

13 PUBLISHING TIPS EVERY WRITER SHOULD KNOW TO KEEP FROM TEARING THEIR HAIR OUT

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1. Have The End in Mind.

Before you start writing, ask yourself some basic questions.

- Why are you writing your book? Do you want to market your products or services to a broader audience? Are you writing your book to establish credibility in your field? Is it your business card? Do you have a story that will help others get through tough times, and you want to help? Is it a memoir for family and friends?
- Who do you want to read and benefit from your book?
- How will you get the word out about your book? Do you want to start promoting it even before you take pen to paper (or fingers to keyboard)? Do you want to pre-sell your book? What venues will you use to promote your book?

2. Find Someone You Can Trust And Has Experience to Guide You.

You may be hesitating to write your book because you're not sure what your message is, how to organize your thoughts and materials, or where to start. Perhaps you think you don't know how to write. *Write your book anyway.* There are people who can help you. Do you have a colleague or friend who has already successfully published a book? Do you have a coach who can help you organize your thoughts and encourage you along the way? Or find an editor who can both coach you with its structure along the way and edit your book once it's written.

3. Decide How You Want to Publish Your Book.

There are some authors who use their books as a business card. They want to quickly get their information into as many hands as possible, so they will have the books printed in large quantities to keep the per book price to a minimum. Some authors want to have someone else publish and print their book and receive royalties. And many authors want to self-publish – either figuring out the entire process on their own or hiring people/companies to help with certain parts of the editing, design, and production process.

4. What Options Are There for Publishing Your Book?

You have a wide range of choices for publishing your book.

- Find a publisher that will print the book for you at no cost to you. The publisher will take care of the editing, design, and printing. However, you may not have any say over the book cover, you will not make as much per book as if you self-published the book, and you will probably be restricted to using their printer when you want to purchase copies of your book. Plus you will not be allowed to take your book elsewhere, unless the publisher lets you out of your contract. And don't expect the publisher to publicize your book.
- Find a publisher or publishing coordinator who will oversee certain aspects of the publishing process – or the entire process. Fees range from a few thousand dollars to well over \$25,000, depending on who you contract with and how many services they provide or you need. Do you want help with your concept and your book, chapter, and section titles? Do you need an editor, an accountability partner, a cover designer, a book formatter for print, Kindle, Nook, .epub, .mobi, .PDF etc.; a printer; a publicist, etc.?

- You can contract with the individuals and companies that provide the services you need. (You can even hire someone to ghost write the book for you.) This means you will find the editor, the person to format your book, the printer, the publicist, etc.
- You can do it all yourself – if you have the time, talent, discipline, and focus.

5. Be Sure You Own Your Book!

There's something called the ISBN; and in the publishing world, ISBN is everything! ISBN stands for International Standard Book Number. It is a unique numeric commercial book identifier and is your ID in the book world. He/she that owns the ISBN for your book owns the book. It doesn't matter that you wrote the book. If your publisher uses one of its own ISBN for your book, kiss your book goodbye. If you don't have an ISBN for your creative work, someone else could take your work and place their own ISBN on it, thus preventing you from using what you created.

6. Getting Your Own ISBN is Easy.

- In the U.S. you can either purchase an ISBN directly from Bowker at www.myidentifiers.com or find an entity that has purchased a large block and is willing to sell to you from their block. At this printing, a single ISBN from Bowker is \$125, and ten ISBNs are \$250. Since every version of your book (print, Kindle, Nook, etc.) has to have a separate ISBN, it makes sense to purchase ten. If you're Canadian, your ISBN is free. Other countries have their own rules and regulations.
- If you're going through a publisher, getting an ISBN should not cost you anything. So beware of publishers who make you pay for an ISBN that you will never own. In cases of KDP, Amazon retains the ISBN for digital books, while you have a separate one for the print.

7. Should You Copyright Your Book?

Formally copyrighting your book is another layer of protection for your rights to your intellectual and creative property. Copyrighting establishes a public record of your original work, gives you a basis for taking legal action if any of your work is used without your permission, and helps you recoup statutory damages and attorney fees in court. If you want to do it yourself, go to <https://www.copyright.gov/registration/literary-works/> and follow the application process. It's up to you to determine if you want to formally (and legally) protect your work. Whether or not you decide to copyright your book through the U.S. government copyright office, still place the © symbol and "All rights reserved" notation in your publication.

8. Read the Fine Print in Any Contract You Receive

This should be obvious. However, in the excitement to have someone want to help you publish your book, you may scan the contract without fully realizing the full impact of what you're signing. However, there are many scammers out there who are delighted to take your money and then never deliver. Ask questions if you don't understand something. Have an attorney look over the contract. And remember, if what they promised verbally isn't in writing, ask the publisher to document their promises...or don't sign.

9. Be Aware that Once You Sign a Contract, You're Giving Up a Lot of Control

One of the things that I've noticed is that newly contracted authors, especially if it's their first book, do not understand that once they sign the contract, they're giving up some control over their book. While some publishers give you a say in what your cover looks like, how your bio reads, etc., not all publishers do. Many of the larger, well established publishers decide what your cover will look

like with no input from the author. The same can be said of the blurb that will be on the cover. Most publishers have well trained specialists that know how to make your book look its best so that it appeals to readers and sells more copies.

