

# Break into Publishing

*What It Takes to  
Write, Produce, and  
Market Your Book*



TRADE  
PRESS  
SERVICES

*Marketing Communications Strategists*



# Contents

Executive Summary .....	1
Recent History of Publishing.....	2
Questions Every Author Needs to Answer.....	3
Exploring Publishing Options .....	4
Which Publishing Option Is Best for You? .....	6
Step-by-Step Process .....	9
Marketing Your Book .....	13
Marketing Mistakes Authors Make and How to Avoid Them.....	14
Author Beware .....	15
Know the Facts.....	16

# Executive Summary

Writing a book takes a monumental investment of time, energy, and resources. For many, the dream of finishing a manuscript and getting it published can seem out of reach. Still, millions of aspiring authors strive to embark on a literary journey at some point in their lives. Whether you have a compelling story to tell, a unique perspective to share, or a passion you want to explore, writing a book can be a transformative experience in self-expression, creativity, and personal and professional growth. While the process is unique to each author, the path to success requires careful planning and execution. Authors can transform their dreams into reality by focusing on strategy, writing, editing, production, and marketing.

Book publishing is a multifaceted industry with several key players—authors, literary agents, publishers, editors, distributors, booksellers, and libraries. In 2021, 2.3 million new books were self-published in the United States, an increase of more than 93 percent within the past five years and covering over 57 percent of total new books published. [More than four million books](#)—both self-published and commercially published—were produced in the United States in 2022.

There are multiple benefits to being a published author, and the advantages vary depending on each author's goals. In some cases, a successful book publication brings monetary rewards that can be used to continue to build an author's brand or business. Revenue, however, is

not the only benefit. A published book enables authors to be seen as thought leaders in their fields, which can help grow their client base, expand their social media following, and create greater awareness of their products and/or brands through multiple media outlets. These outlets range from traditional mainstream media publications and on-air shows to being invited to speak as an expert on industry podcasts, at social media events and conferences, and even doing TED Talks.

*Book publishing is a multifaceted industry with several key players – authors, literary agents, publishers, editors, distributors, booksellers, and libraries.*





## Recent History of Book Publishing

Not so long ago, large publishing houses controlled which authors were published. Known as the “Big Six” traditional publishers, they monopolized the publishing arena. The original Big Six were Hachette, Macmillan, Simon & Schuster, HarperCollins, Penguin, and Random House.

In 2013, to counteract the influence of Amazon’s book sales, Penguin and Random House merged. In 2022, Penguin Random House sought a \$2.2 billion merger with Simon & Schuster, arguing that it would make book publishing more competitive and help both authors and readers. A U.S. Federal Court, however, [blocked the proposed merger](#) following a lawsuit brought by the Department of Justice, which argued the opposite effect, saying it would, in fact, lessen competition, and the court concurred.

Traditional publishing is no longer the only option authors have to publish their books. Self-publishing has become more accessible due to an increase in digital platforms, making it easy for authors to publish their

books independently. Along with a rise in various book formats, the tide has also turned when it comes to readers willing to accept self-published or hybrid-published books.

“Readers seem not to care so much about how a book reaches them as they do about the experience of reading it,” says [Jennie Nash](#), author, book coach and founder and CEO of [Author Accelerator](#), a training program for book coaches. “There are a lot of paths to publishing and writers need to carefully weigh their goals, their resources, and their options.” For an untested, new author, getting past the traditional publishing gatekeepers is an enormous hurdle. Now, the growth of the self-publishing industry has empowered budding authors with the opportunity to publish their manuscripts. Whether authors partner with a traditional publisher, take the self-publishing route, or even use a hybrid model, a published book can position them as an expert, potentially solidify their brand in the marketplace, and establish a unique competitive advantage.



# Questions Every Author Needs to Answer

**B**efore writing a single word, ask yourself two questions, “Why do I want to write a book?” and “What risks am I willing to take?”

## 1. Why am I writing this book?

Authors need to be clear about the answer to this question. It takes an internal focus and awareness of what motivates you. Some possibilities include the desire to increase visibility, credibility, and name recognition in your field. Or, perhaps it's more about wanting a book to facilitate entrance into the speaker's marketplace. Another possibility is the author's desire to use the book to sell products or services. What about wanting to leave a legacy? Writing a book could be an exercise in pulling together one's experiences, expertise, and intellectual property into a single source of information.

