

A-Z of Self-Publishing



A is for Advertising. Do very little paid advertising. Try to get publicity first. If you need to advertise, use co-op advertising to share the expense with other publishers, and only advertise in publications that will reach your target market.

A is for Amazon. Once you've published your book, consider establishing an account with Amazon.com. They offer a number of options. Remember when setting the retail price of your book that most distributors will require at least a 55% discount!

A is also for Associations. Join as many publishing associations as possible, since you're going to need all the help you can get in order to succeed. Send review copies and press releases to associations that cater to your market.

A is for Awards. Use *Literary Market Place* to find out about awards your book might qualify for. Awards add prestige, create opportunities for press releases, give a sense of pride and accomplishment, and lend credibility to you as an author. You can also type the keywords book awards into your browser. This may lead to new places to submit your work.

B is for Best. Do it right the first time and then be proud of what you've done.

B is for Book Printing. Get bids from various printers, using consistent specifications. Consider a short run printing (500–1,500 copies) for your first book to minimize

your risk and expense. Search the Internet for book printers and make sure to have your book's specs handy so you're always comparing apples to apples. Ask for samples and at least two references, and then check with their local Better Business Bureau.

If you choose the print-on-demand (POD) route, Lightning Source offers a great opportunity to print short runs and then to have access to their distribution channels. You'll find lots of other choices on the World Wide Web, too, but use the same caution you'd use when choosing a local printer.

C is for Catalogs. Get your book in as many catalogs as possible, but don't limit yourself only to book catalogs. If your book would make a great gift, look into gift catalogs, as well.

Check out the *Directory of Mail Order Catalogs*. It's expensive, so you might want to share the cost with another publisher, or you can see if it's available through your local library. Regardless of which route you choose, think beyond just book catalogs. If you're publishing a children's book, look into catalogs that feature products for children, and even if they don't offer books, you could still pitch yours as the first.

C is for Consultant. Establish a relationship with a publishing consultant. It may sound like an expensive step, but compare it to the cost of making mistakes that could have been avoided. Each mistake you make will cost money, and if you eliminate enough mistakes, a publishing consultant will actually save money in the long run.

C is for Copyright. Always copyright your material. Get instructions and forms from the Copyright Office, Library of Congress, Washington, DC 20559, visit their website at www.loc.gov, or call 202-707-3000 during business hours.

D is for Distributors. Do some Internet and Yellow Pages research to get your book into the hands of as many distributors as you can.

D is for Do it Right. Let me reinforce the need for doing everything right. Your first goal should always be to create the best product you can. It needs to be something you can be proud to put your heart and soul into—and doing

everything right is the first step toward achieving that goal.

E is for Energy. You need an abundant amount of energy to produce, market, and promote your book, including brainstorming with publishers of similar books.

E is for Equipment. Your office will need a phone, a computer, a fax machine with a designated fax line, a copier, a printer, and other equipment. Economize whenever you can, but make sure each piece of equipment will fit your own situation.

E is for Expectations. Set realistic expectations, knowing that most companies don't make it by selling only one product. On the other hand, every company had to start somewhere. Set a budget—and stay within that budget. Don't put a second mortgage on your home, but if you can afford the risk of investing in your dream—and you're willing to work hard to achieve it—go for it.

F is for Facts. Make sure all your statistics can be backed up. Do your homework or hire an editor to help you verify all your facts.

G is for Galley Proof. The last step before the printer, a galley is a well-written, edited version of your book—not a manuscript that still has to be edited. Send out galleys ninety days prior to the publishing or printing of your book. Make sure you only mail galleys to people who request them. Use galleys to seek endorsements from well-known professionals for your book prior to printing, since it lends credibility to have celebrity endorsements on the back cover.

H is for Help. Keep your local reference librarian's number handy, get familiar with the incredible amount of free help that's available on the Internet, and if you hire a consultant, have your questions ready before you call.

H is for Humor. You're going to need lots of it as you work your way through the self-publishing maze. Maintaining a sense of humor can save your sanity in the long run.

I is for Inventory. Keep an inventory of office supplies, and shop around before you put in an order. Your Internet browser is always at your fingertips. Type in your cur-

rent needs, followed by the keywords best price.

J is for Junk Mail. You can learn a lot by studying junk mail. Look at other publishers' fliers, see what's effective and what isn't, and learn from their mistakes.

