SET YOURSELF UP FOR

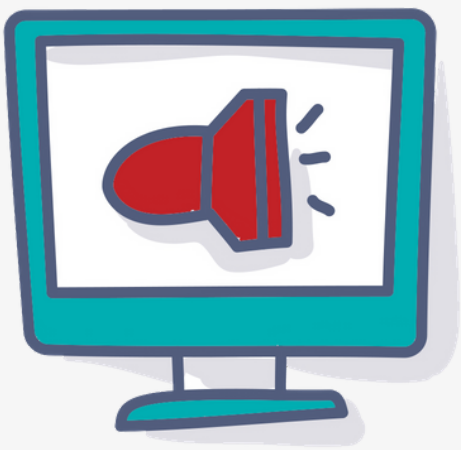
INDIE PUB SUCCESS

POLISHED MANUSCRIPT

The best thing you can do to set yourself up for success in indie publishing, is to write the best book you possibly can and have it edited professionally. You should have a round of developmental or story editing , and then a round of copyediting with line by line corrections.

AUTHOR BRANDING

Before you start creating your books and your promotional materials, you need to get clear on what kind of books you're writing, who you audience is, and how you will connect the two. Complete the Author Branding masterclass for Members.



AUTHOR WEBSITE

You'll need a "home on the web" where you can send people to learn more about you and your books, download your free books, and sign up for your mailing list. You may also want to include a contact form, and any bonus material.

MAILING LIST

Building a mailing list is one of the most powerful marketing avenues you have. Collecting your fans in a place where you can directly contact them is key. This is how you build your ARC team, as well as notify fans of new releases and promo deals on your existing books!

FREEBIE BOOK / STORY

Having a "perma-free" story or book will help new readers find you, and will help you grow your mailing list. If you're writing a series, then having the first book for free will help keep a constant flow of new readers buying your books!

WEEKS 1-4

16 Week Indie Publishing Timeline

PREREQUISITES

This timeline begins when your book is WRITTEN, and EDITED. Ideally, you have also completed the AUTHOR BRANDING process, and have set up your AUTHOR WEBSITE and your AUTHOR MAILING LIST.

WEEK 1 - STRATEGY

You need a strategic plan for your publishing path. What formats will you publish your book in? How and where will you distribute them? What do you want to get out of the publishing process and how much will you invest? The Strategic Author Worksheet + Tutorial can help you formulate your path and your plan.

WEEK 2 - ACCOUNT SETUP

You'll need to set up your publishing accounts, based on the choices you made in your Strategic Author publishing plan. Most commonly this will include KDP, Draft2Digital, and your ISBN account. If you're publishing print versions, then you might choose CreateSpace or IngramSpark as well.

WEEK 3 - COVER DESIGN

You need to choose your source for your cover design, and book that service. Some designers have a wait list, and some need longer lead time than others. Make your choice, and then collect whatever information they need from you to create your cover. Add this cost to your project budget.

WEEK 4 - CLAIM PROFILES

Claim your author profiles on social media, and on any book services like Goodreads, Bookbub, and Amazon Author Central. Make sure you set up Author Central in all the major countries separately: US, Japan, Germany, UK and France.

WEEKS 5-8

16 Week Indie Publishing Timeline

PREREQUISITES

You should be using a fully edited and proofread copy of your manuscript for the formatting and layout steps, and should have completed all the tasks in the Preparing for Success and Weeks 1-4 task lists.

WEEK 5 - FORMAT BOOK

Format your book files for your channels. I recommend Vellum (for Mac) or Draft2Digital's formatting tool. Add sections like: dedication, about the author, 'also by' this author, and a link to where people can sign up for your mailing list. A sneak peek of the next book they should read is also good!

WEEK 6 - METADATA

You need to finalize your metadata so it's ready to upload with your files. You'll need to prep a book description, about the author bio, choose 7 keywords/keyword phrases, choose 2 categories for your book, and collect any editorial reviews or blurbs from other authors. Proofread these!

WEEK 7 - FINALIZE COVER

It's time to finalize your cover design. You should have your set of files from your cover designer at this point, and be ready to use your cover on all your promo materials. Make sure you have a folder of different sizes and resolutions ready to use!

WEEK 8 - ARC REVIEWERS

Share your book cover, description and release date with your author mailing list and social media followers and ask if anyone would like a free advance copy in exchange for an honest review on launch day. Make a list (or tag / add to group) everyone who says yes.

