

## **PUBLISH YOUR BOOK**

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A RhondaKay Show Publication

Notes from a seminar presented at Black Images Book Store in Dallas, TX by the authors of *“Do The Write Thing,”* Kwame Alexander and Nina Fox. The focus is on self-publishing your book eliminating the middle man using the 7 steps featured in their book.

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#### 1) Writing Your Masterpiece

- a. Determine your purpose for writing the book
- b. Plan a schedule of writing and follow it
- c. Attend writing workshops
- d. Read other books like the one you are writing
- e. Maybe form focus groups who read and critique your book

#### 2) Fine Tuning Your Masterpiece

- a. Identify and hire a professional editor; someone who does this for a living. You may also hire a Degreed English teacher.
- b. Be knowledgeable of the different kinds of editors:
  - Content Editors – edit for content
  - Line Editors –
  - Developmental Editors – a subject matter expert who helps you develop your book to its best possible form.
  - Copy Editors – proofreads your book and checks for spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc.
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- c. Trust your editor, after all you selected them and they have your best interest at heart.

### 3) Starting Your Publishing Company

- a. Make sure your book gets into stores. It needs to have an ISBN number (International Standard Book Number). This is like a social security number for your book. You must have a different ISBN number for each book you write, each version you write i.e. paperback version, hardcover, sequels, re-writes, etc. This number shows bookstores, etc. you approach you are serious.
- b. Make sure your book gets reviews. Put together a press package for marketing.
- c. Make sure your book can compete. Do your research. Find out from book stores what their best selling book in your subject category is and take notes from there.
- d. Check the business license and tax laws.
- e. Use a P.O. Box.
- f. Get a separate phone line, check card, etc. for business.
- g. Stay on top of trade detail by subscribing/reading the latest trade journals. (Publisher's Weekly)
- h. Get a Library of Congress number.

### 4) Designing Your Masterpiece

- a. Helpful questions to ask yourself: Do I want color? Do I want a photo on the cover? Do I want my picture on the cover?
- b. Find out how your type of book is designed. \*If you look at various elements of certain books, they are all common. Look for what is consistent between them. (Figures, eyes, nose, ears, etc. incorporated into the cover design.)
- c. Find out which book in your category is faring the best.
- d. Effective colors for book design: red, yellow, purple, bright colors.
- e. If you design the cover yourself or have someone you know design the cover, commonly used tools to get the job done are Quark Express, PageMaker, and Photoshop. Prices for design range from \$45/hr to \$500 flat fee rate for services.
- f. Book Composition: what do you want your book to look like, where do you want the page numbers to occur, do you want a header on each page, what font type will you use, what font size? The industry standard font size is 11 point.

5) Marketing (Presented by Nina Fox)

- a. Develop or have developed a marketing plan. How will you get your books sold?
- b. Put together a Press kit that contains press release and other marketing information relating to your book.
- c. Seek free publicity from newspapers, radio, etc.
- d. Use email to contact friends, acquaintances, and the like asking them to purchase your book and to spread the word.
- e. Make and accept opportunities for speaking engagements.
- f. Be persistent and consistent in your marketing endeavors.
- g. Send letters to family and friends.
- h. Use various organization lists as source of target marketing.
- i. Exhaust all avenues for free advertising before paying for advertising.
- j. Consider a commercial or infomercial for your book. (You can also place it on your Website)
- k. Give little gifts at promotionals that will make potential customers remember you.
- l. Be creative in your marketing. One man hired an actress to act out a segment of his book during a book signing. *\*For poetry, you must perform in order to get book sales.*

6) Printing Your Masterpiece

- a. Locate printers whose sole business is printing books. Since they are book publishers, they are set up to do mainly book type printing and the cost will be cheaper.
- b. Minnesota is the book publishing capital.
- c. Know the various types of binding:
  - Plastic Coil: used for workbooks and study books, etc.
  - Perfect Bound: paperback
  - Case Bound: cloth bound, hardcover
  - Shiny: 10 pt. Coated 1 side to get a shiny book as opposed to having the book shiny all over. It will cost less and the look will have the same effect.

## 7) Selling Your Masterpiece

- a. Know the various markets available:
  - Independent Book Stores (Black Images)
  - Chain Book Stores (Barnes and Nobles)
  - Specialty Book Stores
  - Libraries
  - Beauty Salons and other businesses
- b. Bookstores who sell your book get a minimum of 40% discount off of the retail price.
- c. Vendors purchase based on looks and quality (well written).

Manuscript Format:

PageMaker is the industry standard. Type your manuscript in New Courier font size 11 double-spaced. Place manuscript in a binder or leave loose.

There are grants for writers.

[www.texaswritersleague.org](http://www.texaswritersleague.org) is a writer's resource website.

This is just a place to start. Continue to develop your craft and do your research. Be sure to participate in any groups, organizations or activities that will help get you closer to your goal of publishing your books.

Best wishes,

RhondaKay