



OF AUTHORSHIP

BUILDING BLOCKS FOR EMERGING AUTHORS

A large pile of wooden letters and numbers is shown in the foreground. The letters are made of light-colored wood and are scattered together. The letters 'A', 'B', 'C', and 'S' are visible among the pile.

REKESHA PITTMAN

ABCs

OF AUTHORSHIP

BUILDING BLOCKS FOR EMERGING AUTHORS

REKESHA PITTMAN



**ABCs OF AUTHORSHIP:
BUILDING BLOCKS FOR EMERGING AUTHORS**

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INTRODUCTION

I have had the pleasure of training hundreds of authors worldwide to publish with massive success. When I published my first project, I made several avoidable mistakes simply because I did not know some of the essentials of building a great book. It is my mission to provide emerging authors with tools that will lead to more published works of excellence, and less manuscripts that perish as a result of limited knowledge.

ABCs of Authorship defines many of the practical steps that are necessary to produce a bookstore-quality book. This tool is a great crash course for new authors that do not have years to waste making mistakes and want to publish books right the first time. These key concepts and proven strategies will lead to publishing and greater profitability if utilized correctly.

Don't let any negative statistics about authorship stop you. Technology has made it easier than ever to realize your dream of becoming published. You may not have a

big budget to become a blockbuster author, but you have the tools to shape your own success.

If you are ready to assemble the building blocks that will support your publishing goals, this guide was written just for you. Are you ready to learn the author's ABCs? Let's head in the "write" direction!

A is for ACT

Act! There will never be a perfect time to begin your book. There is no time better than now!

“Life” will always have a detour waiting for you. Once you make the decision to become an author, open up your notebook, grab your electronic device, or buy some paper and get “write”! One word will lead to many more, but you have to begin.

Today, assemble some tools that will keep you focused on the goal. If you need to purchase a special pen, do it. If you need inspiration, head to the nearest bookstore! Whatever you decide, act immediately!

Write down the title of your book. Type it and make it as large as you can. Print it out, frame it, and place it where you can see it. If you keep the goal in front of you, you will be more likely to reach it.

Determine that absolutely nothing will stall your progress. Establish a regular writing schedule that fits within your current

lifestyle. If you do not have time to write, release some non-productive activities or excuse yourself from assumed assignments that are not true responsibilities. If you can only manage to write 3 times per week or 15 minutes each weekday, do it faithfully!

Declare, "I am an author!" Say it aloud each day. Always keep something with you to jot down a few notes that may come to your mind. I often use the notes application in my phone to write inspired thoughts. There are no excuses. Stay armed with a way to record your book, if needed.

If you need to secure the services of a book publishing coach, do so. Make sure that the selected coach is truly committed to your progress and not just your pockets. It may require a small investment, but it will be worth it if you can avoid paying for mistakes that could have been avoided.

Why wait any longer? Act! If your first move is to research your options on the internet, you can at least make informed decisions on what would be ideal for your book. Tomorrow is not a greater option than today. Act!

Your journey as an author begins now. What choices are you willing to make now that will change your future forever? This is your day, so act!

ACT

Say, **“I am an author!”**

Write down your book title somewhere visible.

Select a dedicated weekly writing schedule and write it down.

B is for BRANDING

Branding is the latest buzzword that is repeated online, in the marketplace, and for individuals that aspire to have influence. This concept can be confusing for people who have not had experience in marketing or sales, but feel the freedom to try new things.

Your brand encompasses how your presentation, reputation, and productivity work together. Your photos, logos, products, written words, speech, social media presence, websites, appearance, behavior and so much more are some of the elements that comprise your brand.

To make things a bit plainer, a brand is something that is “burned” into the minds and perceptions of people that leaves a lasting impression. Just like cattle are branded for identification, you have a brand, whether you crafted it intentionally or not.

Your business or organizational logo, author photos, book cover, online presence

and your marketing should be done with careful consideration. Many authors sabotage their books by promoting unprofessional book design, unflattering photos, misspelled public posts and unadvised marketing strategies. Understanding the principal techniques of branding should eliminate these errors for you.

Don't compromise on quality! You do not have to spend thousands of dollars developing a great brand. Strategic planning will help you to look your best and conserve money at the same time.

If you are not a skilled graphic designer, build a relationship with one and maintain consistent excellence. Refuse to use images and photos that are not high-resolution. Invest in a domain name and a decent website so that your business cards, bookmarks, postcards and advertisements enable your readers to find you. If you are not sure about gaining new readers via the internet, ask someone who has already had great results.

Your logos, graphics, websites, printed and digital materials should be top-notch.

When other people see the attention to detail that is presented, your book sales, appearance opportunities and income can increase.

If you have to start slowly, do so. Build a brand that is authentic and admirable. Be sure that you hold yourself to the standards that allow your brand to develop and expand.

BRANDING

How would you describe your personal brand?

Do you have a current, professional headshot?

Do you have a professional logo?

Do you have an online presence?

C is for CATEGORIES

Whether you place your book in a bookstore or list it for sale on Amazon, knowing the proper category for your book is crucial. Many bookstores place titles in the section with releases that are similar. Your book may fit into more than one category. If you are not sure which categories are appropriate, take a trip to a commercial bookstore or look at the categories listed on the Barnes & Noble website or on Amazon.

Selecting the correct category can also determine if your book will end up as a bestseller on Amazon. Even though you may not hit the top 10 in general book sales, you may be able to claim bestseller status in your respective category. If you are unsure of what type of book to publish, understanding which categories are most popular may help you to select a title that will be in demand.

Being aware of your book category will also help you to do some research on current and emerging trends in book cover design, marketing, and sales data in that genre. Take note of the sizes of the books on the shelves.

Are they mostly hardcover or paperback? Are there any corresponding journals, companion tools or study guides available? Are there many or very few audiobooks available about your subject?

Instead of relying on a bookseller to figure out where to place your book, you can have your cover designer place the category on the back of the book. Although there are some standard practices in book cover layout, pay attention to emerging trends that may allow your design team to be a bit more creative with how you can stand out in your category.

It is also good practice to regularly monitor books that are similar to yours and gain inspiration or education from the best practices used. The best way to maintain success as a published author is to understand what is going on in the industry. You may be the type of innovator that can put a brand-new category on the map!

