PROJECT ADVICE and BOOK CONSTRUCTION TIPS

MAKING A BOOK IS NOT DIFFICULT!

Mankind has been putting symbols on pages for future reference for many thousands of years and today it's quite simple.

Our teacher once noted:

"There is never enough time to do it right, but publishers and printers always find time to do it over..."

CREATE A REALISTIC SCHEDULE

- If, for example, you want your book to be in stores one month before a holiday, schedule printing to be completely finished by that earlier date, and not the holiday date.
- Allow time for human error in every phase of the schedule.
- Many things can and will go wrong in the process. Schedule in some extra time with the layout and proofing schedules.
- Expect that inevitably a schedule date will be missed and you'll save yourself some stress.

STICK TO YOUR DEADLINES

- Book construction is a collaborative effort, with each step dependent on those before and after.
- Timeliness and communication are the keys to a smooth, less stressful Production process.
- To ensure that everyone on the team has a dedication to meeting their deadlines, encourage them daily by email or phone.

MANUSCRIPT PROCESSING

- Create Microsoft Word .doc manuscript files with names that adhere to a standard file-naming convention and are consecutively named by chapter (01.ChapterName_date.doc) This will make the Production Layout process go smoothly.

MANUSCRIPT STYLING

- Keep it simple. When you create a manuscript document you are creating code to be processed by the page layout program. Don't make your code "buggy" with extra returns and extra spaces.
- Coordinate style names in the Word doc with the Style Sheets in the InDesign template to avoid incorrectly formatted layouts.
- If tables or charts are required, create columns with single tabs only.

AVOID THE PRODUCTION PROCESS UNTIL MANUSCRIPT IS FINAL

- This can't be stressed enough... Developmental editing should be completed before sending to Design Layout Production.
- There is no room in the Production process for editing text, which may very well be better, but does not fit the design — requiring the layout to be redesigned.
- Obtain an accurate (if not final) manuscript-to-layout ratio before printing bids are requested.

IMAGE/CAPTION PROCESSING NOTES

- All images/captions should have similar file-naming conventions, noting chapter and image numbers. Please specify image/caption locations within manuscript using "Production Notes."
- Missing items (text or images) will slow down the process of completing layouts and ultimately meeting your deadlines for submitting final pages to the printer.
- All images must be provided at the correct resolution and size (300 dpi resolution, CMYK, color or grayscale) for optimal image reproduction.

DESIGN, LAYOUT, AND PRODUCTION SUGGESTIONS

- Coordinate Author and Designer's ideas about the look of the book to properly present the material.
- Cover design and interior design should also be coordinated to produce consistent design elements.
- Avoid using too many fonts in a design. It confuses the reader and looks very unprofessional.
- Avoid changing design elements in the middle of the Production process. This includes book trim size, changing margins, and body text size.
- Trimming and binding can cause text and design elements to be trimmed away. If the printer has interior preferences on margins and trim bleeds request a template and specifications before sending to Production for layout.
- Provide Production with all electronic specification files obtained from the printer. This will ensure that the files are problem free.

FILE MANAGEMENT SUGGESTIONS

- Editors need to save files correctly and Production must have software translation tools operating to ensure smooth file sharing.
- Always package files with a preflight utility for automated file collection before shipping the Press Quality PDF to the printer. This step ensures that all assets, fonts, and files required for that layout are in one place, ready for archiving.

UTILIZE YOUR COMPUTER'S ORGANIZING CAPABILITIES EFFICIENTLY

- There are inexpensive software packages, such as Microsoft Excel, that help you develop and maintain schedules for projects, and they may work very well for you.
- Investigate shareware and freeware sources of software for your computer whenever possible.
- Share all schedules for the project with each member of the Production group, including proofreaders, indexers and the printer.

CONSIDER SHIPPING SCHEDULES CAREFULLY WHEN REQUESTING PROOFS

- Add delivery times and days to your proof shipping schedule, for example:
  - FedEx closes at 5:45pm
  - FedEx will deliver on Sunday, for a higher price
  - UPS and USPS is not open on Saturday or Sunday
  - Some local package stores will take packages on Saturday, but they won't ship until Monday.
- Get "Tracking Numbers" for all printed proof packages through USPS, UPS and FedEx and monitor their progress.
- Confirm that your shipper will deliver proof copies to correct addresses for your staff.

INSIST THAT YOUR STAFF USES CURRENT SOFTWARE TOOLS AND THAT THEY COORDINATE WITH EACH OTHER

- If you're working with professionals, trust that they will perform well for your task.
- Resumes are useful to see what software they are fluent in, what equipment they work with and what projects they specialize in.
- Maintain your equipment well, you can't put out the next bestseller if your tools are breaking down. And this includes people!

AVOID ALLOWING JOBS TO BLEED INTO EACH OTHER

- Designer shouldn't rephrase text, and Editors must avoid the temptation to redesign the layouts.
- Make it clear to everyone where certain duties fall and, if necessary, insist they stick to those borders.
- Near the end of the Production process avoid changing anything short of that which could be libel.
- Write short notes to other members of the team on the proofs or PDFs during the process and communicate about any disagreements by phone as press time nears.

REMEMBER TO HANDLE LEGAL ISSUES

- Get permission for the art and text you use that you did not create yourself.
- Purchase your ISBN, begin the process of obtaining your *Library of Congress* (LOC) copyright number and obtain other copyright information well in advance of your "Manuscript to Production" deadline.
- If you foresee a potential legal problem, resolve it before submitting your book to Production or you will regret not having done so.

AVOID MAJOR CHANGES AFTER SENDING TO PRINTER FOR FIRST PROOF

- Avoid making unnecessary changes after final proof. Unless it is a libel issue, anything that has gotten this far can wait until the second printing.
- You will receive higher prices and unhappy printers, if the page count changes from the original bids
- Local presses and printers schedule press time according to page count; reworking bids and scheduling to accommodate a longer or shorter book is always going to cause delays.

- Online printers will accept files that change page count and will generally provide an updated layout proof online, along with an increase or decrease in final cost. This will also cause a delay in the final product availability.

DON'T RUSH CREATION OF THE INDEX

- Provide a clean PDF or printed proof of your final design to the Indexer and expect 2-3 weeks for a medium sized book, 300-400 pages.
- Communicate with your indexer; they can give you their best work when given proper and clear directions.
- We have all used books with bad and good indexes and know just how valuable a great one can be.

DON'T BE INTIMIDATED BY YOUR PRINTER

- All printers have *Customer Service Representatives* (CSR) who will be happy to explain their lingo and pre-press requirements.
- Ask the CSR to email you any specifications or PDF diagrams that can be helpful in expediting the Production process, including InDesign CS6 templates and file submission requirements.
- Keep in touch with the printer throughout the process. Ask a lot of questions, these businesses aren't profitable if they alienate paying customers.
- Never avoid talking to the printer, nor assume the job is going well just because you haven't heard otherwise. THEY might be waiting for a check to arrive before they ship the books and YOU might be waiting for the books to be shipped.