

## PRODUCING A BOOK AS PROFESSIONAL AS YOU (*as found in The Wealthy Speaker by Jane Atkinson*)

Advances in technology have made publishing a book yourself within the realm of possibility. It can still cost a pretty penny, but it is not nearly as expensive as it was ten years ago. However, producing a professional book is not a typical hardware store do-it-yourself project. If you are going to spend time and effort writing a book in hopes of self-publishing, it is worth your time and money to employ the assistance of accomplished experts to produce a professional book that represents you and your ideas in the most authoritative manner possible. While there are many stages in producing a book, having an understanding of the process will help you discuss issues and determine expertise from a more knowledgeable position.

An experienced editor or book designer will be able to manage the entire project for you. He or she will be able to contact multiple suppliers, provide quotes from which you can choose, liaise with all the parties and ensure all details are handled. An editor or book designer who has worked inside a publishing house or in different capacities in the industry would be your best resource. While a project manager can alleviate a lot of the burden, ensure that you have final approval on the key decisions. For the purposes of the discussion below, we'll assume you've hired either an editor or book designer to take care of the business of managing the production of your book.

### **Initial Meetings**

Writing a book, no matter how objective the material seems, is a very personal undertaking, so be sure that you click with the people with whom you are dealing the most – the editor and book designer. Spend some time on this step and interview a few candidates.

- Editor – Discuss the editor's experience in your genre and whether he or she has been involved in self-publishing before. A good editor will also have some questions for you, such as identifying your audience and purpose. The editor will have the biggest impact – after you – on your text, so be sure you are in sync.
- Book Designer – Ensure the book designer can handle the whole typesetting job, including the preparation of files for the printer and design and preparation of covers. A good designer will provide some samples; experience in the genre is helpful. You will work closely with the book designer on very subjective issues, so ensure you choose someone with whom you feel comfortable asking questions and expressing opinions.
- Printers, Distributors, Marketers and Publicists – You may not need to meet with the printer or distributor, but you will want to meet with marketing and publicity to ensure they “get you”.

### **Quotes**

Get detailed quotes up front, but know that these can change if the work changes. The project manager will provide you with a full quote for approval and it should be broken down into the following categories: editing, formatting, and printing.

## **Editing**

- Before Starting – Ensure you and the editor are clear on the audience and tone. Just as you did for your speech, you need to identify your very specific market or niche. The book should represent your tone and style and a good editor will stay true to these points. On a more technical note, determine how you and the editor will review material (i.e., tracking changes electronically).
- Three Stages – There are three stages of editing: developmental (focuses on structure; audience); stylistic (attends to flow of text; use of language); and copy editing (technical editing of spelling, grammar, etc.). The last two stages may be combined, but if your manuscript requires a developmental edit a separate pass will be required. The hardest part of this process for you will be letting go of the material. At some point you must say I am done writing – or you'll never see a finished book.
- Process – The best approach is one where you work together with the editor to ensure that you are happy with the editorial changes. The editor reads the manuscript through and discusses the approach with you. He or she then edits according to the guidelines discussed and provides you with an edited manuscript to review. This version of the manuscript usually contains some queries. After you review the edited manuscript, the editor makes a final pass, incorporating your responses.

## **Formatting**

- Interior Design – When the editor and designer work together, the best results will be achieved. The editor creates a list of elements to be designed and includes notes on their purpose (how they aid the reader and/or look of the book) and also selects representative pages so the typesetter can create a sample. The interior design of a book can be of great advantage – it can aid in readability and help present the structure of ideas.
- First Proofs – The editor provides the final files to the typesetter. The book designer will format the text and ensure each page meets design specifications. Two sets of proofs are produced; one is forwarded to you, the other to the editor.

## **Proofing and Formatting**

- First Proofs – In reviewing first proofs, the editor ensures nothing has been omitted, the interior design has been applied correctly and page breaks are appropriate. You will be asked to review the material to ensure all the content is correct and up-to-date. At this point, stylistic editorial changes are discouraged as they become expensive and threaten the schedule. The editor combines your changes with his or hers and returns the proofs for correction.
- Second Proofs – The formatter makes the corrections and produces a second set of proofs. These are usually supplied to the editor only at this stage. The editor ensures all corrections have been made. The editor and formatter will continue this process until all changes have been completed accurately.

## **Printing, Distribution, Marketing and Sales**

The project manager will oversee the printing process. The project manager may provide names of freelance marketers/publicists. If you want to sell into bookstores, a distribution company is helpful.

As you can see obtaining the help of qualified specialists will provide you with a team you can depend upon to produce a book that is professional in appearance and substance that will represent you and your ideas.

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