

T&J
PUBLISHERS
SELF-
PUBLISHING
GUIDE

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Should I Self-Publish Or Take The Traditional Route?

The above question is one of the main questions asked by aspiring authors. Both the self-publishing road and the traditional publishing road have their pros and cons. I will go over these in a moment, but first I need to make sure you understand the fundamental differences between a self-publisher and a traditional publisher.

The biggest difference between a self-publisher and a traditional publisher is a self-publisher absorbs the bulk of the work with regards to publishing and promoting their book and a traditional publisher does the bulk of the work with regards to publishing and promoting their book. Also, the process is a lot different between self-publishing and publishing with a traditional publishers. For example, with a traditional publisher, the author must first write their manuscript and then submit it

to the publishing house along with a query letter or proposal (in most cases, the writer would need the assistance of a literary agent in order to get their book into the right hands at the publishing house). Afterwards, an editor will review the manuscript and decide whether or not it will be a good fit for the publishing house. This process alone may take weeks or even months. If the manuscript is accepted by the publishing house, the publishing house will then purchase the rights to the manuscript from the author/writer and then pay them an advance on future royalties. The publisher, after acquiring the rights to the book, will then put up the money to produce it fully: design a cover, copyright it, etc. The publisher will also put up the money to promote the book. A self-publisher on the otherhand must get a cover done themselves, copyright the book themselves, design the book's interior themselves, and even put up their own money to promote the book. Now, on the pros and cons of both options:

Traditional Publishing pros

- Traditional publishing companies do all of the work for you after you've written your manu-

script.

- Traditional publishing companies are usually well funded and well connected, and therefore, they are very good with promoting published titles.

Traditional Publishing cons

- Traditional publishing companies may take weeks or even months before deciding whether or not to publish a book that has been submitted to them.
- Traditional publishing companies, due to the fact that they own the rights to the author's manuscript, maintain complete creative control over that author's book, even to the point of changing the title and content if they want; therefore, the author loses their creative control over their own book.
- Traditional publishing companies generally pay authors much lower royalties than self-published authors pay themselves.
- Most traditional publishers will put limited funds behind the marketing campaigns of lesser known authors, thereby causing them to have to finance their book marketing campaigns just

like self-published authors. So, unless your name is Stephen King, chances are you're still going to have to pay to promote your own book.

Self-publishing pros

- Self-publishers get to maintain complete creative control over their manuscripts and keep the rights to their manuscripts.
- Self-publishers receive higher royalties off of the sale of their books.
- Self-publishers have a 100% guarantee of having their books published since they're publishing them themselves.
- Self-publishers can publish their books as quick and as soon as they'd like without having to wait weeks or even months for a traditional publisher to publish their works.

Self-publishing cons

- Self-publishers have to do all of the work themselves or put up the money to have the work done on their books, from producing a cover to having it copy edited.
- Self-publishers have to put up the money to promote their books.

Can Self-Published Authors Succeed?

The misconception many people have is that the only way to succeed as an author is to get picked up by a big name traditional publishing company. This isn't true. Just because a traditional publishing company picks up an author's manuscript, that doesn't guarantee that author will sell thousands and even millions of copies of their book; likewise, just because an author self-published their book that doesn't mean their book won't be successful. Let's look at a few self-published success stories:

50 Shades of Grey. This novel has sold millions of copies worldwide, but few people know it was originally a self-published project. It developed a humongous fan-base before being picked-up by a traditional publisher and adapted to the big screen.

Still Alice. This critically acclaimed novel by Lisa

Genova was a self-published title that had gained a substantial fan-following before later being picked up by Simon & Schuster and published by Gallery Books 2009. The book went on to be translated into twenty different languages and sat on the New York Times Best Seller List for 40+ weeks before being adapted to the big screen.

The Celestine Prophecy. This book by James Redfield spent 165 weeks on the New York Times Best Seller List and was adapted to the big screen, but it originally started out as a self-published novel. James sold over 100,000 copies of the book out of the trunk of his car before a traditional printer even noticed it and acquired it.

Mark Dawson was paid \$450,000 by Amazon for his series of crime thrillers which he self-published.

There are plenty more self-published success stories that provide proof that a truly motivated self-published author can succeed. And in case a traditional publisher turns you down and tell you that your manuscript isn't good enough to be pub-

lished, just remember this is only one person's opinion, and oftentimes, people can be wrong. Just ask Stephen King. His first novel, *Carrie*, was rejected over 40 times by multiple publishers before finally being picked-up by one. And we know what happened after that. The rest is history as the old saying goes.

So, if you believe in your book, you can make it a success.

Do I Need A Compelling Story?

Writing is an art-form. A good writer is an artist, a word-smith, a master story-teller. Good writers specialize in producing books that are enjoyable, even addictive. Many authors are visionaries: they have goals and stories they'd like to tell. But being a visionary and being a good writer are two different things. That is why it's important that an author invests not only into making sure that their book is packaged beautifully, but also written masterfully. Many authors make the mistake of producing books that aren't enjoyable; and if a book isn't enjoyable, it will run the risk of receiving bad reviews, which can be a devastating thing.

Like anything, becoming a good writer takes time and practice. Most people who make good money from writing do only that: write. Writing is their livelihood, their passion. Good writers don't write as a hobby; they take the time to nurture

their talent. So, if you know that you aren't the most skilled writer, don't let that put you off from writing a book. It's important that you realize the importance of finding someone who is gifted in the area of writing and let them communicate your ideas onto paper for you. It's still your vision, your book; just don't make the mistake as a self-publisher of producing a book that no one will enjoy reading.

