

# **Indie wisdom for nonfiction self-publishers**







# ABOUT SELF-PUBLISHING

- **Self-publishing is independent publishing, maybe your only option or your best and most promising choice to publish your book.**
- **There is no handholding from a trade publisher. Rely on yourself with a total control with responsibilities and rewards, write well, and learn marketing.**

## ABOUT SELF-PUBLISHING



**Trade publishers divide marketing efforts between hundreds of titles. A self-publisher gives attention to one book for years.**



**With or without help, you research, write, edit, invent the title, create the cover and layout, add illustrations and pictures, choose fonts and price, publish, and market your book.**

## ABOUT SELF-PUBLISHING



**Trade publishers reject 99% of manuscripts. It's virtually impossible to find one even with an agent.**

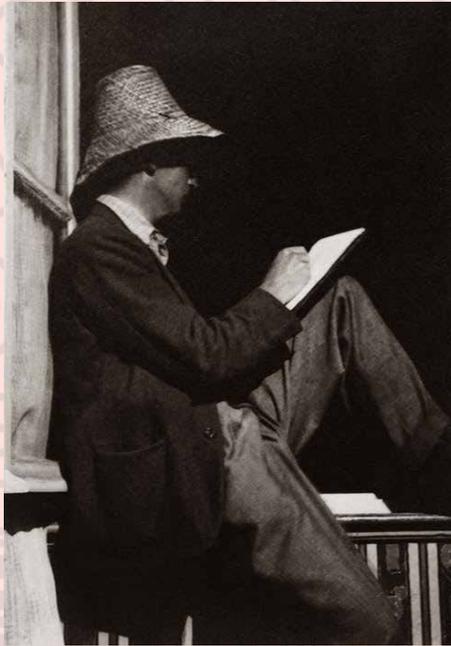


**Self-publishing cannot reject you because you are the boss. Find fame and fortune or at least satisfaction.**



**Believe in your book even when the success is not sure or easy.**

# INDIE WISDOM



# INDIE WISDOM



**Make the uncommon easy to understand.**



**Avoid negative self-talk.**



**Back up frequently so you won't lose too much.**

## INDIE WISDOM

-  **Ideas are invisible goldmines. Jot them down and continue working.**
-  **Ignore advice that your intuition tells you to be wrong for you.**
-  **Nurture courage, enthusiasm, and hard work to discover rewards.**

## INDIE WISDOM



**Unethical and misleading conduct will hurt your reputation.**



**Send a thoughtful thank-you card to editors and journalists for featuring you. They'll deserve recognition and will remember you.**



**It's hard to make it easy. Focus on one small subsection at a time.**

## INDIE WISDOM

-  **Replace tired words and dull repetitions with simplicity, clarity, and consistency.**
-  **Keep your notes at your fingertips and focus on one thing at a time: write, or edit, or organize, or read.**
-  **If you have an entrepreneurial mindset with the energy and passion, this is perfect for you.**

# IDEA STASH



## IDEA STASH



**Your mind will overflow with ideas you might use later. Store the unused gems in your idea stash so you can safely clear your head.**



**A small book and less expensive might be easier to sell than a larger one.**



**Trade publishers sell through established channels, but you must find other ways.**

## IDEA STASH



**When you think of something useful, put it on a list so it's half-done.**



**Keep your short memory free for daily thoughts. Your long-term memory is an infinite storage bank for amazing ideas.**



**I used the word easy so nobody would blame me for not writing more elaborately. That word became my strongest selling point to accurately describe my writing.**

# WRITING AND EDITING



## WRITING & EDITING



**Self-edit well. It might take several rounds before you agree with your subconscious.**



**You understand what you mean, but what about your readers? Consider their comfort zone and be clear.**



**Good nonfiction is interesting yet simple. Use strong, direct words. Remove unnecessary filler words, adjectives, jargon, fluff, and clichés.**

## WRITING & EDITING



**You don't want your readers to think you are ignorant, careless, or lazy. Weed out typos, use unusual words rarely and know what they mean, and discover synonyms.**



**Editing is like weeding a garden. The more errors you remove, the easier it will be to see the good words. This is a gentle love affair with your book.**

## WRITING & EDITING



**Clarity offends nobody, whereas chaotic writing irritates both readers and editors and rapidly alienates them.**



**Start your instructions from the most logical point and proceed in the most natural manner.**



**Write with fire in your fingertips. If you constantly interrupt yourself, you'll never get the work done. Editing comes later.**

