



Fourteen Thoughts on Association Publishing

"Practical Problem-Solving Advice for Publishers"

By

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Quick Read

Mind if we share a few opinions? For many years, we have been in the publishing business, in associations, societies, and for-profit companies, working as executives, advisors, and industry commentators. We have worked in commercial and nonprofit organizations. Here are our reflections on the current state of and the future of publishing in associations and societies.

Contents: Associations and Societies; Book Publishing; Co-Publishing; Customers and Quality Management; Organization; Product Development; Project Management; Recruiting; and Rights.

Associations and Societies

- Associations, foundations, societies, and other nonprofit organizations have many advantages that support publishing. Because of their many advantages, nonprofits should be able to earn respectable profit margins in their publishing programs.
- Many nonprofits are risk-averse in their publishing operations. This overcautious mentality inhibits the growth of an organization's publishing business.
- Board members and volunteers have a propensity to micromanage publishing programs. Micromanagement by volunteers will have a devastating effect on staff morale and reduce the effectiveness of the organization's publishing program. Nonprofits should clarify the roles of staff and volunteers.

Book Publishing

- "Book publishing is a quick way to make a slow buck." It takes a significant amount of time to earn profits by publishing books. Time is needed to develop new books, market books, and to establish an identifiable market niche. If you are in a hurry to make money, stay away from original book publishing; i.e., starting book publishing from scratch.

- Established book publishers should talk to their readers every chance they get. Use opportunities for contact at professional seminars and conferences to find out how publications are being received and to mine new book ideas. Publishers shouldn't assume that the distribution channel manager is always the customer.

Co-Publishing

- Co-publishing and co-venturing can be powerful for association and society publishers. Carefully evaluate all opportunities to co-publish/co-venture with other organizations. Work to structure deals that are beneficial to all parties.

Customers and Quality Management

- Customer satisfaction is vital to success. Constantly monitor and evaluate customer satisfaction. Design product and processes to serve customers.
- Quality management concepts are critical in a publishing environment. Concepts such as "process improvement," "measurement," "internal customer," and "rework," should be incorporated into the daily publishing lexicon. Read and learn from the masters: W. Edwards Deming, Joseph Juran, and Philip Crosby.

Organization

- No one template exists to optimally organize a publishing unit in a nonprofit organization. Organization structures of nonprofit organizations vary and this affects how the publishing unit is organized and where it fits into the organization's structure.
- Books, journals/magazines and on-line products are totally separate and distinct businesses. You can't lump them together as operational and financial entities and expect to be successful.

Product Development

- New product development doesn't happen in a vacuum. Someone in the organization must be responsible for new product development. Successful new product development takes a leader to champion the introduction of ideas for new products into the organization.

Project Management

- Project management methodology is valuable for any new book division, magazine, journal or on-line project. A project management approach will enable staff to control the outcome of the project through a disciplined approach to project scope, communications, scheduling, resources required, risk, measurements, and project delivery date.

Recruiting

- Recruiting new staff is one of the most important duties of a manager. Develop an interviewing strategy based on the position's requirements.

Rights

- Rights are a major asset of a publishing organization. The management of copyrights and licensing is a key strategic function for success in publishing. Competent rights management (protecting and licensing) may require a full-time dedicated staff position.

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Join Association Nonprofit LinkedIn™ Group

Association and Nonprofit Publishing is a closed LinkedIn group and is open *only* to publishing managers, editors, librarians, and association executives. Association and Nonprofit Publishing Group's purpose is to establish a forum that will provide helpful information to our members. Our intent is to educate and inform our members about the publishing business *without blatant sales pitches and spam*. <https://bit.ly/2SAgdfL>

About the Authors

Harvey Kane

Harvey Kane is a semiretired STM publishing executive, having worked for American Pharmacists Association, American Chemical Society, Springer, Academic Press, and CRC Press, now part of Taylor and Francis. Early in his career he worked for Macmillan Publishing Company and acquired college level textbooks in various fields. Harvey has collaborated with me on a variety of assignments. He is a top contributor to our LinkedIn™ group **Association and Nonprofit Publishing**.

In his career, Harvey has held these positions: Director, Book Publishing ACS; VP Publishing, American Pharmacists Association; Publisher, CRC Press; Consultant, American Home Builders Press, and Senior Editor at Humana and Springer. Harvey has published books, journals, newsletters, e-books, and a free circulation newspaper. Lastly, Harvey has extensive experience in the electronic delivery of scientific information. Harvey shares his high-level experience at leading STM publishers in this paper.

John B. McHugh

John B. “Jack” McHugh is a 40-year veteran of the publishing business. Jack has worked as an executive for Houghton Mifflin, Wadsworth, and Saint Mary’s Press. Jack is also an experienced association publishing executive. For seven years, he was Publisher and Director of Programs at the American Society for Quality and for a two-year period, he served as the Interim Publisher at the Project Management Institute. He is a member of the ASAE Advisory Board for Publishing, Communications, and Media Issues and Practices.

Jack's specialties include association/nonprofit publishing, book publishing, executive recruiting, journal publishing, rights and permissions, new ventures, organizational design, and social media strategy and policy. Mc Hugh is also the manager of the LinkedIn™ group, **Association** and **Nonprofit Publishing**.

Also of Interest

- A-8, *Twenty Best Practices in Nonprofit Publishing—Revised with co-author David Beacom*, 2018, 2 pages
- A-11, *Maximizing Volunteer Input in Association Publishing—Revised with co-author David Beacom*, © 2018, 3 pages
- A-23, *Earning a CAE: One Candidate's Experience, An Interview with Liz Novak, MBA*, CAE, 2018, 3 pages

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