

How to Double, Triple, Even Quadruple Your Royalties in 7 Easy Steps (Part I) (...the article Pennwriter's didn't want you to read)

Warning #1: If you are Stephen King, Jackie Collins, J. K. Rowling, or any other household name in the book marketplace, you don't need to read this article because you are already making top dollar.

Warning #2: If you are John Grisham, Mark Twain, Upton Sinclair, Carl Sandburg, Gertrude Stein, Walt Whitman, Henry David Thoreau, or William Blake, you also don't need to read this article because you are already aware of what I'm about to say and have fully taken advantage of the benefits to move you to the same category as those persons mentioned in Warning #1.

Warning #3: If you follow the steps in this article, you will double, triple, or quadruple your royalty earnings, but you will NOT be considered published by Pennwriters, even if you make more money than J. K. Rowling. You will however have plenty of royalty dollars with which to wipe your tears.

Warnings said and done, if you are still curious as to how to increase your royalty dollars, read on.

Lightning Source – ever heard of them? Maybe not. However, Lightning Source publishes 60,000 books per week. Their catalog of books contains more than 200,000 titles. And, as a subsidiary of Ingram (sound familiar now?), they reach 90% of the retail market with their distribution services.

Please excuse my French, but I'm about to curse. Lightning Source is THE source if you want to become your own publisher or in other words, self-publish. There. I've said the dirty words. But don't stop reading yet. You've come this far. Just hear me out. It could be worth more than a few dollars to you. Just ask the people who wrote these books: *Dianetics* (L. Ron Hubbard); *Feed Me! I'm Yours* (Vicky Lansky); *Bridges of Madison County* (Robert J. Waller); *The Read Aloud Handbook* (Jim Trelease); *Life's Little Instruction Book* (H. Jackson Brown). All the aforementioned began by being their own publisher.

Being your own publisher isn't what you've been told. We are no longer talking about the desperate-to-be-published writers spending frivolous dollars to have a handful of books printed to be read only by their family and friends. I am talking about a quality, refined product written by a self-motivated, driven individuals who are tired of being the low rung of the publishing market when it's their talent and their hard work that is feeding the publishing companies of the world. **I'm talking about getting the dollars you deserve** for the product that has heretofore made the publishing industry fat and sluggish, a by-product for which they are paying the piper now. While the traditional publishers are tightening their belts, cutting titles – and editors – the writers of the world have quietly been looking for new avenues to showcase their work. Lightning Source is quickly showing itself as one of those lucrative avenues. (Note, Lightning Source doesn't work

with individuals, they are not a vanity press, nor does it take a portion of your royalties, they only work with legitimate publishers – which you can easily become at little cost.)

For those of you who are still with me, the bottom line for success in any publishing endeavor is not *who* published the book, but *how it's marketed*. By marketing, I don't mean a worldwide signing tour. When was the last time you saw Deepak Chopra sitting out front Waldenbooks in the Susquehanna Valley Mall? (Deepak, by the way, was one of those who originally self-published.)

It's time as authors that we wake up and see that sitting in a mall corridor signing books isn't going to make us rich and famous and it isn't going to get us a seat on Oprah. Whether you are traditionally published or the dreaded S.P., get thee to a library or pay a professional and learn what marketing is really all about.

That said, once you know how to market your product (and you're going to be doing that regardless of who is printing your book), why not move into the realm of *real* income, take control of the reins, and cut out the middle men who are ravenously eating away your hard-earned dollars. If you are going to be doing all the work, why not start taking all the profit too?

According to Michael Seidman in his book *Fiction: The Art and Craft of Writing and Getting Published* (a book I highly recommend to any non-published author if for no other reason than to read how an advance is figured), "*Traditional publishing procedure has been the allocation of the first fifty percent of profit...to certain fixed expenses.*" Included under the sub-heading of 'expenses' is your royalty. And what do they give you? An average of 7-10%, maybe a bit less if you are a first time author, maybe a bit more if you're seasoned. According to Michael Seidman's estimates, from a \$22.00 hard-cover book, you can expect a royalty of "*2.20 per book.*" To add insult to injury, you can expect to receive those payments, maybe twice a year. (Try telling your mortgage holder you're only going to pay them twice a year, or your credit card company. I don't think they'll buy it.) Lastly, after the publisher finally decides to pay you, your agent takes a cut – another 10-15%. This is the income on which you're now supposed to live the lifestyle of the rich and famous. Isn't it time to make our income match our literary dreams? They are possible if we learn good marketing skills and cut out the middle man. And sure, when you reach the level of those in Warning #1, you may very well want to work with a top-ten publisher, but by that time, you will be able to bring in top dollar making it worth your while and theirs.

Becoming your own publisher is no longer a question of having the cash to buy 5,000 books and a garage to store them in. Becoming your own publisher no longer means you have to personally stop in each and every book store from here to L.A. with a trunk full of books. Publishing has reached the 21st Century and Lightning Source is at the forefront of this movement. In fact, Lightning Source is so good at what they do, nearly every major *traditional* publishing company across the U.S., Canada, and U.K., is now using Lightning Source to market titles that might have not been printed at all. Why? Money. Lightning Source is an economical way to get books (real books – hard and softbound

books) into the hands of the wanting public. (They also do e-books if you have a mind to go that way, but the top dollars are going to come from hold-them-in-your-hands books.)

If a few poorly written, unedited manuscripts make it to the marketplace because of the ease and simplicity of the print on demand system, who will notice? But what happens when a quality product makes it to market? Just ask John Grishom (*A Time to Kill*), James Redfield (*The Celestine Prophecy*), Tom Peters (*In Search of Excellence*), Ken Blanchard and Spencer Johnson (*One Minute Manager*), or Richard Nelson Bolles (*What Color is Your Parachute?*)

Whether you've never sold a book or have just signed for your thirtieth, if you're not making near 50% royalties, it may be time to look at becoming your own publisher. It's easy, cost effective, and can be done by almost anyone. Want to know how?

Look for Part Two of this article in a forthcoming issue to learn how you too can become your own publisher in 7 easy steps and in doing so, double, triple, or even quadruple your royalties. It's not for everyone, but maybe it's for you.

Jamie Saloff has been watching the birth of the print on demand system since she first heard the term mentioned at a Pennwriters Conference some years ago. She has been helping motivated authors work through the steps to become their own publisher for the past three years. More information is available on her website at <http://www.saloff.com>.