-end US publisher who secured a glowing feature for the book on publication in the *New York Times*.

### ***The best marketing tool***

Philip approached Infinite Ideas a couple of years ago after successfully selling his speaker training business. He had time at last to write the book of the course he had been delivering for so many years and he wanted it to be published by a high-quality imprint so that he could use the book to launch his new business, funnily enough a speaker training business. He had looked at self-publishing but had decided that the production quality was so terrible that it wouldn't be able to support his new brand values. So, like Mary, he wanted a professionally produced book but he was asking the publisher to do a different job. He wanted distribution in the right places. He wasn't particularly interested in selling books to Waterstone's in Lincoln. He wanted distribution in places where his market was, Schiphol, Heathrow, Changi, London Victoria. The reps worked hard to secure the right distribution and within one month of publication Philip had won a £200,000 contract as a direct consequence of someone having bought his book (at Gatwick actually). Philip isn't interested in royalties. He sees the book as marketing collateral and knows the real value of his book to him is in increased fees from clients.

### ***Raising the profile***

Chitterlings is a specialist offal restaurant in the Crawley area. When the owners approached Infinite Ideas they

had just one restaurant but it was developing a national reputation for quality and they were hoping for a Michelin star. There were plans to open three more outlets, all with a strong offal flavour, including one in Belgium, called Faggots. As part of this launch the owners wanted a beautiful, high-quality cookbook that would position them as the Ottolenghi of entrails. Infinite Ideas had plenty of experience in this area, having published *The People's Cookbook* by Anthony Worrall Thompson and Paul Rankin a couple of years previously. With all the media contacts still warm from this highly successful TV tie-in Infinite Ideas was able to give Chitterlings exactly the product and press exposure they needed.

Your relationship with your publisher is very important. Find one you like if possible. It makes a big difference if the personal chemistry between you and your commissioning editor, particularly, is good. But you also need to work out what it is you want your book to do for you. If you think you really have a mass-market paperback bestseller in you (sadly unlikely by the way) you need a publisher with enormous book trade muscle – Transworld, Random House, Penguin. If your needs are a bit more focused than that, you need a publisher who has the same focus as you do, who shares your vision for the book and who has the capability to deliver what you need.

# Preparing a manuscript for submission

# 3

‘If a publisher declines your manuscript, remember it is merely the decision of one fallible human being, and try another.’

Sir Stanley Unwin, co-founder of publishing house George Allen and Unwin



You've got to the point where a publisher has agreed to take a look at your manuscript. Congratulations! You have joined the elite group of writers who actually get read by someone. But it's very easy to mess this stage up. What follows is a publisher's view of the dos and don'ts.

**DO** please re-read your manuscript. The publisher will be reading it completely cold and will notice all sorts of off-putting blemishes. She'll be looking for reasons to put your manuscript away (i.e. reject it) and get on with the other twenty she has to read that morning. Don't give her the ammunition. You need to read it in the same way that she will. Practically all writers read their own work, but only a few actually see their own work. The least you can do is make sure your work is spelt correctly.

**DON'T** fall into the trap of being too easily satisfied with your work. Of course you're proud of it but don't let euphoria lead you to a false sense of security. Find a reader you can really trust, somebody not too close to you, but close enough to understand what you are trying to do.

**DO** make sure the presentation is slick. Infinite Ideas gets anywhere between twenty and fifty submissions a week from all sorts of wannabe authors. Many of these are beautifully submitted, but they've had entire manuscripts submitted unbound and falling all over the place (without

the page numbers needed to stack them back in order); cookbooks sent on scrap paper and, once, even on toilet roll (not used). They receive submissions that are (badly) handwritten, complete with ink stains and margin notes, or so badly laid out on the page that nobody could have any idea what's going on. These submissions may be masterpieces but no publisher or editor will devote time to deciphering a poorly presented manuscript. They all get rejected instantly.

**DON'T** be tempted to experiment with clever presentation tricks in order to woo an editor. The idea of submitting your cookbook on greaseproof paper might seem brilliant at first, but it isn't. The type will still be rubbing off the paper when it hits the bin.

**DO** avoid annoying a publisher before she has even started reading by following some simple style tips. Use good-quality A4 paper if you are submitting as hard copy: it should be clean, white and fairly heavy if it's to survive being thumbed. Leave a large margin on the left hand side (for editorial notes) and space on the other margins: it makes a page much easier and more pleasant to read. Only ever print on one side of the paper (you'll have to forget the trees for once). Keep your text clean and well spaced: stick to a size 12 font (black) and always set in double-spacing. Indent the first line of every new paragraph, don't leave

extra lines between paragraphs, and *always* make sure your pages are numbered.

**DON'T** be anonymous. Make sure the publisher can see it's your work. Include your name, address, telephone number, email address and date in the top right-hand corner of the title page. Write the title of the piece in the middle of the page, and, at the bottom, write the number of pages submitted and the number of words.

**DON'T** fold your manuscript over when sending, or stuff it into a tiny envelope. If even you don't seem as though you're proud of it or care about it why should the publisher care?

**DO** always include a brief covering letter with your manuscript (and at all costs avoid trying to explain or justify your work – credit publishers with the imagination to work that out by themselves) and a stamped addressed envelope. If a publisher sends the manuscript back and it's a little dog-eared or coffee stained, don't send it out to the next one: print off a new copy. And for God's sake remember to remove any rejection slips a previous publisher has attached before sending it on (it happens more than you'd think).

**DON'T** just send your work to the first publisher you come across or the only publisher you know. Do some research,

find out which imprint is most likely to publish your style or genre – a romance publisher won't accept your horror novel even if it's the best thing they've ever read. Get hold of a publisher's catalogue to see what kind of books they publish. Alternatively buy a yearbook that provides information on what each publisher accepts and the guidelines for approaching them.

**DON'T** send in your entire manuscript. Nothing's more likely to get your work sent back unread than an unsolicited novel plopping onto the welcome mat. Instead, write a brief letter to a publisher telling him who you are, and including any information about your past successes and your future plans (publishers like to invest in writers who plan a career in writing). With this letter, include a three-hundred-word synopsis of your work and two sample chapters (usually the first two). And never send a proposal to more than one publisher at a time: it's considered very bad form (the publishing world is a very small one).

**DO** accept rejection. Unless you are extremely lucky you'll have to. It isn't easy: during the abyss of time between submitting a piece of work and hearing an editor's response you can't help but build up your expectations. And if the response is negative it can crush your confidence. Don't give up.

**DO** take notes. Rejection can take many forms. More often than not you'll get a printed compliment slip with nothing written on it. This is the easiest response for an editor but the most frustrating response for a writer. What did they think? Wasn't it even worth an acknowledgement? Don't get too wound up. Editors are busy and sometimes they simply don't have the time (or are too badly organised!) to respond. Sometimes the printed slip comes back with some scribbled comments. These might be complimentary: 'good but not quite right for this imprint'; promising: 'please send something else'; critical: 'good overall but you haven't quite pinned down the characters'; or just plain derogatory. We won't give an example of the last, but they do occasionally happen. If you do get a grumpy response, just try to ignore it (the editor's probably got haemorrhoids from sitting down all day) and move on.

**DON'T** automatically reject your rejection. If an editor sees real promise in your work he may take the time to write a more detailed analysis of his decision. Don't take this as an insult and bin the comments, or get on your high horse and write a scathing letter back justifying your work. It's an editor's way of encouraging you to look at certain elements of your writing in order to improve your chances of publication. Take a few days to cool down, then look at what he's saying: it may not be relevant, but he might just

be pointing out a weakness you've completely overlooked. Editors don't often make good writers, but they do know what sells and what doesn't. Paying attention to their comments will give you a great advantage next time you submit.

**DON'T** ever, please, address your work to Dear Sir/Madam. If you can't be bothered to find out the relevant publisher's name why should he be bothered to read it?

