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# Introduction

A few years back, in the space of a week, I had three things happen (it's always three, isn't it?) that gave me the kernel of a Big Idea. *And* the foundation of this book...

The first occurrence was a review on Amazon of the original edition of this book. The reviewer taught workshops on publishing, came across the first edition of this book, and the last line of her review read: "His book's solid advice and well-told experiences have pushed his book to the top of my 'recommended reads' list for my workshop attendees."

A few days later, I got an email from someone who had bought one of my books. She thanked me for writing it, adding, "Actually, I should be on your payroll; I'm out there selling you and your books."

Finally, I got an email from a gentleman who wrote: "I'm really getting a lot of value from *The Well-Fed Self-Publisher*. It's a great book. I bought about half a dozen books to get me started on this project, and I have to say yours is the best, which is why I'm contacting you for some mentoring/consulting work."

(P.S. That consulting work—general self-publishing coaching, book title/subtitle creation and back-cover copywriting—totaled over \$1,300...).

So, these three occurrences, all bunched together, had the light bulb go on and led me to a deceptively simple, *unprofoundly* profound epiphany about what it takes to achieve success as a self-publishing author (or any author, for that matter...). But it's even more potent than that. In fact, shortly after coming to this realization, I wrote an article about it that appeared in a prominent journal of independent publishing and called it, "The #1 Most Powerful Book Marketing Strategy of Them All."

Yes, the title was supposed to be a bit hyperbolic, though I assert the actual strategy is anything but. As a sort of reply to the title, the piece started like this:

Sound like snake oil? Too good to be true? Typical overblown hype? Classic over-promising with inevitable under-delivering? Actually, no . . .

Ask any publisher or self-publishing author what's the most effective strategy to sell more books, and all the answers you get will likely fall under the overarching umbrella of "Marketing." Lots of review copies. Tons of live appearances. Scads of news releases to mainstream media. A powerful web site. Radio. Ezines. Blogging. Social media. Writing articles. And ideally, a healthy mix of all the above.

All are "bricks in the wall" of a comprehensive book marketing campaign and should be consistently pursued and implemented.

But, what if you could do one thing before any of these that would turbo-charge the effectiveness and yield of all of them? Something that would dramatically simplify your overall marketing job and help you sell far more books with far less effort—not to mention boost sales of your related products and services.

And here's the best part: It's something you have complete, absolute, 100% control over. What's this amazing tactic?

Okay, drumroll please. Prepare to be underwhelmingly overwhelmed . . .

### ***Write a Really Good Book.***

Go ahead and roll your eyes, but what do you do when you discover a great restaurant? Or a fabulous movie? Or an amazing vacation spot? You can't wait to tell your friends about it. Same with a book.

Write a book that readers consider one of the best—or THE best—in its field, one that, in the case of a novel, delivers a transcendent reading experience; or in the case of a non-fiction how-to title, provides solid, high-value information that enhances the quality of a reader's life or the size of their bank account and does it in a fun and engaging way, and you'll automatically recruit an army of unofficial salespeople—most of whom you'll never meet.

They tell others who'll tell others, and shazam!—you'll experience that wonderful phenomenon known as word-of-mouth advertising. My books have been rich beneficiaries of W-O-M. Sure, I've worked hard to promote them, but most of that effort was on the front end, and I haven't come close to making book promotion a full-time job.

In fact, despite my working nearly full-time as a freelance copywriter (the subject of my three *Well-Fed Writer* titles), sales of my books and spinoff products and services have nonetheless provided me with a full-time living since 2001. All with a part-time marketing effort. And I say it's because, well, they're really good books.

