



OK, YOUR BOOK IS PRINTED ... NOW WHAT!

Many years ago when I worked in camera store, a customer came in one day with a very old roll of unexposed B&W film. He wanted to buy a camera that would fit that type of film so he could use up the film. The film was so old, all camera manufactures had long since quite making cameras that would take that type of film. I explained to him that the roll of film was worth maybe \$2.00 (if it was still any good) and suggested he throw out the old film and consider a new camera and woowooo "color" film. He thanked and left with is old roll of film.

I think about this story quite often when I am dealing with authors and writers. They have such knowledge and enthusiasm for their ideas and topics, unfortunately many of them, especially new writers and authors seldom give little if any thought to who will be buying their books and where and how they will be getting them.

I often ask these writers, "who is going to be the recipient of your book?" Most writers simply tell me "they are going to sell them". My next question is "where will you sell them?" Most people respond with "bookstores and the Internet". Then the tough question, "and how are you going to go about doing this?" That's when I get met with a blank stare.

Many writers, especially new ones, have often given little thought to where and how they are going to go about selling and distributing their books. When you think about it, most new authors and writers are so absorbed in their manuscripts they have little time to even think about selling their books, aside from a few fleeting thoughts. I tell all of them, the purpose of printing your own book is to get it into the hands of readers. Getting books into the hands of readers can be done many ways.

Some people write and print small runs of books, solely for immediate family and friends. Others have more lofty regional, national and international distribution ideas. Both ideas of getting books into reader's hands are good, but one takes much more thought and much more work than the other, but both have the right idea.

I was interviewed by a television Creative Director a short time ago; she asked me "what advice could you pass along to anyone thinking about writing their first book." My answer was immediate and definite "think about who the audience is for your book and how you will go about getting that book into the hands of your audience". I went on to tell her, if every author thought about who their audience was, and how they were going to market their book, they would have a much better chance of having a more successful book project, that everyone would benefit more from ... the author, the printer and most of all the readers.

What I hate seeing, are talented authors with wonderful manuscripts or books, trying to determine after the fact how and where they can sell their books. In many ways they are no different than the young man I encountered years ago who had a roll of film and was looking for a place to use it, the film, just like a manuscript ... not matter how good it is, needs to have place for it to fit in.

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