

Self-Publishing: Nine Easy Steps

(I've written my story, now what!)

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© August 2003

Why Self Publish?

- You Own Your Book Rights – As a self-publisher you own your rights and would have options to sell all, some, or none of your book rights. Traditional publishers as well as Print On Demand would own your rights and would also have the power to put your book out of print before you choose to do so.
- Types of Publishing – Commercial Publishing, Traditional Self-Publishing; Print On Demand for Independent Based Publishers, Print On Demand Fee Based. Some pointers on the pros and cons are discussed in detail (see Step #8).
- Traditional Self Publishing is more feasible today than it was 10 years ago. With advances in the internet, computer technology, digital printing, desktop software (e.g., Pagemaker, Quark X Press, etc.) anyone with an idea, or story can do it. It is the best alternative to Commercial Publishing. Although Print On Demand services have become popular, this option does not compare to the value and autonomy of traditional self publishing.
- Self-Publishing and Self-Promoting your own book can be a very rewarding experience. Whether your book becomes a bestseller or not, things will go wrong, and you should not get discouraged. Think of all the knowledge you will gain, the new friends, fellow authors, and contacts you will have acquired. Think of how empowered you will become by this experience.

Self Publishing Successes

- ***What Color is Your Parachute*** by Richard Nelson Bolles sold 4.3 million copies.
- ***The One-Minute Manager*** by Ken Blanchard and Spencer Johnson. The authors self-published this book for their seminars, and revised it based on feedback from seminar participants. After sales of 20,000 copies, they allowed a trade publishing company to turn the book into a bestseller. The book truly "launched" both their careers. Johnson's *Who Ate My Cheese* was on Publishers Weekly's bestseller list for more than 64 weeks in 2000 and 2001.
- ***The Elements of Style***, that timeless little book found on everyone's desk, was originally self-published by William Strunk, Jr. for his classes at Cornell University. It is a living example of "find a need and fill it."
- Bestselling Canadian author **Margaret Atwood** self-published her first volume of poetry ***Double Persephone*** in 1961, the year she graduated from college. The print run was only 200 copies. Atwood has gone on to become a bestselling novelist and short story writer.
- **Scott Adams**, creator of the *Dilbert* comic strip and book series, self-published an original ebook, ***God's Debris***, early in 2001 as a way of testing the market for a new book. As a result, he was able to get an "unusually good deal" from his regular publisher, Andrews McMeel, when he sold them the book rights.
- In 1998, **Arthur Agatston**, author of ***The South Beach Diet***, began by self-publishing several hundred pamphlets outlining his diet ideas for patients. Several years later, with the help of an agent, he sold rights to Rodale. Within a year, the book had sold almost seven million copies.
- **Julie Aigner-Clark** founded the Baby Einstein company to produce early-learning videos, DVDs, and audio CDs for babies and toddlers. Many of the products feature poems written by her. The company has won many awards for its products and has sold more than 8 million copies of its videos and other products. In November 2001, she and her husband sold the company to Disney for \$25 million.
- **Web Sites About Self-Publishing Successes** are as follows:
<http://www.aceguru.com/sp/spss.htm>; <http://www.communicationcreativity.com/guidesel.html> ;
<http://www.bookmarket.com/selfpublish.html>

Nine Easy Steps

1. Get Familiar with the Publishing Industry
2. Research, Reference, Read Books, Visit Web Sites
3. Take Care of Business
4. Registrations, ABI, Publication Date, and Barcode
5. Copy Editing Your Manuscript
6. Library of Congress
7. Book Design and Title
8. Traditional Self Publishing vs. Print On Demand
9. Market Planning, Promotion, and Networking

1. Get Familiar with The Industry

- American Booksellers Association (ABA) <http://www.bookweb.org>
- Publishers Marketing Association (PMA)
<http://www.pma-online.org>
- Small Press Magazine <http://www.smallpress.org>
- Visit bookstores and libraries. Notice the different book formats, covers, designs, pages, etc. If you find a book format of how you want your book to be like then you should purchase that book. Sometimes, book manufacturer information is included in the book (usually on the copyright page below the ISBN)

