

DIY Self-Publishing

**Your Edited Manuscript to
Formatting to Uploading to
Publication and Distribution**

Karen Cioffi

DIY SELF-PUBLISHING

From Having a Fully Edited Manuscript to Uploading Your Print-Ready Files for Publication

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<https://karencioffiwritingforchildren.com>

<https://writersonthemove.com>

<https://thewritingworld.com>

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The author has taken every precaution to ensure accuracy, but due to the everchanging nature of the internet cannot make any guarantees.

INTRODUCTION

Self-publishing is an amazing beast. It has brought the world of publishing into the hands of you, Joe, Beth, and everyone and anyone who wants to write a book.

It has brought writing power and freedom to all.

But, with writing power and freedom comes responsibility.

This means that while it's true that self-publishing has opened a tremendous amount of doors, and anyone can now write and publish a book.

This, though, doesn't mean you can slap anything together and self-publish.

You need to produce quality (edited) content for three reasons.

Reason number one: You have an obligation to your reader.

You want to give the reader her money's worth. Whether it's fiction or nonfiction, you want to create a book that will engage the reader. You don't want the reader to stumble over grammatical and content errors while reading.

One of the drawbacks to the ease of self-publishing is those new to the arena don't realize they should hone their craft before actually publishing a book.

This means taking the time to learn about writing and self-editing, and realizing the importance of hiring a professional editor to edit the book before giving it to the world.

Reason number two: You have an obligation to other writers.

Part of the problem today is the 'I want it now' syndrome that self-publishing lends itself to. Authors don't want to take the longer 'proven' road.

But, learning the ropes really does matter.

Once your book is 'out there,' it becomes another element in the determining factor as to whether self-published books are of the same quality as traditionally published books.

This is where your obligation to other writers comes into play. It's not fair to diminish the value of self-published books.

Reason number three: Self-editing is a good book marketing move.

In book marketing 101, the first step is to create a quality product.

In a webinar, pro marketers Daniel Hall and Jason Fladlien discussed the importance of 'the offer' (your product) compared to the sales copy. By far, a quality product is much more important.

If your intent is to only publish one book, then quality may not matter from a marketing perspective. The saying goes, 'if you fool me once, shame on me.'

If this is the scenario, then you don't have to worry about readers/purchasers buying more from you.

But you'll need to be careful here, because word-of-mouth is lightning fast in the internet world. This could easily stop your one-time purchasers also.

On the flip side, let's assume you love writing and have decided to earn an income from it, possibly from content writing or blogging. Then, self-editing will play a huge part in your marketing success.

If you produce a sub-standard product (blog post, article, book), it will discourage a customer from buying what you're offering.

Remember, a great product will not only sell itself, it will usually write its own copy. Editing before publishing helps create a quality product.

Okay, now on to getting your book published!

Self-Publishing a Book - Formatting

While I've ghostwritten a lot of children's books, I haven't followed the process that must take place after the book is written.

I have done some illustration reviews, but usually I just hand the polished manuscript to my client with a list of illustrators and formatters and that's it.

But I realize that figuring out what to do after being handed a complete manuscript that's ready to go can be a bit overwhelming. I wanted to be able to provide more information to my clients to help them with the next step.

This is why I decided to revise a book I had published a few years ago. So, I could go through the self-publishing process myself.

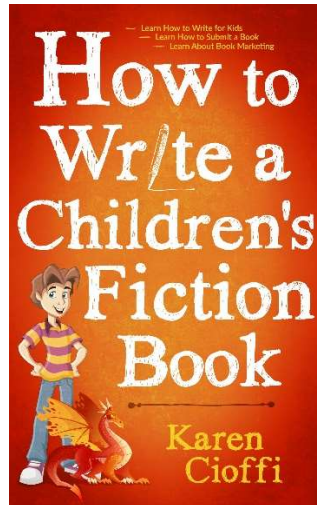
When I first wrote the book, I paid someone on Fiverr to take my Word doc manuscript, format it, design a cover, and actually upload it to Kindle and CreateSpace (at the time). I had no involvement whatsoever aside from writing the manuscript.

What I learned from that experience is that you should really hire someone or a service who knows what they're doing. While sometimes going the cheap route can work out, sometimes it doesn't. So, buyer beware.