### “Word-of-Mouth” Is No Mystery

A sidebar titled “The Power of Word of Mouth” in the November 2011 issue of the IBPA (Independent Book Publishers Association) *Independent*, read (in part):

*“Nothing beats word of mouth, nothing,” declares Marcella Smith [former Barnes & Noble executive], who asks how many of us read The Help, The Kite Runner, or The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo because a friend had raved about it.*

*Big-name publishers agree. Last fall an NPR story, “How to Sell a Book? Good Old Word of Mouth,” quoted the marketing director of Little, Brown, Heather Fain: “In a lot of ways, the greatest marketing tool we have in publishing—and that probably will never change—is word of mouth.”*

*[Marcella] says, “The question is what starts the word of mouth. In my book selling days in New York City, it was most certainly The New York Times daily book review, and sometimes the front page of the Sunday Times Book Review.”*

This sounds suspiciously close to the old joke, “How do you become a millionaire? First, get a million dollars. Then...” What’s conspicuously absent from the description above? It’s this: What starts word of mouth isn’t an appearance in *The New York Times*. It’s the quality of the book. Keep rolling those eyes, but, fact is, landing in the *NYT* won’t happen until you write that really good book, and you have total control over that process.

### The Habit of Excellence

And what makes a “really good book”? In my genre of non-fiction how-to, that means an in-demand subject, practical information, plenty of nitty-gritty detail, an engaging writing style, and high production value. And “high production value” means hiring *professional* resources to produce your book: book cover and interior book layout designers, editors, indexers, and printers who specialize in books.

A bit about “engaging writing style”... A huge component of that is stories, anecdotes, firsthand accounts (yours and others). Stories make ideas and concepts come alive. My books (and any really good non-fiction or how-to book) are full of stories and are much more engaging for their inclusion. Not to mention, I’ve heard from countless readers that I come across as a fun guy—someone they feel they’re having coffee with. Nice to hear.

But this goes beyond just writing and producing a really good book (though that's the anchor). It's about having everything related to that enterprise—spinoff books, ebooks, coaching, seminars, teleseminars, speaking, customer service, your “author personality,” you name it—be better than it needs to be.

### **Publishers Get *This* Right**

As critical as I am of the conventional publishing world (stay tuned for my rants...), let's give credit where it's due. One thing the traditional publishing world, as a rule, gets right, is they produce books well. They hire the best cover and interior layout designers, editors, and indexers. Since they can't even begin climbing out of the deep hole of production costs until books start selling, they have to do everything in their power to put their best foot forward. And even then, publishing houses lose money on most books they produce!

If you end up following my self-publishing game plan as set out in this book, you'll be in same boat as they are. So, this is advice you'll do well to remember and internalize. And it's a message that's getting increasingly lost in all the unbridled excitement surrounding “the new world of publishing.”

Yes, you can now bypass the traditional publishing gatekeepers, but the books that come from serious publishing houses are the standard by which your book will be judged, so you'd better get it right. In this over-connected world of ours, cut corners and put out a crappy book, and *that* inconvenient truth may just go viral and poison not only your chances with that book, but with your next one as well.

And understand: Doing a professional production job on your book is no guarantee of success; all it'll ensure is a book of baseline quality, one that can compete with those conventionally published, and even have a fighting chance.

Put it all together, and it's all about cultivating a “habit of excellence.” I know, sounds a bit cliché and soundbite-y, right? The term “excellence” has been bandied about pretty irresponsibly for a few decades. Sort of a poster child for an idea that's gotten big-time lip service and low follow-through.

But, don't be fooled. It's not some tired and meaningless platitude. *It's a calculated, bottom-line-focused business decision.* From firsthand empirical experience, it really *can* be the most powerful marketing strategy of them all. Not the only one by any stretch, but a foundational one, and as noted, the one that will enhance and extend the impact and reach of everything else you do to get the word out. It's certainly been that for me.

Oh, and this philosophy applies whether you're publishing via POD (print-on-demand); for the Kindle (and other e-readers); or you're following my “conventional self-publishing” blueprint laid out in this book.

