



# Self-Publishing Basics

Starting a Small Press or  
Working with an Internet Publisher  
and Publishing Your First Book

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## SECTION 1: WHO SHOULD SELF-PUBLISH?

With the advent of computers and desktop publishing, and more recently with the rise of Internet publishing options, publishing your own book has become accessible to anyone with a manuscript and some time and money. If you've been submitting your proposal to publishers or agents and have been collecting rejection letters, taking things into your own hands and self-publishing becomes an attractive option.

Self-publishing has its own rewards; it can also be a route towards finding a bigger publisher. In a market that is seeking the sure thing, many publishers are more willing to take on a self-published book with a good track record than an unproven manuscript.

Self-publishing may seem simple to do, and some aspects of it can be, but there are many issues to consider before pursuing such an undertaking. I recommend that you read this publication through, and possibly some others, before choosing this route.

Let's look at who makes a good candidate for self-publishing.

- ✗ Someone with a built-in market, for example, a speaker or radio personality who can sell, or at least publicize, the book themselves.
- ✗ Someone who is frustrated with searching for a publisher and has the willingness and the means to self-publish.
- ✗ Someone who is looking for a wider audience for their work.
- ✗ Someone who wants to enhance their credibility and create an additional income stream.
- ✗ Someone who is writing for a particular niche or region.
- ✗ Someone who wants to publish their writings or a personal or family memoir for personal gratification or as a legacy to share with friends and family.
- ✗ Someone who also wants to, or is willing to, run a small business and has the resources to do so (although working with an Internet publisher is also a good alternative).

You may also want to expand beyond self-publishing to take on other authors and create a publishing business for yourself. The basics will be the same, although it will become more complex. You'll be juggling more book projects; dealing with multiple authors, contracts and royalty payments; and most likely hiring some staff. If you're planning to expand beyond self-publishing to grow a publishing business, be sure to consult with business professionals, especially if this is your first venture.

Now, let's look at some of the pros and cons. I will begin by addressing self-publishing through your own company and look at Internet publishing later in this book.

**Pros:**

- ✗ You maintain creative control, as well as all the rights. (Many self-publishers cite this as the most important reason to self-publish.)
- ✗ You can get your book out faster than through the traditional route.
- ✗ By building a track record for your book, you can attract the attention of a larger publisher.
- ✗ There is a greater potential for profit beyond royalties. If you are a speaker, you can sell the books yourself at retail price, or at a small discount, and avoid the deep discounting that occurs when selling through the trade.
- ✗ Having a published book can enhance your professional credibility and create new opportunities.
- ✗ Small presses are proliferating, and support services are readily available.
- ✗ Computers enable you to do a lot of the work yourself, and digital printing (print-on-demand) makes large print runs and warehousing optional, making self-publishing more affordable.
- ✗ The Internet has made it much easier to reach your target audience, market your book directly and sell from online bookstores.
- ✗ Putting a book together can be gratifying and a fun experience!

**Cons:**

- ✗ There can be a large cash layout with no guarantee of a return. Your vendors will want payment up front, while your creditors may pay you six to nine months after the sale, so cash flow can be tricky.
- ✗ You must be willing, and have the time, to run a business. Along with producing the book itself, you will manage warehousing, distribution and order fulfillment; sales, marketing and promotion; and numerous other business and creative tasks.
- ✗ It's a lot of work! One company I ran across had 15 partners who pooled both money and manpower to produce and market a single book.
- ✗ It's a risky business. There's a precedent in the business that retailers and wholesalers may return books at any time, so a book that appears sold may not be. Sometimes, books are returned in poor condition and can't be resold. In that case, the publisher takes the loss.
- ✗ Some distributors are not willing to take on a one-book publisher, and you may have to handle sales and distribution yourself. That is doable, but you may find some doors closed to you. On the positive side, there are a lot more resources open to small publishers than even ten years ago.
- ✗ If your book is poorly produced (badly written, lots of typos, amateurish cover design), it won't sell.

If you're simply publishing one or two books with an Internet publisher, a lot of the detail work and the expense will be reduced, but you still need to pay attention to professional standards and get behind your books with a strategic marketing effort. You may even want to incorporate some of the business tips from **Section 2** to create the facade of a separate business, or incorporate publishing into an existing business.

To prepare to enter this business, learn as much about it as you can. Read at least two books on self-publishing (see **Appendix F**). Be sure to choose current ones, as technology is changing rapidly, along with methods of printing and distribution. Join publishing associations. The articles and resources in their newsletters and on their websites will be extremely informative and helpful, and some offer opportunities for cooperative marketing, which can save you a lot of money. You may even want to attend **Book Expo America** to get a comprehensive overview of what's going on in the industry. Get help in the areas you can't handle yourself, especially if you're not experienced in running a business or creating published materials.

In setting up your company, you'll need to deal with both the business aspects (**Section 2**) and the publishing aspects (**Section 3**). Even if you plan to use an Internet print-on-demand (POD) publisher who packages your book for you, it will be useful to understand how traditional publishing works. **Section 4** will cover print-on-demand and electronic (ebook) options.

## SECTION 2: THE BUSINESS ASPECTS

Remember that publishing is first and foremost a business. There are requirements you must adhere to, both for legal reasons and so that you don't find yourself in over your head. If you don't know what you're doing, seek professional help.

Following are a number of items you will need (or, in some cases, choose) to set up to start and run your publishing business.

### 1) Choosing a Name for Your Business

Your business name will also be your "imprint," the name of your publishing company that will appear on your books. It will also determine the domain name for your website. Be prepared with three to four alternatives, as there may already be a business registered in your state with your chosen name, or your desired domain name may already be taken.

You may also want to consult the *Literary Market Place*, the *Writer's Market* and perhaps the *International Directory of Little Magazines and Small Presses* to be sure another publisher doesn't already have the name you want to use. This may occur if they're in a different state, and it's legally acceptable, but it can lead to confusion within the industry. Find a way to make your name different, even if it's "ABC Press" as opposed to "ABC Publishing."

### 2) Choosing a Business Form

If you're starting your publishing business on your own, you can set it up as a sole proprietorship, using your company name as a "dba" (doing business as). If you have one or more partners, you will need to form a partnership or choose one of several forms of incorporation. Consult with a lawyer and an accountant to determine which form would be most beneficial for you, and have them help you set it up. If you have an existing business, particularly one that's related to the books you plan to publish, you can publish under the umbrella of that company.

### 3) Writing a Business Plan

As with any new business, you'll need to write a business plan, particularly if you'll be seeking financing (see #16 in this section). Even if you're not, a business plan helps you think through your vision for your company (even if you're only publishing one book), decide on the types of books you'll publish (see Choosing Your Niche[s], Section 3, #2), plan your marketing strategy, estimate how much capital you'll need and think through any potential pitfalls that might occur, so that you can plan for or avoid them. There are many books that can guide you in this process, including the business start-up guides by state at [Entrepreneur.com](http://Entrepreneur.com), or contact your local **Small Business Administration** for assistance.

#### 4) Setting Up Office Space, Equipment and Contact Information

Before you register your company, you'll need an office or mailing address. As a small publisher, it's possible that you'll be running your business from home. You may want to rent a box at the post office or a mailbox center, rather than give out your home address for business.

Whether you work from home or set up a separate office, you'll need to acquire the necessary equipment, including a computer and peripherals (printer, scanner, etc.), Internet access, furniture, filing cabinets, phone and fax. You may want to establish a separate phone line for your business, as well as a dedicated email address (preferably using your company's domain). You may have a fax machine and fax line, or sign up for an e-fax to receive faxes by email.

#### 5) Registering Your Business with the State

Once you've selected the form of your business, you'll need to register with your state. If you choose a dba or partnership, you can simply register with your state office. Contact the office of your county clerk or your lawyer to learn how to do this. Incorporation generally requires the assistance of a lawyer or CPA, although there are some do-it-yourself packages available (investigate these before you use them and make sure you know what you're doing!).

#### 6) Applying for a Federal ID Number

Once your business is established, you'll need to apply for a Federal Employer Identification Number (EIN). This is the equivalent of a Social Security Number, but for a company. This is necessary for a partnership or corporation. As a dba, you can use either an EIN or your Social Security Number. If you change the form of your business (e.g., partnership to corporation) down the line, you'll have to apply for a new number.

Download form SS-4, Application for Employer Identification Number, as well as the Instructions document, from the IRS website: [www.irs.gov/formspubs/index.html](http://www.irs.gov/formspubs/index.html).

#### 7) Registering with Your State for Sales Tax

As a publisher, you will most likely be selling retail as well as wholesale. For retail sales (direct to the consumer), you will have to collect and deposit sales tax for sales made within your state. Interstate and sales to resellers (wholesalers, distributors and retailers, such as bookstores) are not subject to sales tax.

Go to your state's website to register and learn the requirements. Some states have strict penalties for noncompliance, so be sure to follow up on this.

Once you register, you can also obtain resale certificates that exempt you from paying tax on items you purchase that will be resold, such as photographs or bar codes that will be used as part of your book.

## 8) Opening a Bank Account

You will need to open a bank account in the name of your business, both to write and receive checks. Check your local banks to see which offer business accounts. Their rates and fees (some offer free business checking), as well as convenient locations, will be factors in your decision. Call ahead to see what you need to provide, in addition to your dba, partnership or corporation certificate.

## 9) Author Contracts

If you're working with any authors other than yourself, work with a publishing lawyer to prepare a publishing contract between your company and such authors. If your company is a partnership or corporation, you, as author, will also need to sign a contract with the company. You can find sample contracts and clauses in the books and other resources listed in **Appendix C**, but be sure to have your lawyer customize a contract for your specific needs. You don't want to have it come back to haunt you down the line.

