

# Marketing Your Book

The Self-Publisher's Manual

Watermark Press

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Owing Mills, Maryland

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# **PART I. SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT**

## **Understanding Self-Publishing**

To truly understand what self-publishing is to truly understand the role of the self-published author. To begin with, a book publisher is simply the person or company who is responsible for publishing a book. Period. This translates into the person or company who has paid for the book's publication and stands to make a profit. This profit will not only be enough to cover the cost of publication, but will also be used to keep the publisher "in the black", i.e., making a profit.

Congratulations! As a self-publisher, you have resumed the role of publisher or putting your own money towards the publication of your book. Period. It's that simple. It's no more than the businessman or woman, who takes his or her own money and invests in his or her own company. These individuals would rather start their own company rather than work for someone else. Because the publisher is the one paying for publication, it can just as easily be your money paying for the publication as a New York publishing company.

## **Other Forms of Publishing**

With other forms of publishing, why would anyone want to choose self-publishing? The three major forms of book publication are traditional, subsidy, and self-publication. As with traditional, you may have experienced a few of those "rejection slips" making it very difficult for an unknown author to break into print. The traditional publisher contracts with the author, assumes all of the marketing and advertising costs, then pays the author usually an eight to ten percent royalty on the net return of the book. All of this may seem very glamorous, but the author usually has very little input into the design, editing, or marketing of the book.

Then there are the subsidy publishers. These are the publishers, who promise to not only publish your book, but also promote and advertise it—at your cost. You, the author, will not only pay for the publication of the book, but also the promotion, and advertising too. This may seem like a way to save a lot of time, but in the business world time *is* money.

Because the subsidy publisher really has no investment to gain or loose in the book, the advertisement usually isn't anything that you the author could not have done. You could also have marketed it and promoted it less expensively as well. This cost and the reputations of some of these unscrupulous operations, no doubt has lead you to self-publishing. This is why you are now reading this guide.

## PART II. CREATING DEMAND

Again, congratulations! You are a successful self-publisher! You are the proud author of a book, the same kind of book that you could find in any bookstore or library. Take a few minutes to relish that! Few people can admit to such an accomplishment.

Novelist, Richard Bach, (*Out of My Mind* and *The Bridge Across Forever*) once said, “A professional writer is an amateur who didn’t quit.” You have demonstrated that same persistence by not only authoring your own book, but also taking on many of the other responsibilities that go with self-publishing. Even a self-published author may go on to become a well-respected, professional writer. The poet, Robert Frost, was a successful self-publisher as were many others.

Self-publishers, truly are entrepreneurs as well as authors. No doubt you have had to select your own choice of book publishers (Watermark Press) then work with the publisher on selecting the book cover, illustrations, and typestyles to name a few options. Now as a result of all of these decisions and the time it took to write your book, you now possess a book ready to be read and enjoyed by others. As George Bernard Shaw once said, “What is the purpose in writing, but to publish?”

You will probably want to begin where most authors, entrepreneurs, or for that matter any good sales person begins is with your friends and family. These are people that you know and can easily begin talking to about your latest obsession—your newly published book! One word of caution, choose your friends wisely. Especially when it pertains to your book. Just because they are your friends and family, doesn’t mean that they should get it for free.

Give them a discount or charge them full price. If you do give it to them for free, please autograph it and try to choose the friends and family members that are the most enthusiastic. Pardon the expression, but the ones with the “biggest mouths” are the ones that you will want to target. These “sales people” are part of your marketing plan and are doing exactly what you want them to do—sell your book. They are going to brag from one side of the town to the other. They will have everyone they come in contact with wanting to buy your book. For the rest of the planet’s population, there is this marketing plan. This guide is going to help you.

The best way to sell any book, especially poetry, is to tie it into something or *someone* in whom the reading public can relate. One of the first things to do is to get local publicity via local radio stations and newspapers with book reviews and news releases. This could also be accentuated with a direct mailing to your targeted market. Why local publicity? These people will probably know you or a relative of yours. Remember the “big mouths” with the free book? It is an easy promotion campaign, and doesn’t require a big budget. Many of the small, local newspapers will do an interview and photo shoot for free. They love to hear about people like you in the community, who are making any kind of

difference. It only requires a commitment from you to get organized, create a timeline for marketing, and stay within the timeline through a great deal of networking and follow-up.

Start locally—but don't stop there! Go for national or even international markets! Try to get reviewed in as many publishing venues as possible: newspapers, magazines, newsletters, TV, radio, and don't overlook the Internet. Choose publications carefully, just as you did your friends and relatives. The publications will review your book only if it relates to the interests of their readers. Go to the reference section of your local library for one of the most important books for writers, sometimes referred to as the "literary bible", The Literary Marketplace.

It lists every major publisher, publicity outlet and supplier. Here is where you begin your contact list. This list of names and addresses of local book reviewers is your beginning point. You will be amazed at how many outlets there are for getting free publicity: local newsletters, underground newspapers, weekly shopper newspapers, local TV and radio talk shows, book clubs, libraries, alumni or church groups, and more. Also, your librarian may know of additional publications that may increase your knowledge of publicity. Please don't overlook the Internet or the World Wide Web. You should be able to type in the words "book reviews" and "advertising" into any given search engine.

### **Your Sales Kit**

In order to be reviewed locally or nationally, you will need to create a sales kit complete with a timeline for accomplishing these goals. Included in the sales kit is a cover letter, query letter, synopsis or outline, a news release, samples of local reviews, and a response card.

The good news is that the organizations you'll be sending a news release to are eager to hear from you. The better news is a good news release is a lot less expensive than advertising. A good news release can get a good interview via newspaper, newsletters, radio, or sometimes even television. It makes sense that the more people who hear or read about your book, the more people will buy it. Anthony Robbins, a well-known motivational speaker, says that most consumers will need to hear about your book about eight to ten times before buying it.

Follow the format of the sample below: "NEWS RELEASE" should be typed at the top of watermarked business paper. Also at the top type "FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE" followed by your name and telephone number. It is up to you as to whether or not you would be comfortable giving out your work telephone number versus your home telephone number. Use standard block paragraphs with double spacing in between paragraphs.

Try to tie the book into something or someone in the news. Develop an interesting angle. Play the local angle to the local media. You will probably have to revise it as you venture out into the national and international media. Relay the high points that your local reading audience would find of interest.