Categorizing your book properly can mean increased sales. Don't take this designation lightly. Many self-published authors are eager to get a book out, but are clueless when it

comes to the real work that it takes to make a profit from publishing.

CATEGORIES

Visit a commercial bookstore and look at how books are categorized.

In which categories would your book fit?

How likely is your book to be a bestseller in your category of choice?

VERY LIKELY: Popular subject

LIKELY: Semi-popular subject

UNLIKELY: Not popular, but who cares?

HIGHLY UNLIKELY: Niche market, but I love it.

D is for DISTRIBUTION

You will need a way to get your book to the masses. Technology has made distribution easier with online avenues like Amazon. Even if you feel small in the sea of big business, Amazon gives you a way to compete in the market.

Self-published authors may not have the accessibility to bookstores that a large publishing house does. That is fine. If you want to be in a major bookstore, publishing a title through Ingram Spark may be a way to get yourself on the shelf. Be ready to give away a large share of your profits to a bookstore as an independent author. Some stores request a 60/40 split in their favor!

You can release both print and digital books for distribution on Amazon. The Barnes & Noble website states that they do not accept author submissions, but choose which titles will appear in the store. You can still list your eBook version through Nook (affiliated with Barnes & Noble), so take advantage of every avenue.

Amazon also allows the distribution of audiobooks through ACX, which is also an Amazon company. Digital/eBook and audio products are delivered wirelessly. For physical books, you may elect to ship your own books or have Amazon fulfill orders for you. This also comes at a price, of course.

Most independent authors will not need to pay a monthly fee to list printed book titles on Amazon. If you sell less than 40 items per month, an Individual Seller account should suffice. Listing eBooks is free, but you can opt to receive 70 percent of the royalties if you are a United States author, and 35 percent in other countries if you desire to have your digital titles available abroad. This is not a cause for alarm. Since Amazon is pretty much the only game in town, passive income from your digital sales is better than minimal profits.

Google Books also offers some digital distribution options, but you may not see many sales through this channel. Gum Road is also another innovative way to sell digital titles from your own website or via social media links. Choose one or select them all!

In order to receive payments through your distribution channels, you will need to attach a bank account when you sign up online. It helps to have a business bank account, but at least have a personal account. Your books need to find your audience. Be sure to have multiple roads that lead them directly to your book.

DISTRIBUTION

From the distribution options described, which options would work best for you?

Do you have a personal bank account?

Do you have a business bank account?

E is for EDITING

Even if you have won 20 National Spelling Bees, you still need an editor! Many authors balk at the expense of hiring a professional editor and proofreader, but there should be some level of investment placed here. Whatever you decide to do, don't skip this crucial and necessary step.

Far too many self-published books are riddled with typos that could have been corrected with the use of a basic spell check program. Misspelled words should never be an issue. There may be challenges with proper punctuation, accuracy of facts, correct tense usage, verb agreement, and so on, but spelling can be controlled by you.

If your budget is tight, think of 2 or three well-educated friends, associates or family members that may be willing to read your work and make corrections. I have found that if at least two people edit my work, something that one person might have missed will be noted by the other. If you can afford to hire a professional editor, do it.

If possible, start the editing process early. This way, you may be able to fix recurring mistakes or shift some details in your writing to present a stronger finished work. If your manuscript is already complete, be sure to set a realistic deadline for the edits to be returned.

Make sure that you and your editor of choice are clear on the expectations, due dates, and the method of delivery (email or standard mail) for your edited work to be delivered. I have heard many horror stories of editors who take unreasonable amounts of time to complete assignments. Others have told me of comments given by editors that mocked the work presented, or made the authors feel inferior. If you experience this, fire that person and find someone more supportive.

While you should be sure to maintain your voice and personality as an author, don't be afraid to make some changes that will result in a better book. Editing is not an enemy to your ego. When used in the right way, it should make you a stronger writer.

Before sending your work to be edited, make sure to proofread your own work. You

can even use online tools like Grammarly to assist. Check it out at **www.grammarly.com** to see how it can help!

EDITING

Editing can be quite an expense for new authors. Many editors will request a sample of your work and base their rates on your writing ability. To minimize this, write down the names of at least 3 people who can proofread your book before sending it to an editor.

Sign up for Grammarly online and do a trial run to see if it will work for you.

F is for **FORMATTING**

Why have a professionally designed book cover and an amateur interior? Formatting the inside of a book is a bit of an art form. Your title pages, copyright page, introduction, dedication, endorsements and other front matter should be beautifully accurate. Your chapter titles, font selection, pagination, stylization and spacing should meet the industry standard for professionalism.

I have seen many novice authors select fancy fonts that are almost impossible to read in print form. Do not sacrifice quality for the quirky! There are several companies and individuals who will be willing to format for a reasonable price. Be careful, though. Every person charging for work is not an expert! Be sure to get good references and look inside current books to get an idea of how your book should be laid out.

As much as possible, make sure that the overall presentation of your book is cohesive both inside and out. Understand the difference between a page break and a section break. Know that the first numbered page in

the book does not begin on the first page of the document. Realize that there is a need for blank pages in the right spots for proper page positioning. If all of this sounds overwhelming, get some assistance! If you know the basics, you can ensure that the help you employ is doing the job well.

Don't distort pictures within the document. Color pages on the inside of your book will increase the price of printing. If making the pages full color on the inside does not result in a justifiable profit, then black and white pages will work just fine. If you are publishing a cookbook or children's book, then full color may be your best bet!

Publishing a book is much different than writing papers for educational purposes. Many authors are appalled when I inform them that two spaces after a period or punctuation mark is obsolete! Older typewriters and word processors used that technique to make the spacing between sentences easier to read. Computers of today solve those problems. Do everyone a favor and adopt a much better writing habit. If not, your formatting designer may have a few words to say behind your back. Help them help you.

FORMATTING

The type of formatting you use will depend on the type of book you publish. There is a difference between formatting fiction and nonfiction books. There are also standards for children's books and other specialty books. Formatting costs can be based on the number of pages and the size of your book. You will need to know this information for formatting.

Is your book fiction or nonfiction?

What size will your book be? (6x9, 5.5x8.5, 5x8, etc.)

Approximately how many pages will your book be?

