

The Beautiful Plan

~ Publishing Strategies from Patron Saint Productions ~

Issue #7 ~ Spring, 2003

Why Authors Hate You

*Heavily Edited by
Steve O'Keefe*

Authors really don't like publishers. They don't like us because we change their work — or force *them* to. We reject their titles. We dress their books in jackets they hate. We take custody of their manuscripts and refuse visitation rights. We don't let them see or comment on marketing plans. We spend very little money or time promoting their books. Our royalty statements might as well be Aramaic. We don't return their voicemail or e-mail. We don't communicate and we don't care.

Sure, that's an over-generalization, but it's too close to the truth for comfort. It should concern us that so many authors feel this way about their publishers. And it's our fault, really, for not communicating better about exactly what we do, and why. This year, *The Beautiful Plan* will have a special focus on authors — improving our relationships with them, educating them, motivating them, putting them to work. Let's start by *listening to them*.

The following conversation took place over a 3-month span beginning in November, 2000. It concerns the formation of an authors' publishing co-op. The discussion was initiated by Steve Roth — author, editor, and producer of dozens of books. Roth, who earned a Masters in Publishing from New York University, had just completed a 9-year run as CEO of Thunder Lizard Productions. The other 18 participants included many of the most prolific tech writers in America — the folks who write all those books and

manuals that help us use computers well. What they say about publishers isn't pretty or even fair. But it's important. Let's eavesdrop.

STEVE ROTH

You've all heard me talk about the idea of an authors' coop publishing company — an idea Glenn Fleishman came up with about 18 months ago, and that I've been noodling on, researching, and talking to folks about ever since.

The best question I've been asked on this came from Steve O'Keefe. He wondered why there was anything special about this idea, why it's not just another publishing house. What's really there for authors that traditional publishers don't provide? A "Focus on the author" is a nice tagline, but does it really mean anything?

"The author has to do more than fill out a marketing information sheet and the publisher has to do more than ignore it."

The key issue I think we should try to overcome: the misalignment of incentives between authors and publishers. It arises because publishers amortize their risk over multiple titles. Authors, who spend 4 to 24 months (+) writing, don't have that luxury.

Publishers don't have the incentive to target-market specific titles. They don't have people who know each micromarket. It only matters that *some* of the titles sell well — not that they all do. So they throw them against the wall and see which ones

stick. Few titles get the specialized, targeted marketing that's required to rise above the clutter. This is especially an issue for nonfiction, where targeted marketing can really work well.

If we're going to put together an organization that truly serves authors, it must do one thing more than anything else: provide an excellent vehicle for authors to bring their specialized market knowledge to bear on selling their books.

Authors love to complain, but are they ready to put their time and money up to take a chance on their books? The author will have to do more than fill out a marketing information sheet, and the publisher will have to do more than ignore it.

Editor's Note: Roth provided a list of goals for the co-op. Reading it backwards, it contains a laundry list of gripes authors have against publishing companies:

- ◆ Provide a vehicle for authors to get the publisher's share of the profits from their works (or a significantly larger share)
- ◆ Enable authors to bring their market knowledge to bear on marketing, PR, and other promotion.
- ◆ Give authors control over the editorial and production values of their books without having to coordinate the whole editorial team.
- ◆ Publish smaller, high-value works that don't make economic sense in the traditional publishing model.

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- ◆ Enable authors to access the variety of sales/marketing/distribution channels that exist (e- and real) without learning it all themselves.
- ◆ Provide a web site where authors can sell their books without building an ecommerce site from scratch for one or two titles.

STEVE O'KEEFE

Publishers serve the interests of their stakeholders — management and investors — not authors. An author-centric organization will serve the interests of its stakeholders: the authors.

Publishers are devoted to their brands. They do not own the authors, and are not interested in heavily promoting authors, because their investment can walk out the door and sign with a competing publisher. Publishers own a mechanism for publishing, distributing, and marketing “product,” and their interest is in promoting the mechanism, not the authors. That’s why publishers force authors into series, force title changes on them, control design of the product, and control the marketing. Publishers want their brand to survive even if their talent leaves. Authors are viewed as fairly interchangeable.

