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# Publish a Book

►WHO HASN'T dreamed of seeing their name on a book jacket at the local Barnes & Noble? Signing cover pages for lines of adoring fans? Watching your very own title climb the *New York Times* best-seller list?

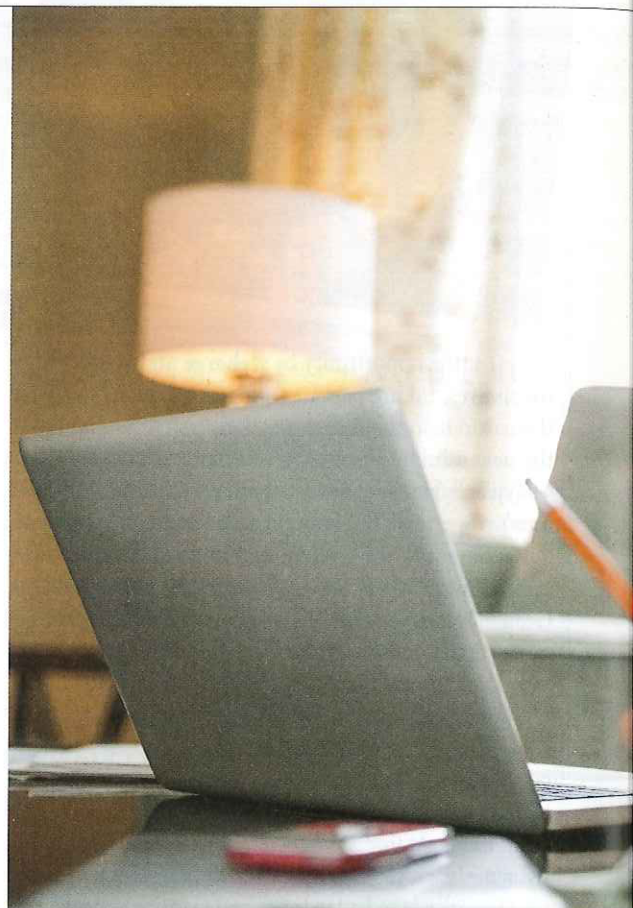
As any recent author will tell you, the arduous process of writing a book hardly resembles this glamorous picture. But that doesn't mean that you shouldn't write a book. Experts say penning a published work is a great way to build your personal brand, engage potential customers and boost sales.

"If your business can benefit from your reputation as an expert, a book is an amazing way to demonstrate that in a way speaking or article writing cannot," says Rohit Bhargava, author of *Likeonomics: The Unexpected Truth Behind Earning Trust, Influencing Behavior, and Inspiring Action* and the founder of Influential Marketing Group. Even as more and more people are writing because of the rise of self-publishing and e-books, showing potential customers a published work lends a measure of gravitas, says D'vorah Lansky, author of *Book Marketing Made Easy: Simple Strategies for Selling Your Nonfiction Book Online* and a book marketing coach for entrepreneurs.

"Technology makes it so much easier to publish a book—today it can take weeks instead of years to get your ideas out there," Lansky says. "Every business owner should write one."

To make the most of your time and wrist cramps, consider first whether self-published or traditionally published is the route for you.

In traditional publishing, you will write a proposal—typically a 30-page document outlining the project with a table of contents and sample chapters. This is then shopped around to agents. Should an agent accept, you will likely be asked to revise the proposal, which will then be pitched to publishers. If it sells to a publisher, the entire process could take several years or more. The



publisher absorbs the cost of editing and production, though authors are usually responsible for most if not all of the marketing. Lansky says that on average a traditionally published book nets the author \$1 per copy once the advance is earned. It's worth mentioning that advances have been notably low in recent years.

The other option is to self-publish. A number of digital options are available, including Lulu and Amazon's CreateSpace, both of which offer easy-to-use, affordable software with options for e-books and print-on-demand. Writers like this option because it can be very fast, gives the writer control over the creative processes, pricing and marketing, and generates a much higher margin on sales.

Even though there is now a low barrier to authorship, it's worth investing time and money to create a polished, professional book, Lansky says. It pays to hire a professional book editor and designer. "An editor is absolutely essential," she says. "Once a reader finds three typos, they think you're lazy or unintelligent. A good book should go through five to seven rounds of editing—it's like polishing silver." Other professionals

### Emma Johnson

is a New York-based freelance business and personal finance writer. She blogs at *WealthySingle Mommy.com* and hosts *The Emma Johnson Show*, nationally syndicated on AM radio.



who will help might include an indexer, illustrator and photo editor.

A few more keys to successful book publishing:

**Pick the right topic.** Ask yourself: What is the one thing you do better than anyone else in your field? What is the No. 1 question customers ask you? What has no one else written a book about?

**Consider a ghostwriter.** “Not everyone is a natural writer,” Bhargava says. “If you can’t imagine sitting in a chair writing for eight hours per day for several months, then you know you should hire a ghostwriter.”

