

# How To Acquire, Create And Market Self-Publishing Articles

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## How To Acquire, Create And Market Self-Publishing Articles

### An Introduction to Self-Publishing Material

Any article, report or book which is bought or sold with reproduction rights is generally referred to as self-publishing material. Most commonly, this material consists of reports or articles varying in length from 1 to 20 or more pages. This material usually has a self-cover. In a self-cover, the same weight of paper is used as in the text. Most books, on the other hand, have covers which are of a heavier weight than the text of the book.

The seller offers self-publishing material including the reproduction right, at a price considerably higher than he would offer the material when sold without reproduction rights. Reproduction rights are granted when the holder of a copyright grants reproduction rights to the buyer. These rights can be unlimited, giving the buyer the option to re-sell reproduction rights for the material also. Or, they may be limited. In this case, the seller will generally allow the buyer to reproduce the material as he wishes, but restricts right of resale. Since the strongest demand is for material which grants full and unlimited reproduction and resale rights, it would always be advantageous to obtain the right to resell reproduction material.

There is a vast demand for this type of material, especially from newcomers in the mail order field. Since the stream of newcomers to this business is almost unlimited, it can be extremely profitable to market self-publishing material. The attractiveness of this material is due both to the high mark-up potential and the ease of handling. Once you own the resale rights to a given article, you can reproduce it for pennies and sell it both individually for a few dollars. or including the reproduction rights, for substantially higher.

Here's a typical example of purchasing and selling price. A five or six page article may have a purchase price of anywhere from \$8.00 to \$15.00. The same article, without reproduction rights, would have a price range of \$3.00 to \$5.00. Once you own the reproduction rights, you can have it reproduced for 20 to 50 cents a set, depending on how many copies you have made. But let's use the high price of 50 cents and a selling price of \$4.00 without reproduction rights: profit \$3.50 = 700%, or with the reproduction rights of \$9.00: profit \$8.50 = 1700%. Not shabby at all! It is especially impressive when you compare that margin to buying a book from a supplier for \$3.00 and selling it for \$9.00: profit \$6.00 = 200%.

The other major advantage is the ease of handling of this

material. You are the prime source. You carry no inventory. You reproduce in small quantities as you are selling the material. The material is inexpensively shipped, generally via First Class due to its light weight.

### |Supply and Demand

The supply and demand for this type of material is plentiful, but that supply represents a small margin when compared to the incredible demand. It is usually the newcomer to the mail order field who has to first establish his product line and supply who is the buyer. The seller, on the other hand, is more seasoned and has been in the business for a while.

If you are in the market and interested in acquiring self-publishing material, you should have no problem locating sources. You will see ads, mostly classifieds, throughout business opportunity publications. Small and medium size wholesalers and publishers in the mail order field also offer a variety of material. Since they generally charge an "up-front" distributor or dealership fee, the material they offer will generally be at much reduced prices.

Most of material offered will be of an instructive nature and this is also where the demand is. Articles or short manuals which are instructive in how to start a business or how to operate different facets of that business are in especially high demand.

Unfortunately, since there is a great deal of sub-standard material on the market, you should be careful in acquiring articles and reports for resale. The material may lack in any of these three areas:

1. the contents are incorrect, incomplete, etc., which is generally the result of poor research and little effort by the writer;
2. use of language is incorrect; and
3. reproduction quality is poor.

If you do not know the seller or his reputation, protect yourself by buying just one article instead of several. If you like the quality and contents, you can purchase several more. Sellers of reproducible material will often not grant a money back guarantee. If you become a seller of reproduction material, it is strongly suggested that you consider adopting such a policy yourself. Unfortunately, there are some customers who will buy this material, reproduce it instantly and return it within days for a refund.

## |Write Your Own Material

If you enjoy writing and some limited research, you could create your own material and sell that in conjunction with the material you have acquired from other sources. We are not talking about the ability to produce literary works but just information-oriented material that is a service to others. This type of an effort can often be a joint effort. Your wife or husband may be the writer and you may be the editor or vice versa. There are also many qualified word processing services available who can edit your writing for a reasonable fee. Once you have created, it, you can generally sell it for many years to come. So, whatever your start-up investment is,, it can be recaptured many times over.

