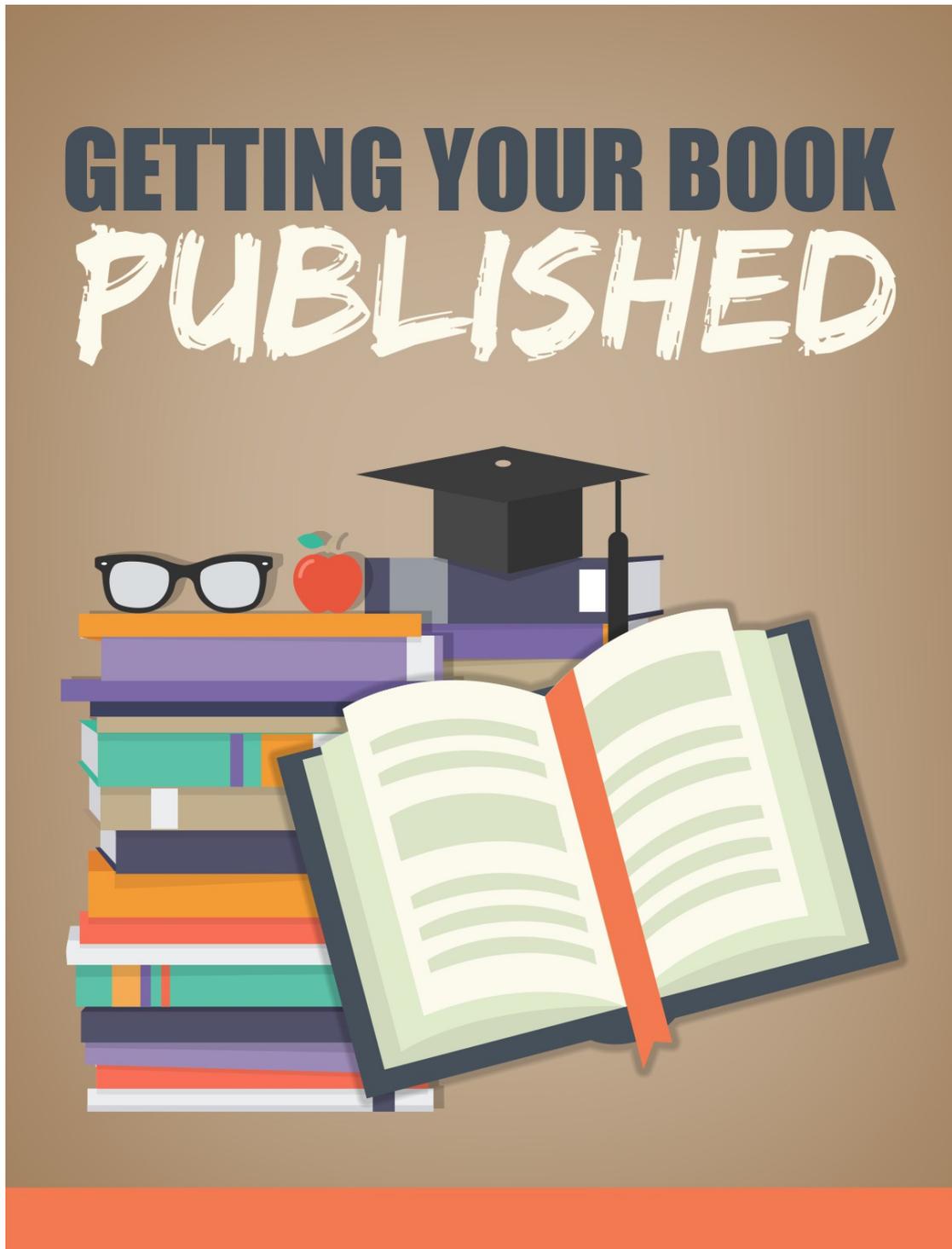


# GETTING YOUR BOOK PUBLISHED



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# INTRODUCTION

The publishing industry remained virtually unchanged for decades in terms of how books are published. The writer would write a fiction or non-fiction book, hire an agent, select a publisher, and eventually a book would be printed. Of course, printing and marketing a book are two entirely different things. The point is that once the printing process was developed, books were destined to be printed for hundreds of years on paper.

The printed book still remains the most common and popular method of publishing. Five-hundred thousand or more new titles are published every year. But there is an emerging trend that is expected to eventually change the world of publishing. Electronic books available online that can be downloaded to special readers or desktop computers are becoming more and more popular. In fact what people seem to be waiting for before this form of publishing explodes is a more comfortable reader, more available titles, and time to adjust to the idea of pages that are electronic rather than printed.

When you talk to people about books, many get a faraway look in their eyes. They are thinking of those wonderful moments before going to sleep with a book in their hands. They are remembering those golden moments when the day's struggles and worries are over and it's time to get lost in another world contained in the pages. This may seem like a romantic view of the books, but people who enjoy reading talk about the feel of the book's page in their hands and the words that can convey emotions, actions, concepts, failures, and successes.

And for every person that loves to read there is most likely someone who wants to publish a book. There are millions of people who have a story inside of them but are afraid to tackle the world of book publishing. How do you compete with the likes of Stephen King, Barbara Kingsolver, Kathy Reichs, or any of the hundreds of other popular authors whose books have prominent places on bookstore shelves?

There is a way. The publishing industry is always looking for new authors that can appeal to both mass audiences and to niche markets. You don't have to be the next Edgar Allen Poe or Sandra Brown to become a published author. You can simply be...you. Almost everyone seems to have a book "in them" but what separates the real author from the would-be author is first writing the book and second finding a way to get it published.