Researching book formatters, I read a lot of self-publishing articles and they explain where to find an illustrator but NOT ONE OF THEM went into getting your book formatted. This always surprised me because it's a big part of self-publishing a book.

I did end up finding a wonderful service, Formatted Books. I used them to format my revised How to Write a Children's Fiction Book.

Formatted Books works with [100 Covers](#) and they created an amazing new cover for me.



I am so very pleased with their work.

But that's not what I'm writing about specifically.

I wanted to document the steps so I could put them in a PDF for my clients and just as important, so I can remember them. LOL

STEP 1 The Revision

I revised my book by editing and proofing it as well as removing some content and adding new content.

I also created a NEW title for the book as the original one wasn't effective.

STEP 2 The New Cover and back cover.

I knew I needed a new cover. The cover on the existing book was from someone on Fiverr and didn't lend itself to writing a children's book.

Luckily, 100 Covers got involved.

They asked a number of questions and based on my answers they created two covers for me. I liked both designs, but did like one more than the other. But I wanted it tweaked.

I worked with Cherub and he took my suggestions and had another version created.

Still wanting it tweaked, he patiently listened to my input. I even provided the image of the "boy" on the cover. He then created yet another version that I absolutely love. You can see it above.

Along with the book cover, the cover designer also creates a backcover design.

I was asked a number of questions again, like what size will my book be (I chose 6X9); what color paper I wanted (I chose white), and my ISBN.

I also needed to provide the backcover copy – this is simply a 'grabbing' description of the book. I also included a very brief author bio in the copy.

Instead of using a headshot on the backcover, I chose to go with a fun colorful promo image I created.



3. The ISBN.

Since I changed the title of the book, it automatically needed a new ISBN. I had already bought a set of 10 ISBNs back in 2017, so was prepared.

There's more about the ISBN in the next section.

4. The Barcode.

According to ISBN.org:

"The ISBN can be translated into a worldwide compatible bar code format. Publishers who wish to have their ISBNs translated into worldwide compatible bar codes can now make their request directly online at www.isbn.org or www.bowkerbarcode.com. Bar code scanning is a required step required by for many retailers in the sales transaction process for book publications and book-related items."

This is another must for the book and is discussed in more detail in the next section.

5. The Library of Congress Control Number (LCCN).

According to the Library of Congress:

"A Library of Congress catalog control number is a unique identification number that the Library of Congress assigns to the catalog record created for each book in its cataloged collections.

While you don't have to get a LCCN, it's free and is a plus to have and it only takes one to two weeks to get.

You will need to register for it prior to your book being published.

There's more about the LCCN in the next section.

6. The Interior Design (Formatting)

The only thing the book formatter asked was that the book be fully edited and ready to go, and the cover be finalized.

They took care of everything else, such as the title page and the copyright page, and page numbers. They also chose the font based on the cover of the book. Although, if you want a specific font, they will work with you.

Self-Publishing a Book

The ISBN, Barcode, and LCCN

Once you've chosen a book formatter and have had your front cover done, it's time to think about the International Standard Book Number (ISBN), the barcode, and the Library of Congress Control Number (LCCN).

THE ISBN

According to MyIdentifiers.com, the ISBN "identifies a book's specific format, edition, and publisher. It's the "global standard for book identification and is required by most retailers."

It also provides metadata for your book which helps readers find your book. This 13-digit number is essential for paper books, but can also be used for digital formats.

Once an ISBN is assigned to a book, it cannot be used for any other version of that book or any other book.

You can get an ISBN at www.isbn.org (through Bowker).

Note: There are other sites where you can get the ISBN cheaper, but be very careful. Often, they keep ownership of the ISBN. This is something you don't want.

There are a number of reasons you will need to give your book a new ISBN, including:

- Each version (format) of your book must have its own number.
- If you change the content within the book significantly, making it a new version or edition, you need a new ISBN. This includes adding a forward or a new chapter or content.
- If you change the cover of your book, you need a new ISBN.
- If you have a single book and then write another, you will need a third ISBN if you put Book1 and Book2 together in another book.

The ISBN goes on the backcover of your book - the book cover designer will include it on the cover in the form of a barcode. The information within it provides the price.

