

Welcome to the
Chicago Self-Publishing
Meetup Group
Self-Publishing Fundamentals
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Self-Publishing Fundamentals

Self-publishing is about controlling
the process and the end result.
It's not about doing it all yourself.

Joel Friedlander, www.thebookdesigner.com

The Big Three Questions

1. Goals – Why are you writing the book?
2. Budget – How much money do you want to spend?
3. Method – Which self-publishing model is best for you?

The Big Three Questions

Goals – You must be clear on why you're self-publishing and what you want to happen as a result.

Three main reasons authors self-publish:

1. Personal – writing for personal reasons such as memoir to give to family
2. Prestige – writing to help grow a business, establish credibility, or boost fees
3. Profit – writing to make a profit from selling books

The Big Three Questions

Goals - publishing for personal reasons:

1. Author wants to record thoughts or impart information, such as memoir to give to family
2. Author has little or no interest in selling the book so marketing, distribution, and author platform are usually unnecessary
3. Editing and design may be lower priorities

The Big Three Questions

Goals - publishing for prestige reasons:

1. Author writes for business or career reasons, and making a profit is less important than prestige of being an author
2. Professional editing and design, and building an author platform, are critical because book is direct reflection of author
3. Marketing and distribution might or might not be important, depending on author's goals

The Big Three Questions

Goals - publishing for profit reasons:

1. Author's highest priority is revenue from book sales
2. Professional editing and design are critical
- readers are unforgiving of errors and won't hesitate to leave a bad review
3. Marketing, distribution, and author platform are crucial, and authors should use multiple channels and formats

The Big Three Questions

Budget – You must decide how much money you want to spend.

Budget has a big impact on how an author self-publishes. Self-publishing requires the author to invest either time or money. The lower the budget, the more self-publishing tasks the author must do himself.

The Big Three Questions

Method – You have to decide which self-publishing method to use.

1. Do It Yourself – Author does everything. Inexpensive but requires much time and effort from author. Difficult without prior experience.
2. A la carte – Author hires individual service providers. Fees vary but are usually less expensive than using a publishing company. Author's role = general contractor.

The Big Three Questions

Method - You have to decide which self-publishing method to use.

3. Self-Publishing Company - Author hires company to handle everything. Can be more expensive than a la carte but requires little effort from author. Be careful - some of these companies are unethical.
4. Publishing Consultant - Author hires a publishing consultant to manage the entire book production process. Author pays consultant fees on top of service provider fees.

The Basic Steps of Self-Publishing

Writing

- Author can write or hire ghostwriter
- Scrivener makes writing process easier and more enjoyable
- Beta readers save time and money on editing

The Basic Steps of Self-Publishing

Editing

- Professional editing fees = money well spent
- Editorial Freelancers Association has a directory of excellent book editors
- After author accepts edits, editor should proofread manuscript before sending to designer

The Basic Steps of Self-Publishing

Cover Design

- Professional cover design fees = money well spent
- A book's cover is its advertisement and directly impacts marketing and sales
- Google or use word of mouth to find a professional book designer

The Basic Steps of Self-Publishing

Interior layout

- Professional layout formatting fees = money well spent
- A book formatter knows how to format book's interior so that fonts, margins, page number, headers, etc. look professional
- Google or use word of mouth to find a professional book formatter

The Basic Steps of Self-Publishing

Ebook formatting

- Professional ebook formatting fees = money well spent
- An ebook formatter knows how to convert the manuscript into the various ebook formats so it looks professional
- Many book designers do cover design, interior layout, and ebook formatting

The Basic Steps of Self-Publishing

ISBNs and Barcodes

- Selling a book at online retailers or bricks and mortar stores requires an ISBN (International Standard Book Number) and a barcode
- Both can only be purchased from Bowker at www.myidentifiers.com
- Most authors should buy block of 10 ISBNs for \$250 rather than a single ISBN for \$125

The Basic Steps of Self-Publishing

Printing

- Print on Demand (POD) technology is a self-publishing author's best friend
- Visit www.parapublishing.com and www.bookpublisherscompared.com to learn about printing options and how to find good POD companies

The Basic Steps of Self-Publishing

Distribution

- Distribution is the process of making books available for sale to wholesalers and at retail stores
- Challenging for self-publishing authors
- Visit www.thebookdesigner.com to learn how to address it

The Basic Steps of Self-Publishing

Author Platform

- Author platform is essential to a strong book marketing campaign
- Platform includes the writer's visibility, reach, authority, and target audience
- Components include blogging, social media, and public speaking

The Basic Steps of Self-Publishing

Marketing

- Self-publishing authors must either hire people to market their books or do it themselves
- It never really ends
- Hiring a book marketing company or publishing consultant can help reach a wider audience

Q & A Time!