A Brief Guide to Publishing with Kindle Direct Publishing

So you want to publish a book!

There are few things more empowering than seeing your name on a book that you have written. Kindle Direct Publishing provides the structure and means for anyone to publish a book. You do not even have to be a good writer. Can you tell a story or share life lessons? Maybe you can write poems. If so, you can publish a book.

Writing a book is a process that is within your reach to accomplish. If you can use a computer, you can publish a book. If you can't use a computer, maybe you can enlist the help of a son or daughter to help.

WRITING PHASE

- Write an awesome manuscript (harder than it sounds to focus on this when you get distracted with everything else you need to do)
- Enlist 3-5 proofreaders (not English teachers—don't split hairs over commas, etc.)
- Aim for about a 9th grade reading level, tops (see: https://readability-score.com)
- Be intentional about your writing process--it will translate into how well the book flows.

Tips:

- Develop an outline for your book
- Write like you talk and go back and edit it
- Write, edit, proofread as you go along
- Write everything, edit everything, then proofread at least 3 times
- Consider allowing time between writing, proofreading, and editing - often you'll have one of those "what was I thinking moments"
- You should enlist multiple proofreaders - everyone catches something different
- Editing is the hardest part. A publisher would have people on staff knowledgeable about your topic who could give editorial advice. It's harder to find when self-publishing, so enlist someone you trust to give a critical eye with deep knowledge of your topic.

DESIGN PHASE

- Establish an account with Kindle Direct Publishing. https://kdp.amazon.com
- KDP is fairly user friendly. The first time I published a book, I published a small book about 30 pages to learn the process. This was a great learning

process and saved some headaches because I was not so concerned about messing something up.

- Download a book (Word document) template you want to use (size, paper color, etc.)
- Once the editing process is finished, you will save the book as a pdf. It is best to use adobe.
- You can use the KDP cover maker. It is simpler to utilize, but you run the risk of your book looking like other Kindle published books.
- You can enlist a cover designer for your book. 99 Designs is a great place to go: http://99designs.com/book-cover-design This can cost some money, but will give your book a professional look.
- If you have the skills, you can download a cover template and design your own cover, but you will need a good program like Adobe Photoshop.

Tips:

- Use MS Word, then save as a pdf when finished editing
- Don't ever enter double carriage returns (ENTER + ENTER). Add space after paragraphs, etc. with styles (go to paragraph and set the before and after spacing).
- Create a list of styles that will be compliant with Kindle format
- All images should be "in-line", not floating
- Don't do ANY formatting until your manuscript is complete (unless just to tinker around). Stay close to the template formatting and change as little as possible.
- Plan on 2 weeks for formatting your book, etc.
- Look at other books for internal formatting ideas. See what is current in your field
- Once you upload your book pdf, use their proof viewer. KDP will identify any problems or areas the need addressing.
- When all issues are taken care of, always order 1-2 proof copies from KDP so that you can see if it is publishable to your standard. I have always ordered a sample book before I "publish" it. There is no substitute for having the book in hand and I have always found more mistakes or have found somethings that I wanted to change. The process of getting the book formatted to my liking has taken me months to complete.
- When the formatting is satisfactory to you, then go live with book and place in the Kindle store

MARKETING PHASE

- Create an Amazon Author account (http://authorcentral.amazon.com) and edit your personal page (best marketing page available for a book)

- Ensure that your Kindle and paperback books are linked together (after 3 days of going live, if not, email them from Author Central account)
- Sign up at least 50 people to preview the book (either paperback or Kindle) and leave Amazon reviews. This is powerful, as it adds credibility to your work to have reviews on Amazon. Don't ask for 5 star reviews—ask them to be honest. Some will leave 4 stars, and that's better than 5 stars. 1 and 5 star reviews are often ignored by potential customers.
- Make a business card or bookmark for people you give the book away free to that points them to the webpage on Amazon to leave a review. I can't stress enough how much to push this. You need those reviews.
- You can make a 3D book Cover image for promotional purposes. This is for any ads and promotions, web or otherwise. http://www.myecovermaker.com/ecover-design

Tips:

o Marketing is the hardest part of this process.
o Professional marketers get it wrong a lot. It's always a gamble, but they know that when it pays off, it pays off big. Don't get down when it doesn't work out as well as you'd hoped. You're not a professional
o Allow intentional time each week (even if just 30 minutes) to market for 6 months to a year. Tweets, blog, speaking plugs, etc. You've spent a lot of time to write a book--spend marketing time to put value on what you've written and what you have to share (speaking, etc.)

Notes:

You can download Michael Hyatt's non-fiction book proposal template and search his site for literary agents—he has a post where he names them and provides contact info. https://michaelhyatt.com/

KDP provides many resources to help the publishing process. There are too many details in their process to cover each one, this guild intended to cover the basic process.

Having a mentor is the best way to successfully publish a KDP book. Once you have published your book, consider paying it forward and helping someone else publish a book.

God Bless Your Book!