To find out more about the ISBN, go to:

<https://www.myidentifiers.com/identify-protect-your-book/isbn/>

Something new authors should be aware of.

If you use a self-publishing service/company to get your book out there, most likely they will provide the ISBN for you.

Sounds convenient, right?

Well, whoever purchases the ISBN will be listed as the publisher of the book.

Do you really want a vanity press, if that's who you're using, or a book formatter being listed as the publisher of your book?

Whether you're publishing one book or ten books, get your own ISBNs.

Browker's MyIdentifiers is where to go. As of the writing of this PDF, the cost is \$125 for one ISBN and \$295 for ten.

I bought a pack of ten in 2017 – they never expire!

You can get an ISBN at: <https://www.myidentifiers.com/identify-protect-your-book/isbn/buy-isbn>

Tip here: To assign your ISBN to your book, you'll need to list the price of the book. So, assigning it will have to be done after you know the sale price.

You'll also need to upload the cover image and you'll need to provide a description of the book.

THE BARCODE

Your PRINTED book MUST have a barcode in order to be listed in major book stores and libraries.

If you don't intend to try to get your book/s into the major stores or libraries then you won't need a barcode. But the fee is nominal so it'd be wise to get it anyway. You never know – you may have a change of heart down the road.

According to MyIdentifiers, "A barcode is a graphical representation of your printed book's ISBN and price – and buying a barcode is a low-cost

investment in your book's success."

Below is an example of the barcode from MyIdentifiers:



You should get your barcode from the service you get the ISBN. It may be free if you get it when you purchase the ISBN.

You can check out:

<https://www.isbnagency.com/how-to-create-a-free-custom-isbn-barcode-p1.html>

<https://www.myidentifiers.com/identify-protect-your-book/barcode>

If you didn't think of it when you bought your ISBN, there are services that will convert the ISBN into a barcode for free. Check out:

<https://www.creativindiecovers.com/free-online-isbn-barcode-generator/>

https://www.isbn.org/ISBN_converter.

Tip here: Before you create a barcode you should fix the price for the book. You will be asked for it.

THE LCCN

The Library of Congress (in Washington D.C.) allows you to record your book in their system. Libraries all over the U.S. use this system to determine how to categorize your book, if they are interested in it.

It's free to get an LCCN and could take one-two weeks, but I got mine in two days.

According to the Library of Congress, the "catalog control number is a unique identification number that the Library of Congress assigns to the catalog record created for each book in its cataloged collections. Librarians use it to locate a specific Library of Congress catalog record in the national databases and to order catalog cards from the Library of Congress or from commercial suppliers. The purpose of the Preassigned Control Number (PCN) program is to enable the Library of Congress to assign control numbers in advance of publication to those titles that may be added to the Library's collections." Here's the URL: <https://www.loc.gov/publish/pcn/>

In the event your book isn't published yet, but you want the LCCN for the copyright page of your book, you can get a **Preassigned Control Number** (PCN). This enables "the Library of Congress to assign a control number in advance of publication to those titles that may be added to the Library's collections." Here's the URL: <https://www.loc.gov/publish/pcn/faqs/#control>

Important: Once your book is published, you will need to send them a copy of the paper book to make the number official.

All mainstream books have an LCCN, so take the time to get one for your book/s.

What you need to apply for an LCCN:

1. the name of the author
2. the name of the publisher
3. an image of the book cover
4. a description of the book.

I think that was about it. It's a painless and quick process.

About #2 above, have the name you'll be using as 'publisher' in hand. Think about it carefully. This will be the name listed as publisher for the ISBN and the LCCN. It's what will appear as publisher in your book.

And, if you'll have multiple books, you'll want the same publishing name. It should be part of your branding.

I decided to publish my book under the name of my writing group: Writers on the Move.

Adding the Metadata

This is just restating that you'll need a good description of your book when you purchase your ISBN and when you get your LCCN.

You'll be asked to fill in information about your book. Make that information effective. It's what will help get your book found. This could very well lead to sales.

Any information you're asked to provide for your book, think about it carefully, think marketing.

Working with the Formatter

The book I published is nonfiction, so all I needed to do was send the manuscript in a Word doc along with the cover. They designed the interior and created a PDF of the book (a print-ready file) which they sent to me for review.