Authors are devoted to building their brands. Authors own intellectual property. This property is usually tied into various personal and professional goals. Most authors make little money from book sales. Many use books as a marketing tool for services and products they sell. Many authors just want to build a big enough following so that they can make a living doing work they enjoy: research and writing. For the most part, authors do not want to be publishers — they will research and write, and they’ll participate in marketing because they have a financial incentive to do so, but they would rather not design, print, store, distribute, and sell their works — or do all the related chores of managing a business.

The thing that always upsets me about conventional publishers is that they insist on controlling rights they have no intention of — or mechanism

for — marketing. If they want the foreign language rights, then they’d better have a plan to show the book to foreign language agents or publishers. If they want the screenplay rights, they’d better know how to sell screenplays. Publishers are just plain lousy at marketing rights for anyone except star authors. Their slowness to market non-fiction rights often results in those rights losing their time-sensitive value. And they refuse to let authors cut deals themselves.

RICHARD HOY

The trick isn’t going to be producing the co-op’s books. With a \$99 investment, you can build an publishing model that starts realizing profits with a handful of sales. The trick will be making the books rise above the other equally good titles on the exact same subject that are in the marketplace at the exact same time.

“What dissatisfies authors most is that their books don’t receive persistent, intelligent marketing.”

STEVE O'KEEFE

Selling books isn’t job one; making authors happy is. And that means providing lots of things publishers don’t, such as helping authors use their books to grow profitable careers and businesses.

The more I look at this co-op deal, the more it looks like it should be an agency co-op, not a publishing co-op. The co-op helps authors advance *their* goals, which are multifaceted, and helps market their product in all formats to all markets. The co-op cuts a deal with an e-publisher first, perhaps, but then also specializes in niche-marketing intellectual property into books, foreign languages, audio, video, screenplay, streaming palm products, anthologies, online syndication, offline syndication, merchandise, promotional tie-ins, software, games, consulting gigs, speaking engagements, expert witness testimony, etc.

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TED NACE

I’m thinking about all those trade books that sell between 10,000 and 30,000 copies. Assuming a 60 percent discount off a \$20 list price (the coop gets \$8 per book), the coop grosses \$80,000 to \$240,000 prior to print costs. Assuming \$1/book for printing, \$10,000 in editing and production costs, that’s \$60,000 to \$200,000 net.

Now suppose the coop is attuned to its authors and really good at direct marketing books at full price. Say another 2000 copies sold at full price resulting from a smart expenditure of \$10,000. That raises the net to \$88,000 to \$228,000.

If the coop publishes 10 - 20 such books per year, it can easily afford the staff overhead and also give authors more control and a bigger share of the profits than they would get from a for-profit publisher. I would guess that royalties in the range of 30 percent would be totally feasible.

With a 30 percent royalty, the above scenarios yield \$36,000 to the author for a book that sells 10,000 copies, and \$84,000 to the author for a book that sells 30,000 copies. That’s two to three times as much as a for-profit publisher paying 10 to 15 percent royalties. And the co-op still has plenty of money to pay its staff, rent, etc.

KATHARINE HARMON

What seems to be emerging is an entity elastic enough to exploit all aspects of a property (rights), explore the various marketing channels for it, and deliver it in various formats. Hallelujah! How wonderful it would be to make this a reality.

I would posit that what dissatisfies authors most about their relationships with traditional publishers is that their books don’t receive consistent, persistent, intelligent marketing. What will make the co-op’s staff members any more motivated to promote and sell each title than any other publishing house’s employees?

Outsourcing some of the marketing work to those who know it and have established contacts is a good idea. That would enable the co-op — if it so desires — to have an eclectic nonfiction list with a few central peo-

ple to hire and oversee the subcontracts, and develop a marketing plan for each title that exploits the markets that make the most sense.

RESULTS OF GROUP POLL

1. Would you invite other (successful) authors to join this discussion?

Yes - 87.5%

No - 12.5%

2. Would you devote the time to create and/or revise good, saleable material and pay to publish it yourself via the co-op?

Yes - 62.5%

No - 37.5%

3. How many meetings (3-8 hours) in Seattle would you be willing to attend?

0 - 12.5%

1 - 25.0%

2 - 25.0%

3 - 12.5%

>3 - 25.0%

4. How many hours would you devote to developing the co-op over the next 6 months?

Less than 20 - 12.5%

20-40 - 37.5%

60 or more - 50.0%

ADAM ENGST

I'd like to see the co-op help prevent the destruction of a successful book for reasons specific to the publisher and unrelated to the author or the market.

