

## Why Your Book Deserves a Business Plan

by Kim Wolterman

**W**hy are you writing a book? You want it to be read, right? If that isn't your goal, then you can stop reading now and go on to the next article. But if you do want to sell books, there is something you can do to help get them into the hands (or e-readers) of your target audience. Create a book business plan. While CreateSpace, the darling of Amazon, advises that a business plan be developed after the manuscript is written, you will be better served by working on a plan as soon as you come up with a book idea. If you have already begun writing the book, don't give up on a business plan. The plan can be beneficial at any point, but the sooner you work on it, the better it can assist you.

The business plan enables you to look at your book as a business, not just a creative exercise. No matter how you decide to publish, a book is a product that needs to be sold. The plan can help you determine if your book idea can actually sell. It will also help keep you focused on your reader and target market.

The key points of a book business plan include honing in on what your book is about, determining who your target market is, conducting market research, exploring publishing options, estimating resources needed to complete and market your book, and examining distribution, promotion, and sales channels. For example:



Kim Wolterman

- 1) What is your book about? We talk about this a lot at SLPA meetings. You must be able to describe this succinctly.
- 2) Who is your target market? It is not "everybody"! Male, female, both? What age range? Fiction or nonfiction? You need to know who you are writing for in order to appeal to them as buyers.
- 3) Market research will help you identify what competition exists for your book. What makes your book different from what is already out there?
- 4) How do you intend to get published? Will you approach a traditional publishing company? Does your subject matter lend itself to local or regional publishing houses, or university presses? Or are you going to set up an independent publishing company? How you answer this question may influence the way your book is written.
- 5) It is important to know how much it will cost to publish your book. While a traditional publisher may cover all of the expenses involved in getting a book into the marketplace, other options may require you to pay some or all of the expenses. You will

*(Business Plan continued on page 2)*

## Self-Publisher or Traditional Publisher?

by Donna Heckler

**V**anilla or chocolate? Salt or pepper? Self-publish or traditionally publish? Much as your tastes vary, the options for publishing vary as well. The question is: What is right for you? Join us as Donna Heckler, an author who has published both with a traditional publishing house and as a self-publisher, compares and contrasts the methodologies, the pricing, and the support from these different options. Hear this marketing expert by day share the marketing ins and outs of these two publication options and which method proved more valuable to her.

The traditional publication route has many benefits, from the knowledge that a recognized publisher is supporting an author's work to the fact that an advance may be paid. But with those advantages are some potential challenges, such as control over the work and timeliness to market. While each traditional publisher is different, there are some commonalities regarding traditional publishing that will be addressed.

Likewise, there are many benefits (as well as a few pitfalls) when considering self-publication. Explore the benefits of retaining control of your material while dictating the timing of

*(Self-Publisher continued on page 2)*



Donna Heckler

### UPCOMING EVENTS

**OCT 14–15: ST. LOUIS SMALL PRESS EXPO**

**KICKOFF AT THE PULITZER MUSEUM**  
FRIDAY NIGHT, OCT 14, 6 PM TO 10 PM

[HTTPS://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/  
EVENTS/1107212912649222/](https://www.facebook.com/events/1107212912649222/)

**MAIN EVENT AT THE ST. LOUIS PUBLIC LIBRARY**

SATURDAY, OCT 15, 10:00AM-5:00PM

[HTTPS://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/  
EVENTS/157416211366560/](https://www.facebook.com/events/157416211366560/)