10. Don't Expect Your Publisher to Market Your Book.

In fact, many book publishers may terminate your contract, return the rights of the book back to you, and take your book out of circulation if you fail to market your book. So either be prepared to market your own book (press releases, getting yourself on podcasts, appearing on television or radio, virtual or in-person book launches, etc.) or hire someone to do it for you.

11. Writing Your Book ... How to Begin.

There are many ways to start writing your book. Ultimately, you need to figure out what's best for your particular style.

- Some writers want to create their table of contents first. That means creating chapter and sub-chapter headings. In essence, it's the book outline. A nice thing about this approach is that you can write your content in any order you want and just plug it into the pre-determined chapter and sub-chapter headings you established in the beginning.
- You can write out a series of questions you want your book to answer and then start writing the answers.
- Another approach is to simply start writing. In this approach, you put down your thoughts/content in the order it comes to you without worrying about content order. Then after you've written all that's in you, go back and organize the content in a way that best supports your book's premise.
- I encourage writers to write their "Why I Wrote This Book" chapter first to help them get clear on their purpose, who they want to reach, and the impact they want the book to have.

Whichever approach appeals to you (or create your own), the bottom line is *START WRITING!*

12. Where and How to Write Your Book

Here the questions become, "What works for you?" and "What can you stick with?"

- Are you a "steady-the-course" writer that can set up a schedule and stick with it? For example, writing one hour every morning, Monday through Friday, after you've brushed your teeth and made your morning cup of coffee. Are you a binge writer, sitting down for several hours at a time to work on your book? Or do you marathon write for a day or several days at a time?
- Where should you write? You may find it best to set up a writing area at your home or office that is dedicated to your book creation. Or perhaps you need to escape to a coffee shop, library, or hotel room to write. Whatever keeps you on track, do it.
- Do you prefer to dictate your book, write with paper and pen, or use a computer? Some writers do much better speaking their book and then having it transcribed by one of the inexpensive on-line services. There are still people who like to sit with a physical note pad and handwrite their books. And then there are those who are "one with the keyboard" and find their creative juices flow better when they type. Again, what's important is what works for you.
- Who will help you keep moving forward? Some writers are self-motivated and have no difficulty "staying the course." Others have accountability partners who help keep them moving forward with their book. An accountability partner could be a co-worker, spouse, friend, or another author.

13. Should You Hire a Professional Editor?

Even a professional writer or editor that writes a book should hire a professional editor. As wonderful as Grammarly might be, it makes mistakes sometimes. And even if you got all A's in your high school English class, it's always a good idea to have another set of eyes look at your book. Having said that, what kind of editing do you want? Most people think that editing is simply having someone check your grammar, spelling, punctuation, and typos. But there are different levels of editing.

- **Developmental Editing:** This editing occurs when you're starting out with an idea or a rough outline. A developmental editor looks at the big picture and focuses more on the structure, organization, and flow of your book and helps you see your book through your readers' eyes.
- **Evaluation Editing:** You've written your book. An evaluation editor will look at your finished manuscript for structure, flow, completeness, and overall quality. If your book is sound in those areas but your writing needs work, you might need a line editor (see below). If the structure or flow are off or you have gaps, you might need to hire a developmental editor. If you get a green light, you might be ready for copyediting.
- **Content Editing:** Here the editor reads and carefully edits your manuscript, working paragraph by paragraph and chapter by chapter. The content editor offers corrections and points out incomplete sections and offers advice on creating a smooth flow as well as advice on the tone of your book. A content edit exists between the high-level view of the developmental and evaluation edit and the line editor's ground-level view.
- **Line Editing:** A line editor is about making your prose sing. However, he/she is not going to evaluate your content, structure, or flow. When you get to the line editing phase, your book is in its final stages. A line editor catches your run-on sentences, clichés, grammar hiccups, typos, and sentence fragments.
- **Copyediting:** You're in the final stretch when you hire a copyeditor. He/she will take a microscope to your book for spelling, punctuation, and grammar mistakes and make sure your book follows the style guide appropriate for your genre (i.e., *Chicago Manual of Style* or *AP Stylebook*).
- **Proofreading:** A proofreader looks at your book after it has been designed and formatted. The proofreader will also find typos (yes, there will still be a few), punctuation, spelling, and grammar issues (these will be minimal at this point), and looks for layout issues, consistency with headings, placement of tables or illustrations, bad line or page breaks, etc. The proofreader is your last line of defense before you go to print.

If you're new to book writing, these 13 Tips might be a lot to take in. However, you don't have to know how to do it all. You do need to have this information to help you make informed decisions on who and/or what organization you will hire to help you bring your book from concept to publication to (hopefully) best seller.

I am your Book Concierge, which means I guide you through the writing and publishing process so that you won't experience the horrors you sometimes hear new authors share about exorbitant fees, lack of support, and losing control of their books.

If you would like support or have questions, schedule a complimentary book strategy call at greatness.youcanbook.me.

Embrace Your Book!

Sophia