## 10) Record-Keeping and Taxes

As a business owner, you will need to set up a bookkeeping system. This will be particularly important when tax time comes around. If you are a sole proprietor, you may be able to simply include this in your personal bookkeeping. For any other business form, you will need to keep separate records.

An accountant can help you set up a system that you can keep up yourself. If your budget permits, you can hire a part-time bookkeeper or virtual assistant to help you out. Be sure to check this person's references thoroughly, as they'll have access to your finances. You might want to check their work frequently and not give them the power to sign checks.

Find an accountant who is familiar with your type of business (dba, partnership or corporation) and, if possible, knows something about the workings of the publishing business. One aspect I found particularly hard to explain to my first accountant is that you cannot deduct the expenses that go into producing a book until that book is sold, so you may not be allowed to take a deduction until two to three years after an expense is actually paid. This is called Cost of Goods Sold on tax forms.

There are a number of simple accounting/bookkeeping computer programs on the market today; a common one is Quickbooks. Ask your accountant or bookkeeper which they prefer, or ask friends and colleagues for a recommendation. There are some that have been created especially for the publishing industry, such as Acumen. These deal with such issues as inventory and royalties, as well as the usual bookkeeping issues. You can locate some of these software vendors through the Independent Book Publishers Association website ([www.ibpa-online.org](http://www.ibpa-online.org), Vendor Resources, Featured Vendors, Select a Category: Software Services and Consultants).

If you will be hiring staff (other than independent contractors), be sure to set up payroll and register with state and federal governments for tax purposes, as well as unemployment, disability, health insurance, workers' compensation and other required payments. Work with your accountant on this, or hire a payroll service.

Needless to say, be sure to work with your accountant to file the proper income and sales tax forms on time each year.

### 11) Personnel

If you are setting up your publishing company just to publish your own book(s), it is likely that your business will be run by yourself, perhaps one or more business partners and even your family. You will be wearing many hats: author, production manager, marketing manager, public relations, bookkeeper, etc.

However multitalented you may be, you will not have the skills or time to do every job yourself. You will probably want to use professional designers and editors to work on your book. These can be hired on a freelance or independent contractor (per-job) basis. You may want to sign a work-for-hire agreement with your vendors to clarify that the rights to the finished product belong to you, as well as payment and scheduling agreements. (See **Appendix C** for sample contract sources.)

If you are setting up a full-blown publishing company, even a small one, you will probably be hiring one or more staff. Figure out the tasks that will need to be handled, what you can (and want) to do yourself, how many people you can afford to hire initially, and create job positions so that all the work will be covered. As your company grows, you will be able to hire more people and specialize.

### 12) Corporate Identity

A publishing company, like any business, needs a professional presentation. A company is often identified by its logo and color scheme.

You'll want to have a custom logo designed for your company, which will appear on your book as well as all other printed and electronic communications. This can be a picture graphic or a designed representation of the company name/imprint. Your designer can then use your logo to prepare letterhead, envelopes, business cards, fax forms, mailing labels, etc. You will also use it on websites, printed catalogs, flyers, fact sheets, press releases and other promotional materials.

### 13) Insurance

There are various kinds of insurance you may need.

- ✗ **Life.** If you have partners, you may want to take out insurance on each other, so that a surviving partner is not stuck with debts or other financial responsibilities. Along this line, you may also want to include provisions for the assets of the business, including intellectual property, in your wills.

- ✗ **Inventory.** If you're warehousing books in your basement, be sure they're covered for such things as theft, flood and fire. If you're using a warehouse or fulfillment center, they may recommend a particular provider that they work with. Distributors may include insurance as part of their services.
- ✗ **Personnel.** If you hire staff, you may be required to carry unemployment, workers' compensation, health and disability insurance.
- ✗ **Property/Liability.** You will want to insure your office and equipment for such things as liability, theft, loss of use and fire. Your agent will suggest the types of insurance recommended for your location, business, etc. Some package several types of insurance as "small business insurance."
- ✗ **Media.** Insurance specific to the publishing industry includes errors and omissions (E&O), libel, copyright infringement and invasion of privacy. These are not absolutely necessary, and can be very expensive, but if you're publishing something controversial or with inherent liability, such as sports, health or medical books, it may be worth looking into. Search online for providers or, better yet, call other small publishers for recommendations.

#### 14) Professional Associations and Business Publications

For support and resources, I highly recommend joining one or more publishing associations, as well as any business associations that are relevant to your topic. If you do nothing else, join the **Independent Book Publishers Association** (IBPA). They're a great resource and offer an informative newsletter and affordable cooperative marketing opportunities. If you're new to the business, you may want to attend their **Publishing University**, held annually at **Book Expo America**.

In addition, you may want to join or subscribe to:

- ✗ Regional publishing associations (for a list, visit [www.ibpa-online.org](http://www.ibpa-online.org), Publishers Resources, Contact a Local Affiliate).
- ✗ Business associations, including your local Chamber of Commerce.
- ✗ Trade associations relevant to your book.
- ✗ Publishing magazines, such as *Publishers Weekly*, *Foreword*, and **Independent Publisher Online** (see **Appendix A**).
- ✗ Business and trade publications, such as *Entrepreneur*, *Fast Company*, *INC*, *Business Week* and *Crain's*, plus special interest journals or trade magazines relevant to your book.

## 15) Educating Yourself on Business and Publishing

If you're not familiar with running a business, you may need to educate yourself. There are plenty of books available, and the **Small Business Administration** offers a number of resources. You can also hire a Small Business Coach to guide you through the process.

You can also read books and magazines on self-publishing and the publishing industry. Two popular books on self-publishing are *Dan Poynter's Self-Publishing Manual* and *The Complete Guide to Self-Publishing* by Marilyn Ross and Sue Collier. For an overview of the industry, try *Book Business: Publishing Past, Present, and Future* by Jason Epstein.

If you can afford it, go at least once to Book Expo America (BEA), the largest book convention held in the U.S. annually. It can be overwhelming, but if you love books, it's great fun to see what's going on and collect souvenirs, such as signed copies of new book releases. Look around, talk to people, ask questions. See what books are being published and how they're being promoted. BEA is held around Memorial Day each year. Check [www.bookexpoamerica.com](http://www.bookexpoamerica.com) for the location, schedule and registration information.

As an added bonus, the **Independent Book Publishers Association** runs their **Publishing University** prior to the conference. It's a great place to learn a lot quickly from the pros. And be sure to visit their exhibit booth at the conference to see displays of members' books — next year, that might be you!

If you can't afford to go to BEA, get in touch with other small publishers in your geographic area or your subject area. Get their advice on printers, designers, editors, and the business in general. Benefit from their experience. Learn from their mistakes. Get involved with your local or regional publishing association and any seminars or exhibits they may offer.

## 16) Financing

You will, of course, need money to finance your book. The standard options are to use your own money; to take loans from banks, credit cards or people you know; or to raise capital through investors. You know what your resources are, and there are plenty of reference books and small business advisors available. Contact the **Small Business Administration** in your area for advice on secured loans.

One other option, if you're publishing other authors, is to have the authors underwrite the publication of their books. This is called "subsidy publishing." In this case, you will probably negotiate a higher royalty rate for these authors. Work this out with your lawyer.

If you're starting a small press, beyond self-publishing one or two books of your own, be sure to take financing seriously. Many small businesses fail in the first year or two due to undercapitalization. The nature of the publishing business is such that

you must pay your creditors up front, but you may not see receipts for six to twelve months after the actual sale when selling wholesale. During that lag time, some of your books may even be returned. You need to be prepared to handle cash flow until you can build up enough receivables to cover your expenses.

### 17) Getting Listed — The Company

To establish your business and give it credibility, and to have your titles listed in *Books in Print*, begin by registering your company with **Bowkerlink**. If you would like potential authors to be able to find you, you might also pursue listings in *Literary Market Place*, *Writer's Market* and perhaps the *International Directory of Little Magazines and Small Presses*. It's also helpful to be listed publicly to help ensure that another new publisher won't choose the same company name (your company website will also address this issue; see **item #20** below). Contact these publications directly. (See **Appendix C**.)

### 18) Cataloging in Publication

If you look on the copyright page of most books, you'll see a section of information that librarians use to catalog books. This information is prepared by the Library of Congress in their Cataloging in Publication (CIP) program. Unfortunately, small and self-publishers are not eligible for the CIP program. If you want to sell to libraries, you can purchase CIP data from Quality Books, a library distributor, at [www.quality-books.com/qb\\_pcip.html](http://www.quality-books.com/qb_pcip.html). Check for current pricing.

If you plan on having a larger company with multiple authors, begin by opening an account for your company. To apply, go to the Library of Congress website at <http://cip.loc.gov/cip/>. Once you're accepted into the program, you can apply for CIP data for each title. Be sure to leave plenty of lead time, as it can take a few months.

If you choose not to include CIP data, you may simply apply to the Library of Congress (<http://pcn.loc.gov/pcn/>) for a Preassigned Control Number for each title.

### 19) ISBN Numbers

If you want to sell your book to bookstores or other retailers (including Amazon.com), it must be assigned an International Standard Book Number (ISBN). You can purchase a series of 10 or 100 numbers, depending on the number of titles you plan to publish, or just a single ISBN. To set up your account and purchase ISBNs, go to [MyIdentifiers.com](http://MyIdentifiers.com).

Note that if you are using an Internet publisher, they will most likely supply the ISBN.