### **A short word about failure**

What do *Catch-22*, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, *The Time Machine*, *Sons and Lovers*, *Moby Dick*, *The Lord of the Flies*, *Northanger Abbey*, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and *Animal Farm* have in common? They were all rejected by publishers, often many times. Some famous writers have literally been able to paper their walls with rejection slips. The moral? Never give up, keep trying: every good book will find a home eventually.



# What happens after you sign a publishing contract?

# 4

‘Editor: a person employed ... to separate the wheat from the chaff, and to see that the chaff is printed.’

Elbert Hubbard, American writer and publisher



So you've done it. After months of hard work you've agreed a deal with a publisher. The contracts are signed, the submission date has been agreed and you may even have been paid an advance on royalties - but what happens now? This chapter will give you some insight into the editorial and production processes that happen within book publishing.

To a new author the process of getting a book from typescript to printed copies can seem a little mysterious, so here are a few wise words that will give you a sneak preview of what goes on behind the scenes. Most publishers will follow similar processes when it comes to getting your book produced, although fine details will vary depending on the size of the publisher and your individual contract.

## **Putting a face to a name**

Once your book has been signed up a publication date will be fixed. Most publishers will begin promoting their forthcoming publications to bookshops and foreign rights agents several months before you have delivered your manuscript. They will need a front cover to show to the sales team, take to book fairs and feature in their catalogue. The publisher will value your input when creating a cover and may even ask if you have any thoughts regarding the

appearance of the book, or a particular photograph you think could be suitable. You will know your book better than anybody else so your ideas can be very helpful. Do remember though that the designer and publisher have been creating book covers for longer than you, know the market better than you do and always have the best interests of the book in mind, so don't be offended if your ideas do not make the final cover!

### **And what do you do?**

At some point early in the process, either once you've signed the contract or after you've sent in the manuscript, you are likely to be introduced to a production editor or desk editor. Very few publishing companies employ in-house copy-editors, proofreaders or typesetters, preferring instead to use external suppliers or freelancers to undertake these tasks. Production, or desk, editors engage the services of these freelancers and manage the entire production process from when you send in your manuscript until the book is sent to the printer.

As far as the manuscript is concerned, these days most publishers will expect you to supply your book as an electronic file, though many will also expect a print-out (or 'hard copy') as this makes it easier to read and edit

your text. In order to avoid the possibility of starting on the wrong foot with your editor it's best to supply your manuscript in a widely used format (most people have Word on their computers). If you're not sure about the right type of file then ask your editor. If you are supplying photographs or illustrations you will be expected to send these along with the manuscript. Once your editor has read and accepted your manuscript it will be passed on to the production editor.

The production editor will get in touch with you shortly after receiving your manuscript in order to introduce himself, give you an outline of the production schedule and iron out any minor queries there might be on either side.

## **Mobilising the troops**

The first freelance person the production editor will pass your manuscript to is the copy-editor. Unlike the commissioning editor, who will read your manuscript to make sure it fits the agreed brief, this person will look at the detail of the manuscript and check for mistakes of sense, grammar and spelling. She will also make any changes necessary to ensure your work conforms to house style. Most editors these days correct your file rather than writing on the printed manuscript. The copy-editor may get in

touch with you with queries before making some changes if anything is unclear. You may well feel your book is perfect but there are bound to be mistakes and if you want a professional quality book a careful (and sensitive) copy-editor is essential.

While the copy-editor is working on your manuscript the designer will be creating a text design for your book. If your book forms part of an existing series then this is very straightforward – your book will follow the style of all the other books in the series. If your book is a one-off then the designer will develop a page style that suits it, probably taking in elements from the cover design in order to create a coherent look throughout.

## **Where's the proof?**

Once a text design has been agreed and the copy-editing is complete the manuscript is ready to be sent to a typesetter. Here your manuscript will be styled and page proofs, which show exactly how the pages will look in the final book, are produced. These will be sent to you so you can check that you are still happy with the text, and to a proofreader who will make sure that any mistakes the copy-editor missed or the typesetter may have introduced (unlikely these days) are corrected. In rare cases it may be necessary for you

to make updates to your book at this stage (for example if you have written a scientific book and new research has appeared since you submitted your manuscript) but normally this is not an opportunity to make substantial changes. In fact most publishers will expect you to pay for corrections if the level is above what they define as necessary. Proofs give you the chance to see the pages as they will look in the finished book and confirm that you are happy with what you see.

If your book is non-fiction it is quite likely that the production editor will commission a professional indexer to create an index based on these page proofs. Many indexers specialise in certain subject areas (e.g. law, medicine, politics). Although they are unlikely to be as specialised as you in your book's subject they will have qualifications and experience in indexing which will enable them to produce an index worthy of the book's expertise.

Some publishers may also ask you to create the index, so be prepared to learn a new skill or pay someone to do it for you.

## **Nearly there**

Once your corrections and those of the proofreader have been made by the typesetter the production editor or a second out-of-house proofreader will check that all the changes have been made correctly and that nothing has been missed on previous checks. Once he is satisfied the production editor will sign off the proofs and ask the typesetter to ready files for the printer.

In the meantime blurb or cover copy for your book will have been written (usually by your editor as the in-house person who knows both your book and its sales platform best). This will normally be sent to you for approval before the complete cover is made up by the designer. Once the production editor has checked that there are no errors and the editor and marketing team have approved the cover it too can be signed off for press.

## **The moment of truth**

Your book is now ready to be printed. Depending on where and how the book is being printed it can take from a few weeks to several months for finished copies to arrive in the publisher's warehouse, ready for delivery to book retailers. You will usually receive a few advance copies before the book appears in the

shops and will of course be able to buy more (at a special author rate) to give away proudly to your family and friends. Once the book has been sent out to booksellers you can officially call yourself a published author. The sales and marketing team will now continue to work hard to make sure your book achieves the exposure and sales it deserves.

Good luck!

# Choosing a look for your book

# 5

'A thing of beauty is a joy for ever.'  
John Keats



Walk into any bookshop or library, or even take a look at your own bookshelves, and you will see that the appearance and size of books varies greatly. So how do you know what the right look for your book should be?

Speak to a printer and he will try to blind you with science by using all sorts of technical phrases such as 'crown quarto', 'woodfree paper' and 'perfect binding'. Using these phrases makes him feel safe and happy but as an author you really don't need to know what they mean (though if you're feeling kind you could smile and look impressed). However it is useful to have a passing understanding of the conventions of book production that will lead your publisher to decide on a particular style for your book. With this in mind, we have created a guide to five of the main elements of a finished book: size, colour, paper, binding and cover style.

## **The long and short of it**

When your editor talks about the size of a book she means the page dimensions rather than the number of pages in it or the thickness of its spine. On your shelves you probably have books ranging in size from paperback genre fiction (crime, romance and horror novels, etc) to large coffee

table books. What these books have in common is that they are most likely printed on conventional paper sizes, sizes related to the paper manufactured by paper mills, which have been used by printers for years. The book sizes you are most likely to encounter are:

- A-format, 178 x 110mm, e.g. paperback romance fiction, crime novels, 'classics';
- B-format, 198 x 129mm, most general fiction and other paperback bestsellers;
- Demy, 216 x 135mm, general non-fiction hardbacks and paperbacks such as self-help or business books;
- Royal, 234 x 153mm, hardback fiction and non-fiction.

Recipe books are usually in a larger format such as crown quarto (246 x 186mm) though as you will see from looking on your kitchen shelves there is quite a variation in the sizes used. Children's picture books and coffee table books also come in a wide range of sizes. In theory any page size can be used as long as it fits onto a sheet designed for one of the common page sizes but it will usually be more economical, less wasteful and better in terms of getting your book placed on the right shelf in bookshops to use a conventional page size.

## **The publishing palette**

The covers of the majority of books will be printed in what printers refer to as four-colour process. This is another of the printers' technical terms but just means that four colours are used that, in combination, can reproduce almost all natural colours. These are cyan, magenta, yellow and black, or 'key', referred to as CMYK. Sometimes a very particular colour is required and then a special mix called a Pantone colour is used instead (these Pantone colours are however more costly). Savings can be made, and interesting effects created by using fewer than four of the CMYK colours.