G is for GRAPHICS

Why in the world would you invest valuable time preparing a gift, only to wrap it in tattered paper? Many authors make the mistake of trying to cut costs by creating do-it-yourself book covers. Others utilize “artsy” friends or family members who have no experience or limited knowledge of the requirements for professional book cover design. Some choose imagery that has no relevance at all to the contents within. Epic fail.

I have several excellent graphic designers on my list. Not only am I able to refer others to many options, but I select who will design what based on the strengths of each person. Some of my designers are extremely affordable while others are a bit pricier. I do not always make choices based on dollar signs alone.

You should invest in a great book cover that represents you, your brand, and your story well. If you are a self-published author, I should not be able to tell at first glance. Unfortunately, many first-time indie

publishers have books that are riddled with amateur mistakes on the outside alone.

When selecting a graphic designer, he or she should take personal responsibility to know what the industry standards are concerning accurate cover design. I have been frustrated many times during the book coaching process when I have to train “professional” designers who are getting paid to do the work. Google (another **G** word) is your friend!

There are great templates for design on the market that will provide guidance concerning the proper specifications for book covers. Make an educated decision on the size of your book, based on what similar publishers on the market are producing. Popular sizes are 6" x 9", 5.5" x 8.5" and 8" x 5" for standard paperback books. Children’s books vary in size. You can also be creative and select a custom book size.

Your images should be high-resolution and free from watermarks. If you are using stock images of graphics found on the internet, make sure that you have permission to use them through payment of a small licensing fee. You can also arrange to have

photographs taken for the express purpose of obtaining images for your cover and interior.

When contracting with artists for illustrations, drawings and design, secure a work-for-hire agreement. Avoid paying royalties or sharing profits based on sales at all costs. Most new authors already struggle to make a profit. Don't set yourself up for a lawsuit later.

GRAPHICS

Professional graphic design is a MUST. Prices vary, but be sure to set aside some of your budget to get a great book cover.

What type of imagery do you have in mind for your book cover?

What colors do you envision using?

Do you know experienced book cover designers or will you need a referral?

H is for HEADSHOTS

Selfies may be popular on social media, but are not suitable for book covers! Even if you have to do your own make-up, style your own hair and head to the nearest department store, you need a professional photo.

I suggest scheduling a photo shoot just for your book launch. If possible, have at least one change of clothes and try to use a solid color background, along with some beautiful shots indoors or outdoors. Avoid taking photos with questionable surroundings or that can send confusing messages.

Be sure to get high-resolution digital images to send to your book cover designer or website developer. If your book does not warrant your face to appear on the cover, be sure to add a vivid photo to the back cover that shows a warm, approachable posture for the photo selected.

Although you may have some full body shots that you desire to use, you will need a photo of your face (or head) for the purposes of appearances and creating advertisements. Simply cropping a larger photo may not be

the best solution. Be sure to take enough photos to have several options to choose from.

If you have not taken photographs in the last 5 years or so, it's time for a new session. If you are insecure about your appearance, do something about it! Lose the weight. Update your hairstyle. Freshen up your wardrobe. Get your teeth fixed. I know that this may sound vain, but if you are not confident with your appearance, it will show.

I have even suggested that authors use a wardrobe stylist for the photo session. Fashion is ever-changing. There may be some items that you would not have considered that someone else with a love for style may convince you to try. While you may want to look like yourself, don't be afraid to unveil a new "you."

Be sure to save the image files to your computer and a cloud-based backup system for easy retrieval later. You do not want to have to search through emails or send text messages to your photographer to send your photos each time they are needed.

Take care not to misrepresent yourself through photos. Even though we can work

“magic” through the use of editing tools, people who meet you in person want to trust that what they see is what they get. Not only will having a stellar picture give you confidence, an accurate visual representation can help build credibility with others.

HEADSHOTS

CAUTION: No selfies allowed!

Do you have a professional headshot that is less than 3 years old?

Will you need to schedule a photo session for your current book project, marketing campaigns or websites?

What other ways can you use your photo to promote your book?

I is for ISBN

ISBN stands for International Standard Book Number. The agency that provides ISBNs for the United States is Bowker. You may order individual ISBNs, or you may purchase them in bulk. If you plan to publish with excellence, you will need an ISBN.

This number uniquely identifies your book. The ISBN will be recorded on the copyright page of your book and the bar code for the back cover will be generated from this unique number. You will also be able to officially register your book through Books in Print after you have published your title.

Don't give into the temptation to utilize a "free" ISBN number that will hinder the placement of your books in retail stores. Some printers will offer a free ISBN that can only be used through them. Having an official ISBN allows you to print your titles through multiple printing services.

If you decide to act as your own publisher, you can sign up for an account online at myidentifiers.com and designate your company as the publisher of record. If you are

not ready to file business documents or tackle this yourself, you may have some options through an independent publishing company. Be sure to read the fine print. Never let money woes dictate your excellence. A little research pays well down the road.

If you print copies of your book and later discover a few minor errors or small typos, you can update your book files and print the same title with your existing ISBN. If you add chapters, make significant revisions, or release another edition of the book, you will need to purchase a new ISBN.

Remember that your bar code is directly connected to your ISBN. You or your publisher will generate the bar code once the retail price of your book has been established. If you change the price of your book after the initial bar code order has been processed, you will have to log into myidentifiers.com to locate your current ISBN and generate a new bar code with the updated price.

Once you order a bar code (which incurs an additional cost), you will see the ISBN in small print at the top of it. This bar code will

be placed in the lower right-hand area on the back of your book. There are specifications for this, so it is wise to deal with professional cover designers instead of amateurs when it comes to maintaining the quality of your work. Your book represents you. Serve your legacy well.

ISBN

Which of these is most accurate?

I have an ISBN.

I need an ISBN.

I have a Bar Code.

I need a Bar Code.

J is for JACKET

Your book jacket consists of the front cover, spine and back cover. If you have a hardcover book, you may have a full-color dust jacket that wraps around the outside of the book and a solid color book with a simple title underneath. You will need an entire book jacket for printing, as well as separate images of the front and back covers for eBook listings and the creation of various marketing materials.

There are many developing styles of book jackets. You can select a jacket that is glossy, matte, embossed, uses foil techniques, or employs a combination of many visual and tactile printing methods. Understanding your unique audience demographic will help you make the choices that best suit your book.