## 2. What am I willing and able to risk? Monetary and time

investments are significant hurdles to book publishing. With the emergence and maturity of self-publishing options, the cost is better managed but is still an obstacle. To eliminate expensive mistakes or unrealistic timelines, know what's involved in terms of resources: time, money, and personnel. With this foundation in place, it's easier to create a strategy that includes a realistic production schedule and budget combined with a clear understanding of the desired outcome.

Using the answers to these questions, potential authors can tap into the information in this white paper to examine the strategies and tactics required to publish a book, evaluate the different types of available publishing avenues, identify the best approaches, and learn how to avoid costly mistakes.



*Before writing a single word, ask yourself two questions, “Why do I want to write a book?” and “What kinds of risks am I willing to take?”*

# Exploring Publishing Options

Despite the real difficulties that exist in a market that now allows anyone to publish, those who are willing to persevere and take their publishing goals seriously have multiple options to achieve those goals: traditional publishing, self-publishing, or hybrid publishing.

- 1. Traditional publishing.** Traditional publishing is divided into three categories: big-five publishers, mid-size and large publishers, and small press. Although the incentives of traditional publishing are similar across the board, the distribution power, client preference, and advance-to-royalty ratio can be visualized as an inverse triangle, with big-five publishers residing at the top.
- 2. Self-publishing.** Self-publishing has gained in popularity due to the



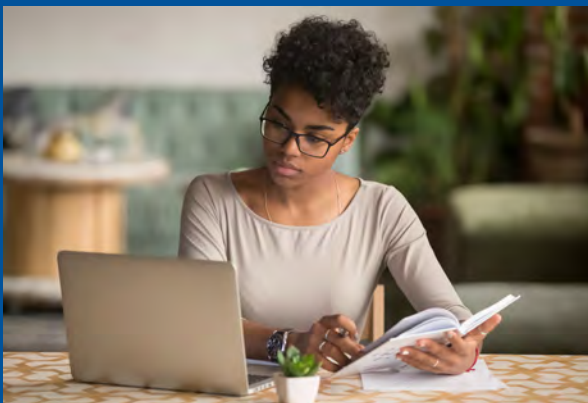
## Three Different Approaches to Publishing

	TRADITIONAL	SELF-PUBLISHING	HYBRID
<b>UPFRONT COSTS</b>	Zero though authors may choose to invest in a literary agent	Moderate to high	Moderate to high
<b>CONTROL</b>	Low	Total	Moderate
<b>SPEED</b>	Slow	Self-determined	Variable
<b>AUTHOR ADVANCES</b>	Negotiable	None	Negotiable
<b>ROYALTIES</b>	Negotiable	Based on net sales	Negotiable
<b>DISTRIBUTION</b>	Extensive	Varies	Moderate to extensive
<b>MARKETING</b>	Publisher	Author	Publisher and author
<b>HOW BOOKS ARE SOLD</b>	Retail and online, typically through a distributor	Online if author pays for retail listings	Seldom retail, mostly online
<b>AUTHOR REQUIREMENTS</b>	Celebrity-status or accomplished writers, authors with large platforms, newer writers with mainstream appeal	Any writer can be a self-published author	Higher quality publishers are more selective of authors

accessibility of digital publishing platforms, like Amazon Kindle Direct Publishing, increased creative control, guarantee of being published, global reach, and 100 percent profit margin potential. The reason for this profit margin is true self-publishing does not include support in the form of editing, marketing, design, or distribution. It is the author's responsibility to fund the necessary publishing components, including editing, design, formatting, marketing, and distribution. Fulfilling these functions depends on the specific needs of the author. Questions to consider include: Will you seek out an agent? Will you hire a firm or an independent contractor to edit and format your book, as well as design your book's cover? Self-published authors must also choose their distribution channel. Will the author print on demand? Will the author partner with an e-book retailer? Will the author invest in carrying inventory and seek placement in a brick-and-mortar store? Will a percentage of sales obligation be a factor? Some authors brave the entire publishing

process themselves. In most cases, however, authors incur additional costs by outsourcing some or all of the publishing functions and partnering with a distributor.