Most books that contain only text use just black ink on the inside pages. However a small part (such as the plate section mentioned below) may be printed in colour if it contains photographs. Heavily illustrated books are printed in four colours and even a text-only book may sometimes use a second colour to add interest to the text design. So if you have written a novel or a business book it will most likely be printed inside in black only, if you are writing a heavily illustrated gardening or photography book it will probably be four-colour and if you have written a text book for schools it might well be two-colour.

## **Worth the paper it's written on**

The four main features to consider with paper are weight, thickness, colour and finish. All will have a bearing on the appearance and feel of your book.

Weight is expressed in grammes per square metre (gsm) but (seemingly in defiance of the laws of physics) heavy paper is not necessarily thick paper. An 80gsm paper could be quite bulky, for example if a style called bookwove is used, whereas a non-bulky 100gsm paper, such as cartridge paper similar to one you might use in your office printer could actually be thinner, despite being heavier. This is because the 80gsm paper contains more air, whereas the 100gsm paper has been smoothed between rollers, thus eliminating some of the air and reducing its bulk. If your book is quite short the publisher may well choose a bulky paper to make it look more substantial (and better value) whereas a less bulky paper might be chosen for a book that is already quite long. For example, reference books are often printed on fairly thin papers and bibles are printed on the thinnest papers of all. Young children's picture books which need to be durable and have easy-to-turn pages are, by contrast, printed on some of the thickest papers. Within a type of paper heavier ones cost more than lighter ones.

The thickness of a paper is also important because of something called 'show-through'. This just means how much text or image shows through from one side of a page to another. In many books this is of minor importance, especially if most of the content is text, for example paperback novels are often produced on relatively thin paper. However if the book has a high level of illustration show-through can be distracting for the reader and needs to be considered in the choice of paper.

Paper colours vary from natural, off-white and cream to bright white. Choice of colour is often down to a combination of price and the publisher's preference. Paperback novels which are relatively cheap and disposable are often printed on cheaper, more natural-coloured papers. This colour of paper is also easier on the eye for prolonged periods of reading. The hardback version of the same novel would usually be printed on a heavier weight cream paper which is still easy on the eye but is of a quality more appropriate to the price and prestige of the book. Many non-fiction books, such as business titles are printed on whiter paper, especially if they contain illustrations or photographs that need to stand out clearly. Heavily illustrated titles are usually printed on coated papers.

Coated papers (where the paper has been coated with china clay) come in several finishes, from very shiny gloss

coated papers to matt and silk finishes which are less shiny and tend to be easier on the eye. Matt and silk papers also tend to give the book a more sophisticated look. Cookery, gardening, art and photography books all tend to be printed on coated papers, though for a super-cool, arty look heavy uncoated papers have recently become fashionable (Infinite Ideas proved just how cool it was by printing the heavily illustrated *Champneys Spa Secrets for Body and Soul* on an uncoated paper). In some cases, for example autobiographies, a book might be almost entirely narrative with just a few photographs and the publisher may well choose to print most of the book on an uncoated paper with the photographs all gathered together in one place, called a plate section, and printed on coated paper.

### **All dressed up...**

Binding and cover style often go hand in hand as the binding style will be influenced by the type of cover. There are two basic cover styles: paperback (limp) or hardback (cased). The cased style of cover is used when a book is required to be more durable, for example books that will be kept for many years and used regularly such as dictionaries, encyclopedias and cookbooks. Large books with heavy paper such as art books and other coffee table books are also likely to be hardback as large paperbacks can easily

become warped and damaged. The hardback cover style also has an element of prestige attached to it, which is another reason why it is used in these cases as a major purpose of this type of book is to be decorative, its function going beyond that of information or entertainment. New fiction titles are conventionally released in hardback first (the thinking being traditionally that literary reviewers only take cased books seriously) and then paperback up to a year later. The hardback version can be sold at a higher price and is more suitable for use in libraries, where a book will be read many times.

Hardback books are the most likely type of book to be sewn bound. This type of binding is more expensive than other types but also more durable so it tends to be used in books with a higher retail value and/or those which need to be longer lasting.

Most hardback covers will consist of a cloth-look cover glued over boards with a jacket or dust-jacket folded and slipped over the top. How ornate the cloth cover is depends on the publisher and how much is available to be spent on the book but in most cases as the cloth cover will not be seen it is fairly simple with just the book title printed on the spine. Some books such as cookbooks might have an image printed on the case rather than having a cloth cover; this will often be the same as the image printed on the dust

jacket. There are many options in between the two, such as a cloth cover with a photograph glued on and with or without a jacket but unless you're Heston Blumenthal or JK Rowling your publisher will probably stick to fairly standard options.

The other common type of cover style is paperback, which is used for the majority of books from romance novels to self-help books and university text books to children's stories. Some of these books will also have cover flaps (or French flaps if you want to be titillated), which give the book a bit more durability and kudos without the expense of producing a hardback book, though this style of book is still more popular in the rest of Europe than it is in the UK. Most paperback books will be bound with glue alone rather than stitched. The most basic type of glued binding is perfect binding but for extra durability notched or burst binding can be used. To the average consumer though there will be no noticeable difference between the various types of paperback binding.

More unusual bindings for books include wire stitching (that's stapled to you and me), which is more frequently used for brochures and magazines and only used for very short books such as children's picture books, school work books or sheet music books. Spiral binding is useful for books where the pages need to lie flat and for this reason

is sometimes used for cookery and music books. The disadvantage of spiral binding is that text cannot be printed on the spine so when books are shelved in a library or bookshop it makes them hard to locate (and you won't find many authors or publishers who think that's a good thing). For this reason, spiral bound books can be difficult to sell to traditional bookshops.

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This covers most of the basic options and common styles of book but in a highly competitive market publishers are always looking for ways to improve their products and make them more exciting to potential buyers, and printers and designers love to play with new ideas. Perhaps yours will be the next innovatively printed book that sets the booksellers talking.

# Understanding sales and marketing



(or “All that bloody effort and I’ve still only sold twelve copies....”)

‘There is only one thing in the world worse than being talked about, and that is not being talked about.’ Oscar Wilde



We've already seen that tons of books are published every year, somewhere in excess of 80,000 in the UK alone. There are too many books, clamouring for too little shelf space. So what needs to happen to get your masterpiece successfully launched in this ridiculously crowded market place?

Let's start by looking at the conventional publishing sector, then we'll move on to the self-publishing world and some ideas about how to sell and market your own book.

## **Conventional publishing**

Most conventional publishers have a sales and marketing department or at least people in situ with responsibility for these functions. Their methods may differ according to the kind of book you've written.

Let's say you've written a very specialist, short-run expensive guide for a particular market. We'll call it the *Colour Atlas of Cormorant Cloacae* mainly because we like the word cloaca. It's beautifully illustrated and priced at £120 because your publisher knows the market is limited and people will pay handsomely to own this must-have tome.

General bookshops aren't going to stock it so don't have any expectation of seeing it piled high in your local Waterstone's.

A publisher of this kind of work will concentrate on two routes to market:

- Direct sales to institutions and individuals;
- Sales through specialist online retailers.

Direct sales will involve access to mailing lists. The chances are that your book has wound up in the arms of a specialist ornithological publisher. If so they'll have the names of interested people around the world and will contact them either electronically or by good old fashioned snail mail. They'll have trading arrangements with the academic library suppliers (e.g. Blackwells or Dawsons in the UK) with whom they may well work to promote the book, and of course it will be available on Amazon. They'll attempt to get reviews in learned journals (such as *The Journal of the American Comorant Cloacae Scientific Institute, JACCSI*) and perhaps take copies to the International Symposium of Cormorant Cloacae (ISCC) that takes place annually, usually somewhere like Oslo.

That's a run through some of the issues around specialist publishing. But now let's assume you've been lucky enough

to place a novel with a trade publishing house. What might you expect to happen?