Once I okayed the PDF, the formatter moved on to *building* the ebook which are ePub and MOBI files. They also created a print version file, which is a PDF file.

You will need to let the formatter know which selling platform or aggregator platform you'll upload your book to, like KDP (Retailer) or Smashwords (Aggregator) or Ingram Spark (Aggregator) or other. I'm guessing there are different formats for different publishing platforms.

Most of Book Formatters clients use KDP and IngramSpark. That's what I used.

In case you're not sure what an aggregator does, this service distributes your book. In other words, they make it available for sale in a number of places, like Barnes & Noble, Amazon, and so on.

Not all aggregators have the same distribution network. IngramSpark has an extensive network with over 39,000 retailers including libraries.

An overview of how the self-publishing process works:

After your manuscript is complete and fully edited:

1. you hire an illustrator or illustration service to create the front cover, the back cover, and the spine for your book
2. the manuscript and cover go to the book formatter
3. the formatting is done and you get print-ready files to upload to the publisher/s (like KDP and IngramSpark)

With 100 Covers, you're also given a 3D/social image and print cover. I'm not sure if other designers do this also.

What Is The Process For A Picture Book?

I asked Book Formatters what their process is and it's pretty straight forward:

The steps to get your picture book formatted:

1. You submit your finalized cover.
2. You submit your fully edited manuscript in MS Word format.
3. You submit your images in a separate file. The images must be a minimum of 300 DPI. Your illustrator should know this, but just in case, you can change the DPI of images at <https://convert.town/image-dpi>
4. Provide clear instructions on where the images are to go. Also provide a description or illustration of the image and text layout.

Let's backtrack just a bit.

You will need a quality and fully edited manuscript no matter what type of book you're publishing.

If it's a picture book or chapter book with illustrations, you'll need to hire a 'good' illustrator.

Try to find one that does the text layout in the illustrations and does book covers. Some of them will provide you with a PDF of the book that you can hand over to the book formatter. This is what you want, if possible.

It's important to work with an illustrator who knows what s/he's doing.

Things you might add to your manuscript before getting it formatted:

1. The dedication page. You could ask the formatter where to put it or send it to them to add it in for you.

(The book formatter will add the title page and copyright page.)

2. The author page. This is a brief 'about you.' It lets the reader know who you are. This goes at the end of your story or content. You can simply include it at the end of the manuscript.

One thing I didn't mention is the backcover copy.

This copy is an enticing description of the book. It should motivate the reader to actually BUY your book. Just be sure not to give the ending away.

You'll give the backcover copy to the illustrator who is doing your book cover.

All in all, it's not a crazy troublesome process.

Once you have a fully edited manuscript and book cover, you give it to a book formatter to turn into the print-ready files you'll need for an ebook and a print book.

That's it.

When they're done, you'll get a MOBI file, and EPUB file, and a PDF (for print books).

The MOBI file is for Kindle. Although, I'm not sure if KDP now accepts PDFs.

The EPUB format is supported across most platforms: most eReaders, and devices like iBooks, Nook, etc. While the EPUB format covers most devices and apps, it doesn't work with Kindle.

So, if you'll be uploading your book to Ingram Spark and Kindle, you'll need both files.

After you get the files, you create an account at Amazon, IngramSpark, or any other retailer or aggregator service you want.

Next, you take the print-ready files and upload them to the services you chose.

Making Your Book Searchable and Findable

The retailers and aggregators will need information about your book, like a powerful description, keywords, category, price, and so on.

Read the questions and information they ask for carefully and complete everything carefully. It's this information that will help sell your books. It allows the distribution service to categorize your book and make it available for relevant search queries.

Once you upload your book, it can take 24-72 hours before your ebook and print book will be available for sale.

Like anything else, take it one step at a time. Knowing what to do makes is so much easier!

One Final Note

If you really, really don't think you can handle this process, there are self-publishing services that will put it together and publish it for you. You do need to be careful though. There are a lot of unscrupulous services out there.

You might look into Lulu.com and BookBaby.com.

Keep in mind that these services will offer you all kinds of services, like editing, illustrations, covers, marketing, and so on.

The last I looked, Lulu was \$1200 for this and BookBaby was \$1800 just for book formatting, publishing, and distribution.