## The Consistent Thread

It'll be the uniform concept underpinning everything I discuss in this book. I've been living this—and in many ways, unconsciously—in all aspects of my writing and publishing career since starting out in 1994. Not because I'm some Brownie or Dudley-Do-Right, but because it makes me more successful. And, yes, I am a “do-the-right-thing” type, and if you are, too, this will all feel quite natural.

Not to mention that I'm, in the current psychobabble, a *pleaser*. I care what people think of me, and by extension, my work, so I'll work extra hard to do a good job, so they have no reason to find fault with me. If you labor under a similar burden, know that this is the silver lining to that cloud. And it's a good one.

But, here's the clincher: Like most human beings, I'm basically lazy and want to work as little as possible. So, if I focus on creating that really good book—a result over which, as noted, I have 100% control—I don't have to rely overwhelmingly on post-publication marketing efforts, whose outcomes are, largely, out of my hands. Yet, when you create a superior product, all the marketing you in fact do will yield greater results.

Not only that, but when your primary product is high quality, for any follow-up products, your reputation will precede you: As long as you continue that habit of excellence, everything you create after that is assumed to be good. Word spreads (i.e., money in the bank), and your marketing tasks are now dramatically easier. And my lazy side loves that.

But, let's stop talking theory and overarching philosophies for a moment and discuss results—where doing all this can take you...

## The Proof...

The first edition of this book began with a pretty cool story about the success I had with my second book, *TWFW: Back for Seconds*, a companion volume to my 2000 first title, *The Well-Fed Writer* (an award-winning, Book-of-the-Month Club title). The original book was a how-to about lucrative “commercial” writing—freelancing for businesses, and for hourly rates of \$50–\$125+—something I've been doing since 1994.

In a nutshell, on September 1, 2004, I released that second book only to the subscriber list for my two-year-old ezine (*The Well-Fed E-PUB*, geared exclusively to commercial freelancers). The book was available for sale only on my web site (it wouldn't be on Amazon or in the bookstores for months to come). I'd promoted its release to my list for a good six to eight months, building the buzz and anticipation. Things went well...

That first day, I sold \$2,000 worth of books and ended up with over \$11,000 in sales for the first two months, of which roughly 80% was clear profit. These results

were the culmination of a marketing strategy launched over four years earlier. Not always precise, well-orchestrated, or even planned much in advance in many cases, but substantial enough for long enough to make good results downright inevitable.

And that juicy outcome wasn't a fluke...

In late 2009, I released the updated edition of my original 2000 release, *The Well-Fed Writer*. Like the 2004 title, this one was also months away from the bookstores or Amazon and released only on my own site and with word disseminated only to that same ezine subscriber base (~7,000 at that point) of my now-seven-year-old ezine. As of the release date, I was in the hole for approximately \$12,500 in upfront production costs for the design, editing, and printing of 6,000 copies of the book.

*Within 45 days of its release, I was in the black.*

Everything I've earned on that book since that moment has been profit. And I'll be discussing some of the specific strategies that led to that financial outcome in the chapter on ebooks, so stay tuned. But, what this all leads to is...

### ... A Full-Time Income ...

This is the potential of self-publishing. In both those release scenarios, that was just one book through one outlet. Bookstore and Amazon sales, once they kick in, drive healthy sales numbers by themselves, and on a steadier, more ongoing basis. *All told, my first book provided me with a full-time living for close to five years*, and collectively, my four books have extended that until today (and counting...) since 2001.

Yes, after my first two books came out, I still stayed active as a commercial freelancer (the field that's the subject of three of my now-five books), but I didn't need to work it at a full-time clip anymore. Now we're not talking "picking-out-chateaux-in-the-south-of-France" kind of money, but the books paid all my bills (including one or two print runs each year), regularly funded my retirement account, allowed me to stay completely out of debt *and* take a few nice vacations each year. Would that work for you?

### ... With Part-Time Effort

I did all that with an effort, which, while formidable, was, as noted, front-loaded. Once the machine is up and running, it definitely doesn't require a full-time effort, though if you did work it to that extent, who knows where it could take you? This sort of financial return is possible because you don't have to sell tens of thousands of copies of your book to make a living from it.