## 20) Setting Up a Website

Once you're ready to start marketing your first book, you'll want to set up a website. There are Web hosts that allow you to do this yourself, using predesigned templates; two popular ones are GoDaddy and WordPress. To get some ideas, check out the websites of IBPA members ([www.ibpa-online.org/membersarea/directory/pmalinks.aspx](http://www.ibpa-online.org/membersarea/directory/pmalinks.aspx)), or try Authors on the Web ([www.authorsontheweb.com](http://www.authorsontheweb.com)) or Smart Author Sites ([www.smartauthorsites.com](http://www.smartauthorsites.com)).

If you use a professional Web designer, get several estimates, as prices can vary widely. View several samples of each designer's work to see if you like it. Your designer can help you choose a reliable and affordable host for your website, or get recommendations from friends and colleagues.

Your website will also reflect your corporate identity (see #12 above). If you haven't already developed your logo and design elements (colors, graphics, etc.), this would be a good time to do it.

## 21) Credit Card Merchant Accounts

If you plan to sell direct to consumers, such as on-site at speaking engagements, you can establish yourself as a merchant with MasterCard, Visa and perhaps American Express and Discover. The IBPA offers this as a member benefit ([www.ibpa-online.org](http://www.ibpa-online.org), Member Benefits, Merchant Acceptance Credit Card Processing), or try your bank or other professional associations you belong to. You can get around this if you use a distributor or fulfillment company to fill your orders. (See **Section 3**, #9 and #10.) For small orders, you can accept payments using Paypal.

Note that sales to trade outlets, such as bookstores and wholesalers, will be done by purchase order and paid in 30 to 90 days, depending on your agreed-upon terms.

## 22) Mass Mailings

If you plan to do a lot of direct mail promotion by "snail mail," you'll want to apply for a bulk mail permit. You'll also need software to maintain your database and add barcodes to your mailings. For information on how to apply and mailing requirements, visit the U.S. Post Office website (<http://pe.usps.com/businessmail101/getstarted/bulkMail.htm>). There are detailed procedures, but if you do a lot of mailings, the money you will save is well worth the trouble.

If you plan to do mailings only occasionally, it will be more time- and cost-effective to find a commercial printing company that also does mailings and has its own bulk-mail setup. You might choose this option even for frequent mailings if you don't have staff to handle it.

A more cost-effective way of reaching customers is to create your own database and keep in touch using an email marketing program such as **Constant Contact**, **AWeber** or **MailChimp**.

## SECTION 3: THE PUBLISHING ASPECTS

Now that you've got your company up and running, it's time for the creative side: the book itself.

### 1) Publishing Terms

Before we go further into the publishing process, let's define some publishing terms that will be helpful to know, whether you're starting your own publishing company or evaluating Internet publishers (see [Section 4](#)).

- ❖ **Offset printing** — the type of printing traditionally used for printing books. Since this requires set-up costs and the machine moves rapidly, it's best for printing books in quantity. Multiple colors and four-color printing require multiple passes through the press and are, therefore, an added cost.
- ❖ **Digital printing, aka print-on-demand (POD)** — the new technology, in which books are generated from PDF files. Multiple colors require only one pass, and books can be printed one at a time.
- ❖ **Trim size** — the dimensions of the front cover of your book.
- ❖ **Spine** — the edge of your book where it's bound. In bookstores, books are generally shelved spine out, so this is the first thing patrons see.
- ❖ **Binding** — the manner in which the pages of your book are held together. The two most common are hardcover and softcover (aka paperback or perfectbound).
- ❖ **Dust jacket** — the printed paper that wraps around a hardcover book and includes the book cover and other key information that is printed directly on the cover of a paperback book.
- ❖ **Page count** — the number of pages in your book, counting both sides. Some digital printing companies do not charge for blank pages.
- ❖ **Paper stock, inks, cover lamination** — the materials that go into your book. You will choose a paper stock for both the text and the cover. Interior text is generally printed in black ink; covers and some interiors are printed in one or more colors. (For more on this, see [Section 3, #6](#).) Paperback covers are generally laminated to protect them from wear.
- ❖ **Front matter** — the material at the front of your book, which may include: introduction, preface, foreword, table of contents, dedication, list of tables or illustrations, acknowledgments, etc.
- ❖ **Back matter** — the material at the back of your book, which may include: appendixes, bibliography, glossary, index, endnotes, author biography, etc.
- ❖ **International Standard Book Number (ISBN)** — the inventory number assigned to a book, included as a bar code on the back cover.

- ❖ **Library of Congress Control Number** — a number assigned by the Library of Congress to identify each book. Once the book is published, the Preassigned Control Number (PCN) becomes the Library of Congress Control Number (LCCN).
- ❖ **Cataloging in Publication** — the information often included on the copyright page that is used by libraries to catalog books.
- ❖ **Imprint** — the publisher of the book. A large publishing house will have several imprints.
- ❖ **Print run** — the number of books printed at one time.
- ❖ **Returns** — unsold books that are returned to the publisher by the wholesaler or retailer.

## 2) Choosing Your Niche(s)

If you're self-publishing, you probably have a specific topic or category about which you write. You may be organizing your publishing company around an ongoing business, a speaking or teaching focus, or a personal interest or passion that you want to write about.

If you plan to publish a number of books, by yourself or multiple authors, being eclectic can be fun and interesting, but it makes your job of marketing harder. If you publish all your books within one category, then the buyers of one book become the potential buyers of all of your books, and you can focus your marketing efforts on reaching that audience. If you publish in several categories, you'll have to divide your resources among those areas. Do what works best for you, both in terms of profitability and enjoying what you're publishing.

## 3) Choosing the Manuscript

If you're reading this book, it's most likely that the manuscript you're publishing — at least the first one — is your own. In choosing a manuscript (you can apply these criteria to your own as well), you would be wise to consider the marketability of the book. It's easy to produce a book; selling it is another story.

Look into how and where you can sell your book. Who is the audience for your book? Are there competitive books already on the market? (That's not a negative; it could mean there's a healthy audience for your topic.) How is your book unique? Is it better or different in some way? What need does it fill that the others don't? Does it have a widespread audience, or regional or topical appeal? (A smaller niche can actually be an easier market to target.)

You may be publishing your personal writings simply for the joy of seeing your life's work in print or to share with friends and family. Family histories are another popular trend, with family members chipping in on the expenses. In this case, using an Internet print-on-demand publisher would be a good choice for you. (See [Section 4](#).)

If you also want to sell to the public, just be prepared that you may have to do a lot of promotion to get others interested, and you'll need to find a "hook" for your story — what will make it appeal to people who are not directly involved.

If you're publishing fiction, it will also depend heavily on promotion. A nonfiction book can be targeted to those who want that information. With novels, you have to convince readers that they will enjoy your story. Targeting a particular genre, such as romance or mystery, is one strategy you can use.

If you're publishing someone else's books, or expand to include other authors later on, you'll need to sign an author contract. This also applies to you, as an author, if your publishing company is a separate entity, such as a partnership or corporation. See **Section 2, #9** for more on author contracts.

#### 4) Preparing the Manuscript

##### Editing

No matter how good a writer you are, you need a second eye on your project. Find a good editor. If you don't know where to look, contact other small presses for recommendations, check the Publishers Resources section of the IBPA website ([www.ibpa-online.org](http://www.ibpa-online.org)), or list your project at the Editorial Freelancers Association ([www.the-efa.org](http://www.the-efa.org)). You can also find affordable freelance editors at **Guru.com** and **Elance.com**, but do check their portfolios or ask for samples, as the quality of the freelancers varies widely. Many book manufacturers also offer prepress services, including editing and layout.

##### Artwork

Does your book need artwork or photographs? If so, you'll need to find an illustrator or photographer. If you don't know one, try to get recommendations, or seek out experienced professionals at **Guru.com** and **Elance.com**. (See item #5 later in this section regarding cover design.)

Check out artists' work, and get some references to make sure they're reliable. (I worked with one illustrator who seemed to get sick right before every deadline.) If you want to use artwork from other published works or the Internet, be sure to get written permission and pay any required fees. If your budget is limited, look for royalty-free clip art and photographs with affordable one-time fees at websites such as **clipart.com** and **istockphoto.com**.

If you need an author photo, dig up a good, reasonably current photograph, or have a new one taken. It's okay to have a friend take your picture, as long as it looks professional and flattering.

## Front and Back Matter

Your book will most likely include various components at the front and back of the book. Front matter can include Introduction, Foreword, Preface, Acknowledgments, Table of Contents and Copyright page. For a nonfiction book, it's always a plus to have a Foreword written by a prominent person in the field.

Back matter is a catch-all for anything that's important or useful, but would intrude in the flow of text if included within the chapters. It can include Appendixes, Bibliography, Glossary, Reading List, Author Biography and Index. Find a professional indexer at the American Society for Indexing ([www.asindexing.org](http://www.asindexing.org)).

## Title

Your book's title is an important part of its marketing. The title of a nonfiction book can be provocative, but it should also clearly indicate what the book is about. Remember that often the first view of your book on the store shelf is its spine, which only includes the title (with or without the subtitle), the author's last name and the publisher's logo.

Pull a few books off your own bookshelf that have intriguing titles and use them as inspiration. Test market two or three possible titles with your friends, colleagues and the buyers at your local bookstores.

If your book is fiction or creative nonfiction, your title should still be intriguing, but you have a little more creative leeway.

