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## **Publishing Your Book at RPI**

### **About us**

We are a growing, privately owned company, independent of the church or any other institution, and we publish about 10-16 new books a year. Our backlist of 145 titles is actively promoted.

The company mission is to provide imaginative resources that help lay and ordained pastoral leaders and volunteers in their ministries. Additionally, we provide pastoral and faith-based resources for personal growth and use by educators and other helping professions. Our three major markets are:

1. Religious ministry and education
2. Public/private educators
3. Helping professions

### **Our market**

The oldest market we serve is religious ministry and education. RPI began over 31 years ago with the publication of *Modern Liturgy*, a magazine now published 10 times a year for Roman Catholic ministers. From the beginning, we have been known for our imaginative style and emphasis on the importance of the arts in the revised rites of Roman Catholic liturgy. Our first books tended to serve these customers and today our titles are particularly strong in the areas of worship, catechesis and development of personal spirituality. RPI resources now serve all areas of ministry in the contemporary Church.

Our newest market is in the helping professions. Many of our ministry and education titles have been of interest to counseling professionals, and we are actively seeking imaginative titles that would be of use to counselors and therapists in non-educational and non-ministerial settings.

### **Focus and operations**

Our editorial focus, as stated above, is specific in the area of faith-based resources for ministry and other helping professions. Our editorial and marketing package is comprehensive and inclusive. We work with and include you in all aspects of your project: concept, development, packaging, and marketing. We work hard to serve you as an author and to incorporate you as an active member of the marketing team to assure maximum market exposure of you and your project.

We differ from the large general publishing companies in that they place emphasis on promotion of one-time maximum distribution of “frontlist” (new) titles in a first press run. Then they go on to the next new book. Our emphasis is on identifying titles that fit our editorial focus rather than books that will have high initial sales; we look for books that appeal to our customer base and will be valuable to them for years to come. Our initial press run may be smaller, but we may go back to press several times. When sales slow, we revisit each project and evaluate the possibility a revision for reissue. It is important to us that our titles are current in addressing the issues and changes within the Church.

## **The author-publisher relationship**

Obviously, established authors bring a level of celebrity, experience and collaboration that is always desirable and respected. However, we welcome new authors and strive to make their first publishing experience a pleasurable, informative journey. We also pride ourselves on our ability to walk with the new or less experienced author. Our commitment to authors has two major foci.

1) We help prepare their projects for publication. We are experts in guiding the translation of good material from one medium, such as a workshop, into a book. We know about design, organization, and copy-editing and our editors have personal expertise in the fields of liturgy, ministry and catechesis. Their experience is often a valuable resource to our authors.

2) We aid in developing each author to his or her fullest potential. We distinguish between writers and authors. Writers focus on their current assignment until it is complete, when their interest is then redirected to the next assignment, rather than promoting their completed project. An author, on the other hand, is a person who has something to say and who feels passionate about a subject area. This passion seeks opportunities to present his or her ideas in a personal way, such making speeches, giving workshops, teaching courses, or working on research in a given area. In some ways, the challenge in publishing is developing authors. We provide considerable resources for our authors, with ideas and support for workshops, book signings, local promotions, and conference presentations.

## **Initiating a publishing process**

Call, write or e-mail our Acquisitions Editor, Helen St. Paul, to discuss your proposed project. If your project fits the profile of our editorial focus for projects we are currently seeking, she will forward an Author Data Questionnaire and assist you in developing and submitting a proposal that includes the following elements:

1. A working title (and subtitle, if applicable)
2. The intended audience
3. The purpose
4. The benefits to readers
5. A table of contents
6. A sample of your writing, such as a preliminary Introduction
7. The format (word count/page count, illustrations, perforated pages, blank pages, etc.)
8. Your credentials and experience in the field represented in your project

Once all components are received, the project undergoes a process of evaluation called a feasibility study. This study includes an evaluation of your proposal with input by each department manager (Editorial, Marketing, Production and Business) and the Publisher. Upon completion of the study, a decision is made to approve as is, or with recommendations for changes in format or approach. The Acquisitions Editor then contacts the author with the decision. The main idea is to make sure the book has a clearly defined purpose and a good customer base *before* writing begins.

### **If you already have a manuscript...**

You may either select a “sample chapter” or submit the complete current draft with your Author Data Questionnaire and Table of Contents. This will initiate the feasibility study. If the project is approved, it is possible that you may be asked to revise the manuscript.

### **Once your proposal is accepted...**

The Acquisitions Editor will continue the dialog with you to establish the timing for publication of your project. This will be determined by a number of factors, including your schedule. You will then receive a Publishing

Agreement, an outline of the proposed schedule, and a packet of materials that will address your participation in the editorial and marketing processes.

### **The physical aspects of the project...**

Ideally, the title, cover concept, and the format are part of the development process, which includes input from the author. Even if you submit a manuscript over the transom (without inquiring first), we will still work with you on design issues. Ultimately, because of our marketing experience, we must retain the right to make the final decision on packaging, but we want to emerge with a book that both pleases you and works in the market. The editorial process will include an ongoing dialog with the Editor regarding substance and format, until you have a final draft. After submitting the final draft, you will see your manuscript twice more: once, after the book has been copy-edited and again after the book is set in type. You can make reasonable revisions on the first proof, but only minor corrections such as typos at the second stage.