GLENN FLEISHMAN

I've gathered many stories about publisher neglect and stupidity that combined to cripple or kill a title. When Jeff Carlson and I put out our *Real World Adobe GoLive* books, we really bulldogged Peachpit and they us. Because of this, we've had the first big book out both years, and our royalty statements make it clear that our interaction has meant thousands of dollars in difference in our royalties.

Every book should get the attention that these books of ours have gotten. It's a lack of focus and an attitude of aggregation (many books = lots of money for a publisher) that screw us authors again and again.

STEVE O'KEEFE

Let's look at the conventional publishing process and see where it goes awry. The author is expected to turn in a manuscript, complete an author questionnaire, then go away. That's pretty much the formula.

The biggest problem I see is that publishers don't act like they're in a partnership with authors, which is de facto what a royalty contract means. Publishers should *use* authors more than they do because authors are unpaid staff members.

I'd like to see a specific publishing plan that says, "These are the rights related to this bit of intellectual property, and this is when and how we intend to market them."

NICK USBORNE

I think Authorscoop will live or die by the way in which it markets itself and its authors. And by how it differentiates itself from the competition. That makes Authorscoop a marketing company above all else.

I think a key differentiator, and marketing tool, will be the voices of authors. Traditional publishers either stifle or ignore the voices of all but their star authors. Authorscoop will have a unique choir of voices; rich, varied, and direct from its authors to their audience.

In a previous, pre-Net life, I actually ran a farmers' co-op in British Columbia. Here's what happens:

- ◆ Out of 50 people, five do 99 percent of the work.
- ◆ When the five make decisions, the 45 complain.
- ◆ When the co-op needs money, nobody wants to pay.
- ◆ The five get fed up and walk away.

This, in a way, is exactly what I fear for Authorscoop. Which is why my 2 cents worth says build a much more proactive marketing organization to lead the charge.

STEVE O'KEEFE

A B-list book represents an investment of about \$100,000 for a mainstream publisher. That's another

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reason why I just don't see quality authors paying the co-op to publish their books; it's too much, too risky.

STEVE NELSON

It may be that a co-op isn't precisely the right model. Maybe what you guys really want to do is something more along the lines of a professional partnership. Like a small law firm, public accounting firm, investment banking firm, or medical practice. In that sort of model, you'd need 3 - 4 partners to start the practice.

You could construct a very cheap book and publicity factory. Once the original partners got the model figured out, you could bring new partners in the same way a professional practice does. You might also want to have a "career track" for people who wanted to be a partner someday but weren't yet ready to do everything a partner does.

In April, I'm going to speak at the Waterside Conference on the subject of starting your own publishing house. Here's a preview of what I'm going to say:

1. Successful authors shouldn't publish. The authoring gig is just way too good. You can make great money with very little business risk and much more freedom.

2. Starting a publishing house, even a small one, requires a lot of money. There's more to success than simply doing an interesting book. To build a publishing house, you're really going to need several modestly successful books.

3. You can succeed at this if you fill a niche. If you get into an empty space that people want filled, the model works and is pretty low risk. But finding a true empty niche is a pretty puzzle.

STEVE ROTH

I don't feel we have the collective "life force" to push this thing through to reality. I'm sorry if I've wasted folks' time already, but I don't feel my time was wasted. I think there's something here — something that could fundamentally alter the publishing power equation — and it may come to life one day.

Are Books Bound by Their Brands?

By Edwin Colyer

You can't judge a book by its cover, but everybody does. You might like the artwork, the title, or the publisher's blurb, but above all, you will likely chose your next bedtime read because of who wrote it. The author is what really matters; loyalty to writers runs deep.

In many ways every author is a brand, though they may not see it that way. "Author branding is rather sub-conscious," suggests Patrick Jansen-Smith, managing director of Transworld Publishers. "People don't think 'Let's go and brand an author.' The author's brand is his or her work.

"Authors become brands if they write a certain kind of book. They build up brand loyalty — you know what you're going to get when you read one of their books. By the nature of their craft you won't get something wildly different. You know what you are going to get."

Take one of Jansen-Smith's most successful authors: Terry Pratchett, author of the highly branded Discworld fantasies. Pratchett has sold 30 million books, translated into 29 languages worldwide. You can quickly identify Pratchett fans from a cursory glance at their bookcase; every book in the Discworld series has distinctive artwork. The characters remain consistent throughout the series, as do many of the recurring jokes. And you can set your calendars by his books, which appear in bookstores about 2 months before Christmas.