## |Material from the U.S. Government for Very Little Money

The U.S. Government, which is also the largest publisher in the world by far, employs tens of thousands of researchers, scientists, writers, etc., and puts out billions of new pages of information each year. Much of it is of absolutely no interest to almost anyone, a lot of it is boring, and even more of it is useless. But - but - but a lot of it is not any of the above. Almost all of the materials is also in the public domain, which means you and I own it. We paid for it with our tax dollars. It is not copyrighted and everyone can use it, reproduce it, re-write it, etc. So since even foreign countries use this unlimited pool of information, why don't you? For example, the Government has a variety of useful publications that are informative and instructive to someone who is starting out in a new business. The best way to use Government publications is by using the research information it provides - fact and figures. You can rewrite it, of course, but not copyright it, and therefore you cannot sell reproduction rights to it. However, you can sell it without reproduction rights.

Write to: Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402 and request a current listing of publications for sale by the Government Printing Office.

There are U.S. Government bookstores in the following cities: Birmingham, AL - Los Angeles, CA - San Francisco, CA - Denver, CO - Pueblo, CO - Washington, DC - Jacksonville, FL - Atlanta, GA - Chicago, IL - Laurel, MD - Boston, MA - Detroit, MI - Kansas City, MO - New York, NY - Cleveland, OH - Columbus, OH - Portland, Or - Philadelphia, PA - Pittsburgh, PA - Dallas, TX - Houston, Tx - Seattle, WA - Milwaukee, WI. Locations are listed under U.S. Government - Bookstore.

## Marketing Your Self-Publishing Material

You can market your material in several ways. One would be via advertising and, at least for starters, this is the preferred way. Another method would be via direct mail. This is acceptable, but only if you are quite certain that the list you are renting represents the interest group you are selling to and is of recent vintage. Lastly, you can market your material as an enclosure with other orders you are shipping. This is called "back-end sale".

Advertising would be the most effective. It is suggested you run a classified in any of the major monthly Business Opportunity magazines. Here are the names of some of the best known of such publications: Entrepreneur, Money Making Opportunities, Income Opportunities, Business Startups, Opportunity Magazine. These are just a very few of the many large publications and there are even more smaller publications available.

Your ad may read something like the following:

**INSTANT-PUBLISHING.** Enormous Profits. Free details on reproduction rights. or

**SELF PUBLISHING.** Over 1000% profit. Wide selection. Free details.

An ad such as the above or one similar will bring you inquiries.

It is your marketing task to turn as large a percentage as possible into buyers. To be most effective and to outdo your competitors, you must meet these criteria. Your product must be priced properly. Your sales literature has to be appealing.

When pricing your product, first take a look at what the competition does. You can find out by responding to similar ads. In that way you will not only learn about pricing, but also see a variety of presentations and selections. Don't be greedy. Stay a little below the competition but allow yourself a fair profit. Remember, your mark-up has to pay for advertising, printing of your sales material, postage and miscellaneous overhead cost, not to mention your time and effort.

Some of these products are sold at ridiculously low prices, and on the other hand, some at extremely high prices. Neither is effective. If you are too low, you will be suspect of offering something sub-standard and, if you are too high, your material will be trashed. The idea is to stay a little below the average selling price. There is no quick fix in finding out what the averages are. You simply have to take the time to write to as many competing offers as possible. If you are buying material

from a publisher who provides you with sales material and suggested retail prices, you may want to stay below the suggested price. In this way, you do not have to redo the promotions material. Also the public is attracted by perceived deals.

