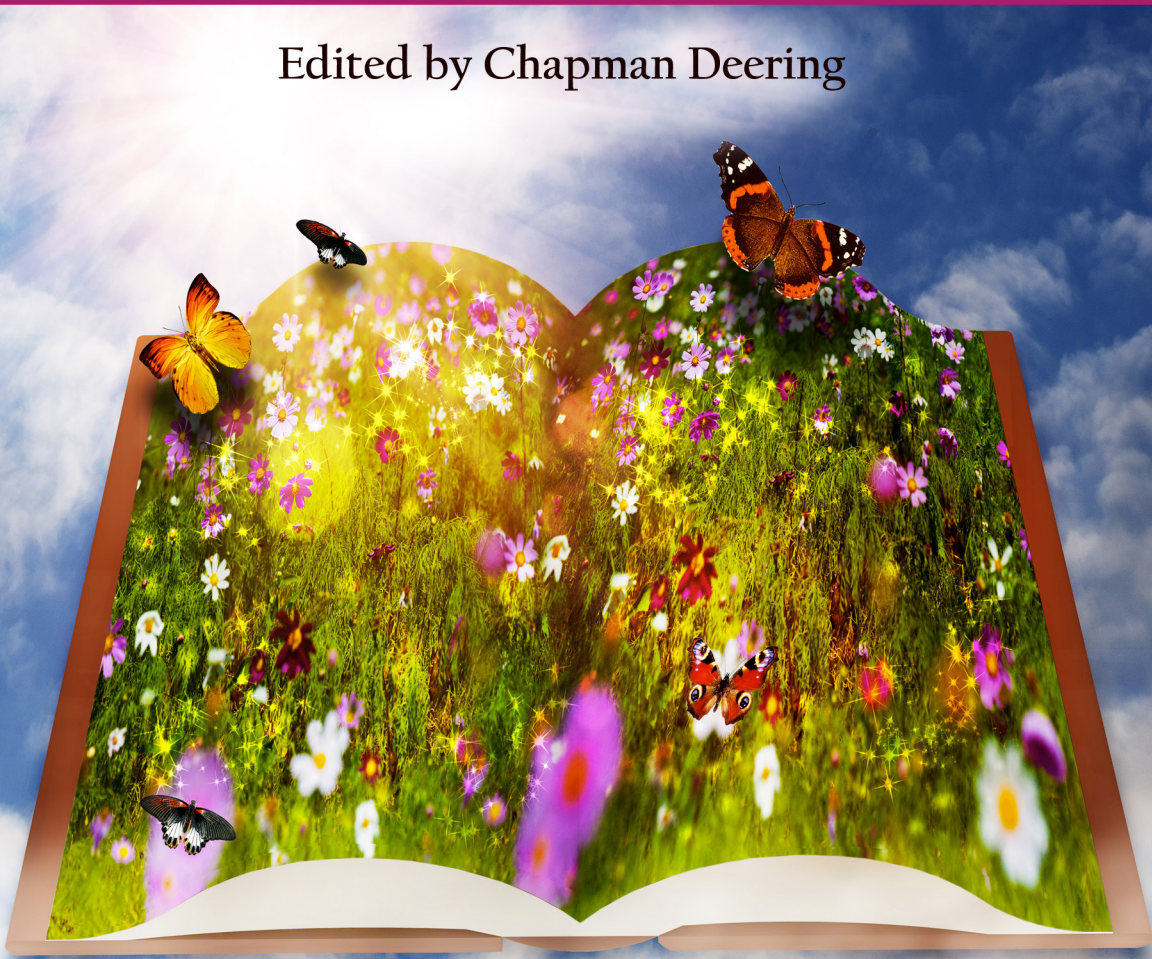


Self Publishing Tips & Strategies

Simple steps for success.

Edited by Chapman Deering



Four Tips for Every Newbie Self-Publisher

The journey to self-publishing can be an arduous one. You need more than just amazing writing skills and a burning passion to go the full mile without giving up. Self-discipline and self-monitoring are key to staying focused and meeting your authorship goals. These four tips will help you keep the momentum going less painfully.

