
Should You Buy Marketing from a Print on Demand Company?

Contributed by Sid Smith
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Let's start a debate. We've already interviewed one print on demand publisher who charges very high fees, accepts only "serious" authors, and primarily promotes their book marketing services. Their claim is that authors shouldn't consider self-publishing unless they are serious enough to put \$4,000 or more into the project. Is this true? Find out what another print on demand publisher has to say about publishers providing marketing services to their authors.

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While it is true that you won't sell any books unless you put a lot of attention into marketing your book, at least one print on demand publisher thinks that you're not going to be well-served by paying huge sums to your publisher.

Angela Hoy of Booklocker (www.booklocker.com) and Writers Weekly (www.writersweekly.com) says, "We do not believe in the common practice of upselling authors on extra services." Most of the larger companies encourage their authors to purchase additional marketing services, in part because it makes sense to the author who is anxious to sell books.

However, Hoy continues, these marketing products and services "are questionable, at best, in their effectiveness." Furthermore, she says, "those companies are 'double-dipping' - essentially making money from selling the marketing services, then turning around and making money on any book sales the marketing services generate."

Booklocker has a different philosophy. They believe that they are in business to make money from the book sales, and when books sell, everyone makes money. Says Hoy: "This puts our business interests in line with the authors' business interests."

What's interesting from my perspective, having been a customer of Booklocker for my first book, which is no longer available by the way, is that they use exactly the same

backend service to print their books as the big boys and girls. Hoy calls this the "Dirty Little Industry Secret."

I agree, and it is top on my print on demand hit list. This misconception that any print on demand that uses this backend service (I'll discuss this service in a future article) can have superior print quality is ridiculous. Also, the prices are the same for everyone, whether you print 1 book or 10,000 books.

So, while I concur with Hoy that the upselling of additional services may be a little shady in some cases, and downright ineffective in others, it is not necessarily a bad thing. You will need to market your book. That's not the question. What you should be asking yourself, however, is if your publisher is the best source for marketing your book.

There are many book PR and book marketing companies who focus only on marketing books (and not printing). You'll see articles, interviews, and teleconferences with many of these individuals and companies in the coming months. This, I believe, is where you should be focusing your time and energy.

Contrary opinions anyone?

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