Selecting your own title, trim size, providing ideas for your cover and managing the process is a luxury enjoyed by self-published authors. Many authors who have distribution through mainstream channels must yield these decisions to the marketing gurus or experts alone.

Unless you are a graphic designer by trade, hire a contractor to create this work for you. It is wise to use someone who is skilled in designing materials for multiple authors. You don't want to pay good money for printed copies, only to find an awkwardly placed spine or lackluster images that did not translate well.

Your book jacket is usually the first point of contact for a potential reader. What will be compelling about your book exterior that will attract the right readers, convince them to purchase it, and then tell others about it? When meeting you in person is not possible, your audience will be introduced to you through this visual invitation. Don't blow it.

When you are invited to a party or other important gathering, the style of the invitation usually gives a preview of what is to be expected at the event. Use this strategy to your advantage. If the contents of your book promote wealth creation, you will not get your intended results if your book cover screams "poverty."

You should keep the most current PDF and JPG files of the entire book jacket, as well as the individual front and back covers.

PDFs are currently the most popular way to upload your files to printers. Some may ask for the JPG or EPS file of your book jacket, but you should always be prepared with additional options, just in case.

JACKET

You can begin working on parts of your book jacket even before the book has been completely written. The best way to do this is to start with the front cover. Next, finish the back with the bar code. Lastly, determine the spine width by the total number of pages in the final document.

What is the target date completion for the front cover of your book?

What is the target date completion for the full book jacket for your book?

K is for KEEP

Keep copies of your work in a place that is protected from destruction! I have heard many sad stories of authors who lost work that was stored on flash drives or computers. Others had handwritten journals that were misplaced or stolen. Refuse to allow this to be your story.

You should retain a virtual copy of your book on a cloud-based server or send it to yourself through email. Whenever I am writing a book, at the end of that session, I email myself a complete copy of my progress and record the date that it was written. If something happens to my computer, I can access my email account from any device and can download a copy of my work to continue my progress.

You should keep all important contracts, graphics, ISBNs and other key information in the same way. Don't spend years compiling your work to be left in tears because you did not insure its success at all costs.

After you publish, keep accurate records of book sales, shipments, confirmation

numbers and any business expenses related to your publishing needs. You should always know the state of your inventory. Keep a good eye out for any emerging technologies that will help you to protect what you need most.

Be sure to keep your integrity, promises and commitments as well. Publishing a book creates the assumption that you are a trusted authority, unless you prove yourself to be otherwise. You can defend your character, your actions, and your outcomes by the records that you keep. Make sure that everything about your book demonstrates that it is well-kept.

KEEP

Do you have an active email account that will be dedicated to your authorship and represents your brand well?

Which methods will you use as types of insurance against losing your files and as protection for your book progress?

L is for LENGTH

Your book does not have to be hundreds of pages in length. Comparing yourself to other authors may discourage you from releasing your story. Other than writing words down, there are many creative ways to increase or decrease the number of pages in your book according to your desired outcome.

With most printing companies, the price that you pay for printing is directly related to the type of binding (hardcover, paperback, coil, etc.) and the number of pages in the book. The actual length of the book is not determined by the pages that have a number on it, but by the number of pages counted as the entire document. Don't be confused by counting the front and back of a page as one. A Word document or PDF will indicate your total page count. The printer is looking at each page that may require paper or ink, blank or not.

If you are self-publishing, many printing companies will not print text on your spine if your page count is less than 100 pages. Low-cost printers may even remove a spine that

has been designed if your book does not meet this minimum. If you want to increase your book length without having to write tons of extra content, you can get creative. You can increase the font size slightly, add space for journaling, include pictures or royalty-free clipart, add a few blank pages so that each new chapter begins on the right side of the book, promote additional books and services, and more. Make sure that these options do not appear to be mere filler, but are still relevant to the reader.

There are many books on the market that are relatively short in length. By this, I am referring to books that may be able to be read in a day or even a few hours. Many emerging books contain minimal words with vivid graphic design and employ visual storytelling. This includes business books, how-to-guides, humor books and many more. Although some practices are standard in the publishing arena, marketing, social media platforms and growing advances in technology are changing the book publishing industry in good ways.

Beyond the traditional books on the market, many gift shops, grocery stores,

coffee shops and private businesses are carrying books and related products. If you have an idea that could be a book, why not publish it? You are only limited by what you think is obtainable or impossible.

LENGTH

How many pages do you project your book to be?

What are some of the ways you can increase the number of pages in your book if you want to guarantee a book spine?

M is for MEDIA

Media has evolved over the years. Traditional media outlets still exist, but much has changed! Print magazines continue to migrate toward digital downloads. News broadcasts monitor and share what is trending on social media sites. Some television stations have broadcasts that are only available on the web.

When authors partner with media, it is a way to spread the news about your mission and message. Although we would all love to be on the bestseller lists and make millions publishing, booking a media slot will be about much more than your book.

Your book is a gateway through which you can cover issues that you are passionate about. It may open up speaking platforms or allow you to develop courses based on your core beliefs. Don't adopt a sales approach to media engagements. Allow your audience to grow as they are able to relate to you as a real person.

Prepare in advance for these opportunities. If you have an appearance on

the local news, have booked a television interview or will be filmed at all, you must plan your look with a clear strategy. People will see you before they hear you. Make your media moments count!

Know what colors work well with your skin tone. Make sure that your hair looks its best. If you are a woman and need a bit of enhancement through make-up, learn how to apply it well yourself or hire a professional to help you look your best. With the popularity of social media, your scheduled media appearances may be great opportunities to post selfies or digital photos while on set to commemorate the visit.

Many radio stations also offer a live video streaming during broadcasts. Don't assume that a camera will not be present. Always plan to look great while remaining as authentic and personable as possible.

Be ready to send headshots and a bio to the media in advance, even if you will be a guest on a podcast or the subject of a blog post. Remember to include vital contact information and details about where your book can be purchased.

After your appearance or story, post the video, article or link to your own website and social media. It is a good way to document your accomplishments and brings a greater level of validity to your career as an author. Remember to thank your interviewer or host. Maintaining great relationships with the media can lead to greater doors or opportunity. Be both great and gracious.

MEDIA

What traditional media outlets would you like to use to promote your book?

What new media strategies can you use to promote awareness for your project?

