

Partnership Publishing Sets the Collective Book Studio Apart

The publisher's unique approach is perfect for authors looking to work closely with a team of publishing experts to create high-quality books readers will love

In January 2019, Angela Engel formed the Collective Book Studio to bridge the gap between traditional publishing and self-publishing. With the steady decline of traditional publishing houses, Engel set out to create a hybrid partnership publisher that pairs authors with skilled editors and art directors while also offering in-house marketing, metadata, and sales support.



Angela Engel

“Since traditional publishing houses are becoming more and more risk averse, all sorts of voices are being shut out of publishing,” Engel says. “Traditional houses are often wary of taking chances on new authors and are looking for big names and established platforms. For this reason, many new authors turn their gaze toward self-publishing. This model is ideal for some self-directed and motivated authors. However, the same thing that makes self-publishing attractive—the low barrier to entry—can also be problematic.”

In addition to being an isolating and overwhelming venture, self-publishing requires no vetting or even editing. Because of this, Engel says, “there is a huge range when it comes to the quality of self-published content.” It’s also why many authors are turning to hybrid publishing models like the Collective Book Studio’s partnership publishing.

To partner with Collective Book Studio, clients submit book proposals, which are screened by in-house editors who decide about acquiring projects. Once a project is selected, clients invest money up-front to bring a book from concept to market with the help of the Collective’s dedicated team. The Collective Book Studio and the client have an equal stake in the success of the project; royalties are split evenly between the Collective and its partner authors.

“Since the Collective Book Studio has a business model where book sales are integral to success, we are just as motivated as our authors to create the highest quality books and to see them flourish in the marketplace,”

Engel says. “In partnership publishing, we are asking the author to invest in their work and in return have a much higher royalty structure.”

Specializing in lifestyle, food, gift, parenting, and children’s books, the Collective Book Studio publishes approximately 30 titles annually, distributed by

Independent Publishers Group

(IPG). “The partnership with IPG is integral to our model,” Engel says. “As a small publishing team without a sales staff, we rely heavily on our distributor and its relationships with accounts to ensure our books are available everywhere books are sold. Having distribution to service an array of sales channels with a full

sales team allows us to be competitive with larger houses. In addition, this sets us apart from many other hybrid models and, certainly, the self-publishing model.”

Among the Collective Book Studio’s bestselling titles are *Embrace the Work, Love Your Career*; *52 Shabbats*; and *Noodles, Please!* Additionally, Collective Book Studio selectively takes on traditional publishing contracts for children’s titles when its editors see potential to develop a book, author, or illustrator. To date, Collective has backed four titles: *Little Loon Finds His Voice* (November 2021), *B Is for Bagel* (February 2022), *Once Upon a Line* (October 2022), and *Gray Fox in the Moonlight* (January 2023).

“The pattern for traditional titles so far has been one per season, but as we grow and depending on the projects that come our way, we would love to increase that number,” Engel says. “For now, one to two titles per season feels like the right mix for the Collective Book Studio.” When asked about the through line that connects all Collective titles, Engel says, “High-quality design and packaging is our specialty.”

This fall, the Collective Book Studio titles include *The Modern Hippie Table*, *Once Upon a Line*, and *Whoever You Are*. And Engel says the Collective may expand into additional categories in the future. “We’re not averse to considering other genres down the road,” she says. “For instance, on our children’s list, we have recently signed an early middle grade title, publishing August 2023. Our current children’s

publishing list primarily consists of picture and board books. We do not publish adult fiction or memoir. But we’re open to considering the right projects that match our editor’s tastes and interests.”

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