For a start, the publisher will announce the book often as early as a year in advance of publication. Why so long? Well the main thrust of their effort is to get book shops to support publication. So, for example, they'll very often send out unedited proofs prior to full publication to key buyers and reviewers. What they're trying to do is create genuine buzz and excitement in advance and if they can give themselves plenty of time to do this they stand a much better chance of generating a decent quantity of advance book orders.

The format your book appears in will depend on the type of book you've written. The old way of doing things was for a novel to appear initially in hardcover and then for the paperback to appear a year or so later. The reason for this was that book reviewers tended to only review hardcover novels. Now, that's still pretty much the case for literary fiction but for mass market fiction invariably a book will go straight into paperback and receive reviews in magazines that are rather less precious about formats.

Publishers will do everything they can to entice the bookshop to give your books serious retail space. This involves increasing the discount they give so the retailer

makes more on each book they sell (and you and the publishers make less...) to actually parting with real cash as a 'contribution' to the retailer's marketing costs.

To support this costly activity your publisher will try a number of things to make your book stand out. They may ask for endorsements for the front cover from well-known figures: 'The funniest book I've read since *The Colour Atlas of Cormorant Cloacae* - Jeremy Clarkson,' kind of thing. Endorsements, although now arguably overused, can still be very powerful especially for a first time novelist who has no recognition with readers.

The cover design is incredibly important; so much so that a publisher will sometimes change a book cover if the book shops tell them they don't like it. Thought you shouldn't judge a book by its cover? Well, there's some compelling research that shows that 20% of people claim that the chief driving force for making them buy a book is the cover. So, it has to work.

To summarise, before the book launches, your publisher will attempt some or all of the following:

- Releasing advance information - press, wholesalers and the book trade will all need to be informed about the title months in advance. That means Advance

Information sheets (AIs), possibly a promotional micro site and trade advertising ahead of publication;

- Creating a buzz - if the book seems to have genuine potential they'll produce press and bookstore teasers and trade ads;
- Selling the book in - your publisher will present your novel to its sales force in an attempt to get the reps excited;
- Advertising - probably with the wholesalers who supply independent book stores, possibly in the consumer press if you're extremely lucky;
- Creating good marketing material and sales kits for their key accounts, which in the main are the major bookselling chains, Waterstone's and WHSmith in the UK (wonderful retailers both), as well as wholesalers and specialists.

Then the big day arrives and you are a published author - fabulous. There is little to match the thrill of seeing your book physically in a book shop. But what next?

Well, a good publisher will want you to work hard from now on to promote your book and there's a simple rule here for you - the more you put in the more you'll get out. Usually local media are the low hanging fruit on the publicity front

so do expect to start on BBC West Peterborough FM and the *Grimsby Fisherman's Herald*. It may sound like slightly depressing activity but it is essential work.

Think about local angles for your book. There's a scene in it set in Preston Bus Station? Well be prepared to discuss your connection with that fine city with the *Lancashire Evening Post*. For a first time author local is usually a good way of generating coverage simply because everyone - everyone - chases the nationals.

And here's a very simple but terribly important piece of advice when you do get any interview space. Mention the book by title as many times as you possibly can. It may sound obvious but you'd be amazed at how many authors, dazzled by the excitement of being on the 6 a.m. Saturday slot on Radio Rhyl, forget to ram the title of their book down their audience's throat.

Local also means local to where you live. Speak to your local bookshop. Would they run a launch event for you? If your publisher won't stump up it may be worth you offering to buy a couple of cases of Norwegian Merlot to help get the event rocking. Even the big chains are interested in local authors, so put yourself about a bit and try to get their support.

If you do arrange something then please, please, please don't expect that the shop's PR machine will generate so much interest that the crowds are queuing down the High Street. It won't, trust us. Again, it's down to you to beg, cajole and hassle everyone you've ever known to come along. Children too mortified to attend? Well threaten the little monkeys with a starvation diet and decimation of their pocket money unless they turn up accompanied by their entire school.

You do have to be prepared to be shameless and make a lot of noise to generate any interest.

Are you on Facebook or Twitter? If so start promoting your book a few months prior to publication. If not, set up a page for your book or yourself on Facebook and encourage as many people as possible to become fans. Your publisher or more likely your kids should be able to help you.

Create a web page too and think what should go up there. Excerpts? Or perhaps the whole book? It may sound counter-intuitive to give away something that is meant to generate revenue but there's a huge amount of evidence to suggest that free e-content stimulates hard copy sales.

Lastly think about how you can use Amazon. You can register as the author and make comments to support your

book page. What you can't do of course is manipulate the Customer Reviews section by encouraging everyone you know to register and post fabulous reviews thus giving you a five star rating. Why not? Well, it's simply not right, is it? No self-respecting publisher or author would ever demean themselves by such chicanery. Ever...

In truth, if you have landed a deal with a big publisher they should lead you through much of the publicity and marketing activity. They'll have budget, expertise and people. It's more likely though that you're being published by a smaller independent business in which case they probably won't have a large budget, so you'll be responsible for driving a lot of the activity.

## **Self-publishing**

Right, so above we assumed that you were working with a commercial publisher who would at least guide you through some of what you need to do. But let's assume you're self-publishing, perhaps through a site like Infinite Authors ([www.infiniteauthors.com](http://www.infiniteauthors.com)). How on earth do you get people to sit up and notice you and your book?

We suggest you start by making a very simple marketing plan.

A good marketing plan begins before you start the production process. It does not need to be twenty pages long; it does need to be succinct and focused. Essentially it should identify the potential markets for your book and the right channels for reaching them.

Start by thinking about your book and where it fits in the market ('situation analysis' in marketing speak but we don't really do marketing speak here). Begin with a short description of your book. What might be the key to getting to the market? It might be your expertise as the author. It might just be that it's a very entertaining read. Or it might actually be that it is the *only* book on the importance of Preston Bus Station in Stalin's love life. Describe in general terms the challenges your book might face. What differentiates your book and what are its competitors? (Stalin? Preston Bus Station? Competition? I doubt it.) Also be sure to describe any external forces that may affect the sales or marketing of your book. Be honest and do your research – saying it's the only book in its area is unlikely (Stalin/Preston Bus Station books excepted) and even if true not necessarily a selling point.

Now think about what goals you hope to achieve through the book. It is important that these goals are specific, that they are measurable against existing information, that they are attainable and realistic and finally that they are within a

set time-frame. This might include things like ‘get into the top 100 books on Amazon about Preston Bus Station within three months of publication’.

Think too about your target market. At whom, when you first started this mighty work, were you aiming the book? Describe them. Where do they live? How old are they? How can you get to them? Only include target markets that you are confident you can get to.

Pay attention to the physical attributes of your book. Is it a natural hardback (higher price) or paperback? Does it need illustrations? Can you afford illustrations? What should the jacket look like? Many self-publishing sites offer cheap cover templates that are neither creative nor unique. Does your book require a bespoke (therefore more costly) design? And what will the cover price be?

Think long and hard about the title. Does it make it clear what the book is about? Does it have a subtitle? Does it need a subtitle? Ask people you trust for their response to your proposed title and do try to get their honest opinion. One problem with self-publishing is that often the author is so close to her subject that she can't be objective. So ask around.

There should be some degree of flexibility within the self-publishing service you're using. Think how much you want to spend and compare this with revenue generated from a realistic sales target. (Sales targets are easy by the way. Think of a number and then halve it. Divide that number by ten and work from that.)

Think about your pricing too. For a start you need to leave a margin after your production costs, assuming you're looking to make a profit. Then look at what the market demands: looking at similar books on Amazon will give you a pretty good idea of rough price points.

And where are you going to sell the book? If you're lucky enough to be able to target consumers directly that's great. You just need to decide what you want to do about discount for bulk copies, how to charge for postage and packing and also of course how you take payment. Cash or cheque with order still just about works but you may want to think about a secure online payment system such as PayPal.

Many self-publishing websites offer a bookshop service through which they can facilitate the sale of your book to the customer. This can work well, but do be careful. How much of the revenue are they keeping for themselves?

