

SURVEY SAYS, POST-PUBLICATION PUBLISHERS OVERLOOK AUTHORS



In a survey recently carried out by the Writers' Workshop, eminent authors were asked whether they were happy with their publishers and to give their views on various other aspects of a writer, publisher relationship. There were 321 responses from writers, who were renowned and established and most of whom had multiple books published and enjoyed popularity both at home and abroad. The results are captivating and shed light on an integral partnership, between whom an amicable marriage is vital, if a book has to be born. The survey provides valuable information to potential writers, would be publishers and those already in the business. Authors applauded their publishers for doing qualitatively, core activities like copy-editing, proof-reading, page design, and even cover design but were found wanting as far marketing the books was concerned. Most authors said that they were not taken into the picture as far as the publisher's marketing plans were concerned. Only 14 percent of the authors expressed contentment with the marketing process, whilst 40 percent said that they "were appalled by the lack of marketing." Almost two thirds of the authors felt that there was considerable room for improvement. Publishers on the other hand expressed budgetary constraints as the prime reason why the books cannot be marketed as per the author's desires. A publishers derisively remarked that authors if they had their way, would probably want advertising zeppelins hanging in the sky all over the country and the publisher throwing lavish parties in royal palaces to promote the book. Around 50 percent of the authors felt, that post-publication communication between the publisher and them was too little. It is but natural that an author would like to ask about the customer response to his book whether there have been critical or laudatory reviews, some sort of feedback is awaited. However, a noteworthy portion of publishers don't seem to concur with this feeling. To the question, "Did you receive any formal guidance in the ways of publishing or guidance on how you as an author could add most value to the process?" A mere 18 per cent said yes, whereas a third said that they did not receive any sort of guidance. A publisher gains much more from the sales of a book than the author and he is the one who invests huge sums of money into it. It seems logical that he would leave no avenue of promotion unexplored. Authors, whose names sell the book, are an automatic weapon to use in promoting the book aggressively, thorough social media, radio appearances, book festivals and similar events. Authors would willingly share this responsibility and help create awareness about the book and boost sales in the process. But not all authors are communication savvy and publishers feel that they may not do a very professional job on social networks, on television or on radio. Hence it becomes all the more important that publishers orient the authors in how best they can help the book. The survey, however concludes, that the publishers are not inclined to do so. The survey brings forward one aspect very strongly, that the publishers are doing precious little to their biggest assets, their authors, without whom their businesses would, probably cease to exist. The sample size of the survey may be small and the results of this survey could be perceived as insignificant and the views expressed as not reflective of the majority. But it would be foolhardy to do, for the survey highlights that there is ample room for improvement for the publishers and increasing their association with the authors would only improve their profit margins. Even though marketing budgets are not very high, it would be a worthwhile investment to train authors disposed to the idea how to use free tools like blogs or Twitter to bond better with their fans. It would create interest and awareness about the books and with the huge reach of the social media sites, the potential is endless. Why these free tools are not availed of his hard to comprehend. It would be worth every penny spent, if authors were made to understand how Amazon works and how to get more reviews on it. Amazon is huge and its power to affect both discovery and buying decisions is mind boggling. Both these things are easy to do and do not require the need to hire an expert. Sales will show an upswing and don't both publishers and authors have a vested interest in seeing sales go up? If lessons are to be learnt from this survey than publishers would be well advised to create an Author Care Department that addresses all these issues. The Author Care department would concentrate on having and uphold a steady and durable bond with every author no matter where they are in the publishing cycle. It would encourage and assist authors to take part in special training sessions that would coach them about the nuances of both social and traditional media. Moreover, it would also apprise the authors how best they can create awareness about their books and promote it. Last but not the least, it would ask the authors for uninhibited and candid feedback about the department's performance and use that to rectify weaknesses that need improvement. Both are imperative to each other's livelihood, they cannot do with one another, so they might as well understand each other well. Looking for all available jobs? [Click here.](#)