## WRITING & EDITING



**When your writing, book, webinar, newsletter, and blog posts are good, your readers will trust you and remember you. In the long run, it's the only way to succeed.**



**Good writing takes time but it's worth it and your customers are worth it.**



**Carefully choose the words you use to add practical value in your book.**

# TOPIC



## TOPIC



**Get to know your topic intimately to make your book stand out.**



**Be selective. If you choose a marketable topic wisely and work hard, the publicity and customers will follow.**



**Carve yourself a marketable niche. It's a special zone you know well, and a defined corner of a topic you'll love to improve and share.**

## TOPIC

- **When you narrow your topic, you narrow your competition.**
- **Become an expert in a specific field. Don't be too general.**
- **Sometimes, a timely topic is even more important than a professional package. Choose both.**



## THE RIGHT TITLE



**A nonfiction title is a diamond, your hook in the book. Make it unique, memorable, and descriptive.**



**A customer will first notice your cover, title, price, and description. Make them invaluable tools for marketing.**



**Your working title will guide you while writing even if changed a few times.**



# BUSINESS



**When you start from nothing, you have nothing to lose. Being your own boss gives you guidance and liberties.**



**Registering your company gives you control and responsibilities. Energy and ideas, self-esteem, and a sense of being accountable will flow your way.**



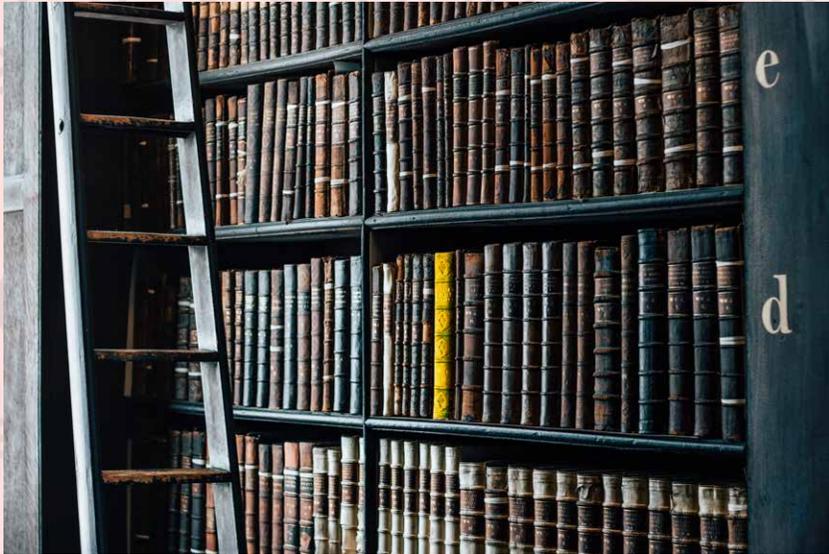
**Get your own ISBN to have your company imprint in your book.**

# BUSINESS

 **Save money and learn. Be a frugal self-publisher, be in control, do your research, don't pay for something you can learn.**

 **A tight budget can motivate you to find frugal ways to overcome many challenges. It empowers you even later when you have the money.**

# ORIGINALITY



# ORIGINALITY



**Aim to produce unique books.**



**Stand out from the crowd. Be different by focusing on something that makes your knowledge uncommon.**



**Have the patience to develop your own style.**

# ORIGINALITY



**Be original, not just to avoid lawsuits, but for the joy of finding your own voice.**



**Make it clear what benefits your reader will get from your nonfiction.**



**Write down enticing titles for your press release, blog posts, and email marketing, so the readers would read the rest.**

# ORIGINALITY

-  **Don't SHOUT with all capital letters or exclamation points!!**
-  **There is no guarantee of success — otherwise, everyone would be doing it.**
-  **Originality is so valuable that you might soon see others to try copying you.**

# FOCUS



**Avoid misunderstandings.**



**Don't allow negative talk from others or from yourself to discourage you.**



**Don't waste your energy thinking you can't. Focus on how you can.**



**Nobody can have the excitement and courage on your behalf.**

# VISUAL PANACHE

-  **Add visual interest by illustrations, layout, and pictures.**
-  **Simple nonfiction illustrations are better than complex.**
-  **If you absolutely cannot draw even a line, find someone who can, but it's exciting to develop your own hidden talent first.**