## Reviews and Endorsements

If you don't have reviews of previously published books, you may want to solicit some endorsements to use for your book cover and marketing materials. Approach people you know, or know of, who are experts in the field, even famous ones. Some of these can be very responsive if they like your work, but start early, as you may have to catch them in the midst of a very busy schedule. You can also ask people who represent your target audience, perhaps someone who has benefited from the work you describe in your book.

Send a polite, professional letter or email explaining your project and who you are, perhaps including a table of contents and a sample chapter or two and offering to send the entire manuscript at their request. DO NOT send the entire book without their permission. If you approach someone by email, DO NOT send any attachments until they are requested, and give them the option of email or snail mail.

Don't take it personally if you're turned down. Some authors are prohibited by their publishers from endorsing other authors' books because of potential plagiarism suits, and some just might not want to. Cast your net wide, and you'll come up with some good endorsements. When I published my children's book, I requested

endorsements from 15 well-known authors. Two of them came through for me, and that was pretty thrilling.

## 5) Preparing the Book for Production

While you're handling the content, you'll also need to prepare for the production of the book. Today's technology gives us the ability to handle many aspects of publishing that once needed experts. For example, if you are proficient at desktop publishing and computer graphics, you may be able to handle the typesetting and layout yourself. But be honest: If you can't do a professional job, find someone who can. An amateurish-looking book, especially the cover, can curtail sales or deter a bookstore or distributor from even accepting your business.

Some things to consider in preparing your book for production:

### Binding

Will your book be bound in hardcover or softcover (also called "perfect-bound") or both? While some genres, such as fiction, seem to require a hardcover release to be taken seriously, a report in *Publishers Weekly* indicated that more people are buying softcover books. They're cheaper and easier to carry around. You can justify a higher markup for hardcover, but they may not sell as well. You may want to consider a "split run," combining a percentage of each type of binding. The text portion will be identical, but it will mean laying out and printing both a paper cover and a dust jacket and assigning two separate ISBN numbers.

You may also want to make your book available as a PDF ebook, as well as formatting it for various ebook readers, such as the Kindle and the Nook.

### Trim Size

How big do you want your book to be? A typical size is 6" x 9" or 5 1/2" x 8 1/2". An atypical size may be more suitable to the content of your book, but will be more costly to print. Bring a ruler to the bookstore (or your home bookshelves), find the size you like and take its measurements. Check with your book manufacturer (see #6 in this section) to see which sizes are possible on their presses, as well as which ones they can do most economically. (This may be a factor in choosing your printer.)

### Book Layout

Once the manuscript is edited to your satisfaction, you'll need someone to lay it out for the printer. This used to be called "typesetting," but is now generally done on computer in a page layout program such as Adobe® InDesign® or Quark Xpress®. The person who does your page layout may be the same person who designs your cover; if not, they should be coordinated for design consistency.

If you're proficient with desktop publishing, you may want to do this step yourself. Make sure you can do a clean, professional job of it, using pleasing fonts and design,

so it doesn't come out looking like a word processing document. Use some of the books on your bookshelves as models. If you're good with type but not an artist, you may want to have your designer do a graphic or two that you can drop into your layout design, to use, for example, on chapter title pages or to set off repeating sections, such as exercises or tips. (Some fonts also feature design elements or "ornaments". The bullets used in this book are Zapf Dingbats.)

As you do your layout, keep in mind (or have your designer do so) that books are typically printed in "signatures" of 16 pages, so your page count should be divisible by 16 (double check with your printer or book manufacturer on this). It's okay to leave a few blank pages at the end, but keep in mind that if you already have 160 pages and need to add one more, you'll be adding 15 additional pages to do so, which will also increase the cost of your printing. There are ways to adjust your type and layout to make your manuscript fit fairly closely, if not exactly. If you're using digital print-on-demand, this will not be a concern.

## Designing the Cover

This is an important step. Despite the old adage, people *do* judge a book by its cover. It's worth spending a few extra dollars to get a top-notch design. Find a designer who understands the specific requirements of book covers. Get recommendations from other small presses, consult the IBPA website ([www.ibpa-online.org](http://www.ibpa-online.org)) or peruse freelancer websites such as [Guru.com](http://Guru.com) and [Elance.com](http://Elance.com), where you can find some phenomenal talent for reasonable rates.

For a hardcover book, you'll need a dust jacket designed — front, back and spine — and text written for the flap. You'll also need to choose the colors of the cloth and the flyleaf paper, as well as any text or graphic you want stamped on the cloth (usually the spine is imprinted) or printed on the inside of the cover (not usually done and costs extra). You'll also provide a short author bio and photo.

For a softcover book, you'll simply need front, back and spine designed. You'll provide back cover copy, as well as a short author bio and photo. You can use the same basic design for both hard- and softcover, but they need to be laid out separately, to different specifications.

Along with trim size, once you have a page count, you'll need to determine the spine width of your book based on the weight of the paper you're using. For example, if your book is 176 pages and the paper weight is 444 pages per inch (ppi), the spine width will be  $176/444 = .396$ , or approximately 4/10 inch. For the hardcover dust jacket, your printer should be able to supply you with a template or dimensions.

Your cover should also include the ISBN number in the form of a scannable EAN Bookland bar code. To purchase one or a block of ISBN numbers and bar codes, go to [MyIdentifiers](http://MyIdentifiers). If you're planning on publishing many books, you or your designer might want to purchase bar code software; make sure that it includes EAN Bookland format.

If you're planning on using digital printing to produce your books, you should warn your designer not to design all the way to the edges, as the covers may print slightly off-center, and to be careful with gradients, which tend to create a moire pattern or banding with digital printing.

## Pricing

This can be a tricky one. There are formulas available for pricing a book based on its production cost, but this can sometimes give you a price way above what the market will bear for that type of book. Figure your costs, including editing, typesetting, design, indexing, printing and perhaps your marketing budget. Divide by the number of books in the print run to get the cost-per-book. A price estimate might be three to five times this cost. (Remember that with wholesalers and retailers taking their cut, you'll rarely get the full retail price of your book unless you sell direct.) Then, go to the bookstore or search online and see what similar books are selling for.

Other things to consider: Does your author have a name in his/her field? Does your book contain information that would be considered very valuable? Is your intention to make a large profit or to make your book accessible to its target audience? Remember, too, that hardcover books have higher markups than their softcover counterparts.

## Category

Be sure to include the book's subject category, usually on the upper left corner of the back cover. This makes it easier for bookstores to place your book in the proper section, or for online bookstores to assign the proper keywords. If your category is unique, do your best to fit it within established categories. It's unlikely that a bookstore will open a new section just for your book! It's okay to use two categories if it's appropriate, but more can be confusing.

## Copyright Page

This page, which is on the back of the title page, will contain some very important information.

- ❖ **Copyright** of your book, usually by the author in the year of publication (© 2011 John Doe).
- ❖ **Rights statement**, e.g., "All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form without permission in writing from the publisher." Check other books to get ideas, and develop a statement that suits you, perhaps with the aid of your publishing lawyer.
- ❖ **Contact information** for your publishing company.
- ❖ **Cataloging in Publication Data**. See **Section 2, #18** for information on how to obtain this and the Library of Congress Preassigned Control Number (PCN). These are optional, but useful if you want to sell to libraries.

- ❖ **ISBN.** If you are using CIP Data, the ISBN number will be included within (you will need to include it when requesting CIP Data). If not, include the ISBN number and perhaps a PCN.
- ❖ **Disclaimer.** If your book contains material that might open you up to liability, such as giving medical or financial advice, be sure to include a disclaimer. Consult similar books and your lawyer for appropriate language.
- ❖ You may also include permissions for material used from other publications, designers' names, where the book was printed, as well as which printing this book came from (often presented as a series of numbers at the bottom of the page).

Check several books from your personal library for ideas on how you would like to present this page.

## 6) Choosing a Book Manufacturer

For books, the "printer" is actually the "book manufacturer." (We will use the terms interchangeably here.) Some commercial printers now have the technology to produce books, but they will be very expensive. It's best to work with a company that specializes in books. You may want to choose a printer early in the process, as their parameters (which presses they use, papers stocked, bindings available, etc.) can impact your design choices.

For the first book my company published, we chose a book manufacturer that had a customer service rep in our city. He walked us through the process step by step and was a tremendous help in teaching us how to put a book together. Many printers that have plants in less expensive areas of the country will have reps in or near major cities. In most cases, you'll work with one contact person, although some printers have different reps for different aspects of the process, which can be confusing. I would suggest finding out how many people you'll have to deal with ahead of time.

To find a book manufacturer, you'll need to do some research. Probably the most reliable way to find a good one is by recommendation. Call a few small presses (find some at the IBPA website [[www.ibpa-online.org](http://www.ibpa-online.org)]) and see who they like working with, who gives them the best service and prices. You can also consult the *Literary Market Place* and John Kremer's website ([www.bookmarket.com/101print.html](http://www.bookmarket.com/101print.html)).

The first time around, you'll want to get five to ten estimates. You'll be surprised at how widely they vary. Along with price, consider also the quality of their output, which bindings they offer (some don't do hardcover, for example) and any special requirements your book may have, such as color interior, photos, binding on the short side or an unusual trim size.

Most of the established book manufacturers are in the Midwest. You may prefer to work with someone locally, but this may limit your choices. If this is the case, I

would suggest getting several estimates and see if it's not costing you considerably more to do that. It might not be. You might also be able to use the other estimates you get as a bargaining chip to bring the price down.

Once you've narrowed your choices down to around three to five, get sample books that they've manufactured, as well as samples of the paper stocks they offer. Higher price doesn't necessarily mean better quality, and vice versa. Also, some printers may be better with hardcover books or picture books, while others don't do them at all.