WEEKS 9-12

16 Week Indie Publishing Timeline

PREREQUISITES

This timeline begins when your book is completed, and has been through a developmental edit, and the first major round of copyedits.

WEEK 9 - UPLOAD FILES

You'll need to export your laid out files into the necessary formats, and then upload them to your publishing accounts. Preview them to make sure everything is perfect. You will also enter your cover image and the metadata you have prepared - and schedule your release date!

WEEK 10 - ARC TEAM

Decide what tool you will use to manage Advance Reader Copy distribution. I recommend Bookfunnel, or Booksprout. Send out download links to your ARC Team mailing list, remind them of your launch date and ask them to read the book before that date.

WEEK 11 - PROMO SITES

If your book is in a series, schedule a promo for the book before the new one in the series to run during launch week or just after. If you're going to do "launch pricing" for the first few days make sure you notify all the free promo sites of the lower price on the new book, and your other book's promo period.

WEEK 12 - LAUNCH!

Ensure that your most perfect files are uploaded, prep your social media campaigns for launch day, and refer to the "launch day" checklist for the other steps to take. Don't forget to put CELEBRATE YOUR BOOK LAUNCH on your to do list!

LAUNCH DAY LIST

TASK BREAKDOWN FOR BOOK RELEASE DAY!

YOUR BOOK IS LIVE!

This task list begins the second your book goes live in the Kindle store and is available for purchase. Often, if you hit publish at bedtime your book will be live by the time you wake up in the morning! Check you listing...

POPULATE ALSO BOUGHTS

The first thing you should do is to buy your book and one or two other books you'd like it to be associated with (big names + bestsellers in your genre!). If possible, recruit a friend or two to do the same thing.

CALL FOR REVIEWS

Send an email out to your review crew that the book is live, and that it is time to post their reviews on Amazon + Goodreads. Remind them to include the statement "I received an advance copy of this book in exchange for an honest review" and include links to the book listing in your email!

TELL YOUR LIST

Now it's time to send your email out to your mailing list to tell them about your new release. If you have special "launch day" pricing, or a set time period your book is available at a discounted rate be sure to tell them that. This should also help populate your "also boughts" and give your rankings a boost.

SHARE FAR AND WIDE!

Now that you've told your list, and populated your "also boughts" and your review crew is posting reviews - it's time to tell the whole world! Your social media channels should be buzzing with release day news. CONGRATULATIONS!

WEEKS 13-16

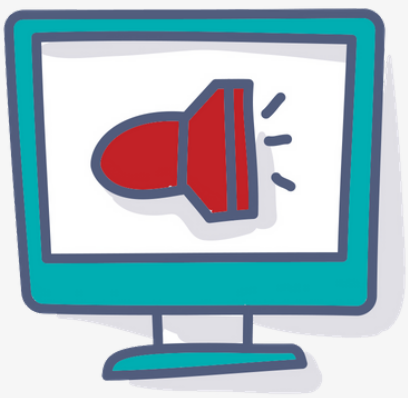
16 Week Indie Publishing Timeline

TIME TO PROMOTE!

Now that your book is live, your ARC team has started posting reviews, and your social media channels are buzzing - it's time to shift gears into full on promotion mode.

WEEK 13 - REVIEWS

The week after your book comes out, you can send a follow up email to your mailing list reminding them to grab it (maybe before the price goes up?) and also that if they enjoyed it to please post reviews as it helps new readers find your books.



WEEK 14 - TELL EVERYONE

It's time to branch out a little further in your promotional web. Look for blogs you can guest post on or do author interviews for, and make sure your books are properly connected to your Goodreads, BookBub, and Amazon Author Central profiles. Update your website with new reviews.

WEEK 15 - PODCASTS

Research podcasts you can be a guest on, and approach the hosts to offer yourself up as a guest on their show. Look for podcasts on indie publishing, your genre of book, or a related topic area. Maybe there's a podcast specific to your geographic area! Be creative.

WEEK 16 - PLAN A PROMO

If you're in KDP Select, then once your book has been out for 4 weeks with no price change, you can book a promo - 7 day Kindle Countdown for 0.99 is ideal - give yourself a couple of weeks to plan for it. Submit your promo dates to all the free sites, and select paid sites (BookBub!) if you have the budget for it. Schedule social media campaign.

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