



Publishing for Profit: Successful Bottom-Line Management for Book Publishers

Thomas Woll, Jan Nathan (Foreword)

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Publishing is a rapidly changing business, and this readable and comprehensive reference is right in step—covering operations, financial, and personnel management as well as product development, production, and marketing. Written for the practicing professional just starting out or looking to learn new tricks of the trade, this revised and expanded edition contains updated industry statistics and benchmark figures, features a new chapter on e-marketing, and provides new information about using financial information to make key management decisions. Highly practical forms and sample contracts are included for up-to-the-minute advice.

Publishing for Profit: Successful Bottom-Line Management for Book Publishers Details

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A.M. says

For my class--MA Publishing--this book was absolutely essential, and a life-saver. Yes, we all go into publishing because we love reading, and like books, etc, but it is in the end a business first and foremost, something which no one should forget!

Very practical advice, a clear outline covering everything from sales pitches to production processes to cost saving techniques. Of course, being a student, I don't know how helpful this book would be to professionals.

Luiza Carreirao says

This book gives a comprehensive overview of how a publishing house works, while also giving detailed information and precise step-by-step instructions on managing a publishing business. It's an excellent reference guide.

Feliza Casano says

Publishing for Profit offers incredible advice for nearly all aspects of running a publishing company. My endgame as a publishing graduate student has always been to either found or work at a small press, so not only did the course help me gain the skills I'd been looking for, but so did Publishing for Profit.

The book is definitely for the business-minded end of publishing and not the editorial side. (There are tons of books on writing and editing that can help with that.) The 2010 edition, the red cover pictured above, does a fantastic job outlining different components necessary to publishing as a company and as a business. One chapter that especially speaks to me is "Make Planning Primary," which emphasizes the importance of setting goals, planning cash flow, and other aspects.

One thing I'd always found disappointing, though, was the book's lack of attention to the digital aspect of the publishing industry. Publishers say digital publishing accounts for 3-10% of their overall sales, yet my original reading of Publishing for Profit hardly addressed digital publishing at all except as a subsidiary right available for publishers to sell.

But then in October, I discovered the 2014 edition of Publishing for Profit.

Read more at my blog.

James Aaron Kirkpatrick says

A lot of really good information here. Some of the specifics are a little dated because of the year in which the

book was published, but still a helpful read.

Anna (lion_reads) says

A must-read for anyone considering a career in publishing or those interested in starting their own publisher. The industry bible! However, this seriously needs a Canadian edition. There are a lot of specific databases and useful organizations mentioned here that are simply not relevant to Canadian publishing.

J.M. says

Chock-full of awesome info.

Kelsey T. Lane says

Very practically detailed.

Nuts and bolts roadmap for starting or revamping your traditional and e-format publishing company. More hands on than theoretical, with financial models included.

S.P. says

This is a great book. Woll is concise and clear with everything he says and even provides template forms and Excel documents to illustrate his points. If one was setting up a small publishing business, this book tells you what you need to know without being condescending.

I would go further though, because Woll highlights what a publisher should do on the business side, he also demonstrates what *any* business should be concentrating on - getting the product right, the marketing right, and the sales rights, as well as keeping on top of the finances - not the sexy bits of the business for sure, but essential for the bottom line.

The fixation on profit (and in the case of publishing, how little of it there is), also explains the way the publishing industry works. It doesn't matter so much about what the book is, but whether it will sell.

Woll agrees with the likes of Scalzi (see previous books on my list!) about what constitutes a successful book - namely that it makes back its costs and then some, and he agrees at just how few books that actually means.

I found this the stunner. 5000 sales would be considered a raving success for any book (assuming they make a profit at the end of it!). Think about that - how many readers are out there? Everyone I know reads, which either means you don't have to sell to many people compared to the pool of consumers, or that I live in a pretty rarefied environment. Worse 5000 is hopelessly optimistic for most books (20,000 titles a year are published, most have runs much less than 5000). These figures are for the US market, in the UK I guess the

numbers are even smaller, and the profitability even harder to come by.

It is really hard to sell even a few books. Don't be surprised then, when the manuscript you have toiled over gets rejected by any publisher. Tough market to be in.

Victoria Sandbrook says

Worth reading. I don't like the bottom line, but it's the reality in this industry...

Douglas Wilson says

Very good. Quite informative.

Adrienna says

Wow, I have read other publishing books and this one is not only simple read...but has sample of contracts that no other publishing books have displayed. I have seen the copyright page, but also ISBN, contract analysis, etc. Good book if you are thinking of self publishing or becoming an independent entity. I will have to put this on my shelf in near future.

I will have to take notes.

Jessica says

G-g-grad school, what?

Michael says

This is a comprehensive introduction to the publishing business. I read this for a class and found myself skimming more than I normally do (okay, I actually never skim), but this isn't exactly summer beach reading. The author offers plenty of business insights and relevant examples. Being new to the industry, I found myself not being able to entirely wrap my brain around a lot of it. But overall it is definitely a keeper for future reference.

Nina says

I read this book for a Trade Publishing course. Woll provides a clear, easy-to-read overview of the publishing industry. The information provided is for publishing in the United States, so I suspect that some

of his statements might not apply to Canadian publishing. As well, I wonder how much of his information is out of date at the time of my reading, since the book industry has seen huge changes over the past few years.

Drucilla says

4th edition

Everything you ever wanted to know about creating your own publishing company. Enough said.

5th edition

What I said about the previous edition still goes, but the updated bits concerning the digital age are just as good. It's a pretty dense text, but still readable.