If you have a passion to write a book then you need a passion to get it published. Today there are two main choices: traditional books printed on paper and electronic books. Within the electronic book publishing industry there are even more options including eBooks, print-on-demand books, and books that can be downloaded to a special portable reader.

In the following sections the process of getting a book published is reviewed. There will be a discussion about the writing process, finding an agent, choosing a publisher, working with an editor, and marketing the book. There is also a section on electronic publishing using Amazon as an example of industry trends. Book publishing has never been more accessible to potential authors than it is today. That is good news for anyone who is ready to publish!

## **OVERVIEW OF THE PUBLISHING INDUSTRY**

As mentioned, the publishing industry offers several options for getting your book published.

### **TRADITIONAL PRINT PUBLISHERS**

The traditional print publisher prints a book on pages, adds a cover, binds the pages, and then reproduces it in as many copies as believed to be sellable. But first you have to get your book to the publisher before any of this can happen. That can happen in one of two ways.

- Submit to an editor who works for a publisher
- Submit directly to the publisher

In the chapter titled *All About Publishers* there is a lengthy discussion about publisher and the selection process.

### **SELF PUBLISHING**

Self-publishing is exactly what it sounds like: you take most or all of the responsibility for printing, cover design, binding, reproduction, marketing, and distribution of the book. You can self-publish a printed book or you can self-publish an electronic version of your book or you can choose a

print-on-demand option. Some authors choose to publish both print and electronic versions of their book in the hopes of selling more books.

When you do everything yourself, you also assume all the up-front expenses. That is why there has been growth in the businesses that assist self-publishers. One of the fastest growing self-publishing areas is electronic publishing. Even sellers of print books, like Amazon, have added self-publishing units that give authors a forum for getting their books into the marketplace.

## **ELECTRONIC PUBLISHING**

Electronic publishing is considered to be the wave of the future in the opinion of some experts. There are several options to choose among.

- Use a commercial e-publisher to publish, market, sell, and distribute an electronic book
- Set up a print-on-demand version of your book where you can order small quantities of your electronically formatted book to be paper printed as needed
- Set up your own website and publish and sell your book
- Use an online bookseller like Amazon to publish and sell your book
- Self publish your book but use an online bookseller like Amazon to promote and sell your book

As you can see there are a number of ways to get your book electronically published. Electronic books can be downloaded and printed, downloaded to a special handheld reader, or read online.

## **GETTING STARTED**

With so many great options available today in the publishing industry, it's easy to get confused. It is important to keep in mind that most of the publishing concepts are the same. Many of principles behind the writing process, editing, finding a publisher, and marketing apply whether you are talking about a traditional print book or an electronically published book. The principles are the same but the process may differ. For example, marketing principles underlay the strategies for selling a book but the actual tactics can differ if the book is only available electronically.

In the following sections the principles that are discussed assume a book is being published in print form. In the chapter *Self Publishing and Electronic Publishing* the process for publishing and marketing eBooks and other electronic book versions are reviewed.

# THE WRITING PROCESS – AN OVERVIEW

This is an eBook about publishing and not about writing per se, but you will have a much greater chance of getting your book published if you choose your idea carefully and keep your ultimate goals in mind. Your idea should not be strictly driven by the desire to get published, but you also do not want to write a book that only five people will read. For most writers coming with the desire to be published is the desire to make some money too. As you will learn later the amount of money you will make will be dependent on the number of books you sell and the negotiated contract.

## **FINDING IDEAS**

So where do you get ideas for a book? The answer is you get them *everywhere!* If you want to know what sells and what people are interested in reading, you can start with a visit to the bookstore. Just simply visit a neighborhood bookstore and look at the prominent displays. What are the tables displaying? What types of books are present in the largest quantities?

With the internet it is also easy to search for lists of the most popular books that are selling. Bestseller lists provide a quick view of the book market and what the public is reading. There are even lists by type of book. If you are determined to write a nonfiction book then look at the nonfiction bestseller lists.

The ideas you get from the bookstores and the library are just the beginning. There are many other ways to get ideas.

- Talk to friends and family and ask what they enjoy reading
- Quiz co-workers or the chat with people at the gym
- Brainstorm and make a list of where your thoughts take you in the way of ideas
- Think about your hobbies and any areas of expertise you can claim
- Consider your unique skills or abilities
- Recall the times you have told yourself someone should write a book about...

- List the topics you find interesting like politics, sewing, caring for the elderly and so on

Once you have listed the ideas you can then sort the list into a descending list of topics that hold the most interest for you. You are almost creating a funnel into which you pour all your ideas and coming from the narrow tip will be those that have the most interest. You can work your list over several times and eliminate the topics you do not feel qualified to write about. Eventually you will find yourself with 2 or 3 topics and from those you will find one that has potential to be turned into a full book.

At this point other considerations come into play. You have a good idea for a book, but will it sell? At this stage you must match your idea to the market. This is where your visit to the bookstores, the bestseller lists, and the market needs are matched to your book idea. Does your idea fit? That is the question you must answer.

## **WHAT WILL PEOPLE BUY?**

The process of writing a book requires a significant investment of time and creative energy. If your goal is to express that creativity in a way that will enable your book to get published, then you do not want to fashion your book into a tome that few people will read.

Realistically you will probably not write a best seller on the scale of a Stephen King book the first time you are published. It can happen, but it is just not likely. Yet the goal is to write a book that will be published and sell. Publishing a book that does not sell really does serve no useful purpose to anyone.

To determine the type of book people will buy, is necessary to understand the audience that will be the most likely to the book. Is it going to be stay-at home-moms, nonprofit organizations, golfers, teenagers, mystery lovers, or any of the hundreds of others who read books. Once you decide what the most likely audience will be, you then must decide if it will be large enough. Once again you are back to the question of how to publish a book that will sell. Selling five copies will probably leave you in debt even if you decide to self-publish.