When your profit per book (after all expenses) is three, four, five, or more times what you could make with a conventional publisher, you can generate a nice income stream with much lower sales numbers. Add some high-profit spinoff products we'll discuss later, and you end up with a business model that absolutely annihilates the conventional publishing one (i.e., in some cases, 20–30+ times the profit). No kidding.

And we're talking about the best kind of income stream—a *passive* one. You get nice checks every month and even nicer PayPal and credit card deposits, though you're not working nearly as hard as you did at the outset.

### **Time for a Life?**

Depending on your circumstances, that could mean freedom from the 9-to-5 grind, a chance to pursue other personal projects, time to smell the roses, or whatever works for you. Yet this discussion doesn't even touch on the deep sense of satisfaction and accomplishment you get from building something real and substantive out of nothing more than an idea. Not to mention touching thousands of lives and perhaps making a profound difference in those lives. All of which transcends the money (but hey, we'll take that, too...).

### **A Caveat . . .**

These were my results. Yours may be different. I'm not you. My book isn't yours. Everyone's monthly obligations differ. But, I'm living proof that it absolutely can be done. Many have. There's nothing particularly mysterious, difficult, or complicated about the process. It just takes hard work, creativity, enthusiasm, persistence, and yes, some money. We'll get into the specifics of all that in the coming pages.

### **Fact or Fiction?**

*"The only reason to self-publish is because you can't land a publisher."*

Every time I hear that, I have to smile. The "unspoken"? The preferred route is to land a publisher. Well, I disagree. Self-publishing was my *first* choice. I explored conventional publishing only half-heartedly, knowing early on, that I wanted to keep: 1) control over the project/process; 2) the rights to my work; and 3) most of the profits.

Yet, because of the subsequent success of my books, I've been approached by four publishers over the years, asking if I'd ever considered going the traditional route. In each case, I was flattered, *and*, there was nothing they could offer that I wasn't doing far more profitably on my own. Just as importantly, their overtures were proof positive

that the path I've embarked on (in terms of book content, production, and marketing), in the eyes of successful publishers, is a good and valid one.

Not that I need their blessing, but I mention it since so many authors still deify traditional publishers. In the next chapter, I'll start removing the scales from your eyes...

## Self-Publishing: The Perception

Self-publishing. What comes to mind when you hear it? Last resort? Desperation? Shoddy production quality? Ugly book covers? Pipe dreams? Poverty? Vanity? The realm of the amateur? Well, it's certainly meant all that for many, but unless you've been in a cave for the past decade or so, you know there's a new definition out there, one with rising profits as well as rising industry respect. And I'm Exhibit A.

More importantly, the trend toward *independent publishing* (now, there's a kinder, gentler term, no?) is being driven largely by reality. As it gets progressively harder to land a deal with a conventional publisher, more and more authors are starting to (cautiously) glance in this direction.

Add the whole e-reader revolution (Kindle, Nook, iPad, et al.), plus gradually improving print-on-demand (POD) offerings, and the options for the D-I-Y publisher are robust. And we'll discuss these two in far more detail in later chapters.

This book presupposes that your goal is *commercial success* and is aimed at those who want to turn their passionate creative efforts into real "pay-the-mortgage" money. If you're just interested in writing a book as the proverbial labor of love, with no concern whatsoever about whether a dime ever flows your way, great. *And*, this book won't be for you.

This book isn't about how to write a book (the secret: Turn off the TV, work on it a little bit every day, and string enough of those days together. Voila! A book. There. I just saved you tons of money and time on books and seminars that'd tell you the same thing).

## My Goal: Your Success

The focus of this work is to help you create a powerfully "packaged" book, aesthetically speaking, and to give you the tools to help you maximize your marketing, promotion, and publicity efforts in order to turn a handsome profit on your masterpiece. Simply put...

