

If you decide to self publish

Contributed by Sid Smith
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Just in case you're thinking about self publishing, here are a few tips that might just save you some time and money. Self publishing is at times confusing. There are too many options and far too many erroneous opinions to make sense of what works and what doesn't. This short article will give you a few good clues about where to go...

If
you decide to self publish...

Here are a few tips that may help
your process:

- Choose a printer that does only book printing. There are a number of others who are trying to take advantage of the upsurge of self-publishing, but aren't focused on books. You want someone who is dedicated to book publishing because their quality is consistently better.

- Some offer low-cost packaged deals with several book cover styles to choose from. Spend a little extra and have a professional create a custom book cover. Regardless of the phrase "it's what's inside that counts", people do purchase books by the cover. {josquote} At last count there were about 50 printers in the United States alone who will print books. Then, there are somewhere around 200 (give or take a dozen) Print on Demand (POD) publishers - and this number is growing rapidly! {/josquote}

- Decide if you want hardcover or softcover before researching printers. Softcover is less expensive, but hardcover (not sure why) has more credibility. Considering people will pay \$97 or more for an Ebook, I don't think the extra \$10 for a hardcover book should be an obstacle. Some printers specialize in hardcover, others softcover, and some do both.

- Create a standard Request for Quotation (RFQ) that you can send to every book printer. You'll specify:

- Hardcover or softcover

- Book physical dimensions (softcover is typically available in 3 different sizes)

- Number of pages

- Number of illustrations

- Number of images, photos or pictures

- Specify if you have any color images

- If you're using Print Quantity Needed (PQN - see next section in this chapter), specify the number of books you want printed

- Let them know if you'll be providing the ISBN, or if they will (most POD printers will supply the ISBN, while others offer lower print cost in exchange for you doing all the background work and setup - see next section in this chapter).

- Specify you want the book listed with a distributor - this costs extra, but allows you to sell through Amazon, Barnes and Noble, etc.

- They may come back with other questions, and many have an online request form. Having the RFQ ready to email will save you a lot of time.

If you're using offset printing (not POD), you'll have to buy at least 1500 copies to make it worthwhile. You can get some pretty good deals from book printing companies in Asia; but, be sure you do a thorough job of checking them out for quality.

Shipping costs are usually about the same,
and if you'll be listing through the major book sellers, it doesn't matter
where your printer is located. Choose based on price and service.

Don't be sucked in by all the "extras" POD printers
advertise, such as marketing services. You'll be doing all the marketing
yourself, and what they offer isn't a lot of help.