But Pratchett himself has become a brand too, even sporting a trademark look of his own. He's a humorous rogue ("He grows carnivorous plants as a hobby; they are a lot less interesting than people believe," is typical of a liner quote), and his hat rarely misses a photo shoot. "The hat is a Zen disguise," he is quoted as saying in a recent Guardian newspaper interview. "If I take it off, I'm just another bald-headed, bearded man."

"It is clear that the more established authors — whether consciously

or unconsciously — see themselves as a brand in the sense of nurturing an identity the public can identify with, and that represents a set of values," comments Lynne Brown, Dorling Kindersley's brand manager for health and sex writers Dr. Miriam Stoppard and Anne Hooper. "Their awareness of this is underlined by examples of fiction authors adopting a pseudonym so they can step outside their usual oeuvre without damaging audience expectation or indeed trading on it. Many authors work hard to protect and enhance these values by the other products/organizations they allow themselves to become identified with."



Brown insists that this type of branding is hardly new. "Although the concept of a 'brand' did not exist then, it is clear that authors such as Dickens were definitely seen as representing certain values and indeed guaranteeing a caliber of product that could be relied on. If that is part of what you would call brand values then they had them. Perhaps the non-fiction area has a shorter history so the whole idea of brand is newer here. Still, names such as Mrs. Beeton come to mind as representing a set of values that people recognized and valued."

Nevertheless, publishers confess that branding is becoming a more conscious marketing activity. And authors are their central brand equity. "This is clearly a collaborative process," Brown explains, "where all the parties involved work towards establishing and then maintaining the brand identity. The process starts as soon as the author begins to establish their identity as a writer. The core values of the

author's brand clearly grow out of their personal value system/interests, etc."

For Dorling Kindersley these brand values are managed via the look and content of the books that go under an author's name. But the really savvy publisher can make much more of its brand portfolio.

"Perhaps what turns an author from an author into a real brand is when they move across media," argues Susan Knopf, senior vice president and director of Parachute Publishing, citing the highly successful Goosebumps series and the Mary-Kate & Ashley books. "An author brand is a situation where readers expect a certain kind of entertainment from a writer, but they are interested in trying new things from that author. They have and want to share an experience with the author. That's different to an author who just writes a new mystery every year."

"It was children who gave RL Stine permission to turn into a brand," Knopf continues. "That wasn't just putting a logo on something — that's short lived — but using the essence of Goosebumps: something scary, a roller coaster ride, and the unexpected."

Yet Knopf observes that many publishers — and their authors — are still reluctant to embrace full-blooded branding. "Any author has potential to be a brand. Some of it is what they do; some is what we do. Not every author has the desire, not every author has the opportunity. Most authors want to write the books they feel compelled to write. For a branded property you need something visual, you need more of a message, more of an image.

"Publishers are into selling more books. The key is to spot the opportunity [to brand] and surround yourself with people who want to do it," says Knopf.

Yet not all publishers have the luxury of big-name authors to splash across their covers. And even if they

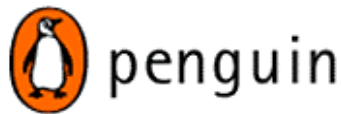
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do, they should not neglect the importance of their own corporate brands. This is perhaps a more controversial area because brand recognition of the publishing house rarely filters down to the casual reading public. Okay, so maybe you do judge a book by its cover, but few check the spine for the publisher's logo. Who cares whether the book is from Bantam Dell or Little, Brown and Company?

Terry Pratchett is a good example of the primacy of the author's brand. He only moved to Transworld in 1998, yet you would never guess it from the look and content of the books alone. They still have the same artwork, same design and same read, despite the different publisher.



Penguin is perhaps the most recognized in the English-speaking world. This publisher has even run advertising campaigns and pushed its corporate image, presumably hoping that greater sales of books generally will benefit it indirectly. Nevertheless, it is still hard to believe that many would buy Penguin before an author of their choice.

However, Dorling Kindersley has carved a market for itself with its highly successful brand of reference books. "DK has always tried to deliver best in field in any topic area. To achieve that it may be more effective to gather together a group of contributors rather than to rely on a specific author for a book," says Brown. "Thus, it is clear we need an identity that will encourage readers to recognize the value of such titles as readily as they may recognize a named author.