**OCT 21–22: LIT IN THE LOU**

**NOV 5: SELF-PUBLISHING WORKSHOP:**  
**HOW TO PUBLISH YOUR OWN BOOK: WHAT YOU**  
**NEED TO KNOW @ MERAMEC CC**

**NOV 9: SELF-PUBLISHER OR TRADITIONAL**  
**PUBLISHER? WITH DONNA HECKLER**

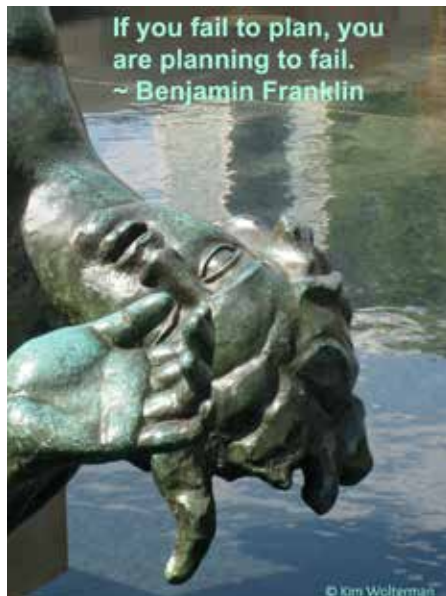
**DEC 14: PITCHPALOOZA**  
**WITH BOB BAKER AS MC**

(Business Plan continued from page 1)

need to think about the costs involved for editing, book design, printing and/or ebook development, and marketing expenses. These all add up quickly, and knowing what you will have to pay out of pocket can help you determine if the book makes sense from an economic standpoint.

- 6) What is the best way to get your book into the hands of your target audience? You need to have a plan for marketing and distributing the book. Where does your target market shop? Retail stores? Specialty stores? Online? This goes back to having a clearly defined answer to #2 above. Don't forget the power of your own networks – family, friends, co-workers, and all of your contacts on social media.

Once complete, have other people review your business plan. They may have suggestions and ideas you haven't considered. And



remember that the plan isn't set in stone. It will evolve along the way. Give your book its best chance for success by developing a business plan.

## How to Publish Your Own Book: What You Need to Know

A SELF-PUBLISHING WORKSHOP

Meramec Community College

Saturday, Nov. 5 • 8 AM–12 PM

**FEE: \$39 • COURSE: WRIT:704 • CODE: 201625 70576**

How to Publish Your Own Book: What You Need to Know

REGISTER ONLINE AT:

<http://www.stlcc.edu/Continuing-Education/Classes/index.asp?Cat=XWRT>

(Self-Publisher continued from page 1)

your book launch. Compare the benefits to some of the self-publishing challenges of cost, book quality, and book distribution.

On Nov 9, Donna Heckler will be interviewed by a member of the SLPA Board in order to ensure that all of the many questions regarding publishing options are raised and addressed. Topics that will be explored include: book pricing, timing, material control, marketing, book events, PR, editing, layout, printing, online delivery, costs, sales, and distribution. Expect to learn a lot – if all goes well, you may come to a decision regarding the publishing method that is right for you and your manuscript.

St. Louis Publishers Association Monthly Meeting:  
2nd Wednesday of the Month

The Heights: Richmond Heights Community Center, in The Argus Room  
8001 Dale Ave., Richmond Heights, MO, 63117

Doors open at 6:30pm for networking; meeting begins at 7:00pm

Monthly meeting cost: FREE for members, \$10 for non-members (guest fee will be applied to membership if you decide to join at that meeting)

## THE BOOK CORNER

### *Limestone and Its Paranormal Properties: A Comprehensive Approach to the Possibilities*

by Timothy Yohe

The idea that limestone rock has an ability to absorb and release electromagnetic and psychic energies has been a sweeping assumption by many paranormal investigators due to its prevalence on very haunted sites. Finally, this book has been written as a starting point for real scientific answers to the question of how exactly limestone can exhibit paranormal properties. Inside you will find information never shared before... a bridge between science and the paranormal world that begins with the creation of Earth and ends with our current quantum theories.



Available on Amazon: <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B017081UNA>

MEMBERSHIP DUES  
\$60 in 2016

## SLPA Meets on the Second Wednesday of the Month

RICHMOND HEIGHTS  
COMMUNITY CENTER (THE HEIGHTS)  
The Argus Room  
8001 Dale Ave.

Richmond Heights, MO, 63117  
(Child care available at The Heights)

Doors open for networking at 6:30pm  
Program begins at 7pm

The meeting concludes around 8:30pm  
Networking until 9pm

Regular meetings are free to members.  
Guests: \$10 at the door.



SLPA NEWS & VIEWS

Editor: Andrew Doty

Designer: Cathy Wood

Webmaster: Kevin Ericson