N is for NETWORK

Don't hide behind a computer screen or digital device. Make personal connections and meet new people. Building reciprocal relationships with others can lead to book sales, speaking opportunities, and amazing invitations that would not have been possible on your own.

Networking through social media is becoming more common, but you should not stop there. If you consider yourself to be serious about your subject matter as an author, avoid placing or allowing conflicting images and messages on your pages. Consider changing your social media settings so that photos and posts that include your name are approved by you before they appear on your page.

There are several ways to find new groups to network in-person. The MeetUp app can help you connect with people of like interests in your geographic area. Ticket-driven event sites like Eventbrite can assist with finding gatherings that you would be interested in. You don't have to network

nightly, but you should try to expand your brand at least once per month.

Aim not to be desperate, pushy or overbearing during your networking opportunities. Every individual in the room may not be a good connection for you. Finding people with similar passions (minus sinister motives) can result in a win-win for the both of you.

Don't be shy. You may have to practice introducing yourself. Smile. Extend a warm handshake. Wave. Give sincere compliments. Be kind. When you make someone else comfortable, they may be more open to hearing what you have to say.

Overexaggerating your accomplishments is not a good idea. Promising to deliver results without merit may lead you to be labeled in a way that is unflattering. The truth is more respectable than big talk or bragging about your accomplishments.

Follow up with people that you meet. Make sure to have a well-designed business card or memorable keepsake to give to people who may ask for your contact information. There are also digital means through which you can share your contact

information and other vital connections, so keep your phone handy and fully charged.

If a particular group or scene does not work for you, keep searching. Allowing yourself to be discouraged by a bad experience will only limit you. You will find what works, but you may have to make an effort to reach out first.

NETWORK

Are you currently networking in person? Why or why not?

What are some local networking options in your community that you need to become involved in?

O is for OPPORTUNITY

When you publish a book the right way, new opportunities can surface. You can become an advocate for great causes, start a new business, connect with like-minded authors, or engage in other endless possibilities.

I often tell authors that book publishing is a crucial key that unlocks many promising doors. Becoming an author is not easy. You will either make a great investment of time or money (or both!). Many writers desire to publish, but just cannot seem to make it happen. With the right information, you can publish and change your legacy forever.

Publishing a valuable book grants you the opportunity to affect many lives. Your words may give someone else confidence, provide inspiration, spark new ideas or even make others laugh. Your books can travel to places your feet have yet to reach.

Unexpected challenges often arise for many authors. Whether completing your first book or your fifteenth, there may be obstacles that are designed to hinder you. Publish anyway.

Procrastination and doubt are not your friends. There are books that are time-sensitive and must be released in the correct season to have the greatest impact. Distractions can try to steal your amazing opportunities. Fight them with all your might.

Many authors are so eager to publish that they spend ridiculous amounts of money and end up dissatisfied with the outcome. Money-driven vanity presses and careless coaches can cost you thousands of dollars. If you are going to pay a price, at least get the results you want!

It is not always someone else who mismanages an opportunity. If you hear about a fantastic book publishing strategist, don't approach him or her asking for a scholarship or discount. Professional graphic design, editing, formatting and marketing services may require a sacrifice on your part. If the money is not in your bank account, it may be gained through selling items sitting in your garage, cleaning out your closet and having a yard sale, or asking for supporters to partner with your efforts. What you really want, you will be willing to pay for.

Even if you attend promotional events without selling one book, there may be an opportunity for a new friendship, discovery of a new location, or a lesson that you can learn to increase your future success. Work your opportunities to see the harvest of your effort.

OPPORTUNITY

I can admit that I have missed the following opportunities (write them down).

What are some ways you can raise funds to publish your book?

P is for **PUBLISH**

There are many writers who never become authors. There are many reasons for this. Some writers are waiting for a major publisher to make an offer. Without a proven track record of success or a large following, a big contract is unlikely. Others simply have no idea how to publish. Thankfully, help is available.

In addition to the myriad of information accessible on the internet, there are several good books that outline the publishing process for indie authors. For the aspiring author that does not want to figure it out alone, there are several expert-level publishing coaches that are willing to assist with this process. I am one of them!

Technology has made it easier than ever to print book titles. This is great news! The negative side to this availability is that anyone can print a book for a price, even if it is full of typographical errors and the cover is in crayon.

If you are going to publish, do it well. I highly discourage you from selecting a vanity

press company. These businesses capitalize on the ignorance of authors by charging high rates without a guarantee that you will sell a single copy. Many authors assume that by paying a high price to publish, all of the marketing, distribution and management will be taken care of for them. The truth is, even established authors must promote their own books!

Big publishers may provide a budget for promotion, but it is a business and a return on investment is expected. If you are publishing on your own, you can generate a sufficient budget for coaching classes, book cover design, editing, formatting, ISBNs, bar codes, and marketing through creative fundraising. I train all of my authors to do this and many of them have raised several thousand dollars with a good marketing strategy.

There are several print on demand (POD) companies that will publish your books and ship them to you for a reasonable price. Some companies offer a price break for ordering in bulk, while others charge a flat rate per book. Whatever your budget, you can publish!

You should also release an eBook. Refuse to settle for having an eBook alone. Having both physical and digital copies will serve the needs of a larger audience. If you want to be really modern, record the audiobook too!

I often say, “Publishing comes by discipline, not by inspiration.” There is a right way to do this. Make sure that the work you release is a project you can be proud of.

PUBLISH

I plan to release my book on the following date: (write it down).

I have calculated the approximate amount of money that I will need to publish my book. It is: (write down the amount).

YES or NO?

I plan to release a printed book.

I plan to release an eBook (digital).

I plan to release an audiobook.

Q is for QUALITY

There is no acceptable reason for a substandard presentation in anything that represents you as an author. Your book cover, photos, websites, social media presence, marketing materials and videos should maintain a level of quality. Perfectionism is not the same as excellence. Some people refuse to move forward with innovative concepts and strategies due to insecurity or perceived criticism that the results won't be good enough.

Excellence is more about your mentality than your money. Building relationships with other talented people will spark new creativity for your book release and marketing efforts. I see too many authors who have compromised promising work for quick or extremely cheap solutions.

