

Author Success Stories

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Stories of authors who became successful with self-publishing and some of the obstacles they had to overcome. Learn how they overcame the difficulties and you too can successfully self-publish your work.

Author Success Stories

I. Never Assume

A group of ladies wrote a book that quickly became a bestseller, primarily because of personal “connections”. The success of the first book led to a second book, then over a period of fifteen years became a series of seven books.

Each book in the series was easily recognizable. Each book had the same cover design, each book had the same binding and each book had the same page design. The only difference was the title and the color of the cover. Fans of the series immediately snapped up each book as it was published, if for no other reason than to complete the series.

The authors became so well known that they decided their name alone would produce the instant success of a new book with a completely new format and design, AND targeted to a different demographic group. The authors were tired of publicity and promotion, so they decided to skip this part of the marketing process, believing that reputation alone would create more success.

Well, no one found the book. Actually, not no one, but vastly fewer people. Those of the existing fan base who did find it chose not to buy it – it didn’t match their set of books. The target demographic group did not buy it because they had never heard of the authors.

The authors contacted Ink Tree Ltd. for help. Through an aggressive marketing campaign, Ink Tree secured several sales of the book – sales that also generated tremendous “free” publicity:

A large newspaper chain purchased the book as a premium with new subscriptions. The newspaper launched a door-to-door and a print advertising campaign, exposing the book to thousands of people in the target demographic group.

A national gasoline retailer offered the book? in a special Christmas promotion. Many more thousands of people saw the book as it was displayed near cash registers all across the country.

A major shopping centre offered the book as a gift-with-purchase offer, again advertising the book in newspaper, radio and poster promotions.

The moral of the story is: every book needs marketing help. It will not sell itself. If no one knows about it, no one will buy it.

II. Own Your Book

David Leonhardt, professional speaker and vocal consumer advocate, wrote a book to help people build their own happiness. Titled *Climb your Stairway to Heaven – the 9 habits of maximum happiness*, David’s book is written for individuals as well as for companies. What a great concept David introduces – create happier customers and employees, and you will increase sales!

Originally, *Climb your Stairway* was printed by a company that offers self-publishing services for authors. The company owns the ISBN number and the rights to the book. The authors then must purchase their books back from the “publisher”, even though the book is considered “self-published” by the author.

When David brought his book to Ink Tree Ltd. to find non-bookstore markets for his title, the in-between company posed a problem. Many of the volume buyers required a greater discount than David was given by his “publisher”. It was just

impossible to sell the book to the volume buyers.

David eventually purchased his rights, giving his book a new ISBN number designed a new cover and created his www.thehappyguy.com website. It was a lesson learned in maintaining control of one's own book. If you are going to do the work, you might as well own the product. If you have to do your own promotions and sales, you might as well own the product. If you want to increase your share of the profits, you had better own the product.

Now that David owns his own book, Ink Tree Ltd. has been able to help David with his own happiness. Interesting markets have been found for *Climb your Stairway*. The world loves this book. Many foreign rights contracts have been secured, making *Climb your Stairway* available in Korea, China, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, Croatia, Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, Indonesia, Philippines and Viet Nam.

III. Hire the Professionals

Julie Van Rosendaal had a brilliant idea: write a cookbook for low fat cookies that taste better than high fat cookies. It was her first book, *One Smart Cookie – All your favorite cookies, squares, brownies and biscotti with less fat!* She did not even consider finding a publisher. Julie wanted to maintain control of her book because she had a vision for its design and content. Julie researched her subject matter and the publishing industry very thoroughly so that she would produce a very marketable book.

Julie understood well the need to interview and hire professionals where necessary. She visited many bookstores to ask if her book was a saleable product. Once she established the viability of her book idea, she enlisted a graphic designer, actively sought many printing quotes and developed her www.onesmartcookie.ca website.

Julie avoided the mistake that many new publishers make: that is, they budget up to the print run, and then they neglect to put money aside to promote the book. Sales will not result if the publisher is not creating the sales.

With very good business sense, Julie hired Joni Hamilton to publicize her book. Joni gained national media attention for Julie, which drove people to the bookstores to buy *One Smart Cookie*. Then, Julie hired Ink Tree Ltd. to search out non-traditional markets for the book. Through the efforts of Ink Tree, *One Smart Cookie* was purchased by a national retail catalog. Most recently, a large sale of the book was secured with a display retailer. Both sales were non-returnable.

The successful publicity and marketing of *One Smart Cookie* landed two major publishing contracts for Julie – one in Canada and one in the United States. The good sales record proved to the publishing houses that the book would be a bestseller for them as well.

Julie is now in the process of self-publishing another book. Because she treats her book as a business venture, she is poised for another success.

Ink Tree Ltd. helps authors publish, market and sell books. We have all the tools you need to succeed in book publishing. Let us help you make your book a success. © Copyright 2004 Ink Tree Ltd.

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