## VISUAL PANACHE



**It's easy to find overused clip art, but primitive art can be a charming magnet.**



**A visual effect is captivating. Consider simple drawings, special first letters, or other small details.**



**Concentrate, visualize, imagine. A visual touch says much without words.**

# WEBSITE



## WEBSITE



**Your website is an important platform under your control, a center of your ongoing creativity, publicity, and marketing.**



**Learn to make your own site to change as needed. Make it easy, pleasant, and organized.**



**Show online stores where your book is available. Make sure the links work.**

## WEBSITE



**Create a simple site to organize everything about your book(s). Start with your cover, description, and price. Add landing page, categories, bio, pictures, reviews, comments, links to blog or newsletter, Q&A, info about your upcoming books, and contact details.**



**Keep the website current with testimonials and links to write-ups and feature stories.**

# PRICING

 **Pricing is a great marketing tool to test different prices. Your royalty is perhaps 70% and your overhead is very low.**

 **Self-publishers can always change the pricing of their e-books.**

 **Consider free or promotional prices.**

## PRICING



**Check out similar books in your category. A print book costs more than an e-book. A hardcover book costs more than softcover.**



**Nonfiction will generally cost more than fiction. It's needed several times for useful information, kept for years, and it has required a lot of research and work.**



**Focus on the long-term profit rather than on the price of a single book.**

# MONEY MATTERS



**The customers will download your e-book from online retailers. Their cut is only 10–15%. When your book sells, they'll make money and you'll make money.**



**You are better off without exclusivities, consignments, traditional bookstore chains, and returns.**

## MONEY MATTERS



**The bookstore chains are too risky and require you to finance their inventories. They do not sell your book. Your customers are elsewhere.**



**Self-publisher's work is never done, but there are always more marketing channels to discover.**



**A little money can go a long way. Reduce costs and spend your money on visible details like cover design, editing, and layout.**

## **MONEY MATTERS**



**Learn all you can, especially the skills that will help you with future books. It takes time but gives you control, and it's money in your pocket.**



**Beyond money, there are more important reasons to self-publish your writing: joy of learning, sharing, teaching, helping, growing, and discovering.**



**Your book is more valuable than money.**

# DISTRIBUTION



**Compare distributors and retailers.  
Diversify. Do not double-distribute.**



**You want your book at amazon but  
much more.**



**The distributors cover the global  
market for e-books and find retailers in  
countries beyond your reach.**

## DISTRIBUTION



**Distributors will take your e-book to online stores. Your marketing and social media will help customers discover it anywhere in the world.**



**Retailers deal with distributors rather than tens of thousands of individual authors.**



**Use several distribution channels. Don't fall into exclusivity that would restrict you and give the power to one platform alone.**

# FEEDBACK

- **Interestingly, many like what others like, or say so. It's human nature.**
- **Customer comments become a positive boomerang to give you energy, boost your confidence, show your book is wanted, impress editors, and sell books.**

# FEEDBACK



**The blurbs, reviews, and write-ups validate your book. Show them on your website, blogs, social media pages, and newsletter.**



**The more work you do, the better your book, and the better your book, the more reviews, and the more reviews, the more sales.**



**Every honest comment counts.**

# BOOKSTORES



# BOOKSTORES



**Many self-publishers believe their book must be sold in bookstores. But it would not be successful without your marketing.**



**Most books are not sold in bookstores. Most customers never go to bookstores.**



**Indie publishers find better ways.**

# BOOKSTORES



**Bookstore chains buy books from trade publishers on consignment, pay months later and only for sold copies. Many reminders later, unsold copies are returned or forgotten.**



**Find independent bookstores and other risk-free markets instead of giant bookstore chains.**



**Independent bookstores care about their customers and about their employees. Bring them customers with publicity for your book.**

# RESEARCH

-  **Research what's out there and how to improve it, or what's not out there but should be.**
-  **Simply because something is published doesn't mean it's a fact. Go to the source for accurate information. Double-check everything.**
-  **Become an expert in your niche. You can't know everything right away, but research is cumulative and never wasted.**

# E-BOOK PUBLISHING



# E-BOOK PUBLISHING



**Start with the easiest publishing option: an e-book.**



**You decide, do, pay, and own everything. With or without help, you write and edit, choose the title, design the cover, format your manuscript, manage the marketing, distribution, and publicity.**

## E-BOOK PUBLISHING



**You cannot touch an e-book. Only the front cover is shown online. There is no printing, inventory, spine, back cover, barcode, index, or page numbers.**



