

Publishing Processes

Life cycle of the publishing process has been illustrated below.



It all starts with an idea. If you have got an idea about a fiction or non-fiction book, probably you have started your journey. It needs to be shaped into the process called book life cycle.

2. PUBLISHING FAQs:

1. **What are the difference between traditional publishing and self-publishing?**
 - a. If you've ever thought about publishing your book, you've probably encountered a discussion about Traditional Publishing versus Self-Publishing.
 - b. Please find the differences below.

	Traditional publishing	Self-publishing
Who bears the cost of publishing	Publisher	Author
Ease of publishing	Difficult	Easy
Typical time to publish	12-36 months	It can be as low as 7 days
Royalty	5-10% of MRP	20-30% of MRP

Who bears the marketing cost	Publisher	Author
Copyright	Publisher/Author	Author
Advance payment	Sometimes Yes	No
Transparency	No	Yes

2. **I am a new author and I want only traditional publishing. What are the chances?**
 - a. Every author wants to be traditionally published as all finance burden is on publisher. In a calendar year over 500K new titles are published in USA and 150K titles in India. Typical rejection rate is 99% in traditional publications. [There are many examples of best-seller started as self-publishing.](#)
3. **Are there any example of best-seller that started career as self-publishing author?**
 - a. [Yes, here is the link.](#)
4. **If in self-publishing margins , profit , control are higher, why anyone would choose traditional publishing?**
 - a. Publishing is a difficult process. Had it been so easy, all self-published authors would have been super-rich. The ratio of success is less than 5%. The author has to learn the art of publishing and marketing deeply to control the self-publishing aspect of the book.
 - b. For example, a new author have no clue on how to design a book, lay out the pages, marketing and distributing the book.
 - c. A typical traditional publishing houses take all into consideration, however authors lose control on the various aspect of the book.
5. **Some self-publishing platform claim, they share 100% profit with author. Is it true?**
 - a. While choosing a publishing house, you should ask one simple question, who are their best-selling authors and how many copies have been sold by each of them and their references to talk to them. Most of the time these self-publishing platforms will not share this information stating it is confidential to do reference check. With that, you will get the answer.
 - b. Whenever any self-publishing platform share 100% profit with author then there is no motivation left for the self-publishing platform to make author a best-seller. As they would not be getting anything post publication. That means they will never try or help author to become best-seller.
 - c. So, any publishing platform sharing 100% of profit should be avoided at any cost, as the only motive for them is to extract publishing expenses from authors and leave them in mid before they becomes best-seller and move to the next author to get another book self-published.
 - d. Some authors get tempted to hear 100% profit and jump to the action only to realize later they lose money, time and never get into the best-seller league.
6. **Does that mean self-publishing platform who share 100% profit with authors cannot be trusted?**

- a. It will all depend after asking questions to publishing house and doing the reference check. Publishing market is very big and many players try to exploit authors in the name of self-publishing. Once the book is published, they do not take due care to the book for reaching masses.
 - b. A typical best-selling book takes almost 6-8 months to become best-sellers. There is no standard rule though and it might depend upon the type of book and marketing strategies.
 - c. If a publishing house publishing a too many books, is a red alert.
- 7. I talked to a publishing house, which says they have 30,000 store presence and 140+ countries they can distribute books**
- a. Ingram and Repro helps reaching 140+ countries. Most publishing houses have the similar setup.
 - b. However, 30K store presence is a misleading information. You can ask those publishing house a simple question, how many books really sold in those 30K book stores. If a book store keeps 10 copies of a book, we are talking about 300K copies sell – a delight #1 national best-seller might envy of. This information is rubbish and misleading and on this basis, you should reject that publishing house.
- 8. My publisher says they are fastest growing publishing house of the world and has 180K+ writers and 250K+ community members and they have published over 16K books. Should I believe them?**
- a. When you asked this question, you knew the publishing house is not believable. So you got your answer.
 - b. 16K book publishing is believable as some publishing houses have been doing this unfair practices for a quite long time and lack of choices forcing authors to land or get trapped by those publishing houses who are nothing less than a typical printer.
 - c. At StoryMirror we have a community of 5M readers and close to 1M unique readers as of Mar 2020, who are active every month, whereas we have only 35K writer base. Someone who claims to be fastest growing publishing, should have better ratios than us. If the ratio of writers to community members are only 1:1.5, it is very bad number for any publishing house. For StoryMirror 35K writer/5M readers = 1:142, which is 94.66 times the ratio you are talking about.
 - d. So be logical and evaluate before putting your money and time.
 - e. Since the publishing house has 250K community members, of which 180K writers, leaves 70K+ readers. That means all 70K readers will not visiting platform every month. Assuming 10K reader visiting platform every month, and they have published 16K books implies 1 reader per 1 book every month. Hope this logical explanations does not make you laugh too louder.
- 9. Is Amazon KDP the best cost-effective platform for self-publication?**
- a. Not necessarily. By default editing is not supported in KDP and provided by

third party companies such as Amnet, Elite Editing and Kirkus as of Mar 2020. The charges are higher than market editing services you can get from professional service provider.

