



BookLaunch
Bootcamp

**TO SELF PUBLISH
OR NOT TO
SELF PUBLISH**

SO YOU'VE WRITTEN A BOOK?



Congrats! The hardest part is truly over.

Now you want to go from “I wrote a book” to “I published a book.” And unfortunately, it’s not always an easy decision on how exactly to do that.

For starters, you have three options: **traditional publishing, self publishing or hybrid publishing.**

What’s the difference?

We’re so glad you asked.

But before we dive into each publishing option and how they differ, let’s get clear on why you want to publish your book in the first place.

It goes without saying that setting goals in any endeavor — a new relationship, a business, etc. — is one of the most important things you can do to help you succeed. Goals keep you on track, give you focus and help you make important decisions.

In this course, knowing why you want to publish a book will help you to decide which publishing platform is best for you.

We’ll be going through the various pros and cons of the different publishing options, but it’s valuable to have a clear sense of your goal(s) as we go through this process. It will help you to better weigh the options before you.

While there’s no magic formula for connecting certain goals to certain publishing plans, there are some important questions you can ask yourself to help you inform your decision.

Use the questions in the checklist on the next page as a guide to getting clear on your goals. There are no right or wrong answers here, and you might have more than one reason for wanting to publish your book. It will be helpful to be honest with yourself, think about your why and get super clear on your primary goal.

WHY DO YOU WANT TO PUBLISH A BOOK?

HAVE YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO WRITE A BOOK?

DO YOU WANT TO BE KNOWN AS A PUBLISHED AUTHOR?

DO YOU HAVE A UNIQUE STORY TO TELL?

DO YOU WANT TO MAKE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE?

DO YOU WANT TO ESTABLISH YOUR AUTHORITY?

DO YOU WANT MORE LEADS FOR YOUR BUSINESS?

DO YOU WANT TO MAKE MONEY WITH YOUR BOOK?

DO YOU WANT TO BECOME A PROFESSIONAL WRITER?



Okay, now that you’ve answered all the questions, take a closer look at the ones you said “yes” to. It might sound silly, but spending some time on this will only benefit you as we move through this course. Try to narrow it down to your single most important reason for publishing.

Got it?

Great. Keep it in mind as we continue through your publishing options.

TRADITIONAL PUBLISHING

Traditional publishing is when a publisher offers the author a contract and essentially buys the rights to print, publish and sell your book through bookstores and other retailers. In return, the author gets paid a percentage of the sales, and this is called royalties. In the past, this was the only way to effectively publish your book, and most of the bestsellers you know of today were published traditionally. If you were to go through the books on your shelf and look at the copyright pages, you'll often notice the big names like Random House and Penguin listed as the publisher. However, there are small publishing companies as well, and the process is all the same.

Cons of Traditional Publishing

1. *They won't do much marketing for you.*

Traditional publishers will do some marketing for you, too, but it's not enough to make a difference. You'll still need to market your own book (there's no escaping it!).

2. *The longer timeline.*

Traditional publishing can be slower because it can take months or years to secure an agent, find a publisher and negotiate a deal. This is perhaps the biggest perceived con of traditional publishing, but the truth is that self publishing isn't much faster. The actual publishing part takes about the same amount of time, but to get through the gate, so to speak, can take months or years because it requires finding an agent, who will then pitch your book to publishers, or pitching directly to publishers yourself. A perk of the longer timeline, however is that you could use the year it takes to traditionally publish to build your platform, which we discuss in detail in our [Book Marketing Course](#).

Do your goals align with traditional publishing?

- If you want the stamp of approval / validation from a traditional publisher?
- If you're trying to build a career as a writer
- If you want the best chance of success
- If you want to get into bookstores

Pros of Traditional Publishing

1. *Traditional publishing can be a filter for good writing and bad writing.*

The major publishing houses are seen as the professionals on the topic, and they are credited with knowing good books from bad books, and what will sell versus what won't. If they accept your book, it's essentially a higher source that says, "this book is good enough for us to publish." It can act as a right of passage because it requires obtaining approval from the gatekeeper.