**E-book is downloaded by the customer and read on personal computers, mobile devices, and cell phones.**



**Get royalties up to 70%–80%, far more than any trade publisher would pay you.**

## E-BOOK PUBLISHING



**Publishing an e-book saves massive amounts of paper and trees. Green marketing is increasingly important to businesses, consumers, and generations after us.**



**Benefits of digital e-books: Publishing is fast, free, and easy, with no printing, inventory, warehousing, or shipping. Formatting sounds difficult and time-consuming, but you'll need this skill from now on.**

# PRINT BOOKS



**For a print book, create a camera-ready PDF with cover and spine for a printer. Printed books show the TOC and the index with page numbers.**



**Your cover with a spine is shown on your website. Your back cover shows description, author photo, ISBN, barcode, company name and website.**

## PRINT BOOKS



**Use POD for individual orders and samples to contact markets like gift shops. When you need larger print runs, use short-run or offset printers.**



**Your printing cost for a good book or a bad book is the same, so make it good.**



**Get customers for your e-book and continue with a print book.**

# TRADE PUBLISHING



**Traditional trade publishers only publish a tiny fraction of manuscripts submitted through agents. It's nearly impossible to get a trade publisher even if you find an agent.**



**Read the contract carefully. Don't pay them – they should pay you the advance and royalties. Some also have expensive self-publishing services they'll push.**

## TRADE PUBLISHING



**When trade publishers turn you down, it can be a fortunate turn into self-publishing. Get informed of different options.**



**Don't waste valuable years searching for a big trade publisher beyond your reach. They release new books twice a year while their old titles move to the backlist and rapidly into remainders especially from new, unknown authors.**

# WARNING SIGNS



**You have worked for many months or years on your unique manuscript. You own it. Beware of crooks.**



**Don't sign away your exclusivity. You want to be free to sell your book globally through channels of your choice.**



**Do not destroy your book's future by using a vanity publisher.**

# SELF-PUBLISHING SERVICES

-  **Self-publishing is your independent business. Self-publishing services are companies that publish any manuscript at the writer's cost. Do not mix them up.**
-  **Research self-publishing services before signing and paying them thousands of dollars.**

## **SELF-PUBLISHING SERVICES**



**Even if you use some services from self-publishing services, make sure you understand the process and can decide what jobs you can and want to learn to do yourself.**



**Some self-publishing services are owned by trade publishers under names like assisted-publishing services, helpers to self-publishers, or subsidized self-publishing providers.**



**They say to sell copies to family and friends, but you need far more to be successful.**

# LAUNCH



# LAUNCH



**You have just published your first book and created something unique and valuable. There are only a few moments like this in your lifetime.**



**This moment of completing your book will not come back. Celebrate with your family and friends and congratulate yourself for the courage of writing your first book.**

# LAUNCH



**The launch makes your book publicly available. Promoting will be ongoing with PR, website, social media, blog, newsletter, and more.**



**A launch is an important moment in your book's life cycle, even the launch of an invisible e-book.**

# MARKETING

 **Marketing is your job and starts in your mind when you are still writing and editing.**

 **It's said that marketing is 99%, but writing only 1%. Become a fisherman and toss baits into unknown marketplace. The more bait you toss, the more fish will bite.**

# MARKETING



**Marketing is easier if your book is timely, in demand, different.**



**Marketing is hard work, but if you love your book, it doesn't seem like hard work.**



**Think of unusual markets with less competition to let media know about your book.**

# MARKETING



**Start your marketing with the patience and enthusiasm only indie authors can have for their books.**



**Don't get discouraged if marketing takes time with slow results. Whatever you expect, it will be different.**



**Your raw manuscript needs editing, cover, formatting, good publicity, meaningful marketing, and enthusiastic reviews to convert it into a real self-published book.**

# MAILING LIST



**Write a booklet of useful information. Offer it for free on social media, a blog post, and your website. Customers can download it by sending you their email.**



**The best mailing list is rich with names of potential customers interested in your topic.**



**Your mailing list starts growing. It's valuable and you own it.**

## MAILING LIST



**Better to have fewer names interested in your topic than a huge supply of names not interested in your book or topic.**



