



So, You Want to Write a Book!

By Dr. Linda Hancock

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Hancock has written a regular weekly column entitled "All Psyched Up" for newspapers in two Canadian provinces for more than a dozen years. Over the years, her readers and clients have said that they have benefited from her common-sense solutions, wisdom, and sense of humour. Dr. Linda Hancock, the author of "Life is An Adventure...every step of the way" and "Open for Business Success" is a Registered Psychologist who has a private practice in Medicine Hat. She can be reached at 403-529-6877 or through email office@drlindahancock.com

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Repeatedly I hear individuals state that they either have written an unpublished book or have always had a desire to write a book. Well, I just finished my second and learned a great deal from the process.

Doing the writing is just one element of the process. You also need to know about graphic design, interior layout, editing options and marketing. In fact, it doesn't matter who you have as a publisher, you will still be responsible for a major part of the marketing.

One of the most important things to know as an author is the different types of publishing options you have.

1. **TRADITIONAL PUBLISHERS:** Everyone seems to think that they will have the best seller which will catapult them to fame and riches. Well, that very rarely happens. In fact, having a publisher who will give you a huge advance to write a book is almost unheard of. All you have to do is walk into a bookstore to realize the competition you have. Usually those who are given an advance to write their book are people who have already achieved great success or celebrity in their lives. A traditional publisher might offer that person an advance for their "story" because they KNOW it will become a best seller.

2. **SELF PUBLISHING:** This has become more popular in recent years. If you are willing to do a lot of research and all of the work required to turn your idea into a finished product, you can accomplish this. In fact, there are books written to teach you about copyright, font size, cover design and all the other details that you will need to know.

There are several aspects of preparation and publishing, however, that you might want to contract out. For example, hiring an editor, photographer or graphic designer can add a professional look and feel to your book. Once you have the final manuscript completed, you will need to produce the copies that you will sell.

If you have a family history book with a small audience, you might decide to use your computer printer and then purchase an inexpensive coil binder which you can use yourself at home.

On the other hand, if you are planning an extensive marketing campaign and require several hundred copies you will need to find a printer. Printers usually give volume discounts based on the number of copies you order from them. (Keep in mind that most books sell less than 600 copies so don't order too many or you may develop resentment for the fact that your money is tied up in inventory).

3. **PRINT ON DEMAND:** Many companies have sprung up which offer you a number of prints on demand publishing options. You can purchase services through package deals or in piece meal fashion. For example, you might provide your own photo which they will incorporate into the cover design. You might want them to prepare the copyright and distribution.

The key to this type of publishing is that you don't order books until you want or need them. You can order one book at a time if you wish. The unit cost is more than for quantity print orders, but you can get volume discounts and don't have to see your money tied up in inventory

4. EBOOKS: The least expensive method for publishing is to type your work into a document and then promote it through your own website or an eBook publisher on the internet. No paper, no inventory, no printing costs - just electrons. The people who want to read or print the book can then access it through their own computer. If you decide to sell it, you will need a shopping cart program, but the profit is huge as your costs are minimal.

A publisher will help you to produce an attractive finished product, but they will not generally sell it for you. The more help you need from them for services, the more it will cost you and that all comes out of the profits that you are hoping to earn.

Writing a book is a lot of work but marketing it can be even more demanding. Before you sink your hard-earned savings into this, be realistic about how and to whom you will sell it. Otherwise, you might just end up as a frustrated and resentful author who owns a lot of your own books!