### **Promoting the project...**

The marketing department will include you to a large degree in the marketing and publicity of your project. Your input will be vital to development of your "Publicity Tour", which may include book signings, local promotions, presentations, workshops (development and presentation), providing lists of people and institutions that are potential buyers, sending postcards to friends and associates, and obtaining endorsements for the back cover and other promotional materials. Your participation is going to be instrumental and essential for developing a successful marketing campaign, which translates to higher sales of your project. It is the rare book that sells without the active involvement of its author. Authors, by the virtue of their involvement in the ideas of their books, are the best sales representatives for their books and are often involved in direct sales.

Many authors keep copies of their book on hand, which they purchase at a discount for cash or against their royalties. They display them to people who attend their workshops and talks. When no dealer or exhibitor is present to help with sales, the author (or an assistant enlisted by the author) can sell copies to the audience after the presentation. Sometimes the event coordinators will assist, either as a favor, as a condition of your booking, or for a small percentage of the sales. It's the most efficient way to reap maximum financial gain from your book. It also makes sense if your book is really an extension of the work you present publicly. Your listeners will virtually demand a copy of your book. Additionally, you may make a strong impression on a local bookseller when you introduce yourself and offer to sign copies and chat with their customers. Book signings may also be a way to induce local exposure and sales at a diocesan or parish event.

### **Copyrights**

When you sign RPI's standard Publishing Agreement, you transfer all the publishing rights for the project to RPI. The transfer of publishing rights is an exchange for the expertise, energy, and infrastructure of a company of people working on behalf of you and your work. By doing so, you would be hoping to achieve

- 1) Editorial consultation and expertise
- 2) Reduced cash outlays on your part
- 3) Increased credibility for yourself,
- 4) Increased exposure on your work,
- 5) Possible cash royalties,
- 6) Possible revenue from sales of subsidiary rights to other publishers and media.

Subsidiary rights sales -- movie rights, for example -- are sometimes made many years after your book is out of print. Therefore, we do not like to abrogate our original contract. However, if you or another publisher are interested in re-issuing your work after it is out of print, we will be happy to negotiate non-exclusive rights for that purpose.

## **Royalties**

Unless your book enjoys sudden high popularity, royalties come along slowly and in relatively smaller amounts. We pay a royalty of eight percent on the net sales (amount we receive). Royalties are not payable in cash until your project enjoys a profit. However, you may at any time take your royalties in copies of your book and we encourage this.

Some publishers pay royalties based on the list price but that practice is changing. Authors like to get royalties based on the list price because it sounds like a better deal. It isn't. When publishers pay royalties on the list price, there is generally a clause that itemizes separate (lower) royalty rates for books sold at discount. If they do not do this, your publisher will have to pay you the same royalty whether your book is sold through the mail at 100% of the list price or to a distributor at 55% of the list price. This makes the sale to distributors more difficult, perhaps even impossible, for your publisher. This can have a negative overall effect on sales -- and a lower overall royalty in the end. We think paying royalties off the net sales is more straightforward and equitable over all.

There are good reasons that royalties are only paid after the book shows a profit. Publishing is a kind of limited partnership for a project. The publisher and the author *share* the risks. The author has an investment in time. The publisher invests real dollars and other resources. It takes about \$15,000 to cover editing, production, marketing, fulfillment, administration, and royalties for a modest book project. Most projects do not recover that investment for approximately three years. If the project does not perform to expectations and the investment is never recovered, the publisher, alone bears the loss of the capital investment. The author, on the other hand, may have recovered his or her investment in time by selling copies of the book or enjoying the extra credibility and bookings that are a by-product of being a published author.

Some books show a profit their first year. If this happens, you receive a cash royalty the following summer. Normally, a book should sell out the first printing within 18 months. If the production went smoothly and we priced the book correctly, you would see a royalty the third summer. It could take longer. It may never happen at all. For this reason we encourage you to take royalties in the form of copies of your book and sell your work directly. You could eventually receive \$1,600 worth of cash royalties from the first printing of an average selling book, but you can make four or five times that by promoting sales of the book at appearances.

## **Advances against royalties**

RPI doesn't generally pay cash advances on a project. When we can be nearly certain of high early sales of a book and enthusiastic author involvement, we sometimes give authors an advance against royalties in the form of copies of their book.

## **Marketing and publicity**

We design a publicity and marketing effort that begins with the distribution of press releases and review copies and may include special mailings or other efforts where appropriate. We market books to our retail customers (the actual readers who pay full price) through several catalogs a year, targeted special mailings, e-mailings, on-line catalogs, conference exhibits, advertisements in *Ministry & Liturgy* and *Liturgical Catechesis*, and a variety of stuffers and brochures. We market to trade customers (bookstores that pay wholesale prices) through sales representatives who call on religious bookstores, a wide variety of catalogs, stuffers, and brochures.

We market directly and through established networks of distributors and wholesalers to libraries, academic, and specialty markets, the general trade and to English-speaking customers in Australia, New Zealand, Canada, India, South Africa, Great Britain, and other countries around the world.

While we do not purchase display space for advertising individual titles in other publications, we often team up with authors who want to purchase advertising space by providing the advertising layout and copy ready to print.