If the interior of your book is in color or includes a lot of photos, you may want to consider printing overseas, although this is generally not cost-effective unless you're doing a very large print run.

When requesting estimates, you'll need to address the following issues:

### Number of Pages

This is based on the number of pages once your manuscript is typeset in your chosen trim size. For traditional printing, this number needs to be divisible by 16, the number of pages on a typical "signature," a large sheet that is folded and trimmed into the pages of your book. For digital print-on-demand, the number of pages you're charged for may or may not include blank pages. Check with your rep on the company's requirements.

### Trim Size

This is discussed in detail in item #5 above, in this section.

### Print Run

How many books will you be printing? The optimal number of books to print can be tricky and is often a guessing game, even for the most experienced professionals. With traditional publishing, the more you print, the lower your cost per book, as the setup costs are spread across more copies. But printing too many can leave you with a lot of books to store or, at worst, unsold books to "remainder" (sell below cost to a remainder dealer). On the other hand, if you underestimate, you'll have to reprint sooner. Check with other small presses to see what their typical print runs are.

If you have no idea, I would suggest starting with no more than 1,000 to 2,000. When you get your estimate, you can ask for prices on, say "1,000 and each additional 500." This gives you numbers that you can juggle in making your decision. See if your printer offers any special deals if you use particular papers or presses. Some offset printers also offer short-run digital printing.

With some print-on-demand book manufacturers, particularly the companies that service small presses and not just individual self-publishers, the price per book is the same no matter how many you order, and you can even order a single book. They

may offer discounts from time to time if you order 50 books or more, and you pay for shipping. Most of the full-service Internet publishers (see **Appendix E**) offer better prices when you order in quantity.

### Paper Weight and Color

Each printer generally has a standard 55# (# = pound) natural paper that they buy in bulk, making it more cost-effective for you if you use it. Unless your book has special needs, this paper will usually be just fine. You may want to consider a bright white (which is not as yellow, but not as easy on the eyes) or, in some cases, such as photo books, a glossy paper (which is more expensive and denser, so that your spine width will be narrower).

Covers are produced on a heavier stock, usually designated as 10 PT. C1S (color one side). Ask your rep to send you a paper sampler, if they have one, or samples of books using the papers you're considering.

### Ink Color for Text and Cover

In most cases, your text ink will be black. A second color will add to the cost of printing, as the pages will have to be run through the press twice. Your cover will generally have one to four colors, with each additional color adding to the cost. If your cover includes a photograph, you will probably need four-color printing. With digital printing, the number of colors doesn't matter, so you can have a full-color cover at no extra cost.

If you're using offset printing and want to keep expenses down, your designer should be able to come up with an attractive cover design using various shades of two or three colors. I've even done a children's picture book using pink and blue, and then overlaying them to get purple — a little tricky, but it worked.

### Binding

Will your book be in hardcover or perfect-bound (softcover) or both? (See item #5 in this section for further discussion of this.) Some printers can do both, while others specialize in one or the other. In most cases, you'll want your cover laminated. Check with your rep for options.

### Submitting Files

Usually, your "text block" and cover will be uploaded as digital files. PDF is the best format, but in most cases, files can also be accepted in various page layout and illustration (graphics) formats. Your printer will tell you how to submit files.

### Proofs

Before your book is printed in quantity, you'll be sent proofs for final corrections and approval. Your printer may offer hard (paper) and/or soft (digital) proofs. Hard

proofs will give you a closer representation of how your book will look, but will take more time and add shipping costs. Soft proofs are faster, as they can be retrieved online, but may not be as accurate a representation of the final product.

As much as possible, corrections should be made to your manuscript during the layout phase, before it goes to print. Once it's printed, corrections become more expensive. The proofs are meant to troubleshoot anything you may have missed previously, as well as any problems in the printing process.

### Extra Covers or Dust Jackets

Ordering extra covers that you can use for publicity purposes is a common industry practice. Some publishers include the unbound, unfolded covers in press kits or create flyers or announcements for events by printing promotional copy on the back. Plan ahead for this. If you're not planning to use extra covers extensively, 200 extras should be adequate for any use that might come up. When ordered with the book printing, the cost of extra covers is minimal. A separate printing would be much more costly.

### Shipping Costs

Some printers will include estimated shipping costs to your location (or your warehouse) on the printing estimate. Even if not, prepare to be charged for them. *Do not* have printers drop-ship or fill individual orders (unless they're very big ones), as they will charge you exorbitantly for that service. Let your fulfillment center do that (see #9 in this section).

### Payment Agreement

Once you've selected a printer, be sure to establish credit and terms with them. If you begin to use them on a regular basis, they may be willing to offer more generous terms, such as a smaller down payment and more time to pay the balance (with interest, of course).

## 7) The Printing Process

Once your book is ready to go, you'll be working with your chosen printer. Here are some guidelines on what to expect.

### Submitting Digital Files and Support Materials

Nowadays, most printers require that you submit your cover art and text file digitally. In some cases, they may also want a printout to show how your pages are meant to look, in case something shifts in the digital file. If you have any special requirements, your designer can note them on the printout. Note that colors and

fonts will be embedded in the files, although some manufacturers may also want the exact font files your designer used.

Have your designer(s) (both cover and layout) check your printer's requirements. They may require that the files be submitted in a specific format (PDF, page layout, graphics, etc.) and that you follow their specifications rigorously in setting up the files. You'll save yourself money and hassle by getting this information early in the process. Your files will generally be uploaded at the printer's website or using FTP software. Some printers still accept files on a disk as well.

Work with the specs on your printer's website or speak with your rep to resolve any questions.

### Contract and Payment

Once you begin the manufacturing process, you'll need to return a signed copy of your estimate and remit payment as required (generally 50 percent up front with your first order). If the estimate included variables, such as a choice of papers or the number of books to be printed, you would need to specify your choices at this point. Remember that you can print additional books later.

### Reviewing Proofs

Once the book is set up at the printer's, you'll receive proofs for approval, either paper copies or PDF files. Check them carefully for any printing errors, marks, incorrect colors, misaligned pages, broken type, wrong page order, etc. Initial printer errors are corrected at the printer's expense. Once you sign off on the proofs, you'll pay extra for any errors you catch at a later stage. Be alert, and check every page carefully.

You can still make changes to content at this point, but they will be at your expense. Often, the additional cost to change a page is nominal and worth it if the changes are important and few. (And, by the way, you will probably catch a few typos once the book is printed, no matter how carefully and how many times it's been proofread.) Do your best to review the files carefully before you send them to your printer to avoid this additional cost.

### Dealing with Errors

Errors can be caught at any stage of the process. Check your proofs and advance copies (**see next page**) very carefully. Printers (and publishers) do make mistakes. If the error is theirs (such as a misaligned cover), you may need to have the job reprinted or, if the error is minor, negotiate a discount. If the error is your responsibility, perhaps something you didn't catch until you saw the completed book, you'll have to make a decision whether it's bad enough to pay for a new printing.

If you're dealing with a large or complex job, particularly if it involves color, you may want to have your printer send you an F&G and a copy of the cover to check before the books are bound. ("F&G" stands for "folded and gathered" and refers to the folded and trimmed signatures before they're bound into a book with the cover.) This way, if you catch something, you can at least salvage part of the job.

### Galleys for Reviews

Will you need galley proofs for prepublication reviews? (These are required three to four months before your publication date by the major trade publications, such as *Publishers Weekly*.) Ask your printer to send you a number of F&Gs to use for this purpose. Let them know in advance; it will generally cost you little or nothing to have them pulled from your print run. If you use F&Gs this way, you will have to print at least three to four months before your "pub" date to meet the trade publications' deadlines.

Alternatively, you can get digital print-on-demand copies locally from a full-service copy center or from various Internet companies. These are sometimes called "advance reading copies" to distinguish them from unbound galley proofs.

The front cover of your galley can be the same as your final cover, with the addition of the words "Uncorrected Proof." The back cover is promotional material for booksellers, rather than readers, and should include the title, author, publication date, ISBN, publisher's name and contact information, price, number of pages, number of illustrations and trim size. If applicable, also include the name and contact information for your distributor ([see #10 below](#)) and publicist.

### Advance Copies

Once your book is printed, you will be sent two advance copies by express mail. This is really a courtesy, as the books are already bound at this point and it's too late to make any changes without incurring the cost of a new printing. With digital printing, your proof may serve as your advance copy.

### Shipping

Along with your printing instructions, let your printer know where your books will be shipped. If there are multiple locations, note how many books to send to each location. Don't use this as a means of filling small orders; it will cost too much and is not their responsibility. Generally, books will be shipped to your own storage space or a distributor or fulfillment center. It's best to line up distribution and fulfillment before the books are all shipped to you, so you don't have to pay for two shipments.

## 8) Copyright

Technically, your manuscript is copyrighted the moment it's set to the page (or screen). Registering your copyright gives you extra protection in case your copyright is challenged or your material is plagiarized.

Although your copyright notice appears on the copyright page, you don't have to register the book with the Copyright Office until you have finished books. You can submit your registration online at [www.copyright.gov](http://www.copyright.gov), and then mail the required books. You can still submit paper forms by mail, but the fee is slightly more. Most books will require Form TX. Books of plays or other dramatic works require Form PA. You can also download Form CO, which you can fill in on your computer and print out. You may also want to request Circular 1 (Copyright Basics) and Circular 2 (Publications on Copyright), as well as any other publications you would like.

If the manuscript has been previously copyrighted as an unpublished work, you will have to update the copyright and refer to the original registration number. Registering books before publication is generally not advised; just be sure to include your copyright (© 2011 John Smith) on all prepublication copies.