There is a bigger consideration to keep in mind also. Publishers will only assume the risk of publishing a new author if it believes the book will sell a minimum of 5,000 copies. That is the absolute minimum and many of the large publishing houses will expect many more than that to sell. In the publishing business, sales estimates assume that approximately 5 percent of the potential reading audience will actually invest in the book.

It becomes much clearer at this point as to why you want to write to a large audience!

The book you write will have to meet a need or a desire for information. People who buy a self-help book need answers to life questions. People who read mystery books have a need for a mental challenge. Those who buy diet books need to lose weight. People who buy romance books need to have the satisfaction of knowing romance is alive and well in the world and may even be living vicariously through the book.

Of course all of this is speculation because there is no way to prove exactly why people buy a certain book to read. But people will buy a book that captures their interest, inspires the spirit, conveys information, lets them travel to exotic places, or enables them to experience adventure.

Your goal is to match your talents, interests, and writing abilities to a market need. Once you succeed at this task, the chances of your book getting published have greatly improved.

## **WHAT TO CONSIDER WHEN CHOOSING AN IDEA**

Surely you need to consider a lot more than just what books are sitting on the bookstore tables by the front door and what you enjoy doing or talking about. To choose a marketable book idea there are several concepts to keep in mind.

- How long will it take you to assemble the book? Will it require charts and graphs and extensive research? Will you have to do interviews?
- Is the book marketable? Will the idea get the attention of an agent? Are there many publishers who might be interested in your book? Will someone read your book and find a number of ways to market it?
- Can the subject matter be covered in a reasonable number of pages? (Now not be the time to work on your masterpiece that will take years to complete)
- Does the topic fit your talents, abilities, and experience?
- Can you imagine a variety of people wanting to buy your book?
- What category of book did you prefer to write?

There are many different categories of books and the category your book will fit in will determine the publishers you can approach and the way it will be marketing. Following are the broad categories in the book industry.

- Fiction – literary and genre
  - Mystery
  - Romance
  - Horror
  - Suspense
  - Science Fiction
  - Fantasy
  - Western
  - Women’s fiction
  - Children
  - Young Adult
  - Creative (such as a book of poetry)
  
- Nonfiction
  - Cookbooks
  - Self-improvement (health, fitness, fashion, beauty)
  - Autobiography
  - Biography
  - History
  - Coffee table books
  - Business
  - Spiritual
  - Family
  - Entertainment
  - Science
  - How-To
  - Travel
  - Sports

It is a long list of categories, but the long list gives you a number of great options too. You should choose the potential categories that may hold your book idea and then do some research to see if it fits based on what it selling in the bookstores and online. Some books may cross categories, but that only means a publisher will have multiple ways to market the book!

The idea you funneled through your mix of ideas may need to be expanded, amended, or abandoned once you consider the marketability of your book. If you are burning to write a particular book but it turns out that only five will sell after doing some research then you should take your idea and rework it.

If this sounds like the creative process is being violated, do not worry. There is a lot of romanticism that surrounds the writing business. The idea of the Edgar Allen Poe writing alone while enslaved by madness or Louisa May Alcott happily penning *Little Women* with no care as to who would read it are false pictures. In fact, Louisa May Alcott in reality was a business woman who her books about the four sisters to make money and help support herself and her family. It’s a well kept literary secret!

## **STICK WITH WHAT YOU KNOW**

You read it over and over again when researching book ideas....stick with what you know. When you want to publish your first book, it is not the time to take on a writing topic that has no relevance in your life. Sometimes new authors think their life is so ordinary there are no ideas to be found.

All budding authors have people, places, and things in their lives that will can kick start a book idea that publisher will want to market.

You have the idea, so it's time to start writing. By the way – to get your book done, it is important to write something every single day. It may only be one paragraph on some days, but even one paragraph is progress.

In the next section there is a discussion about agents. Do you need one? If you do need one, how do you find one?

# ALL ABOUT AGENTS

One of the first major decisions that arises after choosing your book idea is whether an agent is necessary. It is possible to be your own agent or you can hire an agent. There are pros and cons to both options. In the following sections there is a discussion on acting as your own agent and on hiring an agent that has connections with the publishing industry.

Finding an agent is not a particularly easy step to conquer on your way to getting a book published. Agents are in the business to make money and they want to take on new clients that have a high likelihood of offering a book that will sell. Good agents have plenty of clients and are competing for the attention of publishers already inundated with book offers. An agent will cost you money too.

But still...in many cases...hiring an agent is the right choice. You just need to find a way to lure one to your cause.

## **WHO NEEDS AN AGENT?**

It is no secret that you have a much greater possibility of being published if you have an agent. An agent works with editors and publishers every day and understands the industry, the process, and has personal connections with the people who need to be convinced your book is going to be a winner.

Some new authors try to act as their own agent and eventually hire an agent. Unless you are a master negotiator and have a good grasp of the process, then an agent is probably needed. But there are situations where it is probably not necessary to hire an agent.

- Your book is very specialized and can be promoted to a select few publishers that work with your type of book
- You are an attorney who understands the complexity of the negotiation process and can write, edit, and review contracts
- You have friends in the publishing industry who can promote your book personally with the appropriate people
- Your book has limited audience appeal so only local or regional publishers will be interested

- You have written an academic book that will need to be published by an academic press
- You have been unable to find an agent willing to accept your project so you go it alone!

Book publishing is part science and part art form. You have probably heard about the art of negotiation. Getting a book published requires a lot of selling and negotiations all through the process. You have to lure an agent to your cause or you have to sell your book proposal to the right publishers.