Then of course there are bookshops. Let's start with some basic background here. An average bookstore will expect a minimum of 35% discount off the retail price for an academic title, and 50% for a trade book. That's a large slice of margin lost to you after you pay for the production and the cost of sending the book to them. Your book will automatically appear on Amazon if it's graced with an ISBN and if someone orders it from them you will in turn receive that order either from Amazon directly or from a wholesaler such as Bertrams or Gardners. They'll expect a margin too.

So there are a couple of things to think about. If you want a book store to stock your book actively then be prepared to give them a trade discount - they're unlikely to do it otherwise. Also remember those words that strike fear and dread into the hearts of sober publishers (if that's not an oxymoron) throughout the land, sale or return (SOR). You can accept an order from a chain for 1,000 copies, print them, ship them and pay for the printing and shipping, and then get all 1,000 copies back in a couple of months.

So we advocate caution. Much easier in our humble opinion to set a standard trade discount of say 35% if you want to try to encourage bookshop support and try not to be cajoled in to giving more. If you are lucky enough to receive an order, calculate the risk. Speak with the retailer, ascertain what they plan to do with your book. If it's on

display in every shop, then that could be a good thing but you should still work out what may happen if 40% are returned.

There's a bit of a myth that goes on within publishing and bookselling that says the key to a successful book is to pile it high in bookstores. Well, to an extent that's true (even the Man Booker Prize winner would sell far fewer copies if it wasn't available through supermarkets and bookstores), but there is truly more to it than that. It is about creating demand and as a self-published author that has to be your main aim.

While we're talking about prizes do some research. Are there any literary prizes you can submit your book to? It's probably best to look for smaller specialist prizes and leave the Man Booker to Ms Mantel *et al*. But there are plenty of other competitions out there so you should research them. A great place to start is Brit Writers' Awards ([www.britwriters.co.uk](http://www.britwriters.co.uk)).

In a recent survey only 16% of people said they bought a book solely on the strength of a bookshop display. That compares to 32% influenced by reviews in newspapers, magazines and online. A further 20% will buy on the recommendation of family or friends.

So it's all about creating awareness. Most of the same tools we discussed earlier in this chapter apply. Work the local media. Get a web presence. It doesn't have to cost a fortune and often the self-publishing site you work with will offer this facility. Use Twitter and Facebook, or LinkedIn if it's a professional book. Be shameless. Talk to your local bookseller and arrange an event. If it's a children's book go to the local primary school and see if you can do a reading. Try to get the (local) press there.

Think about advertising your book with banner ads on appropriate websites. This will work better for a specialist book as you'll be able to link the subject to Google search terms. Advertising in the national press is horribly expensive and usually costs more than it delivers in sales so unless you have a few thousand quid burning a hole in your pocket we'd advise against it. But specialist press for a specialist book can work.

If you can afford it do take on a PR agent. An agent should help identify a 'hook' that the press may find interesting. As in life generally a huge amount of PR success is about contacts. If you can't stretch to a PR budget create a press release yourself. It should have a story about you and your book, a brief synopsis and a cover image, and don't forget contact details! You then need to research *named* interested

journalists. This is time-consuming but worthwhile and a lot can be done on the internet.

An inexpensive way to reach a lot of journalists and bloggers at once is to send your press release as a newswire release through the Press Association. Your release will be delivered directly into the newsrooms of every national and major regional newspaper, and every TV and radio station across the UK and Ireland as well as over 100 government departments. These releases are also seen by thousands of freelance journalists and bloggers. The Press Association cannot be contact directly so in order to have your release distributed you need to contact one of their distribution partners such as PR Newswire, PR Web, Marketwire or Business Wire.

Consider blogs. If your book is about a specialist subject, say tuning nineteenth-century Latvian pianos or, yes, cormorant cloacae, there will probably be blogs on these subjects. Register and blog about your book. If one doesn't exist yet set it up.

To summarise, if you're serious about promoting your book you have to put the work in. People in the main will not find you, you need to find them. Work hard, explore every avenue, always carry a copy of your book with you (you just

never know who you'll bump into who can help) and never turn down an opportunity to promote your work.

## **Checklist**

Let's finish this chapter with a marketing checklist. Hope it helps. Good luck!

### ***Design and branding***

- You *can* judge a book by its cover. A fifth of book buyers buy a book based on its cover alone;
- Ensure that the design, price and format for your book are appropriate;
- Use the design elements throughout all your marketing, from the press release through to the marketing material and advertising.

### ***Publicity***

- Hook the media from the outset. Have an interesting headline and make the copy stand out. These days journos will take about 15 seconds to look at a release so you have to engage them quickly;
- Work painstakingly on your author biography until it is interesting (assuming it isn't already). Make sure that

it tells the reader a story as well as expressing your subject expertise;

- Get quotes and endorsements for your book if at all possible;
- When targeting the media don't focus exclusively on the mainstream media. Most of the time small pieces in the papers are better than bigger pieces. Sometimes big pieces of coverage give away too much information and give readers reasons not to buy a book;
- Hire the right person if you possibly can afford it. Most publicity is built on relationships with the press and sometimes you need to buy somebody's time to access that relationship;
- Presswire releases are an effective way to announce a new publication to a large audience of journalists and bloggers.

### **Web**

- Buy a domain name and create a simple but well designed website or blog. Add extras like audio downloads, competitions, extracts and reviews if you have any;
- Submit your URL to the search engines and consider search engine optimisation techniques. Select key words and make sure that they are embedded in your

meta tags. You may need to ask someone under 30 what this means or buy a copy of *Get into Bed with Google* (published by Infinite Ideas, coincidentally);

- Include social networking tools (Facebook etc.) that help your website or blog throughout online communities;
- Remember that online marketing takes time. It requires patience, consistency and persistence, but if you are prepared to work at it and invest that time, it can be an incredibly cost-effective way to get you and your book noticed;
- Consider cross-promotional opportunities including affiliate links, content sharing and RSS feeds (better ask that 29-year-old about this part);
- Use media such as YouTube. You can upload a video describing your book for nothing;
- Participate in discussion boards and blogs;
- Consider promotional freebies. Give free PDF versions of your book to review websites and to bloggers.

### ***Events***

- Call your local bookshop and ask to speak with the events coordinator. Ask to make an appointment to visit and present your book signing ideas;

- Contact your local library for reading opportunities;
- Visit stores and offer to sign their stock of your book;
- Contact the literary festivals. There are hundreds of literary festivals throughout the year, some big, some small. Give them a go.

# Publishing as a business booster



‘Every one lives by selling something.’  
Robert Louis Stevenson



Having read the first chapter you may be feeling a little discouraged. But take heart, a well-published book can reap huge benefits for the author.

In 2006 RainToday.com and Wellesley Hills Group published a report that confirmed this. Titled *The Business Impact of Writing a Book*, it was based on an extensive study of business book authors, an impressive 96% of whom reported that publishing a book positively influenced their business. The book improved their brand, generated more speaking engagements, and generated more clients, better clients and more leads. Authors were able to charge higher fees as demand for their services rose and the book allowed the business to close more deals. The overwhelming outcome of this research was, 'Assuming you have something worthwhile to say in a book, write one!'.

If you need further confirmation that book publishing can be an enormous boon find out below what some published authors have to say about their experiences.

"A published book (accent on 'published') can bring a string of powerful indirect benefits. It can boost a CV. It can take the place of a business card, with 1000 times the impact. It can open up lucrative speaking or consulting opportunities. It can enhance an author's reputation in a defined target market."

**Barry Gibbons**, former CEO Burger King and author of six books including *If You Want to Make God Really Laugh Show Him Your Business Plan: 101 Universal Laws of Business* and *Five Loaves, Two Fishes and Six Chicken Nuggets: Urinations from inside the fast food tent*.

“Being a published author has provided me with a significant second platform of authority. My business experience and achievements to date are critical for sure but being published has extended that authority beyond the world of project management into a wider audience. As an author I am finding doors opening with greater ease and indeed, in some cases, the doors of opportunity are being opened for me by others – which is a very nice experience, especially if you are ‘lazy’ like me!”

