

Ellen Reid's **BOOK SHEPHERDING**

A DIVISION OF **Smarketing** Infinite Possibilities

Question: Who Needs a Book Shepherd?

Answer: Maybe you!

Just what is a Book Shepherd, anyway? The definition of Book Shepherd we use comes from our mentor, Dan Poynter, "Mr. Self-Publishing," who coined the term. Dan defines a Book Shepherd as someone who can take your manuscript through all the processes to a finished book. Ellen Reid's Book Shepherding goes beyond that, preparing you for the best shot at success with branding, positioning, professional promotional materials and advice on getting your book moving through a number of markets.

So you have a manuscript and you want to turn it into a book. Do you need a Book Shepherd? There are 10 good reasons why it just might serve you to have the assistance of someone who knows the road to producing and selling a book from start to finish, knows where the potholes are, and knows how to avoid them.

An experienced Book Shepherd:

- 1. Saves you money.** Going it alone to produce a book is filled with hassles, frustrations, delays and potential deadly mistakes that all cost money. A good Book Shepherd can help you steer clear of them so you don't spend money needlessly.
- 2. Saves you time.** A Book Shepherd knows the best route to success as well as what you need and when you need it. Those who sell their books to publishers, soon learn it will take from 12-18 months to get their book released. A Book Shepherd will get the job done—and done right—in about 4-6 months.
- 3. Assures you have all you need.** Most first-book authors know they need numbers; ISBN, LCCN, SAN, P-CIP, etc., to be assembled in order to have their book done right. An experienced Book Shepherd will get them for you.
- 4. Connects you to a wealth of resources.** Closely related to #3 is the idea that you will need resource people to end up with a professional book and not one that screams "self-published." Sure, with your handy computer you can design a clean and neat cover. Yes, you can read good books that describe all the pieces—like a compelling back cover—that contribute to producing a successful book. However, knowing what you need to do and having the years of experience to do it right—so the cover "pops" and the back cover sells—are very different things. Working with a "Shepherd" and its copywriter and designer solves that.
- 5. Helps you avoid aggravation and stress.** The process of producing a book is filled with potential tear-your-hair-out problems. They can be as small as running into quirks in your design program that get in the way of doing the layout you want, to ending up with 2000 finished books in your garage and realizing there's a better sub-title for your book that would have really grabbed your target readers. A good Book Shepherd can eliminate these problems and reduce the stress inherent in the process, particularly for a newcomer to the biz.
- 6. Provides a coordinated effort.** Even if you decide (wisely) that you need a cover designer, an interior page designer, and a skilled copy person to write the "sell" text (back cover, flap copy, etc.), hiring individual suppliers may result in your ending up with a camel instead of a racehorse. A Book Shepherd acts as a symphony conductor, directing each individual instrument so the result is a beautiful, harmonious

whole. (If you've ever heard an orchestra tuning up you know the difference between independent, well-produced sounds, and beautifully directed melodic music.)

7. Puts you in a position for success. Your strong point as a writer is, communicating your message by writing your book. However, the best-written book may not sell unless it is "positioned" to appeal to those who would be interested in it. Good writers may not be (and usually aren't) good marketers, and marketing efforts—like positioning you and your book through such devices as an author's tag, a strong title and sub title, and other promotional elements -- are essential to your book's success. Sure, you can try to do this yourself. But experience has shown that even with books and how-to tapes to guide you, most authors are not skilled at these tasks simply because they don't have the experience in producing them. Readers know the difference between a sincere amateur effort and a professional one and, more important, so do distributors and bookstore buyers.

8. Points you in the right direction. How many authors have you heard of (or do you know) who got their books produced and delivered to them, but didn't know how to get them out of storage and into readers' hands? Ellen Reid's Book Shepherding will assist you in producing a professional book and advise you in setting yourself up in your self-publishing business so that you will be taken seriously as a business person, not just a well intentioned author.

9. Helps you see the "big picture." Once you understand that you need to be a writer and a publisher, you will also need to know that you need to be a promoter. In other words, you will need to create some buzz so people know about your book. A Book Shepherd can direct you to resources and ways for doing just that, and doing it well.

10. Expand your horizons. Most new authors think the goal is to have the book printed and somehow get it into the bookstores. However, bookstores may be the last place you want to focus your attention. With a thousand or more new titles hitting the shelves every week, if you have a book that appeals to a specialty market, a Book Shepherd should be able to tell you how to become a successful big fish in a relatively specialized small pond. If you've got a great book on beer, think of how many more people are likely to see and buy your book in a brewing supply store than in a Barnes & Noble. That's where a good Book Shepherd can assist you in working with people who can help you get those high volume, low return sales.

So, does everyone need a Book Shepherd? Absolutely not. Do you need one? The best way to answer that is to determine just how serious you are about your book. Will you be happy simply producing a book to give to family and friends? Or do you really want to go for getting your book out to the market. If it's the latter, you would probably do well to look into the services of a Book Shepherd. Ellen will be glad to talk with you about the specific services she provides, and with that information you'll be in a good position to decide what will serve you best.

Either way, there is nothing quite like the thrill of opening a case of books and seeing your name on the cover.

ELLEN REID'S BOOK SHEPHERDING

*a division of Smarketing-Infinite Possibilities

"Everything You Need To Take Your Book From Manuscript to Print and Beyond"

*Positioning *Branding *Smarketing

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