Speaking of book proposals...a book proposal is a package you prepare that is used to present and promote your book. You can use it to convince an editor to accept your book for publishing as your own agent. Or you can use it to convince an agent that your book will be a hit. Once the agent has been landed, he or she will use the proposal to sell your book to a publisher.

## **THE BOOK PROPOSAL**

What is in a proposal and when do you write it? You can actually prepare a proposal before you have even finished writing the book. When you start looking for a publisher, you have to have something to show the editor or agent. The proposal is a summary of your book and is a marketing tool that is used to convince people your book will be a success. The book proposal needs to sell your book!

The elements of a book proposal include the following.

- Table of contents
- Overview of the book – summarizes the proposal concepts
- Short biography – making yourself sound interesting and marketable
- Marketing concepts – prove your book is unique and will sell
  - What audience you intend on reaching
  - Unique marketing opportunities
  - Creative marketing possibilities
  - Competition that exists in the marketplace
- Manuscript description – approximate word count, time to finish book, number of chapters , etc.
- Book outline
- Writing sample from book – up to 3 chapters

With a nicely written proposal that serves as an exciting summary and introduction to your book, you are ready to begin marketing your book even before you have finished writing it. The goal is to have an editor

interested in your book before it is completed. If you do not know how to write a book proposal there is lots of information online or available at the library. Many universities and bookstores hold seminars also that discuss the writing a book proposal.

## **REPRESENTING YOURSELF**

Some people decide to try serving as their own agent with the understanding they will continue to search for an agent to represent them. If you decide to represent yourself, then you are going to have to learn how to effectively handle steps in the process.

- Submission of your proposal to editors at publishers
- Meetings with interested editors
- Negotiating a contract
- Setting fees and royalties
- Determining role in marketing of the book

The bottom line though is that most people need a professional agent to promote their book to editors. Just getting an editor's attention is a major step and a very difficult one. Junior assistants or assistant editors are besieged with proposals every day and unless your proposal makes it out of the stack and onto the desk of an editor that makes final decisions, you will not have to worry about things like negotiations or contracts.

Another thing to keep in mind is that the publishing negotiation process is complex. You must understand the many terms such "rights" and "splits." If you cannot talk the talk then it will be treacherous walking the walk through the contract process.

If you decide to find an agent at any point, the first step is finding them!

## **HOW TO LOCATE AGENTS**

If you do a Google search on "book agents" you will get thousands of results. There are lots of people out there who claim to be book agents and interested in helping you get your book published. But you need to be aware that many of them are in it to collect an upfront fee and do not perform the full duties of an agent.

The agent you want to land should have your interests at heart. It should be a person with connections to editors and publishers and someone who will actively promote your book. You can mail out book proposals all day

long, but an agent knows people personally that he or she can call and make sure your proposal gets noticed.

A legitimate agent is also motivated to sell your proposal because that is how he or she will get paid. There is nothing more motivating to an agent than the thought of making money off your writing efforts. So how do you find book agents? Following are some steps you can take to develop a list of agents who might be interested in taking you on as a client.

- Research on the internet but beware of people asking for upfront fees
- Go to the library and read *Publishers Weekly* or subscribe online if you can afford the fee
- Join Publishers Marketplace online if you can afford the fee
- Attend writers' conferences
- Attend local university writing/publishing seminars
- Attend bookstore events that bring in authors, editors, agents and others involved in the book industry
- Purchase a book that includes agent listings and contact information such as *Writer's Market* or *Writer's Guide to Book Editors, Publishers and Literary Agents*
- Check your area phonebook for local agents
- Consider even the largest agencies like Curtis Brown, Ltd. and IMG Literary

In other words, you need to check multiple sources and do some research to locate potential agents. The agents you should be interested in need to be able to prove their publishing industry connections, their professionalism, and their successes. Anyone can *tell* you they can promote your book, but can they *prove* they are good at their work and will make a sincere effort on your behalf?

Clearly, locating possible agents is one of the steps that is part science and part art. In other words, there is no process set in stone for locating an agent. You need to do the research and then be willing to network and go with the flow, so to speak.

## **CONTACTING AGENTS**

Even after developing a list of agents, you still need to convince one to accept you as a client. If you have done your homework, the list of agents you have in hand are successful in their profession. That means you have to be convincing as a new author. You have to convince the agent that your book is a potential best seller and editors are going to love your book.

In other words, you have to make a pitch to the agent and it is you and your book you are pitching. It all begins with a query letter....

- Brief description of your book
- Compare your writing to a published successful author but explain why your book is different
- Describe the audience that will buy the book
- Describe how many people you believe will be interested in your book
- Brief description of yourself as an author
- Establish expertise in the case of nonfiction books

Some new authors make the mistake of believing that if a query letter is good, an aggressive phone call has to be better. An editor does not want telephone calls that are excited sales pitches over the phone whether it's you acting as your own agent or an agent you have hired. You will not be able to set up meetings with editors or publishers until they see your proposal, so send the query letter and/or the proposal and be patient.

After you send a query letter to an agent, you hope to get a request for your book proposal. You should include a self-addressed stamped envelope with your letter to make it easy for the agent to respond. You want know either way if the agent is accepting or rejecting your query.

The first rejection can hurt. It is easy to advise someone to not take the rejection personally, but that is exactly the right kind of advice that should be shared. Most agents will reject the vast majority of proposals they receive. Legitimate agents work on a commission and are extremely selective as to what clients they accept. You are not being rejected personally. In fact, your book is not even being rejected because the agent has not read it. The agent simply has to allocate a scarce resource which is time and not everyone will fit into the agent's schedule.

The same principles apply when you decide to apply directly to editors as your own agent.

When you get a rejection...move on!

