



## **"Practical Problem-Solving Advice for Publishers"**

### ***Six Suggestions for Self-Publishers***

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From time to time, all of us working in the book publishing business must have had a neighbor or friend ask, "Is it easy to self-publish?" Or you are asked something like, "I read about an author in *The New York Times* who sold 50,000 copies of an eBook self-publishing with Amazon. How many copies of my book could I sell if I publish with Amazon?"

Over the years, I have taken questions from aspiring self-publishers and have advised some self-publishers. Based on my experience, here are six suggestions for those considering self-publishing.

- *Define with precision the editorial niche your book fits into, and how the readership within it will be reached.* Ask yourself what special credentials you have that would convince people to buy a book you wrote. Position yourself as an expert in the subject your book covers if you are writing a non-fiction book in the professional realm or an STEM field.
- *Get editorial feedback.* Make it a goal to obtain a minimum of three objective, in-depth critiques of your manuscript from competent experts. If the same suggestions for improvement are made by several people, take their advice and make the changes.
- *Use the services of a qualified self-publishing expert.* The process of publishing a book for the first time is overwhelming and without a learning curve, self-publishing doesn't make sense on a one-time basis as a do-it-alone task.
- *Develop a profit/loss statement for your book based on projected costs and sales forecasts.* Ask your self-publishing expert to help you develop realistic sales forecasts for your book. From all your cost projections, figure out your total investment. Be prepared to lose that amount of money.
- *Plan your publicity.* A skillfully executed publicity program can be a self-publisher's best friend. Write a strong cover letter and enclose the letter with a free copy of the book to influential people in the field. Be generous here; when in doubt send the book particularly if you are selling a service as the book can become your calling card.
- *Write a marketing and distribution plan now.* Include actions, timelines, and a budget. Develop a marketing plan addressing packaging, promotion, direct mail, publicity, warehousing and distribution.

**Also of Interest:**

- B-55, *Commercial Publishing vs. Self-Publishing: Advantages/Disadvantages*, 2019, 2 pages <https://tinyurl.com/yxcx9oqh>
- B-10, *McHugh's Book Marketing/Promotion Checklist: Ways to Promote and Sell Books*, Co-author Harvey Kane, 2019, 4 pages [http://www.johnbmchugh.com/pdfs/book\\_publishing/B-10\\_Mkt\\_CL\\_22\\_Ways\\_HK\\_VV-BK\\_10-19.pdf](http://www.johnbmchugh.com/pdfs/book_publishing/B-10_Mkt_CL_22_Ways_HK_VV-BK_10-19.pdf)

## **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. 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, career management, 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**.

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