2. Research, Reference, Read Books, Visit Web Sites

- Set Up Same Login Information and Password for Web sites you register with. Most of professional trade market Web sites are free but require registration.
- Literary Market Place – Lists publishers, agents, trade services and international resources. <http://www.literarymarketplace.com>
- Books in Print (BIP) – Publishers add new titles to the BIP database and update existing titles online for fast inclusion on the booksinprint.com online database. To learn more visit <http://www.booksinprint.com>
- Small Press Magazine – Information addressing the needs of small and independent (self) publishers <http://www.smallpress.org>
- Mark Ortman's "Simple Guide to Self-Publishing" <http://www.nas.com/publish> and Dan Poynter's "Self-Publishing Manual" <http://www.parapublishing.com>
- Writer's Guild of America – Whether or not your work is a screenplay, WGA's Web site includes a thorough database of literary agents by location. <http://www.wga.org>. If your work happens to be a script or screenplay, WGA provides online screenplay, script, synopsis, outline or proposal registration for only \$10 for 10 years.
- Surf the Web using Google and Yahoo – use keywords "Self-Publishing," "On Demand Publishing," "R.R. Bowker," etc.

3. Take Care of Business

- Create a Company Name and Logo for your business and apply for a business license (e.g., Sole Proprietorship, Partnership or Corporation) Sole Proprietorship is recommended.
- You may want to consider using your own name if you are an expert in the industry. Visit the Small Business Administration for more information <http://www.sba.gov>
- Plan a budget and expect to spend in the range of several hundred to a few thousand dollars (and up) depending on book quality (e.g., # pages, hard vs. soft cover, etc.), subject matter, marketing strategy, trade industry association fees, conference exhibit space, hotel/travel, attending book conferences and trade shows, stationery, advertising, direct mail, postage expense, etc.

4. Registrations, ABI, Publication Date, Barcode

- International Standard Book Number (ISBN), the ten digit number on the back of every book, is what identifies the publisher and book title. For about \$300 you receive a set of 10 ISBN numbers. The remaining 9 ISBNs may be used in the future for revised editions or new books you publish. *The 10-digit ISBN format was developed by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and was published in 1970 as international standard ISO 2108. (However, the 9-digit SBN code was used in the United Kingdom until 1974.) Currently, the ISO's TC 46/SC 9 is responsible for the ISBN. The ISO on-line facility only refers back to 1978. Since 1 January 2007, ISBNs have contained 13 digits, a format that is compatible with Bookland EAN-13s.
**Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Standard_Book_Number*
- For information on the application process for ISBN go to <http://www.isbn.org/standards/home/isbn/us/application.asp>. For general ISBN information go to <http://www.isbn.org>
- Advance Book Information (ABI) Form is included with your ISBN from your computer printout listing. After you select your ISBN from the listing, determine your publication release date, and fill out the ABI form. Submitting this form lists your book in the "Books In Print (BIP) database free.
- Publication Date must be set way in advance and should be coordinated with your book manufacturer so that you receive advance printed copies of your book at least 2 months prior to publication date. This strategy will enable you to send out advance copies to the trades for reviews, announce your book, and optimize sales. It is crucial you establish a good relationship with your book printer and make sure your contract of sale specifies your publication date and shipping date of your books. Select a book distributor ASAP, and arrange to have your books shipped directly to your distributor and advance copies delivered to your home/office. For a listing of top book distributors, visit these sites: <http://www.bookmarket.com/distributors.html>; <http://www.literarymarketplace.com>; <http://www.bookweb.org>
- Barcodes, vertical lines on the back book cover, should be ordered right after you have your ISBN. Barcodes allow price scanners to identify your book by title, ISBN number and price. Contact Fotel, Inc. at <http://www.fotel.com/products>