## **CHOOSING A GOOD AGENT**

If you persist in your search for an agent, eventually you will get one or more interested in your book. What next?

The next step is to make sure you select an agent that will serve you well. One of the first steps to take is making sure the agent is legitimate and is listed in industry guides. That is a good indication the agent has experience and connections within the industry.

You also want to work with an agent you can get along with well. If you cringe whenever an agent calls or makes a request because their personality grates on your nerves, then there will obviously not be a good working relationship. Other considerations include the following.

- Do not use an agent that wants more than 15 percent as a commission rate
- Can the agent prove the successful promotion of multiple books similar to yours over a year
- Can the agent provide references from authors who currently work with the agent or have in the past
- Are the terms of the contract reasonable and fair
- Will the agent help with marketing once the book is published
- Does the agent work with successful publishing houses
- Can the agent successfully negotiate a contract with a publishing house
- Will the agent require you to make changes to your book even if you do not agree with recommendations

You can see that deciding which agent is best for you requires consideration of relationship and emotional factors in addition to hard core business terms.

Once you have an agent representing you, the next obvious is promoting the book to editors. At some point one of those editors will want to publish your book. In the next section, publishers in general are discussed. With an offer by a publisher to print your book, you are well on your way to success!

# **ALL ABOUT PUBLISHERS**

Most people are familiar with publishers, but not with their mode of operation. Most people who read do not even bother to look at who published the book. If you decided to act as your own agent, you will be sending your proposal directly to editors or publishers. If you have hired an agent then the agent is contacting editors or publishers on your behalf.

## **BEHIND CLOSED DOORS**

What exactly happens to your proposal or manuscript once it enters a publishing office? How is your proposal handled and who is responsible for deciding whether your book will sell? Once your project is promoted to a publisher, there is a sense of excitement that *now* things are about to happen. But your book is still many steps away from the actual printing because your proposal has to be accepted.

## **SENDING IN YOUR OWN SUBMISSIONS**

If you have chosen to act as your own agent, then you should be sending proposals directly to the publishers. Editors are normally employed who review proposals and decide which projects are likely to be successful in the marketplace. If your proposal interests the editor then you will most likely be asked to meet with him or her.

The initial meeting with an editor interested in your proposal is called a pitch meeting. At this point those who act as their own agents and those who hire an agent will experience the same process as described in a following section.

## **WHEN AN AGENT SUBMITS TO PUBLISHERS**

When an agent is representing you the agent will use professional contacts to get the attention of editors. The agent submits your proposal, or manuscript if the book is fully written, to editors and/or publishers. Most publishers, but not all, have editors. Some of the smaller publishing firms may not have and editors. If you have carefully chosen the agent representing you the he or she has the right kind of contacts most likely to be interested in your book.

The agent will make telephone calls and take editors to lunch. They will set up meetings and contact others who have connections with the publishers being targeted. The agent writes cover letters and will mail the cover letters with your proposal to editors and publishers. The agent decides how to go about selling your book to editors and publishers and can take a number of routes. The agent has a proposal or manuscript in hand and can:

- Send to one editor that is believed will have likely interest in the project
- Send to several editors to see what kind of feedback is returned and if the
- Send to many editors and publishers to obtain as many comments and as much exposure as possible

A good agent will work diligently to get your proposal in front of editors or publishers because that is the only way your book ever has a real chance of being published.

## **THE PITCH MEETING**

As mentioned, at some point there will hopefully be an editor or publisher who takes an interest in your project. That pitch meeting is where you sell yourself and your proposal. The agent has gone to a lot of work to get you this meeting and it needs to be taken seriously and you need to act like a professional. It is best to meet in person though sometimes phone call meetings or even internet video meetings can be used.

You might meet with just the editor, but chances are you will meet with a publishing team. The editor does not rely strictly on his or her opinions about your proposal or manuscript. If the publishing firm accepts your project a lot of money will be invested in the printing and marketing of the book. The publishing team is composed of editors, marketing professionals, book sellers, and the publisher.

The next question is whether the agent should attend the meeting with you. If the agent is able to do so then take him or her up on the offer by all means. The agent can help you establish rapport with the team and

can answer questions you might not be prepared to answer about marketing and sales for example.

Before attending the pitch meeting make sure you are as prepared as possible though. You want to convey the excitement at the thought of having your book published but you also want develop a professional approach. Your preparation for this meeting should include the following.

- Develop a marketing hook that the publisher will not be able to resist
- Offer sales suggestions that show creativity
- Provide assurance you are willing to participate in any and all promotional activities
- Convey a willingness to make changes to the manuscript (as long as the changes do not materially change your story or book content)
- Have a list of questions ready that will have answers able to help you decide if this publisher is a good choice

What some authors anxious to publish forget is that they do have a choice as to whether they allow a publisher to publish the book. If you are not comfortable with the editor or publisher you always have the option of withdrawing your proposal up to the point a contract is signed. That may be difficult to imagine happening, but your questions you direct at the editor should help you determine if this will be a good working relationship.

## **THE OFFER...WHAT A DEAL!**

You get an offer from a publisher! It is a stunning moment that makes you feel as if you crossed a line into the world of professional writing. Those lonely hours sitting at the computer in the middle of the night were worth the effort. The offer sets off a whole new set of activities that lead up to the contract itself.

### **THE OFFER**

The offer is actually an offer to buy your book. What it means is that you are selling rights to your material. There are three different kinds of offers.