**Peter Taylor**, EMEA PMO Director at Siemens PLM and author of *The Lazy Project Manager: How to be twice as productive and still leave the office early*.

“Publishing a book has allowed me and my business to achieve significant new credibility. The journey from the initial idea through to seeing copies of your book in the hands of customers is exhilarating. The journey required a heightened level of commitment but the prize was worth every ounce of energy. New doors open, your profile and authority are seen in a different light, it becomes easier to turn business enquiries into contracts and other platforms,

for you and your business, emerge. Since writing *Turn your sales force into profit heroes* I have been on TV and had numerous articles published in respected journals and online for my industry. All that plus the buzz of seeing your work professionally presented on a retailer's shelf or website."

**Peter Brook**, founder and MD REL Sales Consulting and author of *Turn your sales force into profit heroes: Secrets for unlocking your team's inner strength*.

"Having my book published by a recognised publisher was the most significant thing that I could do to add value to my business. It added huge credibility to the message I am delivering and positively impacted the business. We picked up some major clients as a result."

**Penny Ferguson**, CEO PFL Ltd, 2008 Business Woman of the Year and author of *The Living Leader: Become the leader you want to be*.

"When I started my business there were quite a few speakers on the subject but I was the only one with a bestselling book in the market and it resulted in a quantum leap in bookings to speak at conferences. I've since written seven more books and each time a new book hits the shelves I receive a boost in business on the speaking circuit."

**Catherine de Vrye**, former Australian Executive Woman of the Year and author of *Good Service is Good Business*.

“The *Financial Times* guide has led to a lot more writing work and invitations to run workshops and develop training courses as well as coaching work.”

**Romesh Vaitilingam**, author of global bestseller, *The Financial Times Guide to Using the Financial Pages*.

“Writing my books is definitely the most important investment I have made in my business. It totally changes people’s perception of you, increases your day rate by 100% and brings you into contact with people and opportunities that would never normally come your way. I am still amazed by the number of people I meet who know of me already because of the books. They are the only advertising anyone would ever need.”

**Will Murray**, author of *Corporate Denial: Confronting the World’s Most Damaging Business Taboo*.

“A book makes you stand out from the crowd when pitching for consultancy work.”

**Annemarie Caracciolo**, author of *Smart Things to Know about Teams*.

“Being a published writer has generated consultancy and coaching work for me, not to mention invitations to speak at conferences and run workshops. In many ways, the

royalties a book earns are the least important part of the financial equation.”

**John Middleton**, author of *Smart Things to Know About Your Career* and *Writing the New Economy: The Ultimate E-business Library*.

“As a consultant it is critical to be credible in front of clients, especially in the early stages of the relationship. One of the ways to develop near instant credibility is to have published books in the area of expertise in which you are consulting. There have been numerous occasions where, because of the books I have written, the client engages more readily and at a different level. This not only helps to build relationships and allow the client to trust your professional judgement, but it also helps to close sales.”

**Andrew Holmes**, consultant and author of *Carl von Clausewitz's On War: A modern-day interpretation of a self-help classic* and *The Painspotter's Guide to Broken Britain*.

“Having a business book published can give instant credibility to an author, especially if it's in partnership with a major publisher. This can open the door to a lucrative speaking career, especially if the author has some charisma.”

**Brendan Barns**, CEO Speakers for Business.

“Having a book published bestowed instant credibility and authenticity. The result of being a published author is that I am taken more seriously. Since the publication of *The Book of Luck* my network of contacts has broadened considerably and as a consequence I have won search assignments that otherwise I would not have been considered for. I have found that doors have opened that previously would have been closed and I use my book as a calling card to speak to people at the highest level. The book has replaced my company brochure. The publication of a book opens up marketing opportunities second to none. My advice to anyone in a consultancy business is, forget the brochure and produce some original material in a book form and you will reap the benefits.”

**Anne Watson**, author of *The Book of Luck*.

“By far the most credible way to build your brand is to get a book published. A published book opens doors, it gets people to pay more attention to you, it adds robustness to your CV, it generates more enquiries, it gives you the best calling card possible as well as cool collateral for meetings and conferences and it starts the process of becoming a thought-leader.”

**Nicholas Bate**, CEO Strategic Edge Ltd and author of *Unplugged* and *Have it your way: 52 brilliant ideas for getting everything you want*.

“Once one person has believed in you (i.e. your publisher) then of course a book opens other doors (in my case for example loads and loads of TV production companies have contacted me). It is a great PR tool for the business too.”

**Kate Cook**, CEO The Nutrition Coach and author of *Get healthy for good: 52 brilliant ideas for mind and body well-being*.

# Tips to inspire your writing

# 8

‘Genius is one percent inspiration,  
ninety-nine per cent perspiration.’

Thomas Alva Edison



If you're just starting out and are having problems composing your magnificent tome here are some short ideas that should inspire you to greater heights of creative genius. Whether you're writing a novel, a self-help book or an illustrated history of Mongolian flower pots you will find something here to help you hone your writing skills and spark your creative fire.

**Cross-referencing and linking your research** – either deliberately or at random – is a fantastic way to get started with new ideas. Ask yourself: 'What links the last three books I've read?' Or pick three areas you've looked at quite separately – say, cooking, code and collage – jam them together and see what kind of relationship your imagination can forge between them.

**Write a list of impossible tasks.** Put it away somewhere safe and only get it out at the end of a day if you're completely overwhelmed, or you feel you haven't really achieved what you set out to do. Looking at it might help you regain a sense of perspective and become re-energised for tomorrow.

**List all the reasons (and excuses)** why the thing you want to do can't really be done. Include all the lame stuff, like 'I don't have time' and 'I'm scared of making a fool of myself in public'. Once you've got all that out of your system,

counter every single objection and lay out cogent ways of overcoming those obstacles. If you do this early on in your project planning, it should give you confidence that you're setting off down a good path.

**Pick up something within easy reach right now** – a coffee cup, a phone, whatever – and spend five minutes (at least!) manipulating it. Explore its surface with your fingers, feel its texture and enjoy its weight. Now start getting under its skin. Scratch it. Knock it about a bit. Or drop it from a height. Onto a hard surface. If you've broken it, pick up the pieces. Are there sharp fragments with a different texture? Do the dents and bumps reflect light in an interesting way? Now you can begin to see how smashing things up can change the way you perceive things and alter your creative train of thought.

**Constantly analyse your action, to become more self-aware.** Thinking of even the most inane tasks as training can allow you to perceive value in them. When you poured yourself a coffee or tea this morning, did you do it 'better' than yesterday? Was your pouring action smooth? Did you pour from a greater height? Was there any spillage? It sounds silly, but an Olympic pole vaulter will be asking these kinds of questions every time he or she trains (not about coffee-pouring, obviously).

**Take a trip to the zoo and see what you can learn** about body language, facial expressions, mannerisms, social behaviour, eating, goal-based activity, basic desire and playfulness that you can adopt for a while in your own life. Be a stick insect for a day – very still, blending into the background with simple, slow needs. Be a gorilla the next day – park yourself in the centre of every situation, stare, eat noisily and scratch yourself a lot. (Ah, you've done that already!)

**Go up to various people and ask them for directions to the same place.** Note how each person has a different way of describing the same route, focusing on different landmarks and shortcuts. How does the way they see things compare with your own?

**Do this every day.** Take a blank sheet of paper, and just write for a set time at a set time. With each passing day your sketches should become more solid and less hesitant as your confidence builds. Pick random subjects to write about and make sure you include the details, however small. When you feel up to it, start to put the bits and pieces you have been writing into a short story or a poem. You should find that the details you thought were unnecessary enable you to paint a vivid picture of something you've always taken for granted.

**Buy a notebook.** Something small that can fit in your pocket or your handbag. When you see a detail that has some resonance with your work, jot it down. Don't stop with observations either, write down snatches of conversation, interesting news reports. Draw pictures of a car that one of your characters might own; items of clothing in shop windows that would make the perfect costume. The notebook will become a record of your own experience, and a scrapbook of what you consider to be important. The personal interest invested in these scraps will bring your work to life.