Remember: it's not about the story that you tell; it's about the way you tell your story. The difference between a good writer and *everyone else* is a good writer knows how to tell your story in an extraordinary way so as to captivate readers. It is because of this compelling story-telling ability that novels like *50 Shades of Grey* and *The Celestine Prophecy* were able to sell hundreds of thousands and even millions of copies without the big budget marketing of traditional publishing companies. When your book is entertaining and enjoyable, it will receive the best marketing around: word-of-mouth marketing. There is no substitute for genuine enjoyment and satisfaction. When people like your product, they will tell others about it, and this

will set off a wildfire of excitement around your product that will bring the success you crave.

Traditional publishing companies have historically benefited from being able to pay top dollar to hire the best editors in the industry. Traditional publishers are willing to pay these editors tens of thousands of dollars just for their ability to craft an enjoyable read. These editors will arrange the wording and content in such a way to ensure that the book is enjoyable to readers—they know what makes readers tick. But as we have seen in the self-publishing world, there are many talented story-tellers all over the place. There are ghost-writers who specialize in producing manuscripts that are guaranteed to be enjoyable and gain rave reviews. Many of the services that were once exclusive to big traditional publishers are now available to anyone willing to make the financial investment to secure them. A good ghost-writer and a good editor may cost you, but a bad one or not having one at all will cost you way more.

Good writers value their time and talent. The market rate fees for ghost-writers usually run between

\$100-\$250 per page. This is because, as has been pointed out by industry analysts, very few people possess the talent and skill to write a 50,000 to 80,000 word book that keeps readers captivated from beginning to end. This is a rare talent. Generally, those ghost-writers who charge around \$250 per page have placed a book or two on The New York Times Bestsellers List.

T&J Publishers provides competitive rates on ghost-writing services. Those who have utilized our ghost-writing services will tell you that we truly deliver quality, addictive page-turners that keep readers reading from cover to cover and asking for more. The reviews our clients have received speak for themselves.

I've Written My Book, Now What?

After you've come up with an interesting topic—by the way, you should never write a book about something you're not knowledgeable and passionate about. Your book should always be about something you're passionate and knowledgeable about—and produced a manuscript and got it edited professionally, it's time to publish it. The publishing process entails several things: copyrighting your book, producing a cover for your book, and having your book formatted, among other things.

It is critically important that you get a professional cover done for your book. Many people have no idea just how devastating it is to have unprofessional, unattractive, and ugly book covers on their books. For one, many retail stores won't even allow your book on their shelves if the cover is not up to standard. Also, bad book covers often cause customers to be repelled by the book. Your book

can have the most interesting story in the world, but if the cover is ugly no one will read it. The goal is to get customers to be attracted to your book first, and from there, they'll be interested in seeing what's inside of the book (its content); and the only way to accomplish this is to create an attractive cover.

Now, book covers can cost you. Some people have paid around \$25-\$100 for a book cover, but these are suspect. The truth is, a professional book cover will cost you between \$500 and \$2,000. I'm sure you've heard the saying: "You get what you pay for." Cheap stuff yields cheap results. Spend the extra money and go with the professionals.

Aside from a good book cover, it is important that you have an attractive interior design as well. The interior of a book consists of font type, creative design, making sure there are no gap issues with the layout, making sure that the page number, copyright page, etc. are all done appropriately and in the right order. This takes time. Average prices for the book's interior design range from \$200-\$1,500 from professional designers.

Other publishing elements include copyrighting and getting a barcode/ISBN. There are different types of ISBNs, and choosing the right one is crucial when it comes to self-publishing a book. The more expensive ISBNs enable authors to have their books sold in a wider market on a much bigger scale. Speaking with a professional book publisher about this and receiving guidance is important, as some self-publishers have purchased the wrong type of ISBN for their books.

What is an ISBN? It is an International Standard Book Number. Your ISBN identifies your book in stores and online.

It is vitally important that you develop a marketing plan for your book. This, too, cost money. But in order to make money, you must be willing to spend money. Most self-publishing companies offer marketing services to their authors because they realize that a book isn't going to sell itself. It takes a marketer to get your book out there and in the hands of the public. Doing this on your own can be fruitless and ineffective...as well as expen-

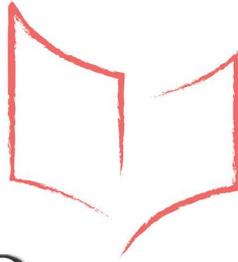
sive.

Next, you would need to find a distributor. Without a distributor, you will have a difficult time selling your book to the public. A distributor is responsible for placing your book in stores (Amazon, Barnes and Noble, Books-A-Million, etc.) so that customers can purchase it. Many authors will get their book printed, but fail to get their books distributed. This is a fatal mistake. Big retail stores will not do business with individual authors; they will only do business with distributors; so, if your book is not being represented by a distributor, it will not be accepted by major retail stores.

Lastly, you will need to sit down with a publisher and let them advise you on a marketing plan for your book. It is their job to identify target audiences and employ the marketing strategies that will work the best for your particular book. They would also be responsible for helping to develop the promotional materials (postcards, bookmarks, fliers, etc.) that you'll need for promoting your book.

In today's world, social media has become a huge thing. There are marketing specialists who focus specifically on social media marketing techniques. You will need to utilize their services, as most big companies today have discovered the importance of having a social media department and hiring a social media specialist to run it in order to increase sales and gain even greater success in their businesses.

T&J Publishers offers publishing packages that provide everything you'll need as a self-publisher. We offer professional editing services at a competitive rate; attractive, eye-catching book covers; gorgeous interior formatting, ISBN/barcodes, and copyrighting services at a great price. We also work with a great distributor to get our clients' books in all of the major retail stores. We also offer great marketing services to authors. We understand the importance of not only publishing books for authors, but also developing for them a plan centered around their book that will generate sales and set them up for success.



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