Note that some Internet publishers will copyright your book for an exorbitant price. This is a simple process that you can easily do yourself.

## 9) Warehousing and Fulfillment

You'll need a place to store your books and a way to fill orders, as well as handle returns. If you have a large basement or attic and the time, you may be able to do this yourself. One small publisher I know found an inexpensive warehouse, took the orders himself, and sent shipping orders and labels to the warehouse to ship. In these cases, you'll have to handle invoicing and collections yourself.

Another possibility is a fulfillment center, which warehouses your books and takes orders and returns. They often have their own 800 number and accept credit cards, which saves you from having to set those up yourself. They generally work on a percentage plus monthly fees, handle invoicing and collections for you and send you a monthly check.

To find a fulfillment company, search on "book fulfillment" or get recommendations from fellow publishers. Ask for references, and do contact them about their experience with this company. My company initially worked with a small fulfillment center that didn't have huge setup fees and was willing to accept us even with one title, but their erratic business practices and fluctuating pricing ended up being a big headache down the road. Once we had a few titles, we left them for a full-service distributor.

If you pretty much want the whole business off your hands, you might want to consider a distributor, which may include small-order fulfillment on a limited basis

(see next section). You can also list your books at Amazon and Barnes and Noble online and let them fill individual orders.

If you're using digital printing, books will be printed on-demand, and large-scale warehousing becomes unnecessary.

## 10) Distributors and Wholesalers

First, let me make a distinction between these two. Wholesalers, like Baker & Taylor and Ingram, provide a service to bookstores and libraries by enabling them to order books from many publishers with only one invoice. They may or may not keep an inventory of your books on hand. (With small publishers, they generally don't, although Ingram offers print-on-demand availability through its affiliate, **Lightning Source**.) They're simply interested in selling books. They have no sales reps and no investment in selling *your* book, although they offer paid advertising and marketing services to promote your book to their clientele.

A distributor, on the other hand, generally has a contract to exclusively represent your books to the trade (bookstores, wholesalers, possibly libraries and colleges). Small press distributors represent a number of publishers, and they do have sales reps whose job is to sell your books to both wholesalers and retail bookstores. They will also get them listed with online stores.

Working with a distributor is a commitment. You will be required to provide marketing materials for the sales reps and contribute financially to their semi-annual catalog, based on the amount of space your book(s) require(s). You may also be offered opportunities to participate in other, optional cooperative advertising, such as your share of an announcement page in **Publishers Weekly** or displaying your backlist titles (more than a year old) at trade shows. (New titles are generally included at their expense.) Along with sales, a distributor handles warehousing, inventory insurance, invoicing and collections, on a commission basis.

Once you're established with your distributor, you'll start receiving monthly checks. Payments are generally made 90 days after books are sold. Your distributor will have the right to withhold a percentage of your payables against "returns." There's a long-standing tradition in the publishing field that a wholesaler or retailer reserves the right to return unsold books to the publisher (or their distributor). The positive rationale behind this is that bookstore buyers will take a chance on stocking more copies of your book, or even stocking it at all, when they know they can return the unsold copies if it doesn't catch on.

Returns are supposed to be in sellable condition, but this isn't always the reality. A distributor will process returns for you and either restock them if they're in good condition or offer you the option of destroying them or returning them to you if they're tattered. You can then sell these books as "used" or donate them. You take the loss. The industry has yet to find a better way to deal with this issue.

If bookstores are a good market for your book, a distributor would be a good option for you. Because they represent many publishers, they have more clout than you would by yourself. They can get you into bookstores and maintain sales of older titles even after your marketing efforts have waned. If you plan to sell mostly direct to consumers, a fulfillment house or an online bookstore would be a better choice (see #9 above).

Small-press distributors are listed in the *Literary Market Place* and the IBPA website ([www.ibpa-online.org](http://www.ibpa-online.org)). Find out what their requirements are. Many will ask you to submit a marketing plan for your book(s). Some will not be interested if you have only one or two titles, unless they have a strong market and good sales potential. If you have multiple titles, a distributor can take several time-consuming tasks off your hands and extend your reach.

Before you sign, get a copy of their contract and review their terms carefully; you may want to compare two, three or more companies. Ask for references, and check them out thoroughly. Find out how long they've been in business and how they are to deal with. Make sure they're stable and pay regularly. A colleague of mine had two distributors go under and lost a bundle of money after they sold out the print run on her new book and never paid her.

You may also want to pursue distribution in other English-speaking countries, as well as selling translation rights. See the **IBPA website** for information on representation at the **Frankfurt Book Fair**, which is held annually in October.

### 11) Getting Listed — The Book

Several months before your publication date, you'll want to start letting people in the trade know about your book. You do this by listing it in *Books in Print*. Register your publishing company (see **Section 2, #17**), and subsequently your new titles, at [www.bowkerlink.com](http://www.bowkerlink.com). If you're using an Internet publisher, they should submit your book for you.

*Publishers Weekly* also has semi-annual announcement issues for new titles. For information on how to submit your books, go to [www.publishersweekly.com](http://www.publishersweekly.com).

### 12) Marketing: Promotion, Advertising and Public Relations

Whether you have a distributor or not, promotion and marketing are still your job. In fact, a good marketing plan can help you land a distributor. If you have the time, you can do a lot of it yourself. If you have the money, you can hire someone. To find a marketing professional, search the Web on "book marketing" or "book publicist." Also look in the *Literary Market Place* or the IBPA website [[www.ibpa-online.org](http://www.ibpa-online.org)].

If you choose to do it yourself, you would do well to pick up some books on book marketing (see **Appendix F** for some suggestions). I would avoid general marketing

texts, or use them just to learn marketing principles, as book marketing is very specific.

Remember, also, that you need to market books on two levels: to the trade, to get your book into bookstores, and to consumers, to get it out of bookstores! Remember that books are "sold" on consignment. If they don't leave the bookstore, they get sent back to you as "returns."

There are a number of ways to promote books:

- ✗ Set up a **website**. This is a must if you're in business today, and your publishing company should have one. In addition, many authors create a website for each book, using the title as a domain name. For examples of author websites, search on the author's name or book title, or check out the following: Authors on the Web ([www.authorsontheweb.com](http://www.authorsontheweb.com)) and Smart Author Sites ([smartauthorsites.com](http://smartauthorsites.com)).

As part of your website, or as an alternative, you might write a **blog** to engage readers who are interested in your topic.

- ✗ Get **reviews** in trade magazines, such as *Publishers Weekly*, *Booklist* and *Library Journal*. These major venues typically require galleys three months before your publication date. Check their websites (see **Appendix A**) for guidelines. Be sure to follow up, or have your publicist do so, as mailings do get lost in the shuffle and making a personal contact can bring your submission to the top of the pile.
- ✗ Send **press releases** or press packets to appropriate editors at newspapers, magazines and related websites — either book editors or those writing about your topic.
- ✗ Write **articles** or take **excerpts** from your book and submit them to magazines and newspapers, as well as posting on article sites on the Web.
- ✗ **Advertise** in trade, consumer and niche magazines, as well as trade and consumer catalogs. You can also take banner ads on appropriate websites.
- ✗ **Direct mail**. If your book is an adjunct to another business or career, you may already have your own mailing list. You can also rent lists for specific target audiences from list brokers (see Cooperative mailings just below). If you plan on doing a lot of direct mail, you'll want to get a bulk mail permit or find a printing/mailing house (see **Section 2, #22**).
- ✗ **Email newsletters**. Instead of or in addition to a blog, you might build a database of interested readers and keep them informed by sending articles related to your book topic, along with tips and notifications of speaking engagements and related products.

- ✗ **Cooperative mailings.** The **IBPA** does a lot of these, along with some book marketing companies such as **Twin Peaks Press** (see **Appendix D**), which also rents targeted lists. By sharing the cost with other publishers, you get greater coverage at a greatly reduced cost. Mailings usually consist of a booklet compiled by the sponsor or a stack of flyers provided by the publishers.
- ✗ **Media.** List yourself in publications such as **Radio/TV Interview Report** (see **Appendix D**) to book radio and TV appearances. You can also find media lists in such books as the Gale Directory of Publications and Broadcast Media (a very expensive book, so look for it in the library).
- ✗ **Self-promotion** through public appearances, speaking engagements, book signings, readings, lectures, classes, etc.
- ✗ **Book fairs.** **Book Expo America** is the big one. It's expensive to take a booth on your own, but you can "sublet" through **IBPA** or other organizations, such as Association Book Exhibit ([www.bookexhibit.com](http://www.bookexhibit.com)), Combined Book Exhibit ([www.combinedbook.com](http://www.combinedbook.com)) or other publishing associations you belong to. They'll display and represent your book along with numerous others. If you're looking to sell foreign and translation rights, sign up for the **Frankfurt Book Fair**, which takes place annually in October.
- ✗ Print up **giveaways**, such as bookmarks, posters, tote bags, t-shirts, balloons, postcards or business cards, featuring your book cover.
- ✗ Run **contests and special promotions.** One author encouraged readers to have their pictures taken in his promotional t-shirt, and he posted them on his website.