- b. Any unedited book is not appreciated in the market. Amazon recommends buzzbooks for cover page design and pricing starts from \$299. Same as the case of ebook formatting, uploading etc. If you combine all this cost, it is higher than any other similar self-publishing platforms. Since Amazon has bigger distribution network through amazon e-commerce and kindle, a general perception of reaching wider audience prevails. However, you will barely get to know many million copies sold authors through KDP only services.
- c. Will give an example of StoryMirror book “Simplify your life” by Vaibhav Dattar. It was originally sold through Kindle and could sell only less than 50 copies after several months. Published again through StoryMirror saw the book sold over 10K copies in few month and the life of author changed through the book.
- d. Book publishing is continuous effort – both time and money and KDP is too costly compared to many self-publishing platform for similar quality and output.
- e. KDP does not help you reach book stores as well. Royalty is also very less if you calculate in real-terms.
- f. There are a lot of hit and trial and discussions goes before a good book is published e.g.
 - i. What is to be written on preface, acknowledgement
 - ii. What font to be used
 - iii. How images will be placed
 - iv. Can I put color image in the inside pages?
 - v. Can publishing house change my graphs/ images
 - vi. Can I have a poetic layout for my poetry book
- g. All the above require a proper education or training, which most cases missed by first time writers, which is not provided by KDP.

10. I am good at grammar and I have written quite well. Do I need editors before publishing?

- a. Writers write on the flow. Mistakes are very common occurrence even for grammar Nazi writers. A book can be a life changer for a person. If a book sells million copies, a writer becomes a celebrity. His life changes post a successful book. Avoiding the editors are the last thing a writer should think while self-publishing

11. What are important attributes of best-selling books?

- a.
 - i. A good content
 - ii. Appealing cover

- iii. Matching target audience
- iv. Demand for book
- v. Right time of launch
- vi. Extensive marketing

12. Which sells most? Fiction or non-fiction?

- a. Both sells equally. Fiction reach million copy sells faster than non-fiction.
[Click on this link to get information on list of best-selling books.](#)

13. I have written only 25K words. Can I publish a book?

- a. If it is a poetry book, it is ok. For novels, it should be at least 40K words for readers to get engaged.

14. Does poetry books sell these days?

- a. Yes, there are poetry writers who even sell million copies e.g. Lang Leav. At StoryMirror we have one national best-seller who has sold more than 10K copies out of poetry book.

15. When a book is called as national best-seller?

- a. When it sells between 5K-10K copies. But there is no standard rule. It is undocumented agreement between publishing houses.

16. I have an idea. How much time and effort would be required to get a 150-page book?

- a. It will all depend upon type of content. If you are expecting a life change after book is released, then you should be ready for equivalent investments – both in money and effort.

17. How much effort are required to become a national best-seller, assuming the book is very well written?

- a. It depends. Will give an analogy here. When you prepare for an engineering exam, MBA exam, CAT, GMAT, GRE, TOEFL, civil services, you invest years of preparation and huge sum of money. A typical top degree from India(IIT/IIM) takes out 2-3 years of time and over Rs2-3M as investment amount. In USA, an MBA degree from top universities cost up to \$150K. The reason behind this investment, we are confident of better future after the degree and ready to go to that extra miles. If one book is very successful entire future life changes for an author. Consistent royalty without doing any further work, huge money through seminars, talk shows and workshops help author lead a very promising life. The amount spent is quite less compared to the other equivalent professional career. Time to become a best-seller can be less than 6 months given proper planning and executions.
- b. Those who believed in quantum leap in their career and put equivalent effort and money, have all become successful and established writers. Those who tried publishing with half-hearted effort, only saw their authorship as a distant dream.

18. What are typical styles of fiction and non-fiction books?

- a. Non-fiction books should have a chapter hook, main premise of the book, key takeaways. You can have one key takeaway or multiple takeaways throughout the book. Powerful real-life examples, case studies, anecdotes make the book worth reading. A non-fiction book written in a fictional way makes it worth reading. The fiction book should have a powerful protagonist, plot, characters should be well developed, nice suspense, interesting dialogues etc make the book worth reading.

19. Do I need Literary agents to publish a book?

- a. Not necessarily. Literary agents are professionals, who connect to publishers, guide you in story building. But if you have chosen a publisher, who can take up the literary agents work, you can be assured that, they will take care of all aspects of publishing. At StoryMirror we have end-to-end support starting from editing, design, layout, marketing and distribution. So you do not need any agency to help you out.

20. I am a regional language writer, where selling 300 copies is a luxury. Can I still aim for selling 10K copies.

- a. At StoryMirror, we have multiple Hindi books, which has sold more than 10K copies. So selling 300 copies in regional language is a myth.
- b. With proper planning and execution, any good book can sell.

21. Which is more profitable? Digital and physical?

- a. Both are equally profitable, provided that effort is oriented in right direction.
- b. Any book that sells through paperback format, also sells quite huge in digital platforms.

22. What all pointers should be looked at in signing a contract

- a. Royalty
- b. Transparency
- c. Termination clauses
- d. Copyright information

23. If I have more questions around this subject, whom to send a mail?

- a. You can drop all your questions through an email to marketing@storymirror.com and/or admin@storymirror.com.
- b. Typical turn around time is 3-5 days.