I'll show you how to create a book indistinguishable in quality from one produced by a reputable publishing company; how to do a far better job of marketing and promoting that book than a publisher ever could; and how to make far more money than you ever would with that publisher. And by doing it all yourself, you control the timetable (potentially shaving 12 to 18 months off production). Plus,



you retain all the rights, allowing you to leverage the brand you've created into a host of profitable “spinoff” businesses—each with its own income stream.

**Note:** My experience is in non-fiction. While general non-fiction lends itself well to self-publishing, *non-fiction how-to* books (like mine) are, arguably, the genre best suited for self-publishing. Why? For starters, buyers have an insatiable appetite for information, and if you can provide the how-to content people want, package it in a compelling way, and are creative and aggressive about getting the word out, you'll do well.

Secondly, in terms of marketing, with non-fiction how-to, it's relatively easy to identify and pursue specific target audiences, a subject to which we'll devote plenty of real estate in this book. Fiction is different, and we'll talk about that in the next chapter.

## Why This Book?

There are some real classics on self-publishing out there (see Appendix B, especially the first four listings under *Books*). What does mine offer that the others don't? Plenty—in perspective, approach, content, style. For starters...

### 1. Sales & Marketing Coaching

The very concepts of “sales” and “marketing” are often downright terrifying to creative types. But, as readers of my earlier books can attest, I'm good at muzzling the mean, menacing, marketing (and sales) monster, and I've devoted all of Chapter 2 in this book to doing just that. *Not* to talking about book promotion, mind you—heck, most of the book is about book promotion—but *just* about the concepts of “sales” and “marketing” in general, so the rest of the book-length discussion of book promotion makes sense.

It's unlikely I'll turn you into marketing wizzes by book's end, but that's *not* necessary to succeed. My goal is to demystify some intimidating concepts so you can market your book successfully—minus any irrational fears of the process.

What qualifies me to make these claims? I bring two invaluable perspectives—and well over three decades of experience—to the table. I was a professional sales and marketing person for 15 years, and I've been a professional marketing copywriter for roughly 20 years (overlapping with self-publishing since the late 90s). Everything I've learned in those first two fields absolutely applies in a BIG way to self-publishing.

Like it or not, it's all about marketing. It's all about being persuasive, about putting your best foot forward, determining what sets our books apart, and how to showcase that in all our written marketing materials. That means book titles,

press releases, book sales sheets, online promo copy, email marketing pitches, and much, much more.

It's about making personal contacts. About identifying an "audience" and crafting the right message to reach a particular audience—whether that's readers, reviewers, media folks, bookstores, wholesalers, distributors, or any other group you need to persuade along the way. It's about speaking to what your audience values, not talking about yourself and your book. It's about figuring out what your book does better than others and letting the world know (like I'm doing here...).

It's about the power of simple, repeatable systems to virtually automate a marketing process. About developing the confidence to *not* put big-name industry players on a pedestal and to know that you have every right to be in the game, too. It's about teaming up with others to move a project forward. It's about realizing that you're playing a numbers game and need to make the law of averages work for you, not against you. It's about using a web site as the linchpin of a marketing campaign. All of which we'll discuss.

## 2. One Big "Real World" Case Study

Contemplating self-publishing, but don't know much about it? I say this book is the best place to start. Why? Well, some books, while gloriously comprehensive, seem to want to offer up everything you possibly *could* do to market your book, the end result being that you feel so overwhelmed, you want to crawl into bed, pull the covers over your head, stick your thumb in your mouth, and not emerge for a week.

More importantly, that approach often feels theoretical. Given that there's no way one author could possibly do anywhere near everything listed in those books, it bears little resemblance to a real-world scenario (NOTE: John Kremer, author of *1001 Ways to Market Your Books*, makes it clear that one person can only realistically do five or 10 of the 1,001 well, and that you just need to find those best-suited to you and your book).