### 13) Markets

Remember that there are a lot of different markets where you can sell your books:

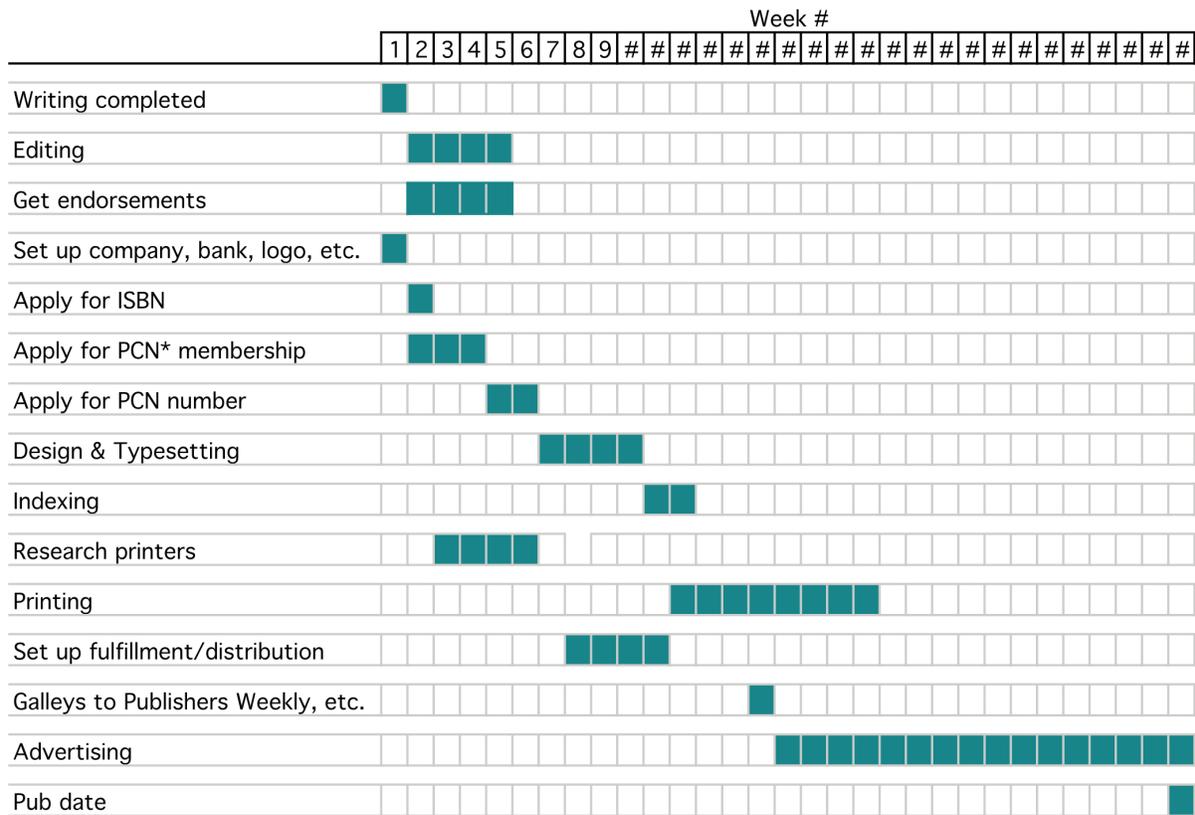
- ✗ Bookstores, including Internet book vendors
- ✗ Libraries
- ✗ Direct to readers, e.g., back-of-room sales at speaking engagements
- ✗ Mail order catalogs (book-focused or featuring items related to your book)
- ✗ Book clubs
- ✗ Schools
- ✗ Non-book stores, e.g., place your photography book in camera stores
- ✗ Special markets: gift shops, price clubs, specialty shops, corporations, premium sales, etc.
- ✗ Foreign and translation rights sales

### 14) Timing

As you can see, publishing involves a lot of activities, and these need to be timed around the publication ("pub") date. You can use a spreadsheet to map out the various activities and how they will unfold.

The following time line is an example of how to time the various activities involved in the publication of a book. Use this as a guide. Notice that different aspects of the production process will take place simultaneously.

#### Sample Time Line for Publishing a Book



\*Preassigned Control Number from the Library of Congress

## SECTION 4: THE NEW TECHNOLOGY

### 1) Internet Publishing: Print-on-Demand

Advances in technology have created a new option that many self-publishers are finding advantageous. It's called "Internet publishing," because it's generally administered by a Web-based company, or "print-on-demand" (POD), because a single copy of the book can be produced as easily as larger quantities (which is not the case with traditional offset printing). It's also called "subsidy publishing," because you foot the bill. The Internet has also enabled individuals to reach their audience directly and market their books more widely and cost-effectively than ever before.

In the "old days," paying someone to publish your book was called "vanity publishing," and it was looked down upon. Everyone in the business knew who the vanity publishers were, and some bookstores refused to carry their publications. But today, Internet publishing is considered a reputable way to publish your book, as long as you maintain a high standard for the content and presentation of the book.

Internet companies publish under their own imprint, so you don't have to start your own publishing company — good news if you want to publish, but don't want to run the business. With the new technology, books can be stored digitally and printed as needed — "on demand" — so there's little or no inventory to warehouse. You just order books as you need them.

While Internet publishers don't offer as traditional publishers, and digital printing is not as precise as offset, they can do a very respectable job for a reasonable price. The trick is to find out up front what you're getting and what you're paying for it.

### 2) Choosing Your Internet Publisher

Each publisher offers different levels of service, which may include typesetting, cover design, color interiors, editing, ISBN number, distribution and marketing, as well as one-on-one author support. They generally have a selection of basic packages, at various rates, as well as add-on services that you can choose "a la carte."

Read the contracts and rate sheets carefully. There are many variables, so contact a sales rep and ask questions (this is also a great way to test the level of service you'll get). Before you call, you might want to review the Publishing Terms in **Section 3, #1**, so you'll understand what they're talking about. Make sure that you retain the rights to terminate your contract at will and publish your book elsewhere, in case "Big Publishing House" comes along and wants to swoop it up. (It does happen. Think *Celestine Prophecy*.)

Some of the questions you'll want to ask:

- ✗ How much is the basic package (or selection of packages), and what's included?

- ✗ What editorial services are available? As we saw in **Section 3, #4**, it's important to have your manuscript edited for content and proofread for typos. Even if your publisher offers these services, it doesn't hurt to shop around and compare prices.
- ✗ How extensive is the cover design (some will simply offer you a choice of templates), and what does it cost for a custom cover? Check out the covers of other books they've published. If you're not happy with the work, find another designer (see **Section 3, #5**). If you want to attract trade sales, particularly bookstores, it's worth investing a little extra in a professional-looking cover.
- ✗ What trim sizes do they offer (see **Section 3, #5**)?
- ✗ What will be the retail price of your book? This is generally based on the page count and trim size of the typeset book, and sometimes the genre (fiction or nonfiction). If your content offers unique value, you can set a higher price than the standard.
- ✗ How much will it cost for you to purchase books for your own use or resale? You can usually get better prices for larger quantities. You'll receive one or more copies as part of your basic package.
- ✗ How will your books be distributed? What range of expanded distribution is available, and what is the cost?
- ✗ What is their method for handling returns? What will it cost you?
- ✗ What royalty will you receive for books sold through distribution channels?
- ✗ What marketing options are included? What additional options can you purchase?
- ✗ How does their publishing process work?
- ✗ Who will be your contact person during the process?
- ✗ How fast is the turnaround from the time they receive your manuscript through approving the proofs to having a finished book? What might happen to slow down the process?
- ✗ How fast can they turn around subsequent orders?
- ✗ Can you get a sample or two of books they've published?
- ✗ Will your book also be published as an ebook? For which e-readers will it be formatted? (See **#3** below for more on this.)

Compare at least three publishers for price, quality and service. Contact some of their authors (you can find some in the shop on the publisher's website, or ask for references) to see if they had a positive experience with this company. Choose your package of services according to what you want, need and can afford.

Since publishers package their services in different ways, it's like comparing apples and oranges. Following is a sample form that you can copy to help you compare publishers.

**SAMPLE FORM FOR COMPARING INTERNET PUBLISHERS**

**Book specs:**    Number of pages: \_\_\_\_\_    Trim size: \_\_\_\_\_ x \_\_\_\_\_

	<b>Publisher / Package</b>	<b>Publisher / Package</b>
<b>BASIC PACKAGE FEE</b> What's included: # of free books Distribution Level of support		
Cost for additional books		
Royalty rate and frequency of payment		
Color printing available?		
<b>ADDITIONAL SERVICES</b> One-on-one support		
Copyediting / proofreading		
Custom book cover Upgraded back cover (text, photo)		
Indexing		
Translation		
CD insert		
Copyright registration		
Library of Congress control number		
<b>MARKETING &amp; DISTRIBUTION</b> Promotional materials Domain name Ebook distribution Amazon look-inside set-up Google listing		

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See **Appendix E** for a list of some Internet publishers.

### 3) Ebooks

The other new alternative is ebooks. These are digital files, meant to be read on a computer or handheld reader. This is still a fairly new arena, and new book-reading devices are coming out all the time. Several formats have already come and gone, and new ones will probably emerge. There are software readers for your computer, such as Adobe® Reader, and hardware readers, including the Kindle, Nook™ and iPad.

As of this writing, most of the Internet publishing companies offer digital formatting as part of their packages. If you want to publish ebooks through your own publishing company, there are services that will help you convert your book for the various formats.

On a more basic level, you can set up your book in a word processing or page layout application; convert it to a PDF file; add enhancements such as bookmarks, hyperlinks and password protection (so the document can't be changed) using Adobe® Acrobat; and sell it from your website, using a shopping cart service or PayPal to collect payments.

While ebooks have not supplanted paper books, as was once predicted, there is a growing market for them, so it doesn't hurt to have your books available in this format.

