



# THE NEW RULES OF BECOMING AN AUTHOR: THE 7 MYTHS OF PUBLISHING SUCCESS



Nick Nanton, Esq. and JW Dicks, Esq.

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## THE NEW RULES OF BECOMING AN AUTHOR: THE 7 MYTHS OF PUBLISHING SUCCESS

**A**manda Hocking was an aspiring writer living in Minnesota who, at the age of 26, had written 17 novels. But no big publisher wanted any part of her. So, as she worked at her \$18,000-a-year job, she decided to take things into her own hands – and worked with a little publishing company to put her books for sale on Amazon.

Two years later, she had made millions from her e-books – and also made a multi-million dollar book deal with the well-established publisher, St. Martin's Press.

That's not how book deals used to happen. But the internet has changed our world to such an extent that it's naive to think that book publishing wouldn't be a part of this tremendous transformation. Hocking's story will continue to be duplicated in years to come.

At the Dicks + Nanton Celebrity Branding® Agency, we believe in the new publishing paradigm that has emerged and we enjoy leveraging it on behalf of our clients. You're reading one of the happy results of that effort right at this moment!

Still, there are many misconceptions that people have about what publishing is all about – and just what is needed (or not needed) to get a book published. We'd like to dispel all that misinformation from our extensive combined experience in publishing over the past three decades – and give you the lowdown on "The 7 Myths of Publishing Success."



### **I JUST NEED TO FIND THE RIGHT AGENT FOR MY BOOK**

Would-be writers used to face the same Catch-22 as would-be actors, singers and screenplay writers – they couldn't break into the business without the right agent, but no agent would take them seriously unless they were already in the business!

Conventional old-school publishers have never paid a great deal of attention to a manuscript submitted by an unknown. That's why book agents came into being – they were reputable people trusted by book companies who could recognize talent and bring it their way.

But, again, it was hard to get an agent's attention if you had no track record. You had to send them a proposal with some sample chapters, wait a few months for a reply, and then start the process all over again with another agent (it's not proper protocol to send the same book to several agents at



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once). That means it could literally take years before you got an agent – if you got one at all. And then that agent had to try and find your book a publisher, which is *another* lengthy drawn-out process.

Nobody has to endure those long delays anymore. Just as singers like Lana Del Rey can get themselves booked on “*Saturday Night Live*” through their YouTube videos, you can get yourself published in record time these days without ever talking to an agent.



### **I SHOULD GET PAID TO WRITE MY BOOK**

We’re all used to getting money for what we do, so, quite reasonably, you might expect a publisher to give you a nice advance to write *your* book. Well, the fact is that, unless you are already an established author, more likely than not, unfortunately you’re not going to get that advance. Many established authors even have difficulty getting them these days, as a matter of fact. In fact, just the other day, we were reviewing a publishing agreement for someone who is literally a household name, one of the biggest names in sports, and his publishing advance as all of—4 figures. Yup, a few grand, and believe me when I say, this is a BIG name.

Instead, you should look at your book as a marketing opportunity for yourself and/or your business, and *not* as a payday. Don’t get us wrong, you can and should make money from *having* a book, but you’ll find most people don’t make that money from actually *selling* the book. The great news is there are tons other ways to make money from your book, but not in the ways people usually think. Your profits will most likely not come from big sales (although we certainly won’t tell you that *can’t* happen); they’re going to come from how the book boosts your brand and opens doors for you, which we’ll discuss a little later. As we like to say, “A book can take you places you could never take yourself!”



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**I NEED A HUGE NEW YORK PUBLISHER LIKE  
RANDOM HOUSE OR SIMON & SCHUSTER**

You might think your book can't be credible unless you have a behemoth New York publisher on board to back it – you know, one that's been around since the 1800's or so. You might think that they excel at marketing and promotion and that they'll give your book the push it needs to go straight to the top.

Well, our experience, as well as the experience of countless other clients and friends of ours (including those who have sold literally millions of books) would disagree with that statement. Again, the publishing world has drastically changed – and the old-style publishers really only work with books that pretty much sell themselves. Of course, the latest Donald Trump business book and Stephen King thriller will be printed by one of the big boys. They jump after books that are all-but-guaranteed best-sellers.

As Amanda Hocking would tell you, what they're *not* very interested in is an unpublished novice writer without a very well known name and a huge media platform. They aren't looking for anything they can't "pre-sell" – unless it has some kind of magnificent literary pedigree or the author is a recognized journalist with some big scoop. The established publishers (and agents for that matter) *want the easiest sale they can make* – instead of having to spend millions to promote an unknown quantity that may or may not make a dent on the best-seller lists.

And let's talk about marketing. Basically, if you are successful in convincing an agent or a publisher to back your book, it's because *you've* told them how well you can market it in your book proposal. So what do you need them for? It's much better to work with a publishing operation that understands this, and what your goals are for your book—which should be to build your platform, your business and your income – that can not only put your marketing ideas into the mix, but add some sizzle of their own. If you know why your book has appeal, you have the most important tool you need to get out there and make a splash yourself – and you won't end up caught in the gears at a major publishing house that can't change marketing strategies on a dime, like you can!

Here's the bottom line. It used to be that, in order to sell a song, a book, a movie, or anything else creative, you were forced to impress what we call "an audience of one." In other words, before you





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could get your work out to the public, you had to go through an individual gatekeeper – an agent, a publisher, or some other kind of decision-maker who, like the ancient Roman emperors, could give your endeavor the rare thumbs-up or the all-too-common and deadly thumbs-down.

The new model of publishing has blown up that myth, and now allows you to control your own destiny.