2. *Similarly, it can be a source of personal pride.*

It's natural to want our efforts to be validated by a governing body and a traditional publisher can do just that. For a lot of authors, this can feel like getting through a gated system, or passing a test. You'll get a stamp of approval for your ego.

Ask yourself:

- Will you feel accomplished if you self publish or do you want the stamp of approval from a traditional publisher?
- Will self publishing feel cheap or like you cut corners?

3. *Media and most platforms will take you more seriously.*

Thanks to the filter, media doesn't have to wonder if your book is actually good. It's already been verified. It's an unfortunate truth about self publishing and hybrid publishing that most media platforms and other publicity won't take you seriously. If you publish traditionally, you will have already "passed the test" so to speak, and they will automatically understand that if a publishing body found your book credible enough to put their name on your work, it must be worth looking further into. In short, you'll have a much easier time promoting your book if you publish it traditionally.

4. *Traditional publishers will do a lot of the work for you.*

They'll cover all editing, printing, set up and design costs for you, so you won't have to spend that money out of your pocket. This can cost thousands of dollars if you choose to do it on your own. Traditional publishers will also do some marketing for you, but it will likely be minimal and you'll still need to market your own book.

5. *You'll be able to get into bookstores.*

Traditional publishers aren't guaranteed to go in bookstores, but most publishers have connections with bookstores and will take care of the distribution for you. What most people don't know about self publishing is that you won't be in bookstores unless you pitch to bookstores yourself. This means you'll likely have to limit yourself to only your local bookshops. In all honesty, however, it might not matter if your book is in bookstores. Most small authors will have more success online where it's easier to find readers.

SELF PUBLISHING

Self publishing is when you retain the rights to your book, and you organize all the formatting, design, publishing, distribution and marketing yourself, with your own money and without the involvement of an established publishing house

Pros of Self Publishing

1. *It can be faster.*

The actual time to self publish is about the same as traditional publishing, but it saves you the months or years it takes to find an agent to represent you and/or sell your work to a publisher. Most people self publish in 3-6 months, but it can be done much faster if needed.

2. *You won't need to write a book proposal, secure an agent or find a publisher.*

As mentioned above, the lengthy timeline of traditional publishing is largely due to the time it takes to jump through all of the required hoops, such as writing a book proposal which will sell your idea to an agent. That agent agrees to represent you and pitch your idea to a publisher, who will then agree to buy it. However, writing a book proposal can be a long, tedious task that might be better spent on just writing the actual book. Plus, the search for an agent and/or publisher can be a challenging one at best, and it can take months or even years at each stage of the process. With self publishing, there's no need for any of this.

3. *It can be cheaper.*

Some publishers require you to buy thousands (3-5,000) copies of your own book to mitigate publishing costs so you won't have to:

- Be out money
- Be stuck with boxes of unsold books in your garage

4. *You can make more money.*

While traditional publishers will cover all editing, printing, set up, and design costs for you, they will take 90% of the royalties. (cont. on next page)

What is a royalty? In short, the royalty is calculated by taking the retail cost of your book less any printing costs to come up with a profit margin. The publisher will take 90% of that, and you'll only see 10% (or less).

They may pay you an advance on your book, which is based on an estimate of how many copies they believe they can sell, and after the publisher gets their money back, you'll get a better royalty rate, but not as much as you'll get with self publishing.

When self publishing, you can keep 60% of the royalties for print and 70% for ebooks.

5. *You'll retain full creative control.*

Agents and/or editors can often sway authors to change direction with their book to satisfy what's 'popular'. This might include minor character changes or complete storyline changes that require several rewrites. With self publishing, you're the judge. You can publish your book whenever you're ready.

Cons of Self Publishing

1. *You won't get into bookstores.*

Most people don't know that if you self publish, your book will not be available in bookstores. It's possible to negotiate terms with your local bookshop(s), but it is very difficult if not impossible to convince the major retailers to carry a self-published book.

2. *You might not be taken as seriously by media and other promotional platforms.*

When it comes to marketing your book, which you will definitely have to do if you choose to self publish, you'll have a harder time being seen as a professional author if your book is self published. It won't carry the stamp of approval that traditional publishing allows for. However, it's quite possible to run successful marketing campaigns around a self-published book, especially if it satisfies a niche market, you're a well-connected author, and/or you have a large platform.