Please be careful if you are thinking about using any vanity press services for editing, illustrations, and marketing. I've seen very poor-quality work from some self-publishing services.

I don't know about Lulu or BookBaby, but do be careful.

I know this is a lot of information and I've tried to make it as clear and understandable as possible.

You Have Your Print-Ready Files in Hand

Let me backtrack just a bit before moving forward.

Pricing Your Book

When you register for the ISBN and the LCCN, you'll be asked the price of your book, so figure that out beforehand if you can. If you haven't figured it out yet, you'll definitely need to figure out what you'll be charging at this point.

First know that different retailers may have different pricing rules. Check the retailers you'll be focusing on.

If you want an ebook and you're going with Amazon KDP and want a 70% royalty rate, you'll need to price your book between \$2.99 and \$9.99. For a full list of Amazon's list price requirements, click the link.

https://kdp.amazon.com/en_US/help/topic/G200634560

If you're publishing a paperback, the pricing works a bit different. Amazon or any other retailer or distributor will need to factor in the cost of printing.

Keep in mind that printing a children's picture book will cost more than a non-picture book without images. This means your royalty per sale will be less because the printing cost will be more.

You can check out printing costs with the link.

https://kdp.amazon.com/en_US/help/topic/G201834340

Now you're up to speed and ready for uploading to an aggregator or retailer. Which will it be?

First thing is to decide what service you'll be using to distribute your book.

I went with Amazon KDP first.

I uploaded the files, but forgot to take down the first version of the book, so both books were blocked. I went in and unpublished the first book and now the new one is available through KDP.

While my book was on hold at Amazon, I uploaded my files to IngramSpark which is an aggregator. You can list your book with both Amazon and IngramSpark.

The reason I used IngramSpark is because I want to be able to sell from other retailers aside from Amazon.

When you upload with Amazon, they do not distribute to other retailers. This limits your selling reach. But for those of you who want to go with just Amazon, you certainly can.

Using an aggregator for distribution allows your book to be listed in places like Barnes and Noble, WalMart, Target, schools, libraries, and thousands of other venues.

Other aggregators include Smashwords, Draft2Digital, Ebookit, Publish Drive, and Streetlib.

FYI: An aggregator is a service that publishes and distributes your book to multiple venues.

Time to create an account.

Go to the retailer and/or aggregator you're going to use.

I already have an Amazon account for another book, so had to create an IngramSpark account.

Note here: Amazon is free to upload an ebook or print book or combo. Other services may not be. As of the time I wrote this, IngramSpark was \$49 to upload an ebook and print book combo.

Keep in mind, you can just publish an ebook, but as there is no additional fee for POD (print on demand), it's worth offering both.

On IngramSpark's How it Works' page, this is what you'll see:

<https://www.ingramspark.com/how-it-works>

What It Costs to Upload a Book with IngramSpark

Print and Ebook	Print Book Only	Ebook Only
\$49 For Both*	\$49 / Title	\$25 / Title
<i>Best Value</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Global distribution to over 40,000 retailers & libraries✓ Availability to Amazon, Apple, Kobo, and Barnes & Noble✓ Print quality and e-reader compatibility✓ Online sales reporting✓ All managed from a single platform	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Print quality to match traditional publishers✓ Global distribution to over 40,000 retailers & libraries, including Amazon and Barnes & Noble✓ Hardcover, paperback or both✓ Variety of trim sizes, binding, paper, & color options✓ Online sales reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ E-reader compatibility✓ Availability to Amazon, Apple, Kobo, and Barnes & Noble✓ Online sales reporting
Publish Now	Publish Now	Publish Now

Simply click on the option you want and you'll be asked to fill in some information to create an account: your name, email address, and password.

They'll send a verification email for you to click on to activate your account.

Next, it's on to accept their agreement then fill out your personal or business information. Then you'll need to accept more agreements.

After this, you'll be brought to a page to fill out your book's information which will include:

1. Title
2. Subtitle
3. Description
4. Keywords

I know I mentioned this already, but think about the description carefully as well as the keywords. These marketing tools are what will help readers find your book and motivate them to buy. This is not a step to rush through.

You'll also need to provide your banking information for receipt of book sales payments. They'll also want a credit card on file to pay for the fee to upload and distribute your book/s and any other services you purchase from them.