- Preemptive Offer – a publisher wants exclusive rights to your book meaning you cannot pursue other offers once the contract is signed
- Auctions – your book is auctioned and editors or publishers bid on the right to publish your book and you will be published by the auction winner
- Individual offers – a single publishing firm makes an offer to publish your book and there is no other competition involved

## **THE ADVANCE**

An advance is money paid to an author by the publisher to seal the deal so to speak. But the advance is paid out against future earnings and will be deducted from book sale revenues. If the author finishes writing the book and delivers it to the publisher as agreed but revenues don't cover the advance the author still gets to keep it.

The amount of the advance can vary. If you are a struggling author and need the money to support yourself or to cover expenses while you finish writing the book and to carry you until the book is actually in bookstores selling, then you will want a larger advance. If you are more interested in choosing a publisher who will promote your book right away then you might end up choosing a publisher who pays a smaller advance.

Advances are paid out in installments. You get some of the advance when the contract is signed. You will get additional money when you send in a completed manuscript. You get the last of the advance when the book is actually published. But this is not etched in stone. You will negotiate the terms of the advance during the contract negotiations. There may be a completely different type of advance payout schedule developed.

## **ROYALTIES**

Royalties are simply commissions. They are figured on a percentage of the sales revenue. The advance is included in the royalties. That is why the advance is deducted from royalties once sales revenue is earned. The royalty can be calculated in a number of ways.

- Percentage applied to publisher's list price
- Percentage applied to publishers net revenue amount received from the booksellers

- Staggered percentages applied to list or net price based on number of copies sold

There are different standard royalty rates for the publishing of hardcover, paperback, and mass-market paperback books. A staggered percentage scale is called an escalator. For example, your royalty schedule might look like this:

7 ½% for the first 50,000 trade paperbacks sold  
8% for the next 50,000 trade paperbacks sold  
8.5% for every copy over 100,000 that is sold

This type of schedule motivates an author to participate in book promotions and other marketing activities.

## **BOOK DELIVERY AND PUBLICATION DATES**

The sooner your book is published and delivered to booksellers, the sooner you can begin earning royalties. But that cannot happen until *you* deliver your final manuscript to the publisher for editing. The contract will include these two very important dates.

- Date you agree to deliver a finished manuscript
- Date book is to be published

The one thing you must do as an author is meet the delivery date. If you do not meet the delivery date the publisher has the right to cancel the contract.

An important term related to the subject of delivery is *acceptance*. When you deliver your manuscript to an editor, it will be reviewed. Out of this review it is quite possible that you will be asked to make some changes. The manuscript may go back and forth several times between you and the editor. At some point the editor will accept the manuscript and it can be sent to the copy editor.

## **NEGOTIATING THE CONTRACT**

The contract, as mentioned, includes the dates of manuscript delivery, rules for acceptance, and the amount of advance and royalties to be paid.

But it includes much more that you need to understand. Book publishing contracts can be a maze of amounts and terms that seem to be a language all their own. This is yet another reason why it is a good idea to have an agent or at least a publishing lawyer review the contract before you sign it. In fact either one can help you negotiate the terms .

Following are the common contract sections found in publishing contracts.

- Author retains copyright and the publisher can only register a copyright in your name
- The territory is defined which may be North America, World English rights, or other international regions
- Subsidiary rights - the right of the publisher to use book material and distribute and sell it through third parties
- Editions – hardcover, trade paperback, or mass paperback or any combination
- Approvals – as to what the publisher is allowed to do with or without the author’s permission
- Warranties and indemnities – you warrant the material is yours and you indemnify the publisher from damages in the event someone sues and claims it is not your material
- Options – the right of publisher to have first publishing rights for future books you might write
- Promotion and marketing (discussed in a subsequent section)
- Electronic rights
- Number of free or promotional copies you are entitled to
- The amount of input you are allowed concerning the book cover
- Accounting requirements

The key to negotiating a good contract is: 1) thoroughly understand the terms, 2) hold out for what is important to you, and 3) use an intermediary if at all possible.

The issue of subsidiary rights is complex. Subsidiary rights are the rights you give publishers to all or parts of your writing in other ways besides as a published book. The rights are usually applied through agreements made with third party licensees. The reason these agreements are made, of course, is to generate revenue. You are entitled to part of the revenue and the publisher gets the rest.

There are different rights in the publishing world that will be defined in the publishing contract.

- First serial rights – excerpts of your book printed in a newspaper or magazine before the book is published (author 10%/publisher 90%)
- Second serial rights – excerpts of your book printed in a newspaper or magazine after the book is published (author 50%/publisher 50%)
- Book Clubs - buy copies of the book or the rights to reprint using cheaper material (author 50%/publisher 50%)

- Permissions – excerpts of your book used by others (author 50%/publisher 50%)
- Electronic books – eBook versions of your book (author 50%/publisher 50%)
- Other media – audio, video film, television and so on (split is negotiated)

In other words, there are many different types of resale rights to be considered.

A section of the contract addresses marketing and promotion of your book. This is such an important part of the while publishing process that it is discussed under its own heading.

# MARKETING A BOOK

The contract will have reference to marketing activities that will take place before and after publication. Of course, both the publisher and you are interested in marketing. You want to market the book so that as many copies are sold and as much revenue generated as possible.

The marketing of your book actually begins long before it is printed and delivered to bookstores. The publisher will have a plan developed, but you also need to talk about your book at every opportunity. You also need to be willing to participate in a number of activities including promotional interviews and book signings. There are also electronic marketing options available too.

## **PRE-PUBLISHING MARKETING**

Before the book is actually printed is a great time to start letting others know it is coming. The major well-sold authors sometimes get full page advertisements in the New York Times, but you have a long way to go before you earn that kind of publicity.

- Complete the Author Questionnaire provided by the publisher. It will be used to develop marketing tools to generate book sales. You should carefully answer all the questions.

The questionnaire may remind you of your original book proposal. You will summarize your book, answer questions about your intended audience and the competition, describe your background and experience, and offer other marketing suggestions.