**Make two lists:** the first containing locations (a bathroom, a garage, a church) and the second containing abstract terms (love, anger, madness). Randomly pick a word from each list to make an abstract location, say 'the bathroom of madness'. Now write a short poem or prose piece describing the place, without using any abstract words (even the one you picked). The idea is to convey the feel of a place using the evidence of your senses and the truth of your own experience and not have to rely on meaningless, shadowy abstraction.

**Your memory may well need a kick-start.** Start by picking some random moments from your past, something like your first day at school, or your first kiss. When you have chosen five or six, write what you remember about the

experience. Don't search for particular memories or precise detail, just write whatever comes to mind (and remember, avoid abstract terms). Do this for twenty minutes then read back what you've written.

**Read your work aloud.** You don't have to read it to anybody, just do what WB Yeats did and pace back and forth reading to yourself. Listen for any discomfort in the language, any words that don't sound right, any clichés you didn't spot when writing. And listen to the shape of it, how well it rolls off the tongue, how well each line works and whether they combine to make a well-rounded whole. You may feel a little silly talking to yourself, but it's worth it.

**Take something you've written in the past tense** (alternatively use another author's text). Now rewrite it in the present tense. You'll probably miss a few verbs, but don't worry. When you've finished, look back at the piece and compare how each version makes you feel. Is the rewritten piece harder to read, or more difficult to believe? Or does it present events in a much more intimate way than the original?

**Visit a favourite location** such as a park, a cemetery, a shopping centre or an art gallery. Settle somewhere out of the way with a cup of coffee and spend some hours observing and making notes. Begin by noting the tiniest of

details, then start to build a more complete picture of your surroundings. Try and see it through the eyes of one of your characters - what fascinates/irritates/elevates her most? Before long, you'll have created a cumulative build-up of detail, soaking your reader in the ambience of a location.



# Glossary of terms



**advance**

A sum of money your publisher may be willing to pay you when you sign your contract. This is an advance payment against your **royalties** (i.e. it is deducted from your royalty payments as they become due). When your royalties are greater than the advance you are said to have 'earned out'.

**advances**

Copies of a book sent to an author prior to the book's publication.

**advertising**

Advertising is the form of communication that attempts to persuade consumers to take some action, such as buying a book. It's most often used in a business to business context, in other words selling a new title into retailers. In publishing consumer advertising is most often used to announce or support a new book from an established brand or author.

**AI (or ATI)**

Advance Information or Advance Title Information sheets are lovingly prepared by marketing departments throughout publishing and used to alert representatives and booksellers to the glories of each new title. Traditionally they contain sales blurb, a jacket image, full bibliographic details, and the core of a marketing plan.

**barracuda**

The barracuda is a salt water fish of the genus *Sphyræna*, the only genus in the family Sphyrænidae, and is found in tropical and subtropical oceans worldwide. Not traditionally in any way relevant to the publishing process, it is simply included here as probably the only fish to half rhyme with a twentieth-century Chilean poet well known in English translation (see **Neruda, Pablo** below).

<b>binding</b>	The style of cover for a book, the most common styles being paperback and cased (or hardback).
<b>black and white (mono)</b>	Printed without colour.
<b>blurb</b>	The description of the book on its back panel, also called cover copy.
<b>book fairs</b>	Nowadays mainly rights fairs where publishers gather to buy and sell foreign language (and other) rights. The main fairs are in the UK in April, the US in May and Germany (the infamous Frankfurt Book Fair) in October.
<b>case-bound</b>	Otherwise known as hardback. Describes books which have a hard, durable cover rather than a soft (paperback) cover.
<b>coated paper</b>	Paper coated with china clay; it is usually of high quality, with a smooth texture and varies in how shiny it is from matt to glossy.

**copy-editing**

The process before **typesetting** and after general (content) editing. The copy-editor's job is to correct such things as spelling, sentence structure and grammar, make the copy consistent and mark up the copy with instructions for the typesetter. Copy-editing can be done in-house but is usually outsourced to freelancers.

**cloaca**

a cloaca is the posterior opening that serves as the only such opening for the intestinal, reproductive, and urinary tracts of certain animal species. The word comes from Latin, and means sewer. All birds, reptiles, and amphibians possess this orifice, from which they excrete both urine and faeces, unlike placental mammals, which possess two separate orifices for evacuation. So there.

**design template**

An off-the-peg style for the text or cover of a book, often used

for books in a series, where all the books need to follow the same style.

**design, bespoke**

A cover or text designed specifically for one book.

**design, cover**

People say we shouldn't judge a book by its cover but of course we do. As the first thing a customer will see, it's important to get the cover just right and the designer will work together with other departments and sales reps to make sure this happens.

**design, text**

The design of the text is just as important as that of the cover. Text design includes the choice of font and decisions regarding the structure and appearance of the text and is usually done by an in-house or freelance designer.

**distribution**

The process whereby a book ends up in the hot sweaty hands (or on the screen) of

a reader. Each publisher has their distributor listed on a bibliographic system and orders sent from booksellers are usually automatically routed to that distributor. Most distributors offer storage, dispatch, invoicing and cash collection. **Ebooks** are distributed through digital aggregators in case you're interested.

**dust jacket**

A detachable sleeve covering a **case-bound** book in order to protect it and make it look pretty.

**eBook**

A version of your book that is available in electronic format and deliverable to a wide variety of screen types.

**editor, commissioning**

Usually your first contact in a publishing company. A commissioning editor is often responsible for a specific **list**. She will estimate the likely

return on investment and if it stacks up try to sell a book to colleagues, particularly in sales and marketing. As far as you, the author, are concerned she is the most important person in the publishing company, even if quite junior. If you can't persuade a commissioning editor to buy into your idea you're stuffed. Infinite Ideas' commissioning editor is called Richard. He is charming, witty, slim and handsome.

**editor,  
desk/production**

The production editor or desk editor is a very important person as she will oversee your work through all its stages, from **manuscript** to printed book; she will be your main contact at the publisher after your **commissioning editor**.

**editorial services**

Activities used to improve the raw manuscript of a book prior to sending it to be printed: **copy-editing, design,**

<b>endorsements</b>	<b>typesetting, proofreading</b> and indexing.
<b>endpapers</b>	A book endorsement is the declaration by a well-known individual of their personal support for a book or author. Usually it is people seen to be key influencers for a book's audience who are chosen to provide endorsements. These endorsements commonly appear on the jackets of books.
<b>extent</b>	The pages at the front and back of a <b>case-bound</b> book that hold the text pages and the cover together. They may be plain white, coloured or printed with a pattern or photograph.
<b>format</b>	The number of pages in a book. Trimmed page size, physical measurements of a book page, e.g. B-format (198 x 129mm), Demy (216 x 135mm), Royal (234 x 153mm).

**four-colour**

This is the standard colour printing technology (aka CMYK) and uses three colours (cyan, magenta and yellow) plus black to create many more colours, giving a full-colour appearance.

**french flaps**

Richard likes French flaps. If you've got French flaps you're off to a flier.

**gsm**

Short for grammes per metre squared, the unit used to express the weight of paper.

**hard copy**

A print out on paper of a **manuscript** or set of page **proofs**; see also **soft copy**.

**house style**

Publishers usually employ anally retentive fruitcakes who are responsible for this. Do you put footnotes at the bottom of the page, the end of the chapter or the end of the book? Are adjectival compound words *always* hyphenated? The fun round here just never ends.

**illustration**

Non-photographic image used in a book, for example a cartoon or a graph.

**imprint**

The brand a publisher attaches to part of its programme that it feels needs a separate identity. Penguin is a well-known imprint of a publisher that most people have never heard of, Pearson.

**index**

An alphabetically arranged list found at the end of a non-fiction book with specific terms and reference points to make your book easy to navigate; it will probably be created from the **proofs** by a professional indexer, but be prepared to undertake the task yourself.

**ISBN**

International Standard Book Number. This is the number on the back of the book, usually incorporated into the bar code, which identifies a particular edition of any book. So the paperback and hardback

editions of the same title will have different ISBNs. ISBNs allow customers and retailers to identify (and therefore buy) a book anywhere in the world. ISBNs recently moved from 10 digits to 13 digits causing a kind of drunken hysteria within publishing production departments.