If you proclaim to be an author, slow down enough to read your social media posts, emails, advertisements and public communications before you send them out. If there are typos on the back of your book

cover, it is simply because there was a lack of quality control on your part.

Graphic designers can be great at rendering compelling imagery, but you must still check the text throughout the book jacket to make sure that the grammar, punctuation, spacing and spelling is correct. Don't find this out after you have ordered a thousand copies of your work. Have someone else look at it as well to know that you know it is right.

Beyond representation by your book, ensure that your reputation remains a quality one. There is a lot of misleading information in cyberspace. Before you repost, quote, or share an item, make sure that your findings are valid. Getting "duped" may call your credibility into question. Publishing comes with even more responsibility. If you are worth listening to, this influence should extend beyond your book.

Make no assumptions. Find several examples of the right way to do what you would like and create a pattern based on that model. There is no reason that your first book should include avoidable mistakes. If

your tenth book looks like it is self-published, you should hire a book coach immediately.

Publishing a book cements a record of your work in history. It leaves a legacy for your family or can advance causes that are important to you. Remove any barriers that would prevent you from releasing your published work. Once you become a published author, no one can “un-authorize” you. Release quality work!

QUALITY

How do you plan to perform quality control for your book?

What are some of the mistakes you have seen other authors make, and how can you avoid them?

Do you need a book publishing coach?

R is for REVISIONS

Many new authors waste time trying to edit or revise a book before it has been completely written. This is a trap that feeds procrastination and stifles your progress. Trust me when I tell you to write the book and then make revisions later.

During the revision process, you should be sure to eliminate any spelling or grammatical errors. If you discover that you used a few of the same words too many times, open up a thesaurus (yes, they are online too!) and mix things up a little. Rearrange a few sentences or paragraphs if needed. Deleting a few repetitive phrases wouldn't hurt either.

You may find that you need to add some more material to your book. Include pertinent resources and make sure that names, dates and locations are exact if you are producing a nonfiction work. Beyond hiring an editor or getting a few friends to proofread, you need to be sure you find someone to check your facts. Even fiction

books should seem real, so give the revision process some serious thought.

Don't allow your ego to get in the way of the revision process. I have an English degree and I still need several pairs of eyes to catch mistakes that my brain cannot seem to compute. If your writing could use a little bit of renovation, that is fine! Learn as you improve, but don't let language mastery be a requirement before you tell your story to the world. Write it anyway!

Whether you receive revisions on paper or through electronic means, make the appropriate changes and save them. As you revise your writing, always know which file is the correct file to work with. As a suggestion, you could save one file as a draft copy and name the final file as the official record.

Perfectionism is another hurdle that stands near the finish line. Many professional authors release revised editions after an initial print run. If you find flaws that you cannot live with after your book has been printed, update your file and order fresh copies. Minor changes will not require the purchase of a brand-new ISBN, but major alterations will. A greatly-revised edition

essentially becomes a new product, so you will need to change the ISBN listing on the copyright page and order a new bar code to reflect this change.

Laugh at yourself if you must. After all, we are human. Mistakes can be corrected. Your book flaws are not fatal, so forgive yourself and write on!

REVISIONS

Answer YES or NO to the following:

I understand that trying to revise my book while I am in the writing process can delay my book release.

Even the best writers make mistakes. I promise not to be too hard on myself or take revisions personally.

I will forgive myself and make all needed changes for revision, even if they are brought to my attention after my book has been printed.

S is for SOCIAL MEDIA

Unless you have lived in a cave for the past 5 years, social media continues to expand into new territories. Written words, images, audio files and videos are being released by the millions into the social media stratosphere.

You don't have to keep up with every platform that emerges, but if you plan to be an author of influence, be sure to claim your name on as many platforms as you can. As time changes, some social media sites gain in popularity while others wane. Are you still lurking on MySpace? Exactly.

I advise all of my clients to build an audience for the book in advance. I have taught multitudes of authors to raise money, share excerpts, build a launch team, share book covers and conduct pre-sales through social media portals. Most modern websites allow you to link your social media accounts to them. Don't break your connection.

Choose the options that will work best for you. There are several online services that will automate your postings and allow you to

schedule them in advance. This allows you to avoid becoming obsessed with hours of endless updates and limits the distractions that you may have to deal with during the day.

There are several bloggers who integrate social media well. If you plan to make money or gain influence through social media, you may want to keep an eye on what is currently trending and join the discussion to be discovered. Each social media site has its own best practices. Placing hashtags on Pinterest may not help you at all. For great tips, attend a few online webinars or search YouTube to get some quick tips on what can help you achieve your goals as an author on social media.

Be strategic. Don't let too much time pass before you appear on a site that provides the type of interaction that you are looking for. As you grow, you can even outsource this function by hiring a social media manager or securing the aid of an intern to help keep up the pace.

Having a modern smartphone, computer or tablet can greatly aid social media management. Sites like Instagram will not

permit postings from your computer. New technologies allow cameras on devices to take pictures that have very good resolution. While you may not choose to record all of your videos on an iPhone, do your best to maintain the integrity of your brand on social media.

SOCIAL MEDIA

I am active on the following social media networks: (write them down).

YES or NO?

I spend too much time on social media that does not lead to profit.

I do not spend enough time on social media.

T is for TEAMWORK

Don't kid yourself ... You need a team of people to create a successful book launch. Even the best writer needs a great editor. Gathering the right partners will help you to release quality work.

The interior and exterior of your project will need extra sets of eyes to assure that your best work makes it from the computer to the coffee table. Just because someone can edit well does not mean that he or she understands interior design layout for commercial book production. Viewing a picture online does not give you the rights to use it. A designer can purchase image licenses. Allow your team to help birth your dream.

I often commission my book cover design before I am finished writing a new book. Having a preliminary artwork helps give me motivation to complete the work, and allows me to start a buzz around my newest release. Select a graphic designer that is experienced with creating titles for commercial purposes. Many first-time designers have an eye for

imagery, but may be ignorant concerning proper book spine layout, bar code placement, font selection, and standard sizing formats.

You may start the editing process while you are still writing your manuscript. Whatever your choice, refuse to release a book that has not at least been proofread by someone else. Be honest with yourself. If you did not routinely receive an A in English, you may need a few revisions to your work. If you cannot afford professional editing, secure the aid of several wordsmiths to read your book and make remarks.