**3. Hybrid publishing.** Hybrid publishing refers to publishers who assist with many functions of the publishing process, typically in exchange for the author funding the project. Also known as author-assisted publishing, partnership publishing, co-publishing, or independent publishing, this option is a middle ground between traditional and self-publishing. Creative control, royalty negotiations and close collaboration, however, are dramatically increased versus traditional publishing, and the need to seek out support services is (in theory) eliminated. Among the companies that are highly successful hybrid publishers are Greenleaf Book Group, Amplify Publishing, She Writes Press and SparkPress. Some of these companies have multiple clients who have [won major independent publishing awards.](#)



## Publishing Considerations

- Time
- Financial Resources
- Personal Commitment
- Graphic Skills
- Social Media Knowledge
- Marketing Expertise
- Distribution
- Content Control

# Which Publishing Option Is Best for You?

While prospective authors have many options available, there are some important questions authors should ponder before deciding which publishing route or routes to take:

- 1. Do you have adequate time to devote to writing, publishing, and marketing your book?** Every writer works at a different pace, but the average time to write a book ranges from four months to a year or more. Additional time is required for editing, design, and production. Once the book is published, it will be necessary to promote it to target audiences, requiring an additional investment of time and marketing skill.
- 2. Are you able to make a financial commitment to hire a writer, invest in publishing, and fund post-production marketing?** Low-end estimates say it costs authors [between \\$500 and \\$5,000 to publish a basic book](#). Of course, the cost depends on the services you require, such as editing, cover design, formatting, and marketing. From Reedsy's 2022-2023 data, average prices range up to \$2,000 for an editor and \$750 for a cover designer. Most will pay far more for professional quality writing, editing, proofreading, and marketing services—likely in the range of \$30,000 to \$60,000.
- 3. Do you have graphic capabilities or access to a graphic designer?** In addition to an eye-catching cover, graphic designers help create page designs, illustrations, charts, and other graphics that enhance a book.



- 4. Is artistic control important to you?** Self-published authors retain full creative control over their books' content, design, and promotion. But with full creative control comes a great deal of responsibility and required skills.
- 5. Do you know how to use social media?** In today's digital marketplace, a social media presence is essential to give a book visibility.
- 6. Do you have a way to market yourself to stand out from the crowd?** With as many as one million books published each year, it's essential to get noticed by readers, librarians, journalists, podcast hosts, professional groups, and other stakeholder audiences.
- 7. Are you willing to hire a developmental editor, engage Beta readers, and/or join writer communities?** While writing can be a solitary experience, books are not produced in a vacuum.



The more feedback an author obtains during the writing process, the better the final product. Jeff Lehman, co-author of *Running Out of Time: Wildfires and Our Imperiled Forests*, advises authors to “get professional editing help and engage them early in the process.”

- 8. Do you want to publish your book sooner rather than later?** While self-publishing may be considered the fast track, traditional publishers provide the structure and support that may make the project shorter in the long run.
- 9. Is it important for your book to be widely distributed?** If fame and royalties are not your primary objectives, wide distribution may not be a priority. Some authors (such as professional speakers)

already have a captive audience of potential buyers.

- 10. Is prestige important to you?** The internet has made anyone with a keyboard a self-proclaimed writer. Meanwhile, published book authors, especially those who work with large publishers, can garner a higher level of respect.
- 11. Are you seeking critical reviews or literary awards?** Self-published books are rarely chosen for critical reviews, given the overwhelming number of self-published books available. While self-published books are typically not eligible for literary awards, there are smaller contests that may specialize in the self-published category.
- 12. Are royalties or an advance an important factor?** Authors



pursuing a self-published track should be prepared to make a significant financial investment in writing, editing, designing, and publishing their book. That said, the percentage of royalties is much higher than through a traditional publisher. While a big-brand publisher may offer an advance to authors, especially if the author is highly regarded, back-end royalties may be lower.

**13. Are you willing to wait 12-18 months for your book to be published?** Traditional publishers have a fine-tuned process authors are expected to adhere to when writing their books. That said, once the manuscript is submitted, it can take up to or more than a year to see the book hit the shelves. On the other hand, self-publishing puts the author in full control of the timeline.

