

The Learned Owl Book Shop
204 N Main St.
Hudson, OH 44236
330-653-2252
www.learnedowl.com

Dear Author,

First of all: congratulations! We know what an enormous amount of dedication writing a book can take. Whether your book winds up on our shelves or not, please know that we appreciate the effort, care and creativity it takes to bring a book to print.

We give you this letter to let you know some of the things it takes to successfully market your book in a store - so that all your hard work is rewarding, both for us and for you.

Things to consider about your book:

1. Price: In order to sell, your book should cost about the same as other books of its size and sort. It's easy to find out how your book compares by browsing books similar to yours in your local book shop.
2. Quality: By quality I don't mean the sincerity of your words or your artistic acumen. What I mean is:
 - Is your book as perfect as it can be? If you are a self-published author, the company that prints your book may offer proofreading, or even substantive editing, for a fee. Spelling counts. So does grammar. We may "know what you mean" in a flawed manuscript, but it's so much more pleasant to read something without any mistakes in it. I strongly encourage you to have as many people read your book *before it goes to press* as you can – for continuity, for sentence structure, and simply for typos. There are plenty of things spell check won't catch, and professional authors with big publishing houses behind them have a whole team of people to help with this stuff. Assemble your own team to make your book the best it can be.
 - Is your book visually appealing? *Do* judge your book by its cover. Other people will. Is your book attractively bound? Does the cover make people want to take a second look? Sure, it's what's inside that matters, but if the outside doesn't move folks to pick it up, how will they know what's within?
3. Promotion: It's very important to get the word out about your book. If you have a signing here at the book shop, we will send out a press release, letting the local papers know the time and date of the event. However, a successful signing takes

so much more. There is nothing sadder than a wet evening (or afternoon) with an author seated behind a little table in a shop, waiting for someone to come in and notice the book they have written. Let people know you will be here. In the same way that a crowded restaurant draws prospective diners, an author surrounded by happy, interested people draws prospective readers. Some simple ways to generate interest are:

- Tell everyone you know, and ask them to tell others.
- Arrange for friends to be at your signing. Having a supportive group with you will make your signing much more fun. Main Street is packed with darling little restaurants and shops to explore, if your companions would like to make a day of it. Or you can all go for a meal or a drink afterwards.
- Branch out. Notify your high school &/or college alumni associations. They generally need a fair amount of advance notice (6 – 8 weeks at least), but they will often put alumni authors' book signings in their newsletters. If you have a place of worship, they may agree to list your event in a weekly bulletin. Any sort of social organization is good to ask for help. Are you a member of the Lions or Rotary? Your local branch might want to know about your book signing. Think of any groups to which you belong – a writer's group, a softball league, even facebook is a good place to promote your signing.
- Keep a positive attitude. Remember, undiscovered genius is still genius, so keep a smile on your face and enjoy the whole author experience.

Be proud of your accomplishment – we are! As an independent book store, we believe that personal expression is important, and we try to nurture the new voices our community. There are lots of resources out there for you. Here are just a few of my favorites:

Writer's Market 2009 (or current year)

Where and How to Sell What You Write

This is put out every year by the good people at WritersMarket.com. It's pretty much the bible for writers. In it you will find not only listings of publishers and agents, but helpful advice about query letters, the process of writing, and other authors' experiences.

Grammar Girl's Quick & Dirty Tips for Better Writing

By Mignon Fogarty

Really, any style guide will do. Strunk and White is always a good choice to keep around for reference. Here's the thing: We all need a little refresher course in the English language from time to time. Grammar Girl gives you a light-hearted one, and is always careful to explain the "whys" (not just the "how-to") of grammar.

A Novel in a Year: From First Page to Last in 52 Weeks

by Louise Doughty

Need a little help finishing that magnum opus? Too daunted to begin your sequel? Doughty doles out bite-size chunks of what-to-do-next, broken down week by week.

On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft

by Stephen King

Everybody I've talked to who has read this has loved it – even people who normally hate Stephen King.

The Artist's Way

by Julia Cameron

Essential reading - it teaches you how to care for and nurture your creative self. This book helps artists of all kinds remember that there is so much more inside of us than we ever think possible.

Good luck with your writing! We wish you the very best.

Sincerely,

Mary McDonald
Events Coordinator
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