"The DK brand is very important to us and its continued development is key to us going forward. We are, in fact, currently investing in various research and market testing to enable us to understand better what DK means to us and our readers."

Yet for most publishers the corporate brand will remain the preserve of literary circles. By building a reputa-

tion for a certain genre, successful marketing, and lucrative deals, (or perhaps by demonstrating an ability to promote and brand writers) publishers can attract the authors that really get the sales going. The most successful publishers will be those that can use their own corporate brand to attract and create the author brands.

Brown, one of the few people in the industry who holds the title "brand manager," believes that stronger, conscious branding is inevitable and necessary. "In recent years in an ever more crowded market, the consumer has come more and more to rely on brand identity as an indicator for purchase. We believe this is now true in all industries and no less so within publishing — particularly in the non-fiction area. Our sense is that this will continue to be a strong ongoing trend but it is of course essential that the expectations raised by the brands be satisfied in the delivery."

So next time you judge a book by its cover, remember that the branding carries inside too.



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~ About ~

Patron Saint Productions

Patron Saint Productions is a publishing consultancy specializing in online marketing strategy, campaigns, and training. It was founded by Steve O'Keefe, a 20-year book publishing veteran who has launched online marketing campaigns for more than 1,000 books and dozens of publishers.

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Kelly O'Keefe, Emergence Inc.

Online Marketing Campaigns

Patron Saint Productions provides the following services, all designed to light a fire under a book during the month of publication. Ask about discounts for series promotions.

New Book Launch

A comprehensive campaign including a media component (e-mail news releases), excerpt distribution, discussion group postings, and online bookstore displays. Price: \$2,750.

Chat Tour or Online Seminar

All the services of the New Book Launch Campaign, plus a week-long author chat tour or online seminar. Price: \$5,500.

Web Site Promotion

Includes directory registration, writing meta tags, linkage campaign, e-mail news releases, discussion group postings, and site-of-the-day submissions. Price \$2,750 + registration fees.

Why I'm Happy Being an Indentured Writer Again

By Glenn Fleishman

[*Editor's Note:* One of the publishing tragedies mentioned in the Authors Co-op discussion (see front page) was Adam Engst's book, *Internet Starter Kit* — a bestseller with dominant market position until, according to Engst, the publisher "killed the book through inattention and neglect." Two years later, Glenn Fleishman provided this optimistic report on a new venture with Adam Engst.]

Adam Engst and I co-wrote *The Wireless Networking Starter Kit* (Peachpit Press, 2003) with the intent of founding a franchise. We want this book to not only be something we revise as frequently as every 9 to 15 months given the pace of innovation and change in the home and small business wireless networking world, but potentially something we spin into other books, electronic editions, and other projects.

In the first few months, we estimate that we have had an extremely high number of direct sales: copies we've actually touched or interacted with. Adam has a 50,000-recipient mailing list (www.tidbits.com), and I have some moderate-traffic sites with thousands of daily visitors on topics focused on wireless networking.

Affiliate Sales

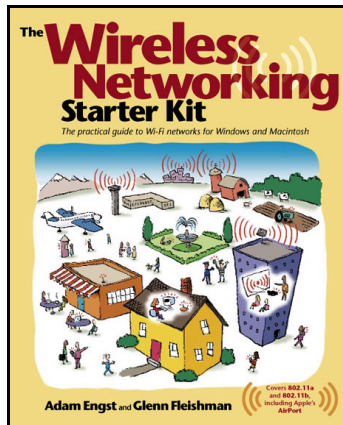
We sold several hundred copies of our book in the first few weeks through our Amazon.com affiliate link, meaning we get our author royalties plus 15 percent of Amazon.com's 30 percent-off-retail price for the book. I can't tell you our precise royalty, but it's well within industry standards. So any Amazon.com sale results in approximately a 100-percent increase in our revenue from the book. We negotiated a similar referral fee from Peachpit for referring sales to their site, as well.

We believe that somewhere between 15 and 20 percent of the books sold in the first month were through Peachpit or Amazon.com links from

our site, which makes a substantial impact on our overall average per-book revenue.

Trade Show Sales

In addition, we pushed the book like crazy at Macworld Expo, doing three book signings, making sure that several booths were selling the book, and I appeared on TechTV's *The Screen Savers* program. As a result, we believe 150 to 200 books were sold on the show floor. Everyone selling books appeared to run out of their copies on hand, and we know how many they had.