**Seek customers who love your topic and need your book.**



**Welcome potential customers and treat them well.**

# BECOME AN AUTHOR AND SELF-PUBLISHER



**You are learning a new skill. Problems and solutions will come your way.**



**Your creativity and endless self-discipline will gradually make you an exceptional author and self-publisher.**

## **BECOME AN AUTHOR AND SELF-PUBLISHER**



**Don't waste years on an endless row of agents, rejection letters, trade publishers, vanity publishers, and empty hopes. Use your time for choosing positive publishing options.**



**Many things will fight for your attention. Your press release, website, links to online stores and social media pages are tools to showcase your book and attract the readers.**

# MEDIA

- ▶ **PR has many names: press release, media release, and news release.**
- ▶ **Compose an enticing press release, hook the media, and get valuable reviews.**
- ▶ **The media get a pile of unsolicited books and media requests daily. What can you do to help the media?**

## MEDIA



**Not everyone wants your book. Find the market that needs it. The success might come but not likely overnight, so be patient and keep on working.**



**Start by sending an email and PR, very brief. Show how your topic could fit in. If they show interest, send a PDF link of your book (plus maybe a short bio, Q&A, and picture).**



**Triple-check your press release for accuracy. Customize it. Find an interesting hook to catch the eyes of busy journalists.**

# PUBLICITY



# PUBLICITY

- **Getting publicity is about telling a story, not selling a product.**
- **Be enthusiastic, happy to help the media and eager to help their readers.**
- **Every self-published book has a story. It's an interesting background for publicity.**

# PUBLICITY



**Make your book good to be proud of your work before making it visible to the media and available to the customers. Make it really good and attract reviews and sales. Make it excellent and it will stay around year after year.**



**The media need something new to smile and nod their heads. You are helping them and they are helping their readers.**

## **PUBLICITY**



**Make your letter/PR to the media personal, warm, shocking, funny, unusual, dramatic, touching, different. Make it brief to open the door.**



**Readers trust even the smallest write-up. It carries an unwritten endorsement from the editor, more valuable than any ad.**



**Get publicity to make your book discoverable. Self-publisher's work is never done, but there are always other marketing channels to discover.**

# PUBLICITY



**Send your press release not only to magazines and newspapers but also to freelancers, bloggers, columnists, social media groups, and anyone interested in your topic.**



**When requested, immediately send a POD edition of your book, or a link to your PDF version, free of course. No delays.**



**Getting publicity is not for the lazy.**

# CRITICISM

-  **Have the courage to also show some criticism about your book with your reply. Some customers will be drawn to your honesty and want to get your book anyway.**
-  **Criticism hurts but you must learn to handle it. It makes you stronger.**
-  **Learn from criticism. It might not be true but read it and consider it.**

# POD (print-on-demand)

-  **The print-on-demand service finds available printers close to the shipping address to lower the shipping fees.**
-  **The country of printing with the print code is included to trace the print job back to the printer if needed.**

## **POD (print-on-demand)**



**Benefits of POD-printed books:  
No quantity printing, inventory,  
warehousing, waste, or risk. Print books  
one or a few at a time.**



**Research several POD companies to  
compare them and to know what's  
involved.**

# BLOG



**Consider starting a blog to create another platform to attract followers.**



**Don't worry if your blog is simple with only one reader. Make it good and it will grow. Use it as a draft for a handy parking place for ideas and notes to publish when ready.**

## BLOG



**Writing a blog is different from writing a book, but good books might blossom from popular blogs.**



**Start writing your blog like a letter to a friend with handy tips.**

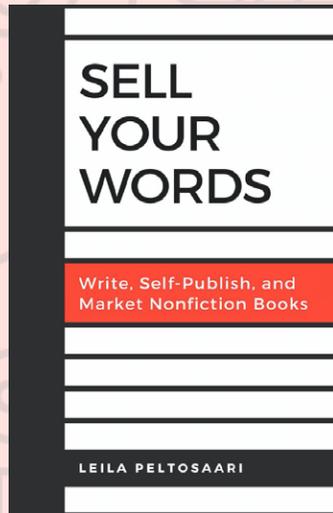


**Make your blog post interesting. Invite comments and show your response. Your readers will tell their friends who will tell their friends. That's the most powerful endorsement.**

## A BOOK FOR SELF-PUBLISHERS

If you like these sample tips, you will love my easy-to-read book without fluff.

*Sell Your Words: Write, self-publish, and market nonfiction books*, is based on valuable and diligent research for the latest details and on my journey.