## EPILOGUE

Publishing is an exciting endeavor — there's nothing like seeing all your hard work come to fruition in a published book. It can also be an overwhelming task. My hope is that the information in this book will educate you about what to expect, so that you can come away with a book that you're proud of, and even enjoy the process.

If you have any questions or would like to explore coaching with me to complete your writing and self-publishing project, or would like to check out my other publications, I invite you to visit my websites:

Good Life Coaching ~ [www.goodlifecoaching.com](http://www.goodlifecoaching.com)

Good Life Press ~ [www.goodlifepress.com](http://www.goodlifepress.com)

All the best to you!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sharon". The signature is written in black ink and is centered on the page.

## Appendix A: Publishing Magazines

### **Booklist**

American Library Association  
[www.booklistonline.com](http://www.booklistonline.com)

### **ForeWord Reviews**

[www.forewordreviews.com](http://www.forewordreviews.com)

### **Independent Publisher**

[www.independentpublisher.com](http://www.independentpublisher.com)

### **Library Journal**

[www.libraryjournal.com](http://www.libraryjournal.com)

### **Publishers Weekly**

[www.publishersweekly.com](http://www.publishersweekly.com)

### **Writer's Digest**

[www.writersdigest.com](http://www.writersdigest.com)

## Appendix B: Trade Listings

### Books in Print

R. R. Bowker

[www.booksinprint.com](http://www.booksinprint.com)

[www.bowkerlink.com](http://www.bowkerlink.com)

### Literary Market Place

[www.literarymarketplace.com](http://www.literarymarketplace.com)

### Writer's Market

[www.writersmarket.com](http://www.writersmarket.com)

### The International Directory of Little Magazines and Small Presses

[www.dustbooks.com/d.htm](http://www.dustbooks.com/d.htm)

## Appendix C: Publishing Law

The following are suggestions, not recommendations. Always check out suggested resources for yourself.

*Business and Legal Forms for Authors and Self-Publishers* . . . Tad Crawford

*Carmack's Guide to Copyright & Contracts* . . . Sharon DeBartolo Carmack

*The Copyright Permission and Libel Handbook: A Step-by-Step Guide for Writers, Editors, and Publishers* . . . Lloyd J. Jassin and Steve Schecter

*The Writer's Legal Companion: The Complete Guide for the Working Writer* . . . Brad Bunnin and Peter Beren

**The Law Offices of Lloyd J. Jassin**

[www.copylaw.com](http://www.copylaw.com)

**Law Office of Lloyd Rich**

[www.publaw.com](http://www.publaw.com)

**Para Publishing / Dan Poynter**

[www.parapublishing.com](http://www.parapublishing.com)

Numerous useful publishing forms, including boilerplate contracts and a list of publishing attorneys.

**Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts (NYC)**

[www.vlany.org](http://www.vlany.org)

## Appendix D: Book Marketing Resources

**John Kremer**

[bookmarket.com](http://bookmarket.com)

**Para Publishing / Dan Poynter**

[www.parapublishing.com](http://www.parapublishing.com)

**Radio-TV Interview Report**

[www.rtir.com/guest.htm](http://www.rtir.com/guest.htm)

**Authors Den**

[www.authorsden.com](http://www.authorsden.com)

**Independent Book Publishers Association Marketing Programs**

[www.ibpa-online.org/programs.cfm](http://www.ibpa-online.org/programs.cfm)

**Twin Peaks Press**

[www.twinpeakspress.com](http://www.twinpeakspress.com)

**Book Fairs and Exhibits**

Book Expo America

[www.bookexpoamerica.com](http://www.bookexpoamerica.com)

Association Book Exhibit

[www.bookexhibit.com](http://www.bookexhibit.com)

Combined Book Exhibit

[www.combinedbook.com](http://www.combinedbook.com)

See **Appendix F** for marketing books.

## Appendix E: Internet Publishers

This list does not constitute a recommendation, nor is it a complete list of all Internet publishers. If you choose to work with one of these publishers, check them out thoroughly, read their contract and get references.

### Full Service

**Authorhouse** — [www.authorhouse.com](http://www.authorhouse.com)

**Booklocker** — [www.booklocker.com](http://www.booklocker.com)

**Bookstand Publishing** — [www.ebookstand.com](http://www.ebookstand.com)

**CreateSpace** — [wwwcreatespace.com](http://wwwcreatespace.com)

**Infinity Publishing** — [www.infinitypublishing.com](http://www.infinitypublishing.com)

**iUniverse** — [www.iUniverse.com](http://www.iUniverse.com)

**Trafford** — [www.trafford.com](http://www.trafford.com)

**Universal Publishers** — [www.universal-publishers.com](http://www.universal-publishers.com)

**Xlibris** — [www.xlibris.com](http://www.xlibris.com)

### Printing and Fulfillment Only

**CreateSpace** — [wwwcreatespace.com](http://wwwcreatespace.com)

**Fidlar Doubleday** — [www.fidlardoubleday.com](http://www.fidlardoubleday.com)

**Lightning Source** — [www.lightningsource.com](http://www.lightningsource.com)

## Appendix F: Useful Books – Some Suggestions

*2011 Writer's Market* (annual) — Writer's Digest Books (Publisher)

*A Simple Guide to Marketing Your Book : What an Author and Publisher Can Do to Sell More Books* — Mark Ortman

*A Simple Guide to Self-Publishing: A Step-by-Step Handbook to Prepare, Print, Distribute & Promote Your Own Book* — Mark Ortman

*Book Business: Publishing Past, Present, and Future* — Jason Epstein

*Book Publishing Resource Guide: Complete Listings for More Than 7500 Book Marketing Contacts and Resources* — Marie Kiefer

*Books in Print* (annual) — R. R. Bowker (Publisher)

*The Complete Guide to Book Marketing* — David Cole

*The Complete Guide to Book Publicity* — Jodee Blanco

*The Complete Guide to Self-Publishing: Everything you need to know to write, publish, promote and sell your own book* — Marilyn Ross and Sue Collier

*Dan Poynter's Self-Publishing Manual Vol 2: How to Write, Print and Sell Your Own Book Employing the Latest Technologies and the Newest Techniques* — Dan Poynter

*Gale Directory of Publications and Broadcast Media*

*Guerilla Marketing for Writers: 100 No-Cost, Low-Cost Weapons for Selling Your Work* — Jay Conrad Levinson, Rick Frishman, Michael Larsen and David L. Hancock

*How To Start & Run a Small Book Publishing Company: A Small Business Guide To Self-Publishing And Independent Publishing* — Peter I. Hupalo

*International Directory of Little Magazines & Small Presses 2010–2011* — Len Fulton, Editor

*Literary Market Place™ 2011: The Directory of the Book Publishing Industry*

*Make Money Self-Publishing: Learn How from 14 Successful Small Publishers* — Suzanne P. Thomas

*Publicize Your Book: An Insider's Guide to Getting Your Book the Attention It Deserves* — Jacqueline Deval

*The Step-by-Step Guide to Self-Publishing for Profit!: Start Your Own Home-Based Publishing Company and Publish Your Non-Fiction Book with CreateSpace and Amazon* — C. Pinheiro and Nick Russell

## Appendix G: Miscellaneous Resources

Small Business Administration — [www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov)

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication — [www.loc.gov/publish/cip/](http://www.loc.gov/publish/cip/)

Quality Books Cataloging in Publication Program —  
[www.quality-books.com/qb\\_pcip.html](http://www.quality-books.com/qb_pcip.html)

Library of Congress Preassigned Control Number — [www.loc.gov/publish/pcn/](http://www.loc.gov/publish/pcn/)

Identifier Services / International Standard Book Numbers (ISBN) —  
[www.myidentifiers.com](http://www.myidentifiers.com)

Copyright Office — [www.copyright.gov](http://www.copyright.gov)

Editorial Freelancers Association — [www.the-efa.org](http://www.the-efa.org)

American Society for Indexing — [www.asindexing.org](http://www.asindexing.org)

Guru.com — [www.guru.com](http://www.guru.com)

Elance.com — [www.elance.com](http://www.elance.com)

## About the Author

Sharon Good is President of **Good Life Coaching**; a Life, Career and Creativity Coach; a teacher and speaker; and a writer, editor and publisher. As co-owner of Excalibur Publishing, Sharon participated in various aspects of book publishing, including writing, editing, production and marketing. She now brings those skills to her new company, **Good Life Press**.



Sharon is the author of several books, including *Creative Marketing Tools for Coaches: Use Your Natural Gifts to Attract Your Ideal Clients* and *The Tortoise Workbook: Strategies for Getting Ahead at Your Own Pace*.

As a Life, Career and Creativity Coach, Sharon works with clients from all walks of life to clarify fulfilling career directions and create happier lives. She trains and mentors coaches for the Life Purpose Institute and New York University School of Continuing and Professional Studies, and is a guest instructor for Retirement Options, the Creativity Coaching Association and Darco Coaching.

Sharon has led workshops and teleclasses on writing, publishing, career change, marketing and personal development for the 92nd Street Y, Columbia University Alumni, the Learning Annex, the Career Change Network, Friends of the Institute of Noetic Sciences, the International Coach Federation/New York City chapter, the Network of Enterprising Women, Axxess Business Centers and other venues.

Sharon coaches and consults with writers, helping them to complete their manuscripts and publish them. To learn more about Sharon and her coaching services, visit her website at [www.goodlifecoaching.com](http://www.goodlifecoaching.com), where you can subscribe to her free e-newsletter, **Living the Creative Life**. You can find her books and audios at her publishing website, [www.goodlifepress.com](http://www.goodlifepress.com).