If your product is priced correctly and your ad is in the right magazine (under the right heading - general business opportunities), the only thing left is your sales literature. It is also the most important. Remember, in the mail order business,, the customer cannot see, smell or feel the product before buying it. It is therefore, absolutely of the utmost importance that your material looks impeccable. This point cannot be stressed enough. In my own testing over the years, I have determined that the same product at the same price but represented by an excellent looking package will outsell the same product represented by a less than average package at anywhere from double to triple the cost. And therein, can be your success or failure. When you are relatively new to our business, you will generally be charged with enthusiasm which is great because it is the energy what will propel you to success. But your impatience and enthusiasm has to be controlled, or you will make costly mistakes and you may become discouraged. So, take your time and be sure your material looks first class. This is the wrong place to save a few bucks. Here are a few suggestions to help you in achieving success with the presentation of your piece:

1. Unless you are using a ready-made circular or brochure which you received when buying your reproduction article and it satisfies you in every respect, have your piece laid out by a graphic designer or experienced desk-top publisher. In most medium and large cities there is an ample supply of these professionals. Many of them operate out of their residence and charge reasonable prices. Before you select one, visit several and look at what they have done for others. If you don't like what you see, keep on looking. Remember, the person you choose can make or break you. Prices for layout of a single page may vary from \$20 to \$50. Since your promotional piece will generally only consist of one or two pages, this is a small price to pay for success.

2. Have the written word used in both your sales letter and promotional piece checked by someone who is absolutely competent in the use of the English language. Your best bet there is a reputable word processing service that has been around for a while.

3. Have your sales literature printed by a professional printer. Cheap copying jobs are fatal.

It must be obvious to you by now that I feel extremely strongly

about the subject of first class sales literature. When your prospective customer pulls your material out of the envelope - or, does he even open it - (experts tell us he does that anywhere from 30 to 100 per week) and looks at your material (again, experts tell us it is an 8 second look) before he decides whether to trash you - boom there goes the whole damn effort into a waste can in a split second - or look at you further? So give yourself a break and do things the right way. Make it look professional. Modern technology enables your literature to look just as good as the literature from a large corporation.

The components of your sales piece should consist of the following items:

1. The circular - brochure - flyer, etc. This can be from one to several pages in length, depending on how many items you are featuring.
2. A sales letter. A good sales letter requires sweat equity on your part. There is no easy way out. You cannot have someone else do the work for you. They can help you, but not do it completely. A good sales letter should be friendly in tone - full of benefits for your prospective buyer - must have a good headline - explain the features of your product - say as little as possible about you. Your customer does not give a damn about you, he wants to know what's in it for him. And lastly, every sales letter must ask for the order.
3. An order form that can be separate or build into a promotional piece.
4. A return envelope. It is not necessary to use prepaid envelopes. My own research indicates there is no difference in conversion rates between prepaid and non-prepaid business return envelopes.
5. Your mailing envelope.

If you should decide to choose direct mail for your self-publishing material, your offer will require the same components as shown above. It is, unfortunately, extremely difficult to come up with just the right mailing list. The broad description of "Opportunity Seeker" does not narrow down your market enough. You are specifically interested in recent - 30 to 180 day - inquiries - or buyers of self-publishing or mail order start-up packages. If you are confident you can come up with such a list, you may give direct mail a try; a mailing of 1000 will give you a good indication. What you will save in advertising will be spent in additional postage and printing. One hundred inquiries of a classified ad may produce between six and nine buyers. To come up with the same number of buyers on a

direct mail campaign, you will have to mail about 500 to 700 pieces.

#### |A Few More Profitable Suggestions

It is important to have an ample selection. The more a prospective customer has to choose from, the better the chances for a sale are and the higher the average order will be. I would suggest that the combined articles or reports you are offering will total about \$100. Ideally, some would be low-priced \$7 to \$10, some medium, \$10 to \$20 and some high priced over \$20. If your prospective customer would buy around 35% of the reports you offer, you should come up with an order of at least \$30 plus.

As you progress in your business, always be on the lookout for new material to be offered to your previous customers. Stay in touch with your previous buyers and inquirers. At least four mailings a year are appropriate. In your follow-up mailings, you should offer additional self-publishing material as well as books. Non-buying inquiries should be dropped from your mailing list after 12 to 15 months. Previous buyers should be dropped within 18 months after their last purchase. As your mailing list increases in size and you keep on a schedule of regular mailings, your revenues and profits will dramatically increase.

Self-publishing products may be your start into the mail order information business or they may increase the size of your business if you have not previously offered this type of material. Some of the most successful mail order entrepreneurs have never sold anything but self-publishing products and have made a great deal of money doing it.

Wishing you success and remember, before you can earn you must learn.