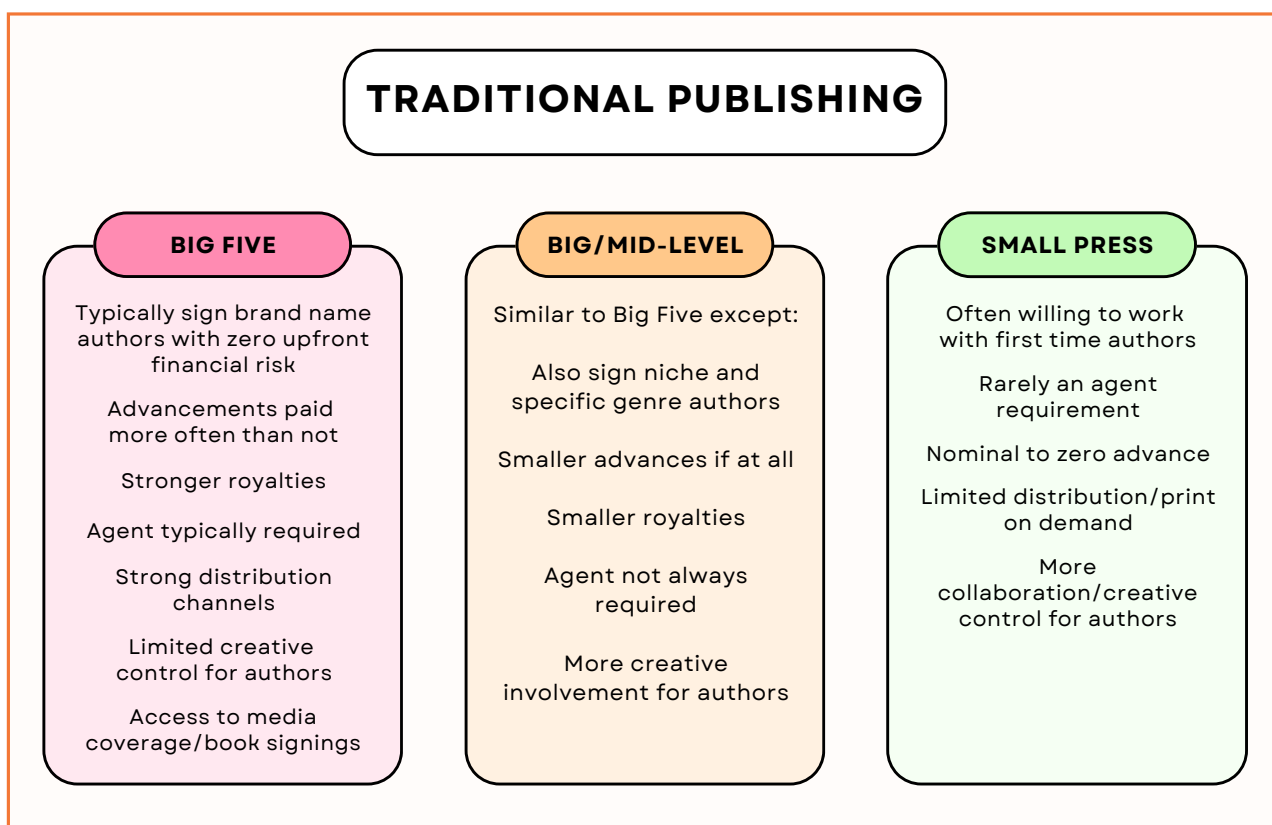
**14. Are you willing to take the time to seek out and find representation through an**

**agent?** Traditional publishers rarely respond to author submissions. As such, it is often important to retain the services of a specialized literary agent. Bear in mind that an agent is one more expense to consider.

**15. Can you handle a lot of rejection?** Authors who seek a traditional publisher should expect to be rejected—a lot. Publishers receive thousands of unsolicited manuscripts each year, and it is estimated that between only [one to two percent](#) of these submissions make it to bookshelves.

If you answered yes to most questions 1-8, you might want to consider self-publishing or hybrid publishing. If your yes answers are mostly to questions 9-15, you might want to consider traditional publishing.