By contrast, this book concentrates on the things you *need* to do, and more specifically, the things I *did* do to achieve the success I had. And by the way, Appendix D contains a time line, starting from before you begin writing your book, right through to after the final version has been printed. It'll tell you exactly *what* you need to do and *when*, so you stay on track throughout the whole process.

Rest assured, I'll offer plenty of ideas beyond the basics, while getting into a level of detail *not* found in other books. As I learned from my first two titles, readers want you to spell things out. *Don't tell me I need to have a press release. Show me how to create a good one. Don't just mention that I need to buy shipping envelopes for my books. Tell me what kind, the company, the model number, and how to reach them. Don't just talk about the value of putting an ezine together. Give me some tips, dos and don'ts, and resources.*

Speaking of that, whenever you see this icon (☒) in the book, it means the item just discussed appears in my separate ebook, **The Well-Fed SP Biz-in-a-Box**, an exhaustive 100+ page compilation of virtually every piece of written marketing material I crafted in the course of my successful book marketing campaigns. It's available as a separate purchase (and for a ridiculously reasonable price). See Appendix C for full details.

### 3. A Focus on Profit AND Process

Many books in this arena focus on the *process*: All the steps involved in producing, marketing, and promoting a book. That's fine, but wouldn't a focus on self-publishing *profitably* be more compelling? Yet in order to claim that piece of real estate, you'd have to have had successful books (as I have). Read this book, and you'll get all the how-to "process" stuff, but delivered through the perspective of someone who's made an atypically healthy living with his books.

### 4. A Fun Book

Then there's my writing style—which was, according to many readers, one of the biggest pluses. Countless times, I've heard: *I feel like you're sitting across the table from me over coffee, chatting*. This is a fun book. That's important when you're just getting your feet wet in this big, new, deep, scary pool. Plus, I'm "fresh from the fight"—steeped in all this, right now, as you read these words. But, I say, the most important plus of this book is the approach...

### 5. A Radical Strategy

Understand this: **Success as a self-publisher is far more about a process than a personality**. It's far more about a bunch of things you have to *do*, than some way you have to *be*. And when we're talking about actions, we're talking about something you have total control over. And I've turned that idea into a three-part operating strategy.

**a) ONE Job.** Early on, I realized that, as a self-publisher, once you physically produce a book, you have *one* job and one job only: **Build the demand for your book**. Ideally, you should farm out everything not having to do with marketing, promotion, and publicity (i.e., warehousing, fulfillment, shipping, web site, etc.), *and* perhaps even a few things that do. All of which we'll explore later.

**b) Targeted Audience.** I realized early on that, with a "niche" book, pursuing mainstream media attention (the standard book promotion strategy and far better suited to books with broad appeal) would be, by and large, a waste of my finite time.

Instead, I determined that I'd maximize the results of any given contact by identifying my target audiences and pursuing the gatekeepers to those most-likely buyers, with the goal of landing reviews, blurbs, mentions, interviews, radio shows, green lights to write articles, etc. (i.e., the “demand-building” activities that drive people to my site, bookstores, and Amazon). As we'll explore later, this can be a more effective strategy even if you *do* have a mainstream book.

**c) Massive Action.** I had a simple hypothesis: If I reached enough of the right people (as described above) with my story and got enough review copies out there, I'd build that demand, and book sales would follow. Which is how it worked out.

What was my definition of *enough*? 500+ review copies. Daunting, yes, but keep in mind: 1) we're talking four-plus years here; 2) if you hit it hard at the outset, you can easily get one-third to one-half of that number out in the first few months; and 3) there are inexpensive ways to ease that grunt-work burden. Again, more later.

It was a pretty potent trifecta. I knew what my *one* job was, zeroed in on the “key influencers” most likely to welcome my overtures, and did a massive amount of it. It reduced a self-publisher's responsibility to **One Big Targeted Job**, not a whole laundry list of energy- and focus-diffusing tasks. Just as importantly, it all added up to a situation where *I was in control of enough things to ensure my success*.