Word of advice: Create your "Add new book" when you're ready to upload your print-ready file. I filled out all the information before I had the file to upload and lost it all. I had to redo it.

Follow Instructions

Follow Ingram's instructions and if you still need help, they have a community that should be able to answer your question. IngramSpark also has a number of articles on self-publishing. Or, you can do an online search.

I priced my ebook at \$6.99 and the print book at \$14.95. At \$14.95, my royalty is about \$5.

If I priced the print book at \$9.99, my royalty would be \$2-\$3.

You'll also be able to include other markets: like United Kingdom, European Union, Canada, Australia, and Global Connect.

I chose them all.

You can check out what your royalty will be for different prices at:
<https://myaccount.ingramspark.com/Portal/Tools/PubCompCalculator>

Discounting Your Book

When you fill in your pricing, you'll be asked about Wholesale Discount for book stores and other retailers of print books.

You can read more about discounting your books at:
<https://www.ingramspark.com/blog/why-should-i-discount-my-book>

I chose to go with the highest discount. While you'll receive a much lower royalty on your sales to wholesalers, at least you'll have the opportunity to sell more.

Returns

This is a tricky one. If you intend to sell to book stores and other retailers who buy in bulk, know that most will not purchase your book, even at a discount, IF they can't return the books.

The catch with returns is if a book is returned, you will be charged for the wholesale price of that book. So, if you allow returns, save the money from

discounted purchases for a while to make sure you have the funds to reimburse for returns.

If you do allow returns, be sure to choose "Returns – Destroy."

With this option you'll only pay for the wholesale amount, not shipping and handling fees for the book/s to be mailed to you.

I don't know if there's a time limit on returns from discounted sales. I've researched and haven't been able to find an answer, but *I think* it's six months.

You can read more about Book Returns below:

Making Your Book Returnable

<https://www.ingramspark.com/blog/making-your-book-returnable>

Returns 101 – What Authors Need to Know

<https://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/authors/pw-select/article/71886-returns-101-what-new-authors-need-to-know.html>

Distribution

Once you upload your book and they approve it, the distributor (IngramSpark) or retailer (Amazon) will make it available for sale.

That's it! You're done!

Well, now you'll have a book you need to market, but that's another story.

Hope this helps ease the process of self-publishing your books.

BONUS CONTENT

Self-Publishing a Picture Book and Vanity Presses

Sadly, there are still new authors who fall for the lure of self-publishing (vanity) services. And, while this article focuses on picture books, it's solid advice for authors of other genres.

As a ghostwriter, the majority of my clients hit the self-publishing road as do I think most of today's authors. It's just easier and much quicker.

This being the case, I often see what happens when an author jumps in without researching carefully and getting recommendations.

And, while these self-publishing services won't label themselves as the old vanity presses, they are just that.

Vanity Publishers and Editing

Many self-publishing companies lure in the author with the "we'll do it all for you."

They promise a quality book and are sure to explain that the author needs her work edited along with designed and formatted for publishing. And, if they publish children's books, they have a staff of illustrators.

HOLD UP! STOP! P-L-E-A-S-E!

I see the poor quality of many of these vanity publishers.

For those who aren't sure what a vanity publisher is, it's self-publishing company that will take your manuscript and publish it - put it out into the world, for a fee.

You, as the author, pay for the entire publishing process. The service makes all their money from YOU.

If you don't sell a single book, they don't care because they made their money from YOU.

What's Wrong with This Scenario?

The first thing wrong with vanity publishers is they will take an already professionally edited and proofed manuscript and say it needs editing that you must pay for.

If their editors are qualified and you have the money to spend on additional editing, that's fine.

The PROBLEM is that most of these companies hire non-English speaking writers to edit and even ghostwrite work. And, those editors may not be qualified to edit children's manuscripts.

I've seen professionally edited manuscripts turned into a mess with these editors.

You might be asking, why would they do such a thing?

MONEY.

These companies are in business to make a profit. They need to hire workers who will work at very reasonable rates, regardless of whether they're qualified or not.

The SOLUTION?

Ask around for editing help. Get recommendations. Don't let a vanity press edit your manuscript.

Be part of a critique group. This will give you more than your own eyes on your story. A critique group can be a valuable help.