K is for Knowledge. Every step along the way, you need to know what the next step will be if you are to succeed as a self-publisher. The more you know, the better your chances of success, and when you don't know—consult an expert.

L is for List. Be selective about the lists you buy. Proven lists may cost more, but they're worth it.

L is also for Labels. Have a label made with your book's name on it or have the cover made into a label. They're great to use when packaging books. You can obtain a free label and rubber stamp catalog from Five Star Publications.

M is for Marketing Plan. Begin creating your marketing plan from the start. Since your budget will be limited, prioritize your list carefully.

N is for Niche Market. To have the best chance at success, target your book to a specialized market. This book is an example of aiming at niche market. In fact, most of the books Five Star publishes are created for niche markets.

O is for Offer. Offer something extra when someone buys your book by mail. Whether it's free shipping and handling or a 10% discount for buying several books, you'll sell more copies. Find examples of some of the special deals we offer to our customers by visiting www.FiveStarPublications.com and clicking on *Special Offers*.

P is for Patience. Remember that Rome wasn't built in a day. It takes time to do things right, whether it's developing relationships, obtaining reviews and endorsements, getting distribution, or finding buyers. Don't beat yourself up if you don't sell out the first printing two months after publication. When you feel your patience running low, reread R in this list—and make sure you're maintaining Realistic Expectations.

P is for Promotion. Promote your books no more than six days a week, but strive for five days, since you also need to have a life outside of publishing. Don't work night

and day—family time is important, too.

Q is for Query. See if other publishers might be interested in publishing your book before you decide to publish it yourself. You'll learn a lot and it may reinforce your determination to self-publish. The Arizona Authors Association has brochures on creating dynamic query letters, as well as lots of other helpful information. Write to Arizona Authors' Association, 6145 W. Echo Lane, Glendale, AZ 85302 or visit www.azauthors.com.

R is for Rubber Stamps. Have several rubber stamps made, including:

- Review Copy
- Advance Review Copy
- Uncorrected Proof
- Not for Sale
- As You Requested
- For Deposit Only
- 4th Class Book Rate
- Galley Proof

Request a free rubber stamp catalog from Five Star Publications.

R is for Realistic Expectations. The first thing to do when beginning the process of becoming a self-publisher is to keep your expectations realistic. If you expect too much you may be disappointed, which can lead to discouragement. Being realistic allows you to lay claim to the many minor victories you're going to experience along the way, and it's always easier to maintain a positive frame of mind when you've had victories, no matter how small.

R is for Reviews. Have your book reviewed by as many sources as possible—including newspapers, magazines, radio and television programs, and association newsletters.

S is for Stamina. You'll need a lot of stamina if you're going to succeed as a self-publisher. It's what has kept me in publishing for more than twenty years.

T is for Timing. Be alert to fast-breaking news in your field and capitalize on it by either getting out a new book quickly or reviving one that's already in print.

U is for Utilization. Don't be afraid to use all the resources available to you, but always temper your decisions with good judgment.

U is for UPC. You can obtain a UPC bar code at: GS1 US (Formerly Uniform Code Council) 7887 Washington Village Drive, Suite 300, Dayton, OH 45459 or by typing UPC Code into your browser and doing some Internet research. The bar code on the front cover of this book is the type used by grocery store scanners. The bar code on the back cover is the type used by bookstore scanners.

V is for Vulnerability. It's a state you may find yourself in often as you work toward success, but being vulnerable doesn't mean being defeated. Keep your eyes on your goal and constantly work toward it—even when you're feeling vulnerable—and you'll succeed.

W is for overWhelming. Self-publishing can be close to overwhelming at times, but whenever you feel yourself being overwhelmed, go back to S in this list and call upon your Stamina to keep moving in the direction of your dream.

X is for eXperience. Whenever possible, call upon the experience of professionals who have been there ahead of you. You don't need to constantly keep reinventing the wheel. Use the experience of others to help you overcome challenges. The price you pay will save time, money, and frustration in the long run.

Y is for You and Your Book. You're embarking on what can be one of the most rewarding experiences of your life—both emotionally and financially—but it's the pride of knowing you've produced an outstanding book that will be your greatest reward.

Z is for Zoo. It may sound strange at first, but once you've gotten into the self-publishing world with both feet on the ground, you'll understand that it often feels like a zoo—welcome to my world!