### **I NEED TO WRITE EVERY WORD OF MY BOOK MYSELF**

Many would-be authors spend hours staring at a blank word document on their computer screen. And staring...and staring...

But, they figure, it's *their* book. They *have* to write it.

To tell the truth, just *organizing* the contents of a book is an art – and if you've never had any experience with putting together a book, you'll likely find yourself going around in circles. Imagine trying to put a car engine together without first knowing anything about cars. Well, it's not that far off with trying to write a first book.

That's why ghostwriters get work – and from some of the top names out there. James Patterson is only able to release as many thrillers as he does because he uses a whole bunch of them. Tom Clancy (*"The Hunt for Red October"*) uses them. And you can bet that almost every celebrity putting out an "autobiography" used one. Professional ghostwriters can be trusted to deliver a professional product that reads like *you* wrote it.

That's because you don't just say, "Hey, write a book for me," to a ghostwriter and then wait for the manuscript to show up (well, you can, but don't be surprised if you don't like the result!). No, a good ghostwriter will get the appropriate content from you, either through notes or phone interviews, and then write the book in your specific "voice" – that way, the book sounds like you and it says what you want it to say. It's the best – and fastest – route to a finished, professional book.

Remember what staring at a blank page did to Jack Nicholson in *"The Shining?"* You don't need that in your life!



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A red, distressed-style stamp with a white border containing the text "MYTH #5" in a bold, sans-serif font.

**IT WILL TAKE YEARS TO WRITE AND SELL MY BOOK**

If you stick to the traditional publishing methods, you can already see how Myth #5 could be oh-so-true. If you do write the book yourself, that could take over a year. Then, it could take you another year or so just to get an agent. And *then*, it could take another year or so until the agent got you a publisher. Oh, and you're not out of the woods yet. The publisher will assign the book to an editor, who will probably have you make changes, which will take a few more months.

And then...they finally have to schedule a *release date* on their publishing calendar. Which means they have to work your book in around all their *other* titles?

Which means whatever you wrote will already be five years out of date by the time anybody has a chance to read it!

There are ways to jumpstart this whole process and get it done in a reasonable amount of time. If you're not a fast or experienced writer, a ghostwriter will help you get the book finished quickly. If you work with a smaller, cutting-edge publishing company that knows how to market your book in the 21st Century, you'll be able to get it out on the market in no time. The old way is fraught with bureaucracy; the new way is all about getting the best results in the fastest possible timeframe.

A red, distressed-style stamp with a white border containing the text "MYTH #6" in a bold, sans-serif font.

**I WILL MAKE MONEY ON BOOK SALES**

Every author dreams of their book becoming a smash success, and people scooping it up in droves at bookstores across the country.



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Well, besides the fact that almost every bookstore across the country is either out of business or headed that way, this is a fantasy that almost never happens with books, especially when they're by authors who haven't *already* sold millions of books. There certainly are exceptions, but, more often than not, books aren't big money-makers – even if they're written by extraordinary people.

If you're writing a book because you think you will make money on sales, either electronic downloads or actual hardbacks, think again. You probably won't and, if you do, it probably won't add up to much.

The *real* pay-off for writing a book is with your brand and the growth of your business, as we mentioned earlier. You gain an immediate and tremendous rise in your profile when you're a published author. You also have a great tool for publicity – it's easier to book speaking engagements or media appearances with a book on your resume.

Most of all, it's amazing for business. One of our clients, Brian Horn, nailed down a huge multi-million dollar deal, just because he was able to pull out a copy of his current best-selling book – with *his* picture on the cover. The client was impressed not only because Brian had this achievement under his belt, but also because the client could tell *his* clients that the project was being supervised by a best-selling author!

Of course, you might be saying, "That's great, but my book will never be a best-seller. So what's the point?"

Our answer? Welcome to our final myth...



### **THE ODDS ARE AGAINST ME WRITING A BEST-SELLER**

Let's be clear about this – the odds are against your book appearing on "*The New York Times*" Best-Seller List.

But let's also be clear about this – the odds can be *100%* that your book will appear on the Amazon.com Best-Seller List.

And let's also make something else clear – you can accomplish this impressive feat by having only *one chapter* in a book.



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For example, at our CelebrityPress® division, we gather together leading figures in different industries – personal development, fitness, real estate, legal, etc. – for collaborative books built around these specific themes—just like the multi-million selling series, *Chicken Soup for the Soul*. Each of our contributors writes (or has ghostwritten for him or her) a chapter.

When we release these books, we have the marketing machinery in place so that they become instant best-sellers in their particular niche. For example, they might be a best-seller in a specific business category or a specific interest category, depending on their subject matter. The reality is that they all become best-sellers and can be marketed as best-sellers.

And that's a powerful marketing lever for any entrepreneur, professional or business.

As you can see, publishing is truly a completely different animal in the 21st century. But don't just take our word for it. Read the following words from literary agent and author Nathan Bransford (and remember, he's a professional working in old-school publishing):

*"I think the big problem with traditional publishing is they seem dead-set on making themselves irrelevant....more and more we're being told that publishers don't have time to edit books. We have to self-edit before sending them in.*

*Brick-and-mortar stores are going away. The marketing budget of a book basically goes entirely into store placement (and maybe not for your book)....advances are getting smaller and smaller....it's rapidly becoming a bad deal for authors who are not automatic best-sellers."*

The facts are undeniable. If you want to make a book happen, do it on your own or with the help of a publisher who understands how today's publishing marketplace really works.

You'll be glad you did.



**If you'd like to discuss publishing your book  
with us, please call 888-720-5986 or email  
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Dedicated to bringing out the Best-Seller in you!

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of stylized initials and a circular flourish.

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