The following table summarizes the key points of the three different approaches to publishing:



# Step-by-Step Process



**W**hile skill and creativity are important in writing a book, there is a science to figuring out the best way forward once you've decided publishing a book is the way to achieve your personal and/or professional goals. These can be broken down into the following steps:

**1. Determine the publishing route.** Are you interested in going the traditional route or a self-published or hybrid route? If you decide that traditional publishing is the way forward for you and if you're writing a non-fiction book, you'll need to put together a book proposal. Your proposal should include a clear hook stating what the concept of your book is about, why only you can write it, why it's relevant right now, who your target audience is, and why your book will appeal to them. Include a breakdown of chapter headlines and craft a compelling title even though a publisher may later change it.

Then submit your proposal to professional agents to see if they are interested in representing you. Unlike with fiction, you are not expected to have a completed manuscript, so you can start submitting it to agents once you feel you have a

solid proposal. Seek out agents by looking at book titles that are in your particular genre, as many authors thank their agents in their acknowledgments. You can also conduct an internet search for agents that represent your particular genre. To be attractive to agents, it helps to include any relevant experience you have in your industry, whether you've won awards, spoken at events, written articles, or have a strong social media following.

Finally, consider that a traditionally published book can take anywhere from 18 months to two years to be published. If you don't wish to wait that long, then a hybrid or self-publishing route may be a better option.

With self-publishing, even though you're competing in a huge pool, you do have 100 percent control over your product and publishing time and keep all your royalties. There also are myriad self-publishing options to choose from. It's still important to produce a good product that stands the best chance of selling.

**2. Assess the competition.** At the forefront of any industry are thought leaders who possess significant knowledge and current relevance. If you plan to write and publish a nonfiction book, it is imperative to scan the existing competition carefully to see what's already been written. With the advancement of digital publishing, exploring trending authors and publications is a click away. Not to be overlooked, however, are brick-and-mortar bookstores. Perusing the section of the store in which

you hope to be featured one day will offer insight into product placement and inspiration into where your completed book lies in the mix of existing published works. If a section of a bookstore is devoid of your topic, the demand may be high and the competition less daunting. Alternatively, if your proposed topic has been well represented, even duplicated, this may signal the need to refine and customize the topic.

It's also worth considering whether a book is the correct format to reach your target audience. Would options like blogs, white papers, or publishing articles in business-to-business publications be more suitable? What are the cost and time efficiencies related to each option? Is there a specific industry trend that supports the need for a book on your particular topic?

- 3. Identify resources, such as a ghostwriter, editor, budget, and timeline.** Do you feel confident about writing your book yourself? You may have excellent skills and credentials in your field and the ability to transmit ideas, but writing may not be your forte. That doesn't mean you should be deterred from publishing a book. There are excellent ghostwriters who can assist. Another option is hiring a book coach to help you craft your story or a developmental editor to help flesh out your ideas. If you have strong writing skills but not excellent grammar skills, a copyeditor can also help you.

Be sure to consider your budgetary constraints, whether you're publishing traditionally or on your own. All books should be reviewed by a good editor or even a beta reader. Just as there are a variety of options, prices vary for editors and ghostwriters. The adage "you get what you pay for" is certainly true, but you need to determine if

*It's also worth considering whether a book is the correct format to reach your target audience.*



you have thousands or hundreds to spend on assistance to make your book the best it can possibly be. A search of editors or ghostwriters will bring up many options, and many are transparent on their websites regarding their costs and availability. Some are booked months in advance, which is why it's important to know your ideal publishing timeline.

- 4. Preparation and writing.** This step includes creating a title that will sell, conducting research, "putting pen to paper," and editing your book. It's important to do your due diligence. Spend time in bookstores and online outlets and look closely at titles in your genre. It helps to have both a headline and a subhead that will appeal to readers. Ensure that your theme and message are clear and compelling in your title. While it may be fun to go cryptic, remember you want prospective readers to see your title and say, "Yes, I understand what this book is about and it's exactly what I need and want to read."

Don't simply rely on your expertise. Seek out the latest research and information on your topic and cite your sources. Take the time to



make sure that your knowledge is current and represents cutting-edge information in your field.

Author Jeff Lehman cited some challenges to writing a book, especially a non-fiction book. One challenge is “finding the right people to interview and understanding their point-of-view.” Also, “researching data and ensuring the facts were timely and sourced properly is critical, as well as attaining copyrights for the charts, graphs, photographs, etc.”