Because of all this, we stand to not just pay out our advance and see royalties faster, but get the icing on the cake — the extra affiliate and referral revenue, plus any ancillary purchases in someone's shopping basket at Amazon.com that gives us just a little extra here and there.

Publisher Supports Publicity

Peachpit's support has been magnificent. We've presented them with long lists of very well justified press contacts and influencers, and they've had no complaints about sending out books to this highly targeted group. Adam and I are doing some personal follow-up with many of the people we've sent books to that is resulting in good feedback and some reviews. We've had positive comments in an InfoWorld email publication, a Lockergnome newsletter (which raised our

rank at Amazon.com to as low as 300 for a few hours), and *Fortune's* Personal Technology Web Log written by editor Peter Lewis.

We wrote a 3,000-word update to the book focusing on a suddenly emergent faster flavor of wireless networks — 802.11g — that burst out a few weeks after the book shipped. We made this excerpt available for free on the site, and two other sites published it (part of the O'Keefe model!), as well using it as an article in TidBITS, pushing more users to purchase the book from our site. We were able to get substantial attention from many Mac sites, too, by discussing a new Apple product in the update. This also raised awareness for the book — along with sales.

E-Book Sales

Because we negotiated the right for non-exclusive electronic editions of the book, we are pursuing arrangements now that could result in something like four times the revenue from selling a print copy for each electronic copy sold. Because our book has such international impact and interest, we expect — just as Jakob Nielsen has found out — that selling an e-book is really about selling overseas without the costs of shipping.

Also, I should note that we packaged the book. Therefore, we have full access to the raw graphics and page layout, allowing us to repurpose, repackage, and republish quite easily.

We're getting closer to the revenue and outcome we wanted from the Author's Co-op by working with an extraordinary publisher.

Glenn Fleishman, Unsolicited Pundit, is a freelance reporter for *The New York Times*, *Macworld*, *InfoWorld*, et al., Macintosh columnist for *The Seattle Times*, and co-author, with Adam Engst, of the new book, *The Wireless Networking Starter Kit: A Practical Guide to Wi-Fi Networks for Windows and Macintosh* (Peachpit Press, 2003). The best entry point for numerous online articles and resources Glenn offers is <http://glennf.com>.

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The Publisher's Plan

By Steve O'Keefe

The main reason authors don't understand what publishers do is that we fail to tell them. If authors understood the publishing process, there would be less whining, fewer resources spent on low-return activities such as direct mail, and greater resources spent on high-return activities such as publicity.

A big step in improving relations with authors would be to provide a "Publishing Plan" document similar to the one shown here. For each activity in the publishing process, the author should be told the name of the person responsible, the direct phone number or e-mail address for that person, and a target date for completion.

Beyond that, publishers should send authors proof of performance on a regular basis. Editorial departments are pretty good at this, sending page proofs, cover art, and galleys. But marketing departments are notoriously poor communicators. How many authors get sent the marketing plan or sales information sheets for their books? Do you send summaries of sales conference results to authors? Do you send copies of your catalog pages, or co-op ads, or ads that run in trade catalogs? Trade marketing activities are almost invisible to authors, which is why they think you're "doing nothing" to market their books.

If you presented an author's book at sales conferences, why not send them a note about it? If your sales reps presented the book to buyers, why not send authors excerpts from the report? If you are exhibiting the book at BEA, ALA, or other trade shows, why don't you tell the author? Publishers spend months preparing the sales channels for a new book, but authors see little or none of this, and fail to appreciate the importance of priming the pump to the successful launch of a book.

Even publicity departments, who understand the importance of the clipping process, fail to send endorsements, reviews, listings, ads, or other

mentions of the author's book. Over a decade ago, when I worked in publicity for a small publisher, part of my job was to photocopy every single ad, endorsement, review, or other mention of every book we published, and send a copy to each author involved. It was rainy-day work, tedious and time-consuming, but it meant a great deal to the authors, who frequently reported that other publishers never sent them any clippings.

A particular sore point for me is that publishers typically purchase all rights to a work, and then sit on everything except the print publication rights. If they are buying foreign language rights, then they ought to have a plan to market them. Same goes for electronic rights, screenplay rights, etc. But if they're marketing these rights at all, authors seldom hear about it until a sale hits the royalty statement. Why don't publishers tell authors how they plan to market these rights, and then send proof that they followed the plan? Why can't you say, "We've taking your book to Frankfurt," and then show a catalog listing for it, or send the author excerpts from notes taken at meetings with rights buyers?

