



The Memoirs

Guide to

Getting into Print

INTRODUCTION

WELCOME TO THE MEMOIRS GUIDE TO GETTING INTO PRINT. MEMOIRS IS A SMALL, PROFESSIONAL PUBLISHING FIRM WHICH STARTED OUT BY HELPING PEOPLE TO WRITE AND PUBLISH THEIR AUTOBIOGRAPHY. THINGS HAVE GROWN FROM THERE AND WE NOW HELP PEOPLE TO PUBLISH THEIR VERY OWN NOVEL, BOOK OF POEMS, COOKERY BOOK, CHILDREN'S BOOK THE LIST IS ENDLESS. PUBLISHING YOUR OWN BOOK HAS RECENTLY BECOME VERY POPULAR AND MUCH MALIGNED AT THE SAME TIME. THE LATTER IS DUE TO THE PRACTICES OF SOME UNSCRUPULOUS VANITY PUBLISHERS.

What is Vanity Publishing?

Vanity publishing is, quite simply, the practice whereby the author contributes to the cost of publication of a book that he or she believes to have interest or even selling potential, but that for a variety of reasons will not be accepted by the larger publishing houses. These can be very valid reasons - many books are suited to a particular niche market or, often in the case of town or family histories, to a certain geographical area, but the final print run will not be big enough to make it a viable proposition for a commercial publisher.

In these cases, vanity publishing is the ideal answer and many authors have managed to make a profit on their book. Unfortunately, just as many have actually lost money, and this is where vanity publishing is now getting a bit of a bad name. You've probably seen ads with headlines such as: *Authors invited to submit manuscripts - any subject considered; Well-established book publishers invites authors*, and the like. If you send off your manuscript, no matter how bad, you will

always get a letter back saying that this is just what they've been looking for and provided you pay for all the costs, they are sure they can sell the book for you. And because deep down we all have secret hopes of becoming the next Jilly Cooper or Dick Francis, all too many fall for these promises. Here at Memoirs, we do things differently. First of all, let's drop that misnomer Vanity Publishing and start using the term Self Publishing, which is really a much more accurate description.

Self Publishing

People want to publish their own book for many different reasons. Yes, some hope to make money out of it and this can be done, with some thought and planning. Others feel they have something important to say and are not interested in monetary rewards. Then there are people who possess very specific knowledge about a profession or hobby that they feel they want to pass on. And finally, some people may have written something that is interesting only to their immediate circle of family and friends, such as an autobiography or a family history, and they simply want ten or twenty copies of it in print.

All of these are good reasons for looking into self-publishing. The most important feature of self-publishing is that you remain in charge from start to finish. You decide what the book will look like, how many copies you want, how much you are prepared to pay per copy. You pay strictly for the actual cost of producing the book, and not for such items as advertising, representation, catalogues and warehousing. It's up to you to sell the book if you wish to do so and any profits remain firmly in your pocket.

If you decide to let us print and finish your book, we will be happy to supply you with our detailed leaflet on ways to sell your own book. This is, of course, entirely free of charge.

Serious Selling Tactics

If you are happy with the idea of producing your own book, but feel daunted by the prospect of actually trying to sell it, we can of course do all the hard work for you. At Memoirs, we approach things in easy, logical steps.

1. Is there a market?

With our many years of experience in publishing we are able to give you an informed opinion as to whether your manuscript has selling potential. We can offer advice on any changes that may be necessary. Quite often a slightly different emphasis results in a book that is eminently suited to a particular niche market. If we feel there really is not much chance of ever selling the book, we will say so too - but we'll break it to you gently.

2. What will the book look like?

This is, of course, entirely up to you. You may have a pretty good idea already of what you want. If you have not even begun to think about it, we can offer suggestions as to style, layout, typeface and size. Within reason, nearly anything is possible. Once again, our experience will be invaluable in producing something that looks 'friendly' and easy to read.

3. How many copies will we need?

This depends entirely on the market you are aiming for and, of course, your finances. We will be able to work out the best ratio of number of copies versus cost and expected sales.

4. How will we sell the book?

This is going to require some serious round-the-table discussion. If your book is related to your profession or specific interest, you may already have a good idea of the best approach. If you are trying to sell a novel or - even more difficult in terms of saleability - a book of poetry, a marketing strategy needs to be developed.

Whichever we decide on, we will always give you a detailed overview of what we will be doing and the costs involved. We do not believe in vague promises of 'our representatives will call on bookshops' or 'we will include your book on our list of available titles'. Whatever we do to promote your book, you are always going to know about it.

5. No guarantees

This is where we have to be brutally honest. We have the experience to spot the potential of your book. We have the contacts to present it to the marketplace. We have the skills to promote it. We do *not* have an insight into the fickleness of the book-buying public. We have all read books by relatively obscure authors and wondered why they weren't overnight best-sellers because they're so good. Equally, there are best-sellers that we haven't managed to finish because they were so boring. There are, quite simply, no guarantees.

Marketing Strategies

Here are some of the ways in which we can promote your book: -

- ***design, produce and place advertisements in relevant publications***
- ***direct mail campaigns***
- ***specialist mailshots to libraries, bookshops and other relevant bodies***
- ***preparation and despatch of press releases***
- ***despatch review copies to relevant outlets***
- ***organise author tours and book signings***
- ***liaise with book trade press***
- ***Place your book with a reputable distributor***

Other Memoirs Services

Quite a few things have to be considered if you decide to become your own publisher, and following are some of the things we can help you with. You can publish your book under your own name, *Jean Smith Publications*, or you can use a business name, *Essential Publishers*. Either way, to look suitably professional you will need letterheads and possibly business cards printed with your chosen name. We can design and print these for you, in the relatively small numbers that you require.

One of the best selling tools if you intend to do things by mail, is an advance information sheet. This is usually A4 size, with a photo of the book's front cover and relevant information about title, author, content, number of pages, if it's illustrated, price and, most importantly, where to order it! We will design and print the information sheet for you.

If you decide to sell your book you will normally need an ISBN number and in most cases a bar-code as well. You can organise all this yourself and information is freely available on how to calculate your numbers. You are also required to send copies of your book to the legal deposit libraries. This ensures your copyright. If you would prefer us to take care of these details we will charge you a small administration fee.

If you want to use a quote in your book you can use up to fifty words without having to request permission from the copyright holder. For longer items, you will need copyright clearance. Once again, this is something you can do yourself but we will be happy to do it for you if you so wish.

What is the next step?

By now, you may be quite enthusiastic about the idea of publishing your own book. However, that book may at this stage only be a handwritten manuscript, a file on a computer, or even just an idea in your head. It doesn't really matter. Just pick up the phone and give us a call and we will discuss where to take things from here.

In our experience, writing and publishing a book is a deeply personal experience and we have developed a very close working relationship with most of our authors. For this reason, we will always endeavour to come and see you to discuss your requirements. To get an initial idea of your plans, we have included a questionnaire that you can return to us. You may not be able to answer all questions at this stage, but just going through them will give you an idea of some of the things that need to be considered. Our aim is, always, to help you in any way that we can and make the whole process of writing and publishing your own book a truly memorable experience.



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