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*San Juan Books, Hybrid Division, MSI Press LLC*

**WHY PUBLISH WITH SAN JUAN BOOKS?**

**What is SJB?**

San Juan Books is the hybrid publication division of MSI Press LLC. While the majority of our books are traditionally published, increasingly we are able to open our doors to authors we would have turned down earlier, thanks to the option of hybrid publication (shared costs). For books where it is not clear that return on investment can be relied upon (because of an author’s initial entry into publishing, lack of a platform, poor sales showing with previously published books, or the need for heavy editing), we ask authors to contribute to editorial and production costs (currently, $999 and $1499, respectively), which, from the research, we have done, is among the lowest fee around, especially considering the services that we offer, which are equivalent to those of a traditionally published book.

Post-publication, there is no difference in treatment between SJB publications and MSI Press traditionally published books. Further, all carry the logo and affiliation of MSI Press LLC and are listed as such with libraries, bookstores, and the Library of Congress. The SJB designation is noted on the book’s page on the website and on the copyright information page.

SJB publications, like all MSI Press books, are produced in paperback and e-book versions, and where sales warrant, in hard cover.

**Strong editing**

Most of our books win awards, including San Juan Books. The strong, professional editing they received from our editors and copyeditors contribute to their viability not only as good books but also as award nominees.

We provide guidance on content – what sells, what might create liability issues, etc. – and guidance in getting relevant permissions. This can be very important in the case of memoirs.

**Professional graphics**

We have professional graphists who work with us. Their designs earn kudos – and to date, no author has failed to love his/her cover and internal graphics. We work with authors to make sure that they like what they get, and that what they get is fitting for a potentially award-winning book.

**Partnering in design**

We allow authors to have considerable input into cover and interior design. While we will not transgress professional design norms and will retain the right for final say over cover design (we generally know better what sells), we do allow authors to submit graphics and concepts for consideration. In many cases, we have been able to use the authors’ contribution.

**Partnering in marketing and promotion**

Effective marketing and promotion are in constant flux in the industry. It is difficult for authors to know what is cost-effective and what is money down the drain. We used to invest heavily in print advertising (e.g., magazines); some publishers still do (the big 5 and self-publishers being the most noteworthy at keeping these print media alive through advertising). But advertising costs have soared beyond any reasonable return-on-investment (even with some pretty deep discounts that we used to get as a small publisher). We do advertise where it is effective, such as full page ads in our distributor’s catalogue when the book is released and paid press releases.

The currently most effective means of promotion—since readers want direct contact with writers, not publishers—is through social media, a space where authors need to be. In addition, we have a strong presence in support of all our authors on social media. We also do email blasts, promote our books through our monthly newsletter, personally interact where needed and helpful with libraries and bookstores, get books into exhibits, and a range of other, individualized activities (and yes, print advertising IF it promises to be cost-effective).

We maintain two pages for authors at our website for purposes of promotion. One is a biography page with links to the author’s website, blog, or both. The other is the book page, which provides book content details, sales information, places to purchase, awards, and more.

Additionally, each book can be found in our webstore. We often a 25% discount on all our books at our webstore, as well as occasional sales with larger discounts. Our authors, depending upon situations and with permission, can pass along their 40% author discount to family, friends, and local libraries and bookstores for books purchased through our webstore.

Once an author has a book on the market, it becomes like pollen to bees, and soon all the scammers are dropping into the new authors’ inboxes. There are also legitimate offers. We know the difference and can guide our authors in what to accept, explore, or reject. We will also do the research for our authors where it is unclear whether the proposer is legitimate or the offer reasonable for a particular book.

Where possible, we pounce on new opportunities for book promotion. We also bring good opportunities to the attention of authors and generally cost-share with those who want to take advantage of the opportunities. Our monthly *Notes* to authors make authors aware of current book promotion and marketing activities.

We prepare press releases for new books; these are distributed to 240 sites. When there is reason to spread the word again about something special, we revise the press release and again release it. We will also send it to local news media when authors provide contacts. And we provide authors with an adjustable copy for their own use.