#1 Be patient

It's not for nothing that patience is regarded as a virtue. There are quite a few logistics involved in both print and e-publication, and many first-time self-publishers tend to miss key steps when navigating the process. Look at it this way : in a publishing house, different individuals and departments handle different aspects of publication. When you're on your own, you have to wear more than one hat, and go about the process patiently. Expect your patience to be tested even more when you're balancing your personal and work (if you're employed) commitments.

#2 Be objective

If you're a non-fiction writer, the ability to see your work through the lens of literary agents can come in handy. It can help you make objective decisions on content creation and marketing, by answering questions like 'what kind of value does my book offer the target market?' and 'how unique and necessary is my book in its category?'.

#3 Don't skimp on the research

It is critical that, prior to publishing, you do your research and clearly understand all your options. Some of the not-so-glamorous aspects of self-publishing include obtaining an ISBN and barcode, figuring out the payment mechanisms and tax obligations, creating your copyright statement, and developing your website. As you're readying to publish, you need to implement your web marketing plan. Even after you've published your book and started work on your next project, you must keep marketing your previous project.

#4 Stay committed

Some writers can draft an 80,000 page book within a month while other may take up to a year to write the same number of words. If you can write only 400-500 words a day, and not write at all on some days, it's fine. What's more important is that you're committed to the endeavor, because ultimately, writing a novel or creating a picture book is both time and effort intensive. Serious writers regard their work as a labor of love. Anyone who doesn't want to take the pain to tell a story probably isn't a serious writer. This quote by the great American writer Flannery O'Connor can help put things in perspective : 'Writing a novel is a terrible experience, during which the hair often falls out and the teeth decay.'

Four Strategies to Market Your Self-Published Book

One of the biggest challenges self-published authors face is effectively marketing their work. The problem isn't so much with the marketing methods or channels; it is more about how well you can leverage them and promote the hell out of your book. Self-publishing has created a level-playing field no doubt, but the playground is fiercely competitive. If you want a fair chance at healthy sales, these marketing strategies can give you a good head-start.



#1 Price your book competitively

The trend of initially selling their books for free for a few days has served indie authors well, garnering them visibility and helping them build a fan base. Low prices on long books also attract readers, which is another tactic employed by many writers. But the flipside is that readers may equate very low priced books with questionable quality and hesitate to buy them. Also, pricing your book too low can be a drag on your revenue, especially if you aren't exactly selling many copies a year.

A not-too-high and not-too-low price is a good compromise for newbie authors. This price could be between \$2.99 to \$4.99 for a full-length book and \$1.99 for a novella.

#2 Get an author website

Your author website will be the one-stop destination for readers and the media to get more information and the latest news about you. Add a brief biography, high resolution photographs, links to your social media profiles, positive reviews and press quotes. Also consider a blog section where you can interact more intimately with your readers.

#3 Get social

Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and Google+ are some of the popular social networks where authors can engage with fans/followers. Guy Kawasaki recommends getting on social media before you start writing a book, as it will take you anywhere from nine months to a year to build a social following.

Create a great profile that elicits interest, and makes you appear likeable and trustworthy. Add your high resolution photo, but make sure it's

just you and not you with your spouse, pets or car. Write a few sentences about yourself and tell your personal story, staying honest to whatever image you want to portray and without going over-the-top about it.

Don't just self-promote, focus on initiating engaging, lively and useful conversations with your readers. You can talk about your interests, opine on a news story or topical subject, and even post interesting photographs from time to time. Answer fans'/followers' questions, give advice, and follow people whose content you find valuable and share-worthy.

People like sharing posts and tweets about contests. You can launch contests on social media and give away free copies of your book as gifts/prizes.

#4 Create Google Alerts

When you create a Google Alert on your name, the search engine will notify you every time someone writes about you and your book(s) online. You can reach out to these entities to explore more promotional opportunities or thank them for the mentions.

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