

Nonfiction Indie Publishing

By Gary A. DePaul, PhD

These are some ideas for self-publishing. I include marketing ideas as well. None of the phases cover everything that you would need or want to do. For example, I don't explain specifics for creating a cover.

The marketing phase covers general ideas with a few specific ones.

Before trying any of these items, read the disclaimer in the footer that is repeated on each page.

Phase 1: Drafting

1. Define the intent of your manuscript.
2. Determine how you want readers to use your book.
3. After reading your book, speculate what readers would do differently.
4. Set a regular writing time and a minimum number of pages to produce per sitting.
5. Do not watch TV.
6. Create a detailed outline.
7. Determine the book dimensions.
8. If you use KDP, create an account. Download the book dimension manuscript template (example: download the 6x9 template).
9. Using the template, build the parts of the manuscript (there is a lot that goes into this).
10. Saving the Preface or Introduction for later, begin drafting Chapter 1.
(Note: if you create references, do not link to Amazon if you intend to publish through to Draft2Digital)
11. Continuously draft without editing.
12. When you have enough written and you are comfortable that you'll complete the draft, ask for endorsers and someone to write a foreword. Endorsements appear in the front matter, usually after the first title page and the copyright page.

Phase 2: Editing

- Read your manuscript from beginning to end while making corrections.
- Use Grammarly Pro to proofread.
- Hire an editor.
- Don't watch TV.
- Ask 3-5 professionals to read the edited draft and correct mistakes that they found.
- Revise some more.
- When you are comfortable, send copies to endorsers and the foreword author. Note that the norm is to send a few sample chapters, but I prefer emailing a full draft.

NOTE: These are suggestions and examples of what I did to publish [my *What the Heck* book](#). I won't be responsible for the consequences if you use some or any of this.

Phase 3: Publishing

- Finalize the front and back matter. Note that you will want to review how others have detailed their copyright page. You can make this simple to include the minimum or complex. Throughout this phase, you'll add to the copyright page. For example, you will add your ISBN and, if you want it, your Library of Congress Control Number.
- Download the cover template.
- Create a cover jpg for web viewing.
- If you use KDP, complete the first part of the paperback publishing form. Your intent is to get to the second page of the form so that KDP will generate your free ISBN (they won't generate one for eBooks because ISBN is not required in that format). Add your ISBN 13 to your copyright page.
- Create an account on the Library of Congress website and request your Library of Congress Control Number (free). When published, mail a copy of your paperback to:

Library of Congress
US Programs, Law, and Literature Division
Cataloging in Publication Program
101 Independence Avenue, S.E.
Washington, DC 20540-4283

- When you receive your Library of Congress Control Number, add it to your copyright page. This enables libraries to carry your book
- Create a Kindle version and print version (these will be different).
- Determine how you will publish using these suggestions:
 - Publish your eBook and paperback exclusively through KDP and enroll in KDP Select.
 - Publish your paperback through KDP and publish your eBook through KDP and Draft2Digital (do not enroll in KDP Select). NOTE: If you publish to Draft2Digital, you can make your book available to libraries for a royalty. Otherwise, you'll need another service if you want libraries to have eBook access for their patrons.
 - Publish paperback through KDP and publish eBook through Draft2Digital (which includes publishing to Amazon)
 - Use another independent publishing platform such as Smashwords (eBooks only: <https://www.smashwords.com>).
- Even if you do not publish through Draft2Digital, create an account and upload your book. Review the upload and resubmit until you are satisfied. Once satisfied, generate files for free (EPUB, MOBI, and PDF). Note that these do not include the cover. If you have a PDF editor, you can edit and add the cover later if you want. You can use these files to give to reviewers who prefer using one of these formats.
- Publish!
- Go to Author Central and create an account. Create an author page. Update your book page (if you have an eBook and a paperback, you'll have two pages to update). Be aware that Amazon is not user-friendly. For example, I added paragraphs to my paperback book description. Amazon displays the description as one paragraph (at least, at the time of writing this).

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Phase 4: Creating your post-publishing branding

- Update your LinkedIn page to include your book.
- Create a Goodreads author page and claim ownership of your published book.
- Create a Facebook author page. For social-media accounts, make them about your authorship rather than your book. This avoids having more accounts than you need.
- Create an author Twitter account.
- Create a YouTube author account.
- Create a Pinterest author account.
- Create an Instagram author account (I stopped using this service).
- For all accounts with banners, try branding them the same. Some have thumbnail images. You might use the same one as well. Find out the preferred dimensions.
- On indiebound.org, create an author account. Once approved, request admins to link your book to your account.

Phase 5: Marketing

- Post regularly on your social-media accounts.
 - Use quotations from your chapters, endorsements, and the foreword.
 - Post about how the book can help professionals. You want to market the value for readers and not your value (such as offering a discount in which the real value of the marketing is for you to have a sale).
- Give books away. You might try a Goodreads Giveaway.
 - There is a cost for this service, and so far, I haven't benefited.
 - Anyone who signs up for a giveaway automatically has your book added to their Goodread bookshelf.
 - Here is What is supposed to happen: winners read your book and write a review. So far, I have no Goodread reviews but have 325 Goodread readers list the book as "to-read," which I don't think is that useful. Maybe it will pay off later.
 - I'm getting the impression that people sign up for the contest but really aren't that interested in the book. Winning the contest might be the prime motivator for some, but I could be wrong.
- Submit for awards in your genre.
- Solicit to facilitate webinars or be a podcast guest.
- Blog about concepts in your book.
- On your website, create complimentary downloads. If you have a subscriber list, require visitors to complete a subscriber sign-up form to access the downloads. I use a free Mailchimp account.
- Create some videos about your book. Market these through your social-media channels.
- Use videoscribe to create a unique video about your book or a concept of your book.
- Create some LinkedIn Slideshares about your book concepts.
- Ask colleagues and friends to write an Amazon review.
 - Assume that 25-35% of those you ask will write reviews.
 - You might create a LinkedIn and Facebook group to keep them updated on your publication preparations.
 - Give them either an advance copy or the initial chapters to read before you publish them. This might decrease the time between your publishing and their posting reviews.
 - Ask them to buy a copy of the book so that they are verified purchasers. Do not offer anything in return for a review. Ask for unbiased reviews, even if that means giving you a lower star rating. Amazon keeps strict standards and may not publish reviews if they suspect the reviewer receives a discount or a free copy.
 - After reviewers post their review, ask for their mailing address, and send them a signed paperback copy.
 - You want more than 10 reviews (more than 50 is preferred) because this affects your Amazon sales rating (I think) and encourages prospective readers to buy.
- If a colleague likes your book and is influential in your field, ask the person to write a book review for a journal or newsletter.
- Do not pay for reviews.

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- Find local bookstores and learn about how you can sell copies through their store.
- If you have a Congress Control Number and your book wouldn't be considered a textbook, donate a copy to your library. Some won't take textbooks and may donate your book to a charity.
- Ask endorsers and the foreword author to help market the book. When asking, be specific. For example, ask them to share a LinkedIn post you did about the book (you can provide them a URL after publishing the post. Preparing something for them to post would be even better.