I can only imagine publishers rolling their eyes, thinking if they told authors they were going to do all this stuff, then authors might hold them to it. Or authors might try to "interfere" in the process, by contacting foreign publishers or agents, for example, and encouraging them to look at the book at Frankfurt. And that is exactly why relations are strained between publishers and authors. Because publishers don't want to be accountable to authors, and they don't want authors interfering with their work. It is easier to keep authors in the dark than risk their meddling.

And that's why so many authors are taking a financial hit to experiment with self-publishing, electronic publishing, working with book packagers,

and working with micro-publishers. They are sick of being left in the dark about their own books, having their suggestions ignored, and being isolated from the marketing process.



The Publishing Plan

Wouldn't it be nice if publishers provided contact information for the people responsible for each of these activities, along with target dates for completion? Wouldn't it be nice if they provided authors with proof of performance?

Design

- Interior Design
- Cover Design
- Illustrations
- Front Matter / End Matter

Editing

- Content Editing
- Copy Editing
- Page Proofs
- Final Page Proofs

Trade Marketing

- Info/Sales Sheet
- Marketing Plan
- Back Cover Copy
- Catalog Copy
- Sales Conference Reports

Publicity

- Press Kit Proofs
- Galleys Available
- Endorsements Sought
- Galley Mailing to Media

Trade Show Marketing

- BEA
- ALA
- Regional Shows

Rights Marketing

- Foreign Language Rights
- Serial Rights
- Electronic Rights

Special Markets

- Custom Editions
- Textbook Adoption
- Gift Store Marketing
- Specialty Retailer Marketing

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~ News from Patron Saint Productions ~

Amazon Ups Advantage Fees

As we have predicted many times in this newsletter, Amazon will continue to put the squeeze on big publishers (discounts, advertising, etc.) while squeezing out small publishers. The latest move is the announcement of an annual fee for the Amazon Advantage program, beginning May 1, 2003. In an e-mail to publishers, Amazon says they are "considering" a fee of \$49.95. Whether that's the final figure depends, we suppose, on how much howling they hear from Advantage members.

New Web Site Resources

• Self publishing guru Dan Poynter offers a new source for statistics on the book publishing trade at <http://parapub.com/statistics/>, and an Article Bank of pieces that may be used for free by editors of magazines, newsletters, and web sites at <http://parapub.com/articles/>

• Renowned publishing consultant Jack McHugh has overhauled his web site (with a little coaching from Patron Saint Productions). The site now offers more than 26 McHugh Publications, all of which are free, and many of which are brand new. You'll find it at <http://www.johnbmchugh.com>.

~ Upcoming Training Programs ~

How Authors Can Use the Internet to Get Publicity

A PR Leads Teleseminar, Thursday, May 15, 2003

Host: Dan Janal; Guest: Steve O'Keefe

Register At: <http://www.prleads.com/seminars.htm>

- ◆ Start with a strategy for maximizing your effectiveness online
- ◆ Learn what materials you'll need to prepare in advance
- ◆ Tips for finding Web Sites That Matter to your target audience
- ◆ How to seed the Internet with excerpts from your book
- ◆ How to find and use Online Discussion Groups to promote your book
- ◆ Tips for booking Chat Tours and Online Seminars
- ◆ The ultimate online marketing tool: Your Own Show!

How to Launch A Book Online — And Keep It In Orbit

A panel at PMA's Publishing University, Wednesday, May 28, 2003

Registration Info: <http://www.pma-online.org/pmau2003/>

Steve O'Keefe joins Internet gurus Dan Janal (author of six books, president of PR Leads), and Mary Westheimer (president of BookZone) for a must-see panel prior to Book Expo America (BEA) in Los Angeles, California.

In Memoriam

We are deeply saddened to report that the pantheon of patron saints has gained a new member. Dr. Jill Ellsworth was an early and consistent advocate of sensibility in web design. Her books, *Marketing on the Internet* (Wiley) and *Education on the Internet*

(Sams) — among others — set a standard of excellence that tech authors still struggle to achieve. She was a mentor to many, and her practical influence will be sorely missed. Jill passed in October 2002. Donations are suggested to the American Cancer Society or your local Humane Society.



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