3. *You'll pay for everything yourself up front*

While traditional publishers cover your editing, design, printing, and distribution costs, that expense falls on you when you self publish. This course will teach you exactly how to do (or hire out) the necessary steps to seeing your book to print, but it can cost several thousand dollars to do it professionally.

Do your goals align?

- **You don't care about the validation / ego boost**
- **You just want to publish your book**
- **You want to retain full creative control**
- **You don't care if your book isn't in bookstores**

HYBRID PUBLISHING

Pros of Hybrid Publishing

1. *It's fast.*

It's like done-for-you self publishing, so you don't have to learn all of the steps yourself. If timeliness is of utmost concern for you, hybrid publishing can essentially run your book through the process a lot faster than you can do it yourself.

2. *You keep the royalties.*

You'll pay an upfront fee for their services, and then you get to keep the typical self-publishing royalties of 60-70%.

3. *You retain full creative control.*

The manuscript you submit is exactly what will be published (unless they upsell you on editing, etc.). This means that unlike traditional publishing, you still get to call the shots on what exactly you publish. Another way to think of it is that oftentimes a traditional publisher will treat you like you work for them (because they now own the rights to your work), whereas a hybrid publisher works for you.

4. *You get to say you were published by a publisher.*

If readers don't know the publisher, it looks like it was traditionally published. Their name will be on the copyright page instead of yours. However, even if you self publish, you can create a separate publishing entity by setting up something called an imprint (which we will explain later in this course).

5. *You'll have access to extra services (like editing, cover design, etc.).*

Most hybrid publishers offer services for every step of the publishing process, so you can pay to have everything done for you, but it will cost a pretty penny.

6. *Most hybrid publishers are higher quality than self publishing.*

Most readers probably won't be able to tell the difference, but there is often a discrepancy in quality from self publishing to hybrid publishing to traditional publishing (in that order).

Cons of Hybrid Publishing

1. *It can be really, really expensive.*

Like most convenience services, you'll pay a premium for the convenience of having someone else publish for you. We've seen these packages cost over \$10,000 when you could do it yourself for much, much less.

2. *While often better than self publishing, the quality is still not as good as traditional publishing.*

It's important to remember that nobody is going to care as much about your book as you do, and it's no different with an expensive hybrid publisher.



DO YOUR GOALS ALIGN WITH HYBRID PUBLISHING?

- You aren't concerned about cost
- You aren't concerned with the stamp of approval
- You want a fast, done-for-you service
- You don't care if your book isn't in bookstores



TIPS TO HELP DECIDE

Now you should have a clear idea of the differences between self publishing, traditional publishing and vanity publishing. Which is right for you?

IF YOU'RE STILL UNDECIDED, HERE ARE SOME TIPS TO HELP YOU DECIDE:

- **LOOK BACK AT THE CHECKLIST QUESTIONS YOU ANSWERED "YES" TO AND SPEND A FEW DAYS MEDITATING ON THEM WITH THE NEW INFORMATION YOU'VE LEARNED ABOUT THE THREE PUBLISHING OPTIONS.**
- **JOURNAL OR FREE WRITE ABOUT YOUR "WHY".**
- **DISCUSS IT WITH YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS WHO KNOW YOU WELL.**
- **IMAGINE YOURSELF IN THE FUTURE, AN ALREADY PUBLISHED AUTHOR. WHICH PATH DO YOU SEE? DOES ONE STAND OUT MORE THAN THE OTHERS? IS THERE ONE THAT YOU KNOW YOU WOULDN'T FEEL GOOD ABOUT?**
- **LOOK UP OTHER BOOKS IN YOUR GENRE ON AMAZON AND CHECK THE COPYRIGHT PAGE TO SEE WHO PUBLISHED IT. IF IT'S A NAME OTHER THAN THE AUTHOR (WHICH WOULD DENOTE SELF PUBLISHED), GOOGLE IT TO SEE IF IT'S AN ACTUAL PUBLISHING HOUSE OR AN IMPRINT (MADE UP PUBLISHING NAME).**