

## How to get published Hints & Tips

This article is written for business consultants, who want to publish something relevant to their profession. If you want to write a science fiction story, or an historical novel, this is not really for you, although many of the principles will still apply.

### Your Aim

First be clear on your aim. You are far more likely to succeed if you are clear what you want from being published. Fame and fortune are too vague! Here are some possible reasons:

- Lead generation
- Cost effective marketing
- £ 000,000s.....
- Credibility - expertise
- Credibility - image
- Credibility – reputation

Note that credibility crops up fairly often! This is a critical area for a consultant. Having something published may also generate leads, and provide a cost effective marketing tool.

Unless your name is J.K. Rowling or Dick Francis, do not expect to make money directly from publishing, it would be rare for non-fiction to pay the mortgage!

### Your Target Audience

First, profile your readers – who are the people you want to reach?

- Where do they look for information?
- How accessible are they?
- What will capture their interest?
- What problems do they face?
- What information do they need?
- Can you offer something unique or special to meet their need?

If you have the answers to all these questions, you will have a strong proposition.

### What to publish

You have a wide variety of media to choose from, which have very different impacts on the reader. They are also priced very differently.

- Leaflet
- Newspaper Article
- Magazine Article
- E-zine Article
- Newsletter Article
- Special Report
- E-zine
- Book

#### Relative Pricing

FOR 50,000 WORDS in a:

- Newspaper £0.50
- Magazine £2.50
- Paperback book £5.99
- Hardback book £12.99
- Special report £75.00

## **Publications**

### **Your own or someone else's?**

You will probably have assumed that “getting published” means selling your copy to a publisher, but self-publishing is increasingly more practical these days.

If we take Jack, an independent Java specialist with his own newsletter and website, Jack could write a specialist article for:

- Computer Weekly
- Jack's Java News
- A USA Java E-zine
- The “Useful Stuff” page of Jack's Java Website

### **The Sales Challenge**

You have a choice of two options here:

- Sell yourself and your work to the publisher.
- Sell (and distribute) your publication to your target audience.

There are pros and cons for both. Publishers are notoriously difficult to sell to, although less so in the more specialist fields. If you take the do-it-yourself approach, marketing and distribution can be a serious challenge, and a serious cost, unless you are using the Internet.

### **Making contact**

If you decide to go for a publisher, start with your network.

- Who do you know?
- Who do you know who might know?
- Who do you know of who might be worth approaching?

Persevere with this – do not restrict your network just to people you know. If you know of an author who is successful in a similar (but not competitive) area to your own, make a cold call and ask them for their contacts – they can only say no!

If your network does not deliver, then go for the direct approach:

- Research the publication
- Get the features list - if it is a magazine or newspaper
- Ring them up and ask!

Do nothing blind. Even though you risk a “not today, thank you” response, you are unlikely to get it to a general enquiry, such as: “I'm planning to write an article of 5000 words on x, would this be appropriate for your publication, and how do you like articles to be presented?”

### **Which Publisher?**

Go about this systematically – visit bookshops and form a view of who to target.

- Research the market
- Who publishes similar books?
- Research retailers
- Research the publisher
- Find a name.... This is so much easier now. Knowing your publishers, you can visit their web site. They will often have a page for would-be authors, sometimes with editors' names, sometimes with requests for proposals.
- Use the name. Be sure to address your covering letter to the editor you have identified.

### **How much to write, and when**

Whether you are writing an article or a book, research the length of similar publications. If it is a book, you do not need to write it before you submit a proposal for publication. All you need is the following:

1. Sales blurb - which will go in your covering letter. Writing this will be invaluable for you, as it forces you to identify your target readership, and define what they will get from your book.
2. Detailed outline – this can be a list of chapters. It shows that you have thought the book through.
3. Synopsis – no more than a page of A4.
4. Up to three chapters, depending on the publisher's requirements, but you will probably be in a better position to deal with items 1 to 3 if you have written three chapters, rather than one.

### **What the publisher wants**

Your research will tell you this very precisely, but a typical requirement is as follows – all hard copy:

- Very clear summary
- Sample material (a chapter)
- Examples of previous work
- Curriculum vitae
- SAE (vital – you will annoy them if you do not send one!)

### **Presentation**

The way you present your proposal is critically important. The medium is a key part of the message here, so make it:

- Flawless
- Totally professional
- One copyright reference per document (they get annoyed by too many!)
- Meet their specification to the letter!

### **DIY Book Publishing**

Are you already a publisher?

If you write a newsletter, or even just have a website, you can consider yourself a publisher already. Publishing an e-book is the next step, but publishing a printed volume is more of an undertaking. However, do not confuse publishing with printing. You do not need huge presses and warehouses full of paper. With today's technology, print runs are much smaller, so you do not have to commit to a garage-full for the next ten years! If you have a strong specialist niche, and good access to your target market, it is quite feasible to publish a few hundred books, and sell them via your website and Amazon, using whatever medium reaches your audience effectively – usually a specialist magazine, or a mailing. If you consider this option, find the right printer, who specialises in short runs. The alternative is to call your book a "special report", if it contains material for which that title is appropriate, and then you could print it yourself, as no one expects a special report to look like a book.

Do not attempt to penetrate the UK retail book trade on your own. It is a nightmare to sell to, and worse, to get money out of. All books are on sale or return, so if you think you have sold one when they take it into stock, you are wrong. It is only sold when the retailer receives the cash from their customer. Only when you make a success of selling directly might you think of approaching a distributor.

For more on this subject, read "Teach Yourself Publishing". It is full of practical advice.

Whichever route you choose to publication, good luck!