Get your copy at [sellyourwords.com](https://sellyourwords.com)

## REVIEWS FOR **SELL YOUR WORDS**

★★★★★ An Excellent Bird’s-eye View of Self-publishing

The Publicity Hound, Joan Stewart, amazon.com, amazon.ca, March 30, 2019

Verified Purchase

“I wish all authors would read this book before writing the first sentences in their own books. It would show them exactly how much painstaking work is involved in book marketing and sales. Leila Peltosaari walks authors step-by-step through all the phases of indie publishing. She also discusses topics that many book coaches don’t stress, like those phony Amazon ‘best seller’ campaigns, fake ‘book awards’ and the importance of email marketing.”

★★★★★ A wealth of useful information for self-publishers

Gizmo, Eric Caillibot, amazon.ca, Kobo.com, June 27, 2019

I wish I had read this before trying to self-publish my first book! Whether your interest is ebook or print, “Sell Your Words” contains an exhaustive coverage of many details easily overlooked by aspiring writers, as well thoughtful and honest accounts of the author’s own experiences. I now have a wealth of notes for future efforts!

## REVIEWS FOR *SELL YOUR WORDS* (CONTINUED)

★★★★★ Stamp of approval from a retired professional librarian

Kay Turner, Kobo.com, April 5, 2019

As a retired professional librarian, both in the educational, and public sectors, I've learned a lot about how to disseminate information, and how good non-fiction books work. *Leila's* is one that works. A non-fiction book has to be well-organized, that is containing good Contents Page (an Index later in print version), and logical thematic chapters. A glossary, which *Sell Your Words* has, is usually an added bonus. Non-fiction material has to be easily culled from the pages, and to be digested at the level of the intended readership. *Sell Your Words* has all those attributes in abundance. Although I have a minimal knowledge of the indie publishing business, *Leila* makes it very accessible, and anybody would be encouraged to try it for themselves. She has obviously spent an inordinate amount of time in research to 'get it right', and, 'Well done, *Leila*,' you have done just that. I wish you the best of success. Kay Turner

## REVIEWS FOR *SELL YOUR WORDS* (CONTINUED)

★★★★★ *Sell Your Words*, Leila Peltosaari

Diane Donovan, Senior Reviewer, Donovan's Bookshelf, Midwest Book Review

Sales: [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

*Sell Your Words: Write, Self-Publish, and Market Nonfiction Books* is for indie authors who have decided to publish their own books rather than seeking an agent or pursuing a publisher, and offers invaluable advice not just on publishing, but on the important task of marketing the book after publication (which could be a book in and of itself).

Why another book on the process of self-publishing? Leila Peltosaari not only sports three decades of success, but points out she has "...made more than a million dollars by self-publishing title after title." And English is not her mother tongue! These facts alone add enough weight to this particular how-to book to make it a worthwhile pursuit.

Leila Peltosaari begins with the writing process based on her first book, written when she was 34 years old. Perhaps it was serendipity that her first home-produced book, *Easy Sewing for Infants*, gained the attention of *Family Circle*, which plugged it to a national audience in their magazine. But chance had no hand in her ongoing success story, as she wrote and marketed numerous well-received books, received much acclaim, and earned much more than the 'pocket money' she had anticipated from her efforts.

Nonfiction writers, in particular, are admonished to strive for creative originality: "Stand out from the crowd. Make your book different by focusing on one thing

that makes your knowledge uncommon. Seize it, research it, and write it down. Explain and clearly illustrate what makes you unique, and your nonfiction book will attract great reviews.”

Peppered with bright visual examples, *Sell Your Words* provides the right blend of excitement, encouragement, and practical advice to give aspiring, would-be authors a boost at all levels of the process. The self-publishing tips are specific and cover everything from POD (print-on-demand) publishing to short runs, handling review copy distribution, making front and back covers which are enticing sales tools, and more.

Marketing insights include not only recommendations but cautions about pitfalls, offering many alternatives to getting out of the slush pile: “I found the literary critique section in any daily paper to be a dead end for my nonfiction books, but the lifestyle section often needs interesting leads. Some have sections like traveling, business, home, health, food, or pets, and one could be a match for your book. Many dailies have reduced personnel and use freelancers, so one person might write feature articles for several departments or publications—get familiar with those names as potential contacts. Some dailies list emails of their personnel and links to their previous articles or columns so you can see their style.”

Packed with basic information provided in a lively, encouraging style, *Sell Your Words* should be the first book writers consult when they embark on the road to publishing success. It covers all the bases and basics and makes the writing and marketing process both logical and achievable.