**Excellent royalties**

We pay 10% on retail price for paperbacks and hard cover books. That generally works out to 50% (or, sometimes, more) of net. We will also contract for 50% on net revenue if an author prefers. That is not necessarily in the best interest of the author because all expenses, not just direct production and distribution expenses, are deducted from revenue; that is not the case with 10% on retail price. With 10% on list/retail, authors get their royalties even if net revenue falls below that level or major costs are incurred from book returns.

We split revenue on e-books 50/50. Unless an author requests otherwise, all books will be prepared in e-book version concurrently with or shortly after the release of the paperback.

We pay royalties annually to all authors. However, where an author’s book(s) are selling well, we will pay at the end of any quarter that exceeds $600 in revenue and tally up totals on the annual statement.

**Reviews**

If we produce an Advance Review Copy (negotiated with the author, based on a variety of conditions and situations that determine whether it is wise to do so), we send ARCs to all the professionally recognized pre-publication reviewers.

We also send books to post-publication book reviewers as opportunities arise. The number of opportunities depends on the nature of the book and the nature of the book industry at the moment of publication. We always send to MidWest Book Review, one of the most recognized and effective reviewers—they review only a percentage of books sent to them, but they have, thankfully and gratefully, reviewed nearly all of ours—and split the cost of a paid review with US Review of Books, which we find to be a cost-effective review. We may, upon occasion, split costs for other reviews that we consider relevant, of high quality and reputation, and cost-effective. (We do not share the costs of review sources that charge hundreds of dollars for a review—and we do not recommend that authors spend their money in this way; these are generally not cost-effective.)

**Awards**

Our books earn a proportionately high number of awards (22-37 a year for the past three years, on an annual book production rate of 10-12 books a year—we are selective). We partner with Book Awards Pro, which connects books with award competitions, keep a list of currently open competitions, and let authors know when a special competition has opened both through the *Notes* and through email.

We provide guidance on which awards are most valuable, most competitive, and best opportunities for specific books.

In the year of publication, we submit all books to Foreword Review’s Book of the Year competition. Our books have placed in the competition as finalists and won the award in the past—and, we hope, will continue to do so in the future. There are other competitions to which we provide books, depending upon the topic of the book and the orientation of the competition. In other cases, we will provide the book for competitions where authors pay the fee, and we do the paperwork and mailing.

**Social media support**

We provide regular, ongoing support on Face Book, X (Twitter), and Instagram. Even years after your book is published, we will be promoting it on our social media sites, including our blog. Two of our best-selling books are from authors who are now deceased. Their legacy lives on.

The promotional activities of authors who are active on social media, in print, or through presentations, workshops, and the like can be reinforced through our social media posts, touting or sharing their efforts. We do a weekly “story behind the book” which individual authors write. Authors also contribute posts for seasonal messages (Christmas, Easter, Passover), all of which bring attention to their books.

**Library of Congress**

Your copyright belongs to you. We will provide you with assistance with the copyright office to register your copyright, and we will keep you clear of copyright firms that charge hundreds to do what the US government will do for $45 and two books (we will provide the books to you for sending) or e-file (we will provide the e-file to the LOC).

We provide a Library of Congress number (LCCN) for your book. That number will have convince local libraries to shelve your book because there will be a MARC record available for the book, making it easier to shelve the book.

We also provide the copy of the book to the LOC required for shelving (a different department from copyright registration).

**Mentoring and guidance throughout the life of the book**

Authors re bombarded with opportunities for book promotion, award competitions, advertising, republication, representation, and more. We generally know the legitimate offers and the scams. A quick note to us (or forwarding of the message received) will bring guidance on whether or not responding to the offer is safe, likely worthwhile, or likely a waste of time and money.

Want to advertise your book somewhere? We can guide you as to the most cost-effective places to advertise your book, as well as give you an honest assessment.

Want to have your book in a particular bookstore? We can work with the bookstore. (Otherwise, all bookstores can order through our wholesaler/distributor.) We can also provide sample consignment agreements for mom-and-pop stores that prefer to work on consignment. (Note: other than selling on consignment, bookstores often generate negative revenue for a book because of their return policies. Given that a significant minority of books are sold through bookstores in the US, there are much better avenues for book sales.)