5. Copy Editing Your Manuscript

- Copy Editing Your Manuscript. It is crucial that you hire an experienced copy editor to strengthen the message of your story, correct any inconsistencies, grammatical errors, etc. Before you send it out to a professional copywriter, have some friends proofread it.
- There are several Web sites that list copy editors but my recommendation would be to research and interview copy editors directly. You may want to visit the American Copy Editors Society Web site <http://www.copydesk.org/executivecommittee.htm> and see if any of the board members would be able to refer you to copy editors for you to contact.
- Other suggestions are to contact newspaper/magazine editors or writers. Some may be willing to edit or recommend a colleague.
- Another option is to find an university that offers creative writing courses. The school professor may be willing or may recommend a graduate student in exchange for acknowledgement in your book.
- When you hire a copy editor to edit your book, you are not required to acknowledge the hired editor's name in your book.

6. Library of Congress

- Library of Congress Copyright protection lasts your life plus 50 years. When you complete your manuscript, send yourself a notarized copy by registered mail, and place it unopened in storage (this is known as “poor man’s copyright” and validates proof of copyright year). When your book is “hot off the press” send the finished product to the LOC Registrar of Copyrights. Apply online by visiting the LOC Web site at <http://www.loc.gov> and following links for US Copyright Office.
- Library of Congress Cataloging - To sell your book to the library market you need to apply for a pre-assigned card catalog number and print this number on the copyright page of your book. There is no fee for this but your book must be over a certain amount of pages. To apply for this go to <http://cip.loc.gov>

7. Book Design and Title

- Book Cover Design and Title – Eye-catching book covers are usually what sell the book. It is well worth hiring a graphic artist with book design experience. Equally important is the book title – think of a creative, brief book title. For a database listing with contact information of graphic artists visit <http://www.literarymarketplace.com> and <http://www.bookmarket.com>
- The Book Spine is the first thing a customer will see on the bookstore shelf. Make sure the title of the book, author and publisher names and logo are displayed on the book spine.
- The Back Cover should include an interesting and informative blurb about the book.
- Research several books at the bookstores before making final book design decisions.
- Back Cover Testimonials would be great if you could get them. Try to ask experts or celebrities on your subject to review your manuscript and get permission in writing to print their comments on your book cover.

8. Traditional Self-Publishing vs. Print On Demand Services

- Traditional Self-Publishing – Remember to choose your book manufacturer and book distributor at the time you have set your publication release date (see step 4). Traditional self publishers have all decision-making control, own their book rights (unlike commercial publishing), and negotiate with vendors and book manufacturer. For information on finding a book manufacturer/printer visit the following Web sites: Literary Market Place at <http://www.literarymarketplace.com> (service is free but registration is required); <http://www.bookmarket.com/101print.html> Or visit the library. Remember to order ample advance book copies for you to use for announcement and promotional purposes. Make sure to stamp advance books “Review/Promotion Copy” on the inside book cover.
- A Web site that discusses the pros and alarming cons of Print On Demand (POD) publishing is located at <http://www.sfw.org/beware/printondemand.html>. POD publishing has become widely perceived in the industry as “vanity publishers.” I would recommend that you research the link above and learn as much as possible about the risks of using Print On Demand publishing (also known as On Demand Publishing).
- Two Types Print On Demand Publishing Services - Fee Based and Independent Based services. Prospective POD customers are tempted to go the POD route because there are no large cash outlays or large print runs, thus no need for warehousing your books. However, if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. There is a much higher unit cost to print the books, and this yields a much lower per-book profit for the author. The author has no control, no ownership of rights at all (or for a specified time, e.g., 3 years), etc. The author would also have no say should the POD choose to have your book out of print The author signs a contract and there are usually hidden fees not in the best interest of the author. POD lacks credibility in the industry.
- Print On Demand Fee Based Services -Xlibris and iUniverse are two of the largest POD Fee Based services.
- Print On Demand Independent Based Publishers - Enables the author more control (e.g., own most of rights, etc.) than “Fee Based” option, but are several drawbacks, including increased printing cost when reprinting.