Once you have your ideas in place, it's time to write. Here are some suggestions from professional writers.

- **Establish a writing space.** If you are going to write a great book, you will need a place to write. Select or create an area that is quiet and free of distractions. Whether it's a home office, your couch, a library, or an out-of-the-way coffee shop, your work environment should allow you to focus, uninterrupted, for hours at a time.
- **Outline your story.** Professional writers spend plenty of time crafting a table of contents and creating outlines before beginning the writing process. Outlines can be detailed chapter outlines or simple summaries that describe each section of the book. This process creates a visual map of your book's direction. “If you are a first-time author, start by creating bullet points of what you want to cover, and then begin to embellish them,” said Dr. Erica Miller, a best-selling author whose first book was *The Dr. Erica Miller Story: From Trauma to Triumph*, the no-holds-barred story of her experience as a child in a Nazi holding camp. “Even if you are an expert, you might not be a seasoned writer. Seek professionals who are experienced. With my first book, I reached out to a colleague who sat

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*–Jeff Lehman*

with me once a week for six months. She recorded our sessions and then produced a working manuscript that I edited. I think this process helped me from getting overwhelmed.”

- **Start writing and stick to a routine.** Research, outlining, and idea development are all critical steps to writing your first book, but there may come a time when preparation becomes procrastination. At a certain point, it's time to begin writing your rough draft. This requires committing to consistent routines and productive writing habits. “Create a sacred schedule to which you will commit to fully,” advised Neil Goldman, author of *The Escalator Effect—A Business Fable: Four Essential Tips to Lead and Inspire Your Organization to Rising Success*. “You have to make writing a priority.”

Here are simple steps you can take to maximize your chance for success.

- Set daily word count targets to keep you on track.
- Schedule dedicated writing time and put it in your calendar.
- Ask a friend or fellow writer to hold you accountable by sending them updates on how much

you've written that day.

- Take breaks and don't give up.

- **Finish your first draft.** As you write your first draft, you'll encounter self-doubt, lack of motivation, and writer's block. That's normal. Try returning to your outline or research for inspiration whenever you feel stuck. Manage your expectations as well. Your first book will likely not be a generational masterpiece or a New York Times bestselling book, and that's okay. If you compare yourself to literary greats, you're doing your work a disservice. All you can do is keep writing until you reach your end goal.
- **Revise and edit.** Every good book goes through many rounds of revisions. After you have reviewed your first draft, ask a friend or professional editor to help. Either way, you need to have an honest, ruthless eye on your writing to know what needs expansion, elimination, or re-working. Look for sentences that [rely on cliché tropes](#) or overly common descriptors. If you're writing fiction, try to determine where there are character inconsistencies, holes in the plot, or leaps of logic. Develop a system to keep track of your edits.
- **Create your second draft.** The second draft is your opportunity to apply your revisions and edits. It's also a chance to consider larger, overarching questions that can only be answered after you complete your first draft. Does your book have a consistent tone? Is there an overarching theme that can be developed and strengthened? Are there weak parts of the book that can be cut entirely? The second draft is also a chance to address more granular questions. Does the book have a strong opening hook? Does it have a natural flow? What sections do I need to elaborate on? Does it have an impactful conclusion?
- **Prepare your marketing pitch.** Once your manuscript is complete,

summarize your book in one sentence (your elevator pitch). Then, write a one-paragraph "blurb" that will appear on the back of the book. Look at write-ups on other books in your genre to see how they get their point across to the reader succinctly.

- 5. Design the content for the front and back covers, the internal formatting and other book elements.** If you are not skilled in this area and you are self-publishing, you may want to hire someone to design and format your book. Cover designers also run the gamut in price and capabilities, so be sure to cast your net wide. On the other hand, if you have some design skills, several tools, such as Canva, can help you design your own covers.

Many of the formats used by online self-publishing companies use templates to follow for their book layouts. You can also use writing programs, such as Scrivener, that format the layout in a variety of ways for different types of publications. Of course, if formatting is daunting or time-consuming for you, you can hire people to do this for you.