**Ongoing support activities—a community of writers and publisher**

MSI Press is more than just a community of authors. Most of our authors consider MSI Press to be a family and have so commented in their books. They help each other, and we help each other, in many ways uncommon to most publishers (hybrid or traditional).

We send monthly *Notes* to authors that keep authors abreast of what is going on at the press, how other books are faring, what to avoid and what to embrace in the book world at the moment, and marketing suggestions.

For authors on Facebook, we have an invitational-only MSI Press authors’ page where authors can help each other.

We produce a monthly newsletter-bulletin that features various works and goes to booksellers, librarians, and readers who have signed up for the newsletter-bulletin. Our click-through rate is good: 4%-5% typically. We are looking into ways to use our distribution list to e-blast select PR materials on behalf of individual authors prepare and want to distribute for their own books.

We have liaisons to publicists who can help authors who wish to invest more time and money into promoting their book. We will provide the support that those publicists request. We will also guide authors on whether or not to take on a publicist with whom they have had communication. (Some are worth it, but they are in the minority.)

We conduct SEO analysis on our website. The specialist who does this for us is also willing to do it for authors’ websites at a very reasonable rate.

Our Author Hub provides documents on many topics of importance to authors about how we do business, as well as about book promotion and marketing. These topics often appear originally in the *Notes*, but are gathered in the hub for easy reference.

Our Tuesday blog posts (“A Publisher’s Conversation with Authors”) are among our most popular posts—and they are available to all our authors (as well as the outside world).

We will announce your workshops and seminars on our social media, as well as repost your blog posts or columns in publications that are openly available. We provide you icons for use in your own social media promotions that we use in ours – for book releases, for book achievements, and the like. One favorite icon is a newspaper headline announcing the bestseller ranking of the book on Amazon. A number of our books have reached the #1 rank in their niches on Amazon’s hot new release list, and every month we have books that are in the top 100 in their categories and the top 2% on Amazon – we herald those as much as we can and give you means to do so as well.

Need help with ghostwriting or developmental editing? We can refer you to capable specialists who have done well for some of our authors.

Money a little tight? We pass along to authors the discounts for book award fees and book exhibit fess that we receive as a publisher and often provide both the book and the paperwork on your behalf (no cost). In some cases, we share the cost. In really tough cases and adequately selling books, we can upfront the fees against year-end royalties.

Need help with PR? We can refer you to publicists our authors have worked with and been happy with in the past. We will provide you with the copy of the in-house press release that we prepare for you (we allow authors to participate in the preparation if they want), and we will update the press release when awards are earned or for other appropriate reasons.

Need help with web design? Our webmaster is brilliant and relatively inexpensive, and he is a freelancer for hire.

Can’t quite get the hang of social media? Our newsletter editor recently opened her own business for just that purpose.

Need a watermarked pdf of your book for an award promotion? Our typesetter has that one under control as well as jpegs of your cover. Available just for asking.

Need an endorsement for your book? Our authors are happy to help each other out that way. Sometimes, too, we can reach a “bigwig” in the field for that purpose, but that cannot be guaranteed.

Itching to have an audiobook? We do not buy rights for audiobooks. Those rights remain with you. Some of our authors do have audio books. If you are at a loss for where and how to get an audio book produced, we can refer you to two different sources we work with (that produce them in two different ways for two different costs).

**Favorable backlisting**

Like all publishers, we have to backlist poorly performing books. This means that they are available from our webstore but not through the distributor. However, for authors who wish to remain on the major bookseller sites (Amazon, Barnes & Noble) and in the book distributor’s catalogue and are willing to pay the small distribution fee that we would otherwise be charged, we will essentially not backlist the book but keep it front-listed. Nearly no other publisher will do this.

We are currently working with Bookshop on biblets (Book-2-Look, a look inside feature). The management there has offered to create biblets for all of our backlisted books. This will put them on an Amazon-like website even though they are backlisted—a pretty