

Writing a book can lead to more business activity

Data shows that reading books isn't the way to spend a leisurely afternoon for those under 25. Should authors, and publishers, throw in the towel? Not unless you want to kiss off a bunch of money.

Book sales are under-reported, according to the Book Industry Study Group (www.BISG.com). Its study, "Under the Radar," reports that approximately 63,000 publishers with annual sales of less than \$50 million generated aggregate sales of \$14.2 billion in 2007. This is serious money.

Is there a book in you? Will the creation of one enhance your present career? Could one lead

you in a new direction? Could you actually make money if you published a book?

The answer to all that is a huge "yes." Most people have fantasies of writing a book, be it for children, a great novel, how-to, business or other genres. They just don't know how to get started.

You can write a book and try to get it published by a New York publisher. You can also look at alternatives. Denver is the home of the Colorado Independent Publishers Association (www.CIPABooks.com), with more than 350 small publishers and authors, and CIPA has its annual college March 27-29. Disclosure time: I'm a past president.

Denver author Mary Jo Fay (www.MaryJoFay.com) is a prime example of

how self-publishing can turn around your career and life.

Fay always had wanted to write a book but was overwhelmed thinking about the typical road to publishing. Thirteen weeks after attending her first CIPA meeting, her first book was published. She thought she'd met her life's goal. Little did she know that it was only the start.

Now, four years and four books later, she has a Google presence in many languages. With an expertise in difficult relationships and how to find healthy ones, her clients are as far away as London; she's sold the book rights to the Egyptian market; has a screenplay with a former Ron Howard producer that's tied to one of her books; and is working with a TV production company in Hollywood about a documentary on childhood sexual abuse. Whew!

"I had no idea the path that self-publishing would lead me," Fay says.

Or take Denver's morning personality Dom Testa (www.DomTesta.com). He co-hosts the "Dom and Jane Show" on Mix 100 Radio in Denver. He's also the author of the Galahad series of books for young adults.

In 2004, he published a young adult novel, "Galahad 1: The Comet's Curse," targeted at the late-elementary/middle school audience under his own publishing imprint. The book became a state best-seller and won multiple awards, including the Grand Prize from Writer's Digest. Suddenly, Testa had the distinction he sought.

"I've been working with schools and libraries for more than 15 years," he says.

"The writing workshops and assemblies for young adults were well-received, but marketing was a challenge. Every business needs a spotlight, something to

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draw attention and provide a distinction. Galahad did that."

Testa has become so skilled that the key publisher in science fictions books has taken over the Galahad series, with more books to come.

Instructional designer Elizabeth Yarnell's (www.GloriousOnePotMeals.com) career took a 180-degree turn when her award-winning book, "Glorious One Pot Meals," was published by her own press two years ago. Today, she's an author, publisher and speaker.

She's not a professional chef and has no culinary training. But she is an inventor, and created a unique method of cooking that's been patented. And she wrote about it.

Yarnell says, "There is no doubt that having a book gives me credibility I wouldn't otherwise have in my career. If I hadn't gone ahead and independently published my book, I would still be trolling for agents and publishers, still hoping to share my words with the world but stifled by contrary big-business interests.

My book provides extra income and has opened the door to move forward in other fields, including hosting a TV show."

When Rhonda Spellman (www.ARTOSpress.com) published her first book, she felt like David facing a world full of Goliaths. She's now working on book three, "In Search of a Better Truth, the Mystery and Magic of Asperger's Syndrome," which she wrote after her son was diagnosed with Asperger's and she sought to understand the disease.

Her discoveries led to new, innovative programs that have changed thousands of lives. From that, she created her disABILITY Awareness program that schools are embracing.

Animal Behaviorists Suzanne Hetts and Dan Estep (www.AnimalBehaviorAssociates.com) have found that their books support their credibility, increase their visibility, attract more customers to their services and make money. Their publishing arm, Island Dog Press, has created "Raising a Behaviorally Healthy Puppy" and "Help! I'm Barking and I Can't Be Quiet." When the American Animal Hospital Association saw their work, it asked them to write "Pet Behavior Protocols."

For all of these authors, writing a book helped grow their careers. Self-publishing has grown in stature. The books being produced by the guy down the street probably are designed and printed by the professionals the New York houses use.

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Career Moves



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