**limp binding**

Unflattering term for a soft cover or paperback book.

**list**

Discrete part of a publisher's output or imprint. Infinite Ideas, for instance, has 200 books in print, 40 of which are in its business list.

**literary agent**

Hard to describe. Even harder to talk to. Lovely people though. They are all located in Fulham.

**manuscript**

Raw text for a book produced by the author in a word processing programme and supplied to the publisher for editing.

**marketing**

The process by which publishing companies identify target markets and then deliver the proper communication so that these markets respond – hopefully by buying the book. Elements that fall within the marketing mix include the tangible features of a book (size, price, jacket copy, etc), as well as distribution and promotional activity such as **advertising** and **PR**.

**marketing, co-op**

When a bookshop promotes a book or series of books by piling it high front of store or in the window, this is the result of co-op marketing. The publisher pays for the privilege which does bring in to question the accuracy of the term ‘co-op’.

**newswire release**

Also known as a presswire release, this is an electronic wire service that transmits up-to-the-minute news, usually in the form of a **press release**, to

the media, bloggers and often the general public. This can be a very cost-effective way of getting people talking about a new book.

### **Neruda Pablo**

The pen name and, later, legal name of the Chilean writer and politician Neftalí Ricardo Reyes Basoalto (12 July 1904–23 September 1973). Not terribly relevant here, but see **barracuda** above.

### **pallets**

Oh we get very excited at Infinite Ideas about pallets. You see, there's an attempt afoot to standardise size, weight and sustainability of pallets so that books delivered from printers will fit through the warehouse door. Controversial. Do feel free to contact us if you'd like a wee bit more in-depth pallet info.

### **PDF**

Short for portable document format, a file which replicates on screen the pages of the

**picture researcher**

printed book. The file format most commonly supplied to a printer for printing books.

Person employed by the publisher or supplied by a picture library to find suitable photographs or **illustrations** for a publication. If you like looking at pictures you could get a job as a picture researcher.

**plate section**

Photographic section of a book, usually printed on different paper (i.e. **coated paper**) from the rest of the book and sometimes printed in colour.

**platform, marketing**

One of the first questions a commissioning editor will ask you will be about your 'platform'. Who do you know in the media who will help promote your book? Do you have regular speaking engagements or other public activities? What's your publishing history? Do you

**platforms**  
**(e.g. ebooks,**  
**audiobooks)**

know anyone famous who will write a foreword? Do you have a network of contacts the publisher can sell to?

Your publisher may refer to your lovingly crafted masterpiece as 'content'. He isn't treating you (or it) as a commodity, not consciously anyway. He's indicating that there are many ways to sell (he'll say 'exploit') the material, for instance as an **ebook** or audiobook. These are frequently referred to as 'platforms'.

**PR**

Public relations or publicity; a deliberate attempt to manage the public perception of a subject. PR is an important component in **marketing** a book because of its relatively low cost, the credibility that is created by a favourable comment from the media and the fact that the right piece

of coverage, say through a national newspaper, will be read by millions. The disadvantage of PR is lack of control: what happens if the journo hates your book?

**press release**

A statement for distribution to the media, describing a new book. A press release is used to gain publicity for a book by providing journalists with information that is useful, newsworthy and accurate.

**print on demand (POD)**

Model for printing where books are produced only once they have been ordered (demanded). In the best cases a single copy can be ordered and sent directly to the customer. Because the print runs are normally very short POD books are usually printed digitally. *See also* **printing, digital**.

**printed case**

Type of hardback binding where the cover image and blurb are printed on to paper that is glued on to the cover board. This may be instead of or in addition to a dust jacket.

**printer**

Delightful person who knows all about the latest Heidelberg TX3000 6-colour printing machine and is very keen to show it to you. If you ask to see round his print factory he'll be only too happy to show you 'where the magic happens'. The magic being the final part of the transformation of your book from an idea to a beautiful printed object.

**printing, digital**

Printing directly from computer files to paper; a sophisticated version of what happens when you print something on your desktop printer. Because no plates need to be made costs are greatly reduced compared to **litho** printing, allowing

**printing, litho**

publishers to print fewer books (sometimes as few as one copy).

Printing method traditionally used for printing books, and still the best method if you're able to print a sufficiently high quantity. The method involves the creation of plates which are treated chemically to only take ink where required (i.e. where the words and pictures are) before the print is transferred to the paper. The same principle as potato printing really. If you really want to know all the ins and outs you should probably ask a **printer**.

**proofreading**

The process after **typesetting** where your *proofs* are read by a professional to weed out any errors missed by the copy-editor or introduced during the typesetting process.

**proofs**

A preliminary copy of the book, in either electronic or printed form. It is used both for **proofreading** and indexing purposes, and often as a **marketing** tool, sent out to bookshops, buyers and reps and also for review. A bound proof made for marketing purposes will be very similar to the final edition of the book, but may lack a front cover and illustrations.

**publicist**

A marketing professional whose job is to generate and manage publicity (**PR**) for a book.

**resolution**

Measurement of image fineness, usually expressed in lines, dots or pixels per inch. Most images need to be around 300 dots per inch (dpi) in order to look good in print.

**rights**

Publishers will usually require you to sign over to them all the rights in your book. This means

that they can sell it to third parties such as newspapers (serialisation rights) and publishers overseas (foreign language rights).

**royalties**

You'll be lucky. And if you are it's the percentage of the publisher's income from the book that is payable to you as the author.

**sale or return (SOR)**

Most of the industry works on the basis that if a book is sold into a bookshop then that bookshop has the right to return that book during an agreed period, usually no sooner than 3 months after publication, and no later than 15 months. This means that an author and a publisher see the world in different ways. Author walks into a bookshop and sees a pile of their books and thinks 'Great'. Publisher walks in and thinks 'Shit we'll be getting that lot back next week'.

### **sales representatives**

Essentially these are the poor sods (reps) who have to persuade booksellers the world over to stock a publisher's books. Big publishers have salaried reps, smaller ones often use freelance reps who are paid on a commission basis. Reps usually work within given territories on an exclusive basis.

### **self-publishing**

Self-publishing involves an author uploading a **manuscript** onto the website of a business such as lulu.com, choosing a cover and interior designs from a template, then through **print-on-demand** technology producing as many copies as he requires. True self-publishing means that the author has 100% ownership of the resulting book.

### **soft copy**

Files of the **manuscript** or **proofs**, for example in Word or as a **PDF**.

**synopsis**

Brief description of your proposed book. Unless you are asked to complete one of those ghastly forms that some big publishers demand of their authors stick to the following: a brief (two or three paragraphs) overview of the subject matter, a list of contents with a couple of sentences explaining what each chapter will cover, a brief explanation of who you are and why you are qualified to write the book and, most importantly, a description of your **'platform'**. Unless your book covers really recondite material for a market that only you could know don't tell the publisher the size of the market. They know much, much more about it than you do. And don't say that the readership is everyone who can read. It isn't. No, not even yours.

## **trade**

Short hand for the book trade – any retailer, wholesaler or library supplier that buys books from publishers for sale to end users (aka readers). Everyone who works in the book trade is *sans doute* talented, intelligent, fragrant and always, always right in their buying decisions. No, really.

## **traditional publishing**

This is where an author has their book accepted for publication and a contract is signed whereby future **royalties** are agreed against sales. Often an **advance** is paid to the author against these royalties. The publisher then at their own expense pays for all the necessary design, editorial and print costs and launches the book to an expectant world generating sales and profit from this activity. Ideally.

**typesetting**

After your book has been copy-edited it will be sent to the typesetter along with the text design. The typesetter will style all the elements of the manuscript according to the text design in order to produce the **proofs**.

**vanity publishing**

Is where the publisher derives all their revenue from sales of books to the author only. An author pays to have her **manuscript** turned into a book, often with no editorial or design input. In most cases we say 'yuck'.



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