That's in contrast to, say, writers trying to handle all aspects of the SP process, not doing enough promotion (likely *because* they're trying to do it all), and hitting up fickle mainstream media who, more often than not, couldn't care less about them. Which is the story of *so* many SPers out there. Lots of frustration, little control, and littler success.

This strategy is also a stark counterpoint to another “no-control” scenario: an author who goes with a conventional publisher who determines how the book will be marketed and how much time and money they'll devote to that process (i.e., little and little) until they move on to the next “hot thing.” *And* they have the rights to your book. Ouch.

## Think BIG

Piggybacking on the three-point strategy above, I say one of the biggest reasons I've been successful in this venture is that I don't have a “small-potatoes” mentality. Now, I *know* not every book is like mine and not every author can follow the exact steps set out in this book. So, please don't hear what follows as belittling. I just want people to set their sights higher.

Since I began my SP adventure in 1999, I've heard countless accounts of self-publisher “success.” Often, this “coup” was something like getting a local indie bookstore to carry a few copies of their book. Or perhaps convincing a library to stock a few free books. Or landing one review in a midlevel publication. Nothing wrong with any of that, but . . .

## Majoring in Minors

I say celebrating *any* validation from the larger world, no matter how modest, is thinking small—a “starving self-publisher” mentality akin to the “starving writer” version. It’s as if they feel, perhaps unconsciously, that all they deserve is the scraps.

The very act of celebrating every minor triumph, I say, affirms some fundamental belief that you don’t *really* belong there—that you’ve pulled off this coup thanks to a bit of rare generosity from the larger world that saw fit to throw you a bone. Lose that mindset and realize you have every right to be there.

More importantly, the “small-thinking” mindset shifts control back into the hands of others and away from yourself. Which just perpetuates the idea that you’re at the mercy of forces beyond your control. NOT so. Of course, I also suspect there’s a perceived payoff to the struggle: that suffering for the sake of art (pearls before swine?) is a noble, romantic calling. Not for me.

I approached this adventure with success in mind. But know this: I didn’t set some ambitious goal for book sales, and I had no grand strategic plan when I started. But, a pretty good plan evolved, and we’ll cover it all in the pages that follow.

## Friends on Your Side

If you’re seriously considering the self-publishing route, one of the first things you need to do is join the premier independent self-publishing organization: IBPA, the Independent Book Publishers Association (<http://www.ibpa-online.org>).

You’ll find a wealth of resources, cooperative marketing programs, helpful articles, tips on promotional vehicles, and much more in their monthly newsletter, *The Independent*. IBPA holds an annual “Publishing University”—two to three days of seminars with experts. IBPA also sponsors the highly prestigious annual *Benjamin Franklin Awards*, which recognize excellence in independent publishing.

## I’m Just Like You

If you’re reading this book, I’d say we’re more alike than different. I don’t like to work any harder than I have to. I’m sporadic in my marketing. I don’t always follow up when I should. I don’t always get it right, and I definitely don’t have it all figured out. I’m still pretty inefficient in the way I do a lot of things, and I’m still doing too many things myself. I continue to feel my way through the process and have a long way to go until this machine is running like a Swiss watch.

Yet, despite all these imperfections, I’ve built something that’s paid all my bills for a long time. Which means I’ve done a lot of things right. And which also means that you don’t have to do everything right to be successful.

Intrigued by the possibilities? Let’s go take a look at why self-publishing makes so much sense, and why conventional publishing is making less and less . . .

**NOTE:** *Virtually none of the many vendor resources mentioned throughout the book were even contacted in advance to let them know I was including them. They are here because they've done a great job for me, or because of positive feedback from my independent publishing colleagues.*

*The notation "SP" is used to refer to self-publishing or self-publishers (SPer).*

*The terms "self-publishing" and "independent publishing" are used interchangeably throughout the book.*