- Email everyone on your email list to announce your coming book
- Vie for local television and radio spots where you can talk about your experience as a newly published writer
- Send notices to newspapers, book clubs, bookstores, and elsewhere

## **POST-PUBLISHING MARKETING**

Of course, once the book is within six months of being published, the publisher will assign a publicist. You do not get to choose who you work with but the publicist will be an expert in book publishing. But this is not a free ride by any means. The publicist will expect you to fully cooperate and participate in marketing activities. It can actually be hard work even though it is also fun since you are touting your first book in print.

You do not have to do anything you have legitimate objections to doing though. When you meet with the publicist it is important to discuss what will be expected of you and to explain your preferences. A good publicist will try to capitalize on your strong points and use them to develop an effective marketing plan. The publicist realizes that if you freeze up in front of a microphone that talking about your book on stage is not a good a plan!

It is your job as the book's author to assist the publicist any way possible. This includes giving him or her marketing suggestions, providing updates on activities that have netted you radio or television coverage, supplying comments made about your book, suggesting places where you could promote your book, and so on.

In other words, you are not just sitting at home waiting for the first royalty check to be delivered to your mailbox. You will be on the phone, emailing, visiting bookstores, contacting book clubs, contacting media, submitting press releases where possible, and assisting with the book's promotion however you can.

The publicist will be instrumental in several ways.

- Developing a press release you can use as a model to develop your own press releases
- Assist with developing a press release kit that includes a bio, photos, articles written about you or your book, an extracted section of your book, and maybe even a CD or DVD. The kit can be sent to the media, workshops, bookstores and any other place that can help you promote book sales
- Notifying a vast audience that the book is or will soon be published
- Includes your book in publisher advertisements promoting new authors

One step you can take today is creating your own website. The website can describe your book and offer a link that enables a visitor to buy the book. Through emailing and online newsletters you can develop a following of readers and easily keep them current on how your book is doing. You can include reader comments and even talk about your next project. You can also include pictures.

All of these tools let you establish an online rapport with current and potential readers. There is really no reason to avoid having a website. It can supplement the publisher's efforts to promote your book, increase sales, and give you a head start promoting your next writing project.

What's not to like about a website?!

## **ON THE ROAD...NEAR AND FAR**

Authors can promote their books through press releases and websites, but there is nothing like the buzz of readers getting to meet an author. When you are working with the publisher to develop a marketing plan there will be a launch meeting that takes place before the book is published. At this meeting there will be an editor, publisher, marketing personnel, and a salesperson. The publisher will provide a marketing budget and the budget must be spent wisely.

There will be many different topics discussed including the sales hooks that will work the best and the marketing materials that will be needed. There will be more meetings of course that will refine the marketing campaign. There will be plans made for advertising and publicity. There will also be promotional programs and a sales program.

The sales program is how the book makes it to bookstores and other sales points. The majority of books sold today are sold through national bookstore chains though there are independent bookstores doing quite well also. In fact, if your book targets a market usually served by an independent booksellers then your books can often get more exposure. The large chains save the most prominent displays for the most well known authors of course which can crowd out books written by unknown authors.

Publishers have a sales force that will be out selling your book as diligently as they can. The publisher now has lot of money actually invested in your success and will everything possible to help your book be successful with readers. While the sales force is out selling, you can still be working to promote your book.

Once the book is in print there are many more promotional options available. If you frequent bookstores you are sure to have seen advertisements for book signings. Book signings are where you sit at a table at a bookstore and autograph your book for buyers. It is like giving your readers an extra reward for buying your book. Autographed copies of your book are going to be more valuable one day when you become a famous author! Think big and think positive should be your motto!

Book signings are popular marketing activities. The bookstore gives you free advertisement. Your reader get additional value for the money they spent on your book. You get to meet your readers and can gather useful information based on their questions and comments. You are also likely to sell more books which puts money in your pocket.

Some authors will go on book tours. Book tours stand a greater chance of success if there has been broad media coverage of your book. They take a lot of planning though and can be expensive if you must stay in hotels.

A better route to take (pun intended) if you are a new author is to try to get media attention. You can offer to appear on local television shows, mail copies of your books to magazines and radio stations, offer to give lectures on the writing process, and more.

# **SELF-PUBLISHING AND ELECTRONIC PUBLISHING**

Some authors will decide to self-publish. Self-publishing can be accomplished with eBooks or by personally paying for the cost of traditional printing.

Self-publishing has some advantages and two of the main ones are as follows:

- You retain creative and promotional control of your book
- You do not have to pay a publisher royalty fees

Obviously though the cost of self-publishing print books is expensive. You will have to cover the cost of printing and binding your books. You will also have to pay for all promotion and marketing expenses in addition to handling distribution. You can easily find yourself a lone wolf holding a stack of books and nowhere to sell them. You will spend thousands of dollars producing less than 5,000 book copies.

With technology though has come a whole new way of publishing. Some believe the electronic book will one day replace the traditional print book. Printed books require a lot of natural resources to produce and millions of books are printed that are never sold or read. With e-publishing the cost of producing a book is significantly reduced.

Even with e-publishing though the book must be edited and marketed. As a result there are now e-publishers offering their services to authors. You may pay a fee up front in some cases, but it is much smaller than any fee a traditional publisher would charge. The royalties are still shared between the publisher and author. There are a number of ways electronic books are delivered.

- Create your own website and offer a downloadable version of your book
- Sign up with an electronic publisher that offers books downloaded to a special handheld electronic reading device
- Sign up with an electronic publisher that offers books downloaded to a customer's computer

- Offer print-on-demand books which are copies of the book that are printed after purchase

Print on demand tends to be expensive which defeats the purpose of electronic publishing. Laser printing systems are used to print paper copies from electronic files of the book. You can buy small print runs and the books are printed on paper and bound.