If you decide to self-publish, your interior layout can make you look great or gullible. Consider the inside of your book just as important as the outside. While great formatting can be accomplished in Microsoft Word, there are also other software programs like InDesign that can be used. Many experienced book producers are also selling downloadable templates that can be utilized for formatting speed and design expertise. Do your research!

Social media is also a great partner for publicity and advertisement. Sharing small

excerpts and your book cover can be a great way to get your team of supporters to help drive sales. Encourage them to take a selfie with your book and share it online once you release it. Hold contests or challenges for your readers. Thank those who support you, no matter what role they played in your success.

TEAMWORK

1. I need the following people on my team to produce a great book: (write the names down).

U is for **UPLOAD**

Old school and traditional methods of book publishing are disappearing. If you are serious about your career as an author, invest in a great computer and state-of-the-art software to write and publish your books. While I have used many devices during the writing portion of creating new titles, my computer and word processing software are what I need to perform flawless uploads to the printing company.

You may choose to e-mail your book to editors and interior formatting designers to speed up the progress of your published work. When you are ready to go to print, you must upload your material in the specified file types to get great results at the press. It is common to have PDF copies of your book interior and your entire book jacket for uploading new books. The PDF, or Portable Data Format document, will allow your selected fonts to remain unchanged during the uploading process. How you upload the PDF is the way that the title will be printed.

Be sure that your interior meets the standards of marketable materials.

You should have your entire book jacket as one separate document for the printing upload. Your interior file will be uploaded as your second document. When uploading files for digital (eBook) distribution, you must check to make sure that a professional result is reached. The file that you use to print your book and the one used to upload your eBook in digital format are often not the same! While printed books have page numbers, blank pages and fancy formatting throughout, eBooks have different standards. You may need to save a new file, remove some of the fancy formatting, and then convert your book to an EPUB file.

Although placing eBooks on Amazon Kindle can be a little tricky to get just right with a Word document alone, Nook (Barnes & Noble) makes the process relatively easy with a copy and paste option. I believe that Amazon will improve its eBook processes soon. Placing both your paperback and eBook titles on Amazon can give your reader a choice as to how your book will be accessed, or you can allow the reader to

receive a free digital version of your book with a paperback purchase.

Whatever you decide, you will have to be comfortable attaching your files for uploading. This process is similar to selecting a file to be sent via email. Always make sure to use the most recent file version and that your graphic design is high-resolution. Ready, set, upload!

UPLOAD

Answer YES or NO to the following:

I am comfortable using a computer.

I have a recent version of MS Word installed on my computer.

I understand how to create a PDF on my own.

I understand how to create folders on my computer and access files I need.

V is for **VERIFY**

My mentor has told me repeatedly, “Be careful what you put in black and white.” This has further evolved to include pictures and social media posts. When gathering information for your book, verify the facts included. Check for the correct spelling of names, streets, cities and countries. Verify any mentioned locations. If you quote someone, use the exact wording. If not, an eagle-eyed reader will be sure to catch it and spread the word.

Becoming an author also comes with a new level of authority. Beyond your book, whatever you put out for public consumption can have an effect on your brand or believability. If you share information that is later determined to be false, your credibility can come into question.

When I see reports that someone has died on social media, I am not quick to share it. Rumors that go viral are often ignored by me. If I want to know the answer, I take a few moments to do my research or pick up the phone. I want my readers to take my

opinions seriously, so I am careful not to act as a channel for disinformation to spread.

If you are not sure where something originated from, try your best to find out. If you are still uncertain, at least let your reader know that the author or source is unknown. Don't present information that was not created by you as though it were original. You never know where your book will land, so make sure that your work can stand.

Even if you produce works of fiction, check the dates, customs, language usage, location descriptions and other details. When I was in college, I began one of my creative writing assignments with "It was the city that never sleeps..." I used this to describe Los Angeles. I was mortified when most of the class laughed at my gaffe.

Verification will support your validation. Do not skip this very important step. If you want to demonstrate excellence in publishing, verify each source. If using Bible references, take a moment to verify that the correct chapter and verse appears. Copy and paste can lead to errors, so take the time to check twice.

Refuse to let your creativity overshadow your credibility. List your sources of material as appropriate. There is no need to make it up as you go. Just the facts, author... just the facts.

VERIFY

I have never shared information that is untrue.

NO (We are all guilty of this!)

I promise to research information before I share it.

YES (This is your duty as an author!)

I am committed to managing the words, videos and images I share with great care from now on. YES or NO?

W is for WEBSITES

You need a website. If you are an author, you need to own your own name, at minimum. A website helps your discoverability as an author.

Advances in technology have made it relatively easy to have a professional presence online. There are many drag and drop site building tools that can be used for novice authors. If your budget can be stretched a little, hire a professional web designer to give your brand a needed boost. Because relationships can change, it is always a good idea for you to purchase and register your own domain names, and then have a webmaster build a site that can be connected to it.

Your website will serve as a virtual “store”. To cover the basics, your author website should contain a professional photo, a brief bio, a photo of your book cover, purchasing information, and your contact or booking information. If you have a PayPal account or other online payment processor, it should be easy to purchase your book with

one click. You can also link your Amazon book listing on your website if you choose to have orders tracked and processed for sales data and rankings.

When conducting workshops for authors, I often ask everyone in the room to Google themselves on a phone or device. Many of them find that the first few hits lead to social media websites. Others discover that they share the same first and last name with someone else who has a stronger online presence. Whatever pops up first is where web traffic is more likely to go. If you purchase a domain and publish a website, having your listing rank at the top during a name search will lead to greater chances for book sales. There are companies that specialize in search engine optimization to help with website rankings.

In addition to online sales, having valuable information on your website can lead to an increase in speaking engagements or invitations for media interviews. People often visit websites before deciding to extend an invitation for a personal appearance. Make it your business to keep your best “book” forward.

You can also use your site to build a mailing list to remain in contact with fans or interested supporters. This can be a great gateway to promotions for special appearances, events, and special sales that you may have. With all of these possibilities, why wouldn't you have a website?

WEBSITES

Answer YES or NO to the following questions:

I own a domain name.

I have an active, updated website online.

I currently collect email addresses to maintain contact with people that give me permission to do so.

I need help designing my website.

