

# Business Books as Calling Cards

Hybrid publishing models provide entrepreneurial authors with more creative and financial ownership of their content than they tend to have in traditional publishing. Because technology has leveled the playing field for distribution, an author can choose from a range of processes that get a book idea to market quickly, cheaply, and effectively—and that works out well for many business authors.

"That cliché that 'he wrote the book on it' is still a powerful thing," says David Hancock, CEO of hybrid publisher Morgan James. Hancock came to understand this phenomenon in his former career as a banker after reading Jay Conrad Levinson's *Guerrilla Marketing* (1984) and, in 2001, partnering with Levinson on the self-published *Guerrilla Marketing for Mortgage Brokers*.

"The book was one of the most powerful tools in my arsenal," Hancock says. "I literally doubled all my fees, and suddenly I became the go-to guy, getting calls from the media and from people who hadn't known I existed. It was laughable, but it was amazing." So inspired, he went on to start Morgan James, named after his two children, in 2003.

Today, the company partners with authors under five imprints. It doesn't charge a fee for service, but neither does it provide traditional editorial services such as editing and proofreading; Lightning Source handles production and Ingram distribution. The company shares royalties with authors, who retain intellectual-property rights so that they can take their books on the proverbial road—through their own platforms—to sell, sell, sell.

Business books tend to do particularly well for Morgan James, Hancock says. In 2011, he published *The Millionaire Mentor* with personal-development coach Brendon Burchard, whom *Oprah.com* later called "one of the most influential leaders in the field of personal growth." Forthcoming releases from the company include *Get Smarter Marketing* by marketing consultant Jill Brennan, and *The Art of Getting Everything* by management consultant and mediator Elizabeth Suárez; both will be out in October.

Diversion Publishing, which literary agent Scott Waxman launched in 2010, has multiple imprints that each offer different publishing services. The traditional publishing arm, Diversion

Books, invests in projects from the start, shapes the works, and executes a relatively traditional agreement around publication, distribution, promotion, and rights.

Its custom-publishing arm, Radius Book Group, marshals the same resources in a fee-for-service model in which the author retains rights to the final product. "Radius has the same pub team that would work on a Diversion title," Waxman says. "The difference is that these authors are more entrepreneurial in terms of the book itself." Mark Cuban, Dallas Mavericks owner and *Shark Tank* panelist, worked with Radius to release an e-book, *How to Win at the Sport of Business*, in 2011; the 2013 print edition has sold 32,000 copies, per NPD BookScan. (The third branch of Diversion, EverAfter, focuses on the romance genre.)

Mark Fretz, editorial director at Radius, believes that the variety of choices available to authors has created fluidity, rather than division, in the market. "We're getting the authors who've never published before, and people who have gone with traditional publishers and, for a number of different reasons, are saying no to that route," he says.

That diversity of author experience is also found at Greenleaf Book Group, a 20-year-old publisher and distributor in Austin, Tex. In October, Greenleaf will publish *The Anticipatory Organization* by Daniel Burrus, author of *Flash Foresight* (Harper Business, 2011). "Daniel came to us with an amazing background," says Greenleaf CEO Tanya Hall, adding that Burrus is active on the lecture circuit, working with corporations and speaking at TEDx conferences. Greenleaf's relationships with booksellers nationwide help broaden the reach of authors who are already marketing their books to clients and at

workshops, Hall says: "A model like ours gives business authors a way to monetize a direct-sales platform. They own the rights and the books themselves, but we draw from the more traditional [publishing] side, with our distribution muscle."

These publishers see a spirit of collaboration in the marketplace, rather than what Radius's Fretz calls "an us-versus-them" mentality. Ideally, more options mean more opportunity for everyone, Fretz says—or, at the very least, that "a traditional contract is no longer the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow." —S.J.R.

NASA and the National Parks Service.

Once a person factors in all of her side projects, burgeoning skills, and other extracurriculars, it can be a challenge to answer the question, "What do you do?" *Tell Me About Yourself* (Berrett-Koehler, Sept.) offers a six-step action plan to help readers better position themselves in

today's workplace by creating compelling, well-rounded autobiographical stories.

"Some people reduce themselves to one thing, [such as,] 'I'm a writer,'" says author Holley Murchison, whose San Francisco-based communications agency, Oratory Glory, trains students,

artists, and organizations to understand and articulate their personal stories. "But as so many move into freelance work, we need to more intentionally approach the question." ■

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