



Publishing

7 Essential Tips for New Authors

7 Essential Tips

The following information comes from years of experience answering author questions about the self-publishing process, along with tips to help your process go smoothly.

1 Hire a Skilled Editor

Large publishing houses rely on editors for good reason, they are essential to making your book look and read like a professionally produced piece that will compete in the market. Many authors think they are either good enough writers and do not need someone else to edit their work for them, or cannot afford an editor, in fact, you cannot afford NOT to hire one. Editors help direct the focus of your story, which is an invaluable asset when you compare the time and effort you've already put into your work. In addition, editors can help craft a title that will sell. Your title, along with the cover design is your first and often only chance to hook your reader.

The editing process is the first item listed in our list because it must be planned well in advance. It's typical for the editing process—including feedback and author changes—to take about three months depending on the schedules of both the editor and author. Having a complete manuscript and title is crucial to beginning the next step... cover design.

2 Hire an Accomplished Designer

To this day, readers still judge a book by its cover, regardless of the flood of interest in ebooks and reading on mobile devices. Successful cover design is paramount to selling your book; if you don't have a budget to hire a professional, then work hard until you do. This is non-negotiable if you want to stand out in a crowded market. Skimping now will cost you sales.

Don't assume you can do it yourself, or use a general designer from eLance who does not have publishing experience to see your book through the entire process. This step is too important to put in the hands of someone who will spend two hours on the concept and use template designs. Good design and the research to identify your market takes time, but it's what separates a good design from a great one.

Have a clear idea of what you want. Designers are not mind-readers so you shouldn't assume they'll know what is perfect for your book without some direction. Research your genre on Amazon, GoodReads and other vendors, and take screenshots of books, fonts and designs you like to share with your designer.

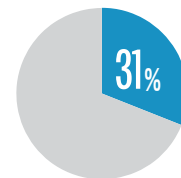
3 Get your ISBN Numbers

An International Standard Book Number (ISBN) is a thirteen-digit number assigned to every book before publication. All books, both printed and digital, require an ISBN so that they can be uniquely identified. Your ISBN facilitates the sale of your book to bookstores (both physical as well as digital), and also to libraries across the nation. Using ISBNs allows you to better manage your book's metadata, and ensure maximum discoverability of your book.

ISBNs can be acquired at ISBN.org for \$125 per each one. You can use a single ISBN for both your printed and ebook if you choose, but hardcover or audio books will require a unique ISBN.

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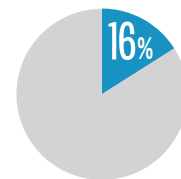
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The Big Five

Traditional publishers now account for only



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Pro-Tip

Offering Pre-orders to your audience via your website gives authors a sales advantage and allows them to connect directly with their readers.

4 Research your BISAC Categories

Many readers search for new books by categories, so it's important to make sure your book is getting noticed by those people that will read it. Start by listing keywords associated to your book. Also research authors you feel are similar to you and see what categories they are listed in.

A good strategy is to choose categories that fit your book and are easier to rank in. If your book fits two categories well, be sure to list them in both to capture the largest audience possible. But be careful to not overdo it! It's also important to match reader's expectations with the subject matter and design of your book. If your cover or content doesn't match the genre, no one is going to see it—let alone read it.

5 Choose your Printer

If you are selling physical copies of your books, the standard model for printing is known as print-on-demand (POD). POD results in radically reduced set-up costs which allow authors to print books in smaller chunks and order more as necessary. This means no surplus to store in your office, or large out-of-pocket costs that come with printing 1,000 copies of your book.

The main players in the POD marketplace are Amazon, CreateSpace and IngramSpark/Lightning Source. All vendors offer distribution channels for your book, however Ingram distributes print worldwide online to Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Books a Million and many more, while CreateSpace gets you Amazon only.

There are many factors to consider beyond distribution when choosing which vendor to go with. If you need advice on which solution is right for you, please contact us on our website.

6 Connect with your Audience

Now that you have your printed books in hand, and hopefully well before this stage, you need to find and engage with your audience. The first step is the creation of an online landing page with book excerpts, author photo and bio, endorsements as well as links to either purchase or pre-order the book. A personal website landing page allows you to market your book 24/7 and track very useful data about who is visiting your site and how they found you.

With this information, you can learn who your audience is, what organizations or groups they belong to, and what motivates them. By leveraging social media, you can then interact directly with your audience and inspire a legion of fans to spread the word about your book.

7 Don't forget the eBook!

The vast majority of self-published authors will not have print distribution in brick and mortar bookstores, which makes digital distribution of your book essential. Most of the indie author success stories of the past few years got their start with eBooks and cult-like followings. Creating an eBook is the quickest and easiest way to get your book in front of your audience.

In addition to the speed at which you can reach new readers, eBooks offer the promise of rich media experience for your readers. Animation and videos can now be embedded into your eBook, creating an immersive experience unlike anything before. In addition to creating ebooks from scratch, we can also help convert an existing book to ePub format, visit our website for examples of our work and contact us to learn how we can help.

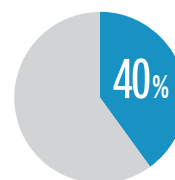


Pro-Tip

Non-fiction titles sell more copies at higher prices.

Indie Authors

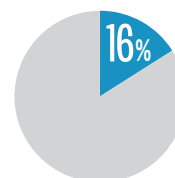
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