“X” is for

(PLEASE SIGN HERE)

Contracts can be tricky for novice authors. There are some businesses that exist to take money from anxious, but unlearned writers to earn a buck. Before you enter into a contract that can result in a loss of your rights or lengthy litigation, be sure to understand what you are agreeing to before signing on the dotted line.

If you are self-publishing and are new to authorship, you should probably avoid legally binding contracts. Why sign over your rights to someone who promises to make you famous, only to later find out that you still have to do the hard work yourself? If you were not aware, making profits in publishing takes lots of work! Even mainstream published authors must hit the promotional trail to sell books. You will need to do it too.

Signing the wrong document can mean that you lose the option of printing additional copies of your book on your own. If you agree to give away the bulk of your

royalties to a company, you may have the bragging rights of claiming authorship, but you will not be paid for it. When coaching authors, I train them to maximize potential profits. Partnering with the wrong people can rob you of your profits!

You may need to sign agreements with designers, editors, consultants, photographers, videographers, etc. Take the time to read what you sign. Most new authors do not have legal counsel, but this does not have to result in a catastrophe. If you can, have someone with great reading comprehension take a look at your agreement to point out something that you might have missed otherwise.

There are some instances that grant you little leverage. You will not have a lot of negotiating power with giants like Amazon. Many royalty amounts are already set for digital payments. There may be other times when you can negotiate terms with your providers. Don't let your excitement be your eventual downfall.

Keep every agreement in a safe place. You can also scan documents into your computer or save them in a cloud to have them

accessible at a later time. You never know when the need will arise to review them.

If you have found yourself in a sticky situation, learn from it and move forward. A prior mistake or misunderstanding does not have to get in the way of your publishing future. What happens after the “X” is in your hands.

“X”

(PLEASE SIGN HERE)

Answer YES or NO to the following questions:

I tend to sign agreements without reading them thoroughly.

I have been taken advantage of in the past because I signed a document that worked against me.

I will read all agreements before signing them, especially concerning my book.

Y is for YES

Yes, you can become an author. Yes, you can create new streams of revenue. Yes, you can leave a legacy. Yes, there is an audience for your story. Yes, authorship is very possible. Yes, the time is now.

Some statistics claim that 90 percent of authors who try to publish books fail. This happens because somewhere along the journey, a “no” was accepted as a valid answer. Authorship comes with unexpected developments, discouragement, and a little doubt. When you have decided that “YES” is your final answer, you will push past the roadblocks and publish with success.

Money can be a huge barrier for many emerging authors. As a coach, I train authors how to raise funds to cover fees, design needs, editing, photography, printing and more. I am successful because I have had to do it many times myself. Your bank account or paycheck should never hinder the dreams that you have. Don't say, “I don't have it.” Ask instead, “How can I get it?” Talk to other successful entrepreneurs if you need

encouragement to get what you need to succeed.

Yes, publishing a great book is possible. Yes, you will have to work for it. Yes, it changes your life forever. Once you become an author, that designation will remain if you never publish another title. That fact alone makes authorship worth the investment.

I have trained hundreds of authors worldwide. Soon, it will be thousands. What I have seen many times is that book publishing opens doors that would have remained closed otherwise. Authorship has granted me valuable interviews on television, radio, podcasts and internet radio. I have been the subject of several newspaper and magazine articles. This happened because of authorship. It became my “YES” in these arenas. The same thing has happened to many of my clients.

Imagine what you could lose if you embrace excuses over opportunity. What was once only reserved for large publishers is now open for anyone with a vision and a bit of tenacity. Although book publishing can be accomplished relatively easily, doing it well

will make the difference in your success. Say “YES” to excellence.

Will you write a book that will change lives? Are you hiding a bestseller in your computer? Will your book become a movie? The answer will arrive through the first “yes” from you.

YES

I will publish my book successfully.

I refuse to be discouraged by any obstacles that would try to hinder my progress as a published author.

I can publish a quality book without spending thousands of dollars.

I will get a book coach and a support system if I need them to succeed.

Z is for ZIP FILES

Large files may be challenging to send through traditional email. You should be able to send your book for edits and formatting via your regular inbox. Some files may be a bit too large to download quickly or may exceed data limits. Zip files or file sharing services like DropBox may be the solution.

If you use a graphic designer for logos in multiple formats, he or she may send you a variety of files in a folder that has been “zipped” for compression to allow all of the images to arrive together. You may see a little zipper icon on the folder sent. Once opened, you can save the items individually to your computer, if you choose.

You may see different file types for the same image. PDF, JPG, PNG, TIFF, EPS and other file type designations may be requested by different providers. Having several options available will cut down the time that you have to wait for your graphic designer to send you the required file type.

You may decide to sign up for a file sharing service to send your documents. Use

caution, because some documents present challenges when opening. Many people use Google Docs, but if it is not set up correctly, the receiving party may be unable to open up the files without permission. This can delay the timely receipt of information. There are some instances when email is the wiser choice. New solutions continue to emerge for your files. Zip them up if you need to.

ZIP FILES

Answer YES or NO to the following questions:

I understand how to open a zip file.

I will be sure to send the correct file types that are needed to complete my project.

I learned several new things while reading this book.

BOOK COACHING SERVICES

Rekesha Pittman has a proven track record of success as an international publishing coach.

She is available for:

- Online Group Coaching Services
- Individual Consultation
- Group Anthology Projects
- Speaking Engagements
- Weekend Workshops

Begin your publishing journey today!
Courses are available online and can be completed from your location.

For more information, or to request book coaching services, please contact:

rekesha@getwriteuniversity.com
www.getwriteuniversity.com

REKESHA PITTMAN



Rekesha Pittman graduated from the University of Southern California (USC) with a degree in English (Creative Writing). She has published multiple books and has served as a respected blogger and regular newspaper columnist.

A noted international speaker and respected trainer, Rekesha has conducted writing workshops and provided book consultation services for emerging authors. She has trained hundreds of authors to self-publish with success through her celebrated and wildly popular online book publishing courses. **Divine Turnaround, Eagles International Authors Course, Get Write University** and **Get Write, Church** have produced successful authors worldwide under her instruction.

Affectionately known as "The WRITE Midwife," Rekesha provides step-by-step guidance through the book publishing process for authors of every genre. It is her desire to aid in the release of books that will increase the impact of authorship globally.