**Don’t expect the book to make you money directly.** “Don’t write a book to get rich,” Lansky says. “Those cases are very, very rare, even when the author hits the *New York Times* best-seller list. Instead, look at a book as a big business card.”

**Be creative in ways to profit from the book.** In addition to using the title to attract and close deals, consider it a networking tool. Bhargava suggests interviewing leaders in your industry for the book’s content as a way to open doors.

## Dianna Booher

### FOUNDER

**Business:** Booher

Consultants, a business communications firm

**Strategy:** Write the book first, then get consulting jobs.

**Results:** Multimillion-dollar business has been driven primarily by book notoriety.

It was the early 1980s, and I had just earned my master’s degree in literature and needed a way to support my young family. But I hated sales and did not want to cold-call.

About the same time, I had lunch with a friend who was a vice president of engineering at Shell Oil. He mentioned his department had flown in a consultant from Atlanta to teach the engineers business writing. I realized I could do that. So I penned a book on business writing, originally titled *Would You Put That in Writing?* But I needed money, so I went to an executive at Exxon and told her my book was coming out in nine months as a way to promote myself. She hired me, and the engineers said it was the best course they’d had in 30 years.

When the book did eventually come out, the *Houston Chronicle* wrote a huge story about it, and my phone rang off the hook with 32 inquiries from companies wanting to hire me to do business communication training. Sales immediately jumped into the multimillion-dollar range. I haven’t done any sales calls since—I just market the book and call people back.

From that book I branched out into presentation skills, customer service communication and more. My philosophy is that you have to know enough to write a book before you can even think about being a consultant. To decide what my next area of expertise will be, I research by talking to clients about their problems, look for emerging trends, and go out to lunch with friends to listen to them. I find a solution to the problems I hear about.

All 46 of my books were published with major houses, including Simon & Schuster, Random House and McGraw-Hill. My advice is to go with a major publisher for your first book. That makes you stand out among all the clutter and helps build credibility easier. Today, 78 percent of my client inquiries can be traced to the books.



## Eric Erickson

OWNER

**Business:** Desert Green Pest Management

**Strategy:** Self-publish a how-to book promoting the business's expertise.

**Results:** Sales came from new global markets, increasing a total of 20 percent.

Seven years ago I started a natural pest control business, and we needed to stand out as the experts. We started by creating educational videos on YouTube, teaching people chemical-free ways of keeping insects out of their homes. Some became really popular, which gave us a lot of credibility and drove a lot of business.

I've been an entrepreneur my whole life and have been involved in a number of publishing projects. I understand how much credibility a book can give a business. So I spent many, many hours researching and writing a book on natural and organic pest control. I had some friends with English degrees make sure it read at an eighth-grade level. I also hired a cover designer through the site Fivrr, which brokers affordable tech and design services.

The book launched in February 2012 on Amazon—most of the 100-or-so sales have been print-on-demand books for \$12.48, though a few Kindle versions were also sold at \$2.99. We promoted via Facebook, Twitter and on our company website. Since then *The Do It Yourself Guide: Keep the Pests Out* has netted us new customers for our green products around the world. I attribute a sales jump of \$100,000—or 20 percent—from the \$100 investment I made to create the book.

Now that I see how much success a book can drive, I'm writing a title for my business consulting firm: *How to Start a Business from Scratch Backwards and Start Making Money in 30 Days or Less*. The goal with this book is to attract high-profile media attention.



## Marc Joseph

CEO

**Business:** DollarDays

International, wholesaler of consumer products for independent retailers

**Strategy:** Teach customers how to be more successful through a book.

**Results:** From the major publicity generated, company was positioned as industry expert.

I launched this business in 2001. From the start, I would get a dozen calls each day from our customers asking questions about running their businesses—everything from pricing to advertising and merchandising. I was happy to do that. It felt good to give advice.

But pretty soon 12 calls turned into 20. It was clear the smartest thing to do was write a book to give these entrepreneurs a game plan for running their businesses. We knew that if we got them hooked into how we do business, it would help them be successful, which is obviously a win for us, too.

Writing the book was a lot of work. Don't kid yourself. I spent every weekend for nine months in my office writing it. You need a lot of personal and professional support to write a book.

In 2005 *The Secrets of Retailing, Or: How to Beat Wal-mart!* came out on Silverback Books. It immediately generated lots of publicity and positioned us as experts. I went on a tour visiting mostly independent bookstores, because the book's message is how to survive and thrive against mega-chain competition.

The book has made us go-to experts for retail sales, since as wholesalers we see trends emerging a full 30 days before retailers do. For example, the business media calls us about holiday shopping trends in November, because we are the ones stocking the retailers. Those media relationships come from the book.

As a result of all that publicity, we landed on the *Inc.* 500 "fastest growing companies" list in 2013. That is important from a PR standpoint since we are also a "little guy" successfully competing against the big guys (Amazon and Wal-mart), just like our customers. **S**