In the following section Amazon is used for a discussion of the world of electronic publishing. Though this form of book selling is still lagging behind printed books, the fact is electronic publishing is gaining in popularity all the time. New authors who are intimidated by the traditional publishing process find they are more comfortable with electronic publishing.

The electronic publishing business is in a state of flux too as new technology creates new opportunities for and new forms of publishing. Amazon is expanding its electronic publishing section and offering new products and new choices for self-publishers. Amazon is also offering an interesting mix of electronic publishing options that combine marketing and distribution methods.

For some the options are a bit bewildering because the self publishing electronic industry is constantly changing and expanding. Amazon was the first to come out with the Kindle which is a handheld electronic reader books can be downloaded to from the Amazon website.

When you own digital rights to your book, you can upload an electronic copy of your book as an eBook. You set a list price and people can then order an electronic copy of your book. Amazon pays you a 35% percent royalty calculated on the list price. The book is downloaded to the Kindle reader.

You can also self-publish printed and bound books. CreateSpace is an Amazon company that offers on demand copies of your products based on customer orders. You can sell books, DVDs, CDs and any other media. You can create a CreateSpace eStore and list your products for sale including eBooks.

CreateSpace offers a variety of self-publishing services. They include the design of the book, professional editing, and marketing including press releases. When you join CreateSpace you can get help with the publishing of a traditional print book or with publishing an eBook to be sold through Amazon that can be downloaded to a Kindle.

CreateSpace makes money by charging a printing fee and pays a percentage royalty fee to the author.

Amazon also has a program called Advantage. Advantage is a consignment program where you can list your book or other media for sale. Your products get exposure to the millions of Amazon customers. Ebooks are not accepted through Advantage probably because Amazon wants eBook publishers to use their Kindle book option. You pay a flat annual fee to Amazon and for each book that sells you are paid a royalty that is 45% of the list price. You get to set the list price and you do have to have an ISBN number which you can purchase as a publisher at the R. R. Bowker ISBN governing agency. The agency can be accessed online.

There are other self-publishing companies besides Amazon. Lightning Source, Xlibris, and Lulu Enterprises are just a few of the most popular self-publishing businesses.

# CONCLUSION

It is a great age to live in if you are an author and hope to publish a book. The world we live in today believes in opportunity, expanded distribution channels, innovation, and a belief that all writers have the potential to be successful. In addition, the growth in types of books has created wonderful opportunities for authors. For example, self-help and fitness books have not always been a popular selection but now they fill shelves in bookstores. All types of fiction and nonfiction books, from romance to coffee table picture books, are published.

Like writing, getting published takes effort. With the vast variety of books comes more competition. You have to get the attention of the right editor or publisher in order to get your book published. There is a logical process you can follow that can increase your chances of publishing success.

Of course, it all begins with the idea. The lonely writer plugging away at a book no one will get to read still exists, but you are probably a modern day writer who wants to sell as many copies of your book as possible. To accomplish this goal you can follow some guidelines that will greatly increase the odds of your written work being accepted by a publisher.

The process can seem somewhat complex which is why many authors choose to hire an agent. Before you even finishing writing your book you can begin searching for an experienced agent who can open doors into the publishing world for you. You also have the option of being your own agent if you prefer.

It is not difficult to locate agents after doing some research, but convincing the one you prefer to accept you as a client requires the development of an excellent book proposal. Writing a successful book proposal requires some creativity too. Send the agent a dull reading proposal and all you will get back is a rejection letter. You have to let your personality shine and the agent will become intrigued by the possibility of that personality coming through in the writing you submit.

Publishers usually have editors on staff that decides which books will be published. Your agent will contact the editors or the publishers that he or she knows, and that is how you get your foot in the door. If the editor agrees to read your proposal and likes what is read, you will be contacted for an interview.

Hopefully your interview will lead to a publishing contract. If it does there will be a lengthy process during which the printing and marketing plan is

developed. Your contract with the publisher will outline the responsibilities of each party and detail the payment plan.

As an author you will assume a major role in the marketing and promotion of your book. You will promote your book to friends and family and professional connections. It will be necessary to attend book signings, send out publicity packets, contact media, and do a number of other tasks. It is a safe bet that most authors enjoy this stage of the publishing process because it means more copies of the book will sell.

Some authors choose to publish their books online or in electronic form. E-publishing is faster and cheaper than print publishing. Companies like Amazon offer self-publishing opportunities such as uploading eBook versions and selling them as downloadable copies. Print on demand is another kind of self publishing business. Your book is laser printed from an electronic copy on paper and then bound. You can order as many copies as you want.

Many believe that eBooks and self-publishing are the future of book publishing. As concern over the use of natural resources and the skyrocketing costs of print publishing lead to fewer novice or first-time authors being able to publish through traditional channels, it is only natural they will find other ways to get their books into the hands of the public. Today's book readers still talk about the feel of the book page in their hands, but will the next age of young adults growing up with electronic objects in their hands feel the same way?

Probably not! And that is exactly why book publishing is slowly changing its production and distribution methods. But right now most books are still printed on paper. The fact is that the process of getting a book published holds something for every author whether he or she sells printed or electronic books. Getting a book published takes effort, dedication, patience, creativity and persistence.

If you want to get your book published, the time has never been better. There are major publishers, independent publishers, and self publishing companies looking for authors who have something to offer the reading public. Can you make a lot of money? Yes...you can! Are you guaranteed you will make a lot of money? No...you are not!

On the other hand, writing is a profession and an art. So you get satisfaction out of the process any way you look at it.