Then if you've done things right, all you should need the company for is to design and format the PDF of the manuscript that you received from your illustrator.

Then you can take the print-ready files from the self-publishing service and upload them into the printing or digital services, like Amazon KDP, Ingramspark, Smashwords, and so on.

Note: If you've written a picture book, the illustrator should include text layout within the illustrations. When s/he is done, you should be given a finished PDF.

Vanity Publishers and Illustrations

Just like the vanity press will convince you your manuscript needs editing, they'll offer illustrations for your picture book.

The PROBLEM is they hire less than qualified illustrators.

I've seen the results of this for the less expensive end (\$1500 - \$2500) and from the more expensive end (\$10,000+). This is for 24-28 illustrations.

In two particular experiences I had with clients (less expensive and expensive), the quality of both products was poor - from poor quality illustrations to proportion problems, to consistency problems, to text/illustration errors, and so on.

The Solution?

As with editing, if you have a picture book or any other book that needs illustrations, ask around. And, whichever illustrator you go with, ask for samples of their work.

Along with this, monitor the illustrations as you go along. Review them carefully. Get out a magnifying glass if you need to. It's your name going on the book.

If one page doesn't look right or you see a consistency error, tell the illustrator or vanity press that you want it done over.

Don't waste your money; get your money's worth. Expect professional work.

You're paying for the work done. Your finished product should make you proud to be the author of that book.

What to Expect?

If you've written your book or had it ghostwritten and it's professionally edited and proofed, and you had illustrations with text layout done, you will give the self-publishing service the completed book (usually in PDF format which the illustrator will provide).

They will take the PDF and move onto the next step, (1) pre-press production: cover design, interior design, registrations (copyright, ISBN, etc.).

Then they'll move onto the (2) production/manufacturing phase: print coordination, pre-testing, and printing.

In the printing mode, they should submit the book to wholesalers and distributors to have your book available for sale in as many places as possible, including Baker and Taylor, Ingram, Amazon, Barnes and Noble, and so on.

Vanity Publishers Companies and Marketing

As with the other services most of these companies offer, be careful.

These companies will tell you they'll get you and your book visibility, they'll market your book to various venues, they'll create a website, and they'll write the website copy for it.

The PROBLEM is most of these companies use less than professional workers and it reflects in the quality of the book and the marketing results.

In fact, hiring a vanity press to do your marketing is a waste of money.

I'll take this a little further.

I had a client who hired a marketing company (not a vanity press) to create her website and market her books.

The company outsourced the work to a company that wasn't experienced in author websites. They needed help with the project, so the client asked me to get involved. Because of all this, it took much longer than it should have and cost more money than it should have.

The Solution?

Don't use a vanity press to market your book.

Ask around. Get recommendations.

If you're going to spend money on marketing, go with a company that is experienced in children's books and author websites.

You'll find more information about book publicity here:

<https://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/authors/pw-select/article/62849-book-publicity-101-hiring-a-professional-marketing-firm.html>

You might also check out:

<https://www.amarketingexpert.com/>

About the Author

Karen Cioffi is an award-winning children's author, working children's ghostwriter and coach, and author/writer online platform instructor with WOW! Women on Writing.

She is also the founder and editor-in-chief of Writers on the Move as well as a former fiction staff writer for two children's learning centers.

Let's Connect:

LinkedIn: <http://www.linkedin.com/in/karencioffiventrice>

Twitter: <http://twitter.com/KarenCV>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/kcioffiventrice/>

Pinterest: <http://pinterest.com/KarenCioffi/>

Online platform eClasses through WOW! Women on Writing:

Build Your Author/Writer Platform

http://wow-womenonwriting.com/classroom/KarenCioffi_WebsiteTrafficInboundMarketing.php

(A 4-week interactive e-class)

For Other Classes, visit:

<https://thewritingworld.com/your-author-platform/>

For help with your children's story, visit:

<http://karencioffiwritingforchildren.com>

<https://karencioffiwritingforchildren.com/karens-books/>

Or, email Karen at: kcioffiventrice@gmail.com

Every day is
a permanent
page of your
life's story that
cannot be edited,

~ Rebecca Murtagh

*Live
it
well.*



Karen Cioffi, Children's Ghostwriter