9. Market Planning, Promotions and Networking

- Create a Marketing Plan and focus on your target market.
- Include A Press Release when sending out promotion/announcement copies of your soon to be published book. Hire a publicist or do your own publicity, and network wherever you go.
- Target Market Mailing Lists enable you to mail to specific freelance book reviewers, newspaper/magazine book reviewers, etc. Lists may be ordered from various Web sites: <http://www.bookweb.org>; www.literarymarketplace.com; www.parapublishing.com
- When Sending in your Request for Review, remember to include a press release with your book along with your reply email, phone, etc., (may also need to include a SASE)
- Announce Your Book at least one to two months before the release publish date. A popular book title listing database company is <http://www.dustbooks.com>. Include press release and other information to the respective book listing companies along with your promotional copy of your book. Major directories list book titles free of charge, Some Web sites to visit: <http://www.literarymarketplace.com>; 1001 Ways to Market Your Book_Web site at <http://www.bookmarket.com/1001ways.html>. These sites include several other book title listing companies for you to send your book announcement kit to.
- Promote Your Book by brochures, flyers, postcards, book signings at bookstores, libraries, events., etc, readings and lectures. Write an article. Mention your book in your bio. Network, attend book trade shows and conventions, local book fairs, use premiums and incentives, enter book in contests, media such as radio interviews, talk shows, radio, newspapers, magazines, TV, advertising, classifieds, coop mailings, direct mail, online sales (e.g., amazon.com, own book Web site, etc.

Self-Publishing: Nine Easy Steps Checklist

1 Get Familiar with Publishing Industry	Notes/Comments	5 Copy Editing Your Manuscript	Notes/Comments
http://www.bookweb.org		http://copydesk.org/executivecommittee.htm	
http://www.pma-online.org		Contact loc newspaper/magazine editors/writers	
http://www.smallpress.org		Contact University professors in creative writing, etc.	
Visit bookstores and libraries			
		6 Library of Congress	
2 Research, Reference, Read Books, Visit Web Sites		http://www.loc.gov	
Set Up same login name and password		http://cip.loc.gov	
http://www.literarymarketplace.com			
http://www.booksinprint.com		7 Book Design and Title	
http://www.smallpress.org		http://literarymarketplace.com	
http://www.nas.com/publish		http://bookmarket.com	
http://www.parapublishing.com		Back cover blurb, Request Testimonials	
http://www.wga.org			
Keyword search, "Self-Publishing"		8 Traditional Self Publishing	
		Send final book to your book manufacturer	
3 Take Care of Business		Set delivery date at least 2 months before pub date	
Company name/Logo		Order ample advance copies sent to your home/office	
http://www.sba.gov			
Budget for association fees, conferences, etc.		9 Market Planning, Promotion, Networking	
		Prepare labels for shipping advance copy books	
4 Registrations, ABI, Publication Date, Barcode		attend conferences, trade shows	
http://www.isbn.org/standards/home/isbn/us/application.asp		announce book http://www.dustbooks.com	
http://www.isbn.org		mailing lists http://www.bookweb.org	
Book Manufacturer, Distributor, Pub Date, Shipping Date		http://www.literarymarketplace.com	
http://www.bookmarket.com/distributors.html		http://www.bookmarket.com/1001ways.html	
http://www.literarymarketplace.com		brochures, flyers, postcards	
http://www.bookweb.org		bookstore signins	
Mail ABI form include pub date		library readings	
Barcodes		Radio, newspapers, magazines, TV, advertising	
http://www.fotel.com/products		online sales, i.e., www.amazon.com	
		Have your own book Web site	