

You just don't know what you don't know... yet

Maria Carlton

I'm not sure why I'm still surprised when new writers say things like: 'but this is such a great book, how do I get it into onto Amazon?' or, 'I just have to get an agent and then the rest will be easy', or words to that effect. Another one I constantly come across is the author who thinks that the easier option will be to simply create an ebook instead of a 'real' book.

Well, the hard truth is, there are already a number of authors who have written about your subject - some good and some bad; some wealthy ones and many who are sadly sitting on the boxes of their unsold books instead of furniture now. There are no new ways to become wealthy, paths to enlightenment or management techniques. They are all mostly the same as someone else's version of it, but told with fresh stories or examples. So the world is not waiting for your words - sorry. But, if you have the wherewithal to back yourself and your message and turn your material into a 'real' book and do it well, then you have a chance at getting your book looked at seriously by any number of publishers, agents or book sellers. You just have to know how the system works - from idea to finished product and then to market.

Sure some people do fluke it - but you know, even the most successful authors in the world often received enough rejection slips to wallpaper a small office with before finally hitting the literary jackpot. I don't believe in flunking it - you really have to be exceptionally good (or know someone who know's someone - wink, wink) to be able to bypass the alligator filled moats and drawbridges that guard most publishing castle gates.

Note: Celebrities are a whole other story - and I'm not even going there with this article today!

So - what do you need to know about publishing in order to have a real shot at making it?

Here's a list of 10 things - but it's out of 100 and these are just the basics. These rules are the same whether you work with a traditional publisher, self publish or want to do e-books..

- 1) Get a good **book** editor to solidly go through your manuscript and make sure its AWESOME, not just pretty good.
- 2) Work with a book shepherd or industry specialist who knows how to get the book from manuscript to 'ready for publishing'; whether that means ready to self publish or submit to a traditional publisher.
- 3) Know who your target market is, why they would want to buy your book and what they might pay for similar books on the same subject
- 4) Find out who else is writing (well) about your subject.
- 5) Have a reason for writing the book - not just because you want to make money as a writer, because most likely you wont.
- 6) Be prepared to speak and promote your book yourself - your publishers won't do a lot, unless you are paying them to and/or you are already very famous and selling millions.
- 7) Learn how to sell from the platform and use PR and social media to get your book promoted.

8) Join some relevant associations and submit articles and blogs to their magazines or websites so that you can get your book some direct attention from those who might be interested in your topic - ie your target market.

9) Create a website and make sure it's professional and geared towards promoting your book and your expertise as an author and speaker so that people can go there to find out more about buying your book and/or tapping into your expertise in other ways (beyond your book).

10) Learn how to creatively - and not in an annoying or immature way - position yourself in your market, to promote your work within your genre. Get smart about your personal marketing and personal brand.

Working with an agent is only likely to happen if you have really outstanding ideas, quality material and a very well prepared manuscript and/or completed book which has already got a proven track record of sales.

A big publisher is only likely to look at your work if you can get their attention and that means having a great agent who loves your work and will promote you well, or a book which is topping the charts already.

If you are a new author, you owe it to yourself to learn all you can about how this industry works, how other authors have succeeded and what's made some books stand out successes in your genre.