- 6. Publish.** Remember, there are a variety of options for self-publishing. New players come into the market regularly. Amazon, Kindle Direct Publishing (KDP), Kobo, Barnes and Noble, Apple, Reedsy, IngramSpark, and many others have step-by-step options that allow you to upload your books online. It's important to research which option works best for you. While Kindle publishing may seem like the best choice, remember it's a vast market, and you'll be competing with a sea of titles. If that's your chosen route, find a way to stand out in your genre with a great title, catchy cover design, and social media marketing to promote your book and garner attention and reviews.

# Marketing Your Book

It's an undeniable fact: if you want to become a known and successful book author, you need to be willing to market your own book. That means connecting with the readers who are likely to buy your work. In the end, it doesn't matter if you've written a book that no one knows about. So, writing, publishing, and marketing go hand-in-hand. Marketing can't be an afterthought—it needs to be part and parcel of your initial process, whether you are seeking a book agent, a publisher, or are publishing the book yourself.

If you have followed the steps outlined in the previous section, you will understand your product, your competition, where your book belongs in the market, and who your target audience is. Armed with that information, you'll be able to develop a marketing plan that will grow an audience, sell books, and build a lasting publishing career.

When identifying tactics to promote your book here are some options to consider:

- **Build an author-focused website.**

This will serve as a central source for your books, social media accounts, blog, event calendar, and mailing list. Keep the design engaging and easy to navigate and be sure to update it regularly.

- **Start a blog or newsletter.** Once your website is in place, create a newsletter or blog to promote your work and ideas. Be sure your website includes a place for visitors to sign up for your mailing list so you can send them updates on the release of your new book.

- **Establish a social media presence.** Create accounts on relevant social media platforms

including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter/X, and LinkedIn. Connect with friends, family, colleagues, other authors, and those with similar interests. Follow, like, and comment on these people's posts and connect with your target audiences well before you publish your book. The goal is to have a strong following in place when your book launches so your connections can help promote your book when the time comes.

- **Solicit reviews from your networks.** Before your book is released, send advance reader copies to people in your network. Once your book is released, ask early readers to post reviews on Amazon, Barnes and Noble, or other online retailers.
- **Alert the media.** [Press releases](#) are a powerful medium for announcing your new book, generating interviews, and developing relationships with journalists.
- **Try new things.** There are myriad ways to gain visibility for your book. The most important thing about marketing is to stay flexible and keep an open mind. Experiment with different tactics, expand upon what works, and move on from what doesn't.

As Nash notes, "People trying to break into the industry don't want to hear this, but authors bear the burden for marketing; no one else is going to do it for them." The most successful authors continually market themselves and their books. Success drives further success, but only if you work at it. Fortunately, professional marketers can help authors develop and execute a marketing plan that sells books and builds audiences of loyal readers.

# Marketing Mistakes Authors Make and How to Avoid Them

Whichever route you choose for publishing your book, establishing a comprehensive and effective marketing plan can be labor intensive and often reduces or prevents costly mistakes for authors. Ironically, many of them result from attempting to keep capital investment low. “Authors should have a detailed plan for marketing once their book is published,” said Neil Goldman.

Here are some key marketing mistakes to avoid by taking these steps:

- **Understand both your target and available market.** Ask and assess, “What is my demographic, where are they, and how can I reach them?”
- **Know that the power of distribution is essential.** Will your book be available both in print and digital? Will you sell it through a brick-and-mortar bookstore? Are you interested in the library market? Choosing one selling channel limits visibility and accessibility to consumers. Instead, conduct some diligent research to identify the channels that your demographic prefers. Channel distribution through book distributors like Ingram, Amazon, Kobo, Baker & Taylor, to name a few, provides a way for your book to be distributed to online booksellers and retailers around the world.
- **Don’t forget formatting, editing, and cover design.** Writing a book is a huge undertaking, and it is important to delegate tasks



when self-publishing. Author and illustrator Lauren Bailey says, “When it comes to book sales, first impressions aren’t just important—they are everything.” The cover design of a book will be a factor in determining whether a buyer makes a purchase. Additionally, the importance of editing and formatting is self-explanatory. It is haunting to realize any typographical or grammatical errors will live on within your published work, especially since they could have been easily remedied with the help of an editor.

- **Be cautious about over or underpricing your book.** Understand your competition and how they set their prices. Also, you should consider royalty share and what the publishers will keep.
- **Analyze options beyond the classic book publication.** Serial publishing online is a relatively new format, such as [Kindle Vella](#), where many authors who understand the format have found great success. Audiobooks, supplementary workbooks, live or online workshops, and speaking engagements are all options available to published authors.



# Author Beware

Having ghostwritten multiple books for clients, we know it's a massive undertaking, not one for the faint of heart. Becoming a published author requires a sequence of complex considerations and decisions, each as important as the book itself. Further, it's time-consuming and expensive, and the rewards do not always match expectations.

The publishing arena is no different from other markets. If you have money to spend, people are always willing to take it. Whether or not they will honestly complete the requested services is another story.

In the context of traditional publishing, understanding royalty structures, marketing services, and creative control are among the top concerns. Traditional publishing is easier on the capital investment of the author and the publishing company may offer payment in advance. If the established channel distribution, marketing plans, and editing support are not a part of the traditional publishing deal, you may want to select another publishing company.

Another red flag is if the publishing company requires payment upfront, often termed as *pay-to-play*. A firm's reputation is the easiest research to do to vet legitimate publishers. Inquiring about industry standards also increases transparency. If editing support is present, ask about the quality of this support. Is this an umbrella company of a larger publishing firm with which your book will not be formally affiliated? Asking these questions can weed out bait-and-switch situations.

For those considering the self-publishing avenue, beware of who is hired to assist along the way. Often, consultants are easy solutions for editing, marketing, formatting, and graphic design. Read the terms of service carefully. Beware of fees that are not typical for these services or not charged by other firms. If you spend your entire budget without the opportunity to collaborate or make changes throughout the consulting relationship, you will waste valuable time and monetary investment. It's a huge red flag if these services cost more than the actual publishing of the book.

When hiring agents, watch for blanket promises of success that are bestowed on every client alike, or identical service offerings for every client. Employ the same caution used when researching and purchasing a used car. Investigate the service provider's reputation thoroughly, especially the results for clients, before entering into any contractual agreement.

[The Writer Beware website](#) offers excellent advice and examples and includes a [Publishing/Marketing/Fake Literary Agency Scam List](#) to review before you negotiate or sign a contract with an unvetted publisher.



## Know the Facts

The publishing industry is experiencing a paradigm shift, which has presented authors with amplified options and increased opportunities for both success *and* failure. The alignment between goals and publishing strategies must be as carefully crafted as the book itself.

Before committing to publishing a book and delivering it into the hands of readers, it is important to understand the motivation for writing the book in the first place and what you expect to accomplish. For some, the goal of publishing a book is its success in and of itself. For others, the definition of success varies depending on the author's motivations, expectations, and desired outcomes.

"You need to have a strong desire to have your voice heard," explained Dr. Miller. "All my books are non-fiction with a self-help orientation. I wrote them because I wanted to make a difference in the lives of people who were struggling. If you have something from your life experiences that can

help others, the reward comes from being an inspiration to others who are lost and empowering people to improve the quality of their life."

Just as there are endless subjects to create content for a book, there are diverse reasons for deciding to write and publish a book. Surprisingly, many of these motivators are non-monetary and unrelated to book sales. Some writers dream of writing a bestseller that will result in recognition and fame, ideally on their first attempt. Yet, the success metric may not be in terms of units sold but rather driven by external or internal forces. Externally, success may be defined as increasing social capital, establishing oneself as a thought leader, or propelling individual or corporate brand recognition. Internally, the motivation for publishing a book can be to create an outlet for one's passion and artistic expression.

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## *About Trade Press Services*

In 1995, Trade Press Services was founded on the knowledge that there is no better way to develop a competitive edge and position professionals and organizations as industry leaders than to communicate with the right people in a way that is informative and engaging. Since then, the company has helped clients achieve critical business objectives through specialized marketing programs.

Trade Press Services is a strategic marketing, communications, and media relations firm. As business-to-business marketing experts, the company helps clients increase visibility in the marketplace, communicate with their customers and prospects, develop a competitive edge and gain recognition as experts in their fields. Trade Press Services works with companies large and small in a wide variety of industries. With more than 2,500 articles published in more than 900 different publications, the organization is recognized by editors for producing timely and topical content that engages readers. In addition to creating compelling editorial coverage, Trade Press Services also develops white papers, case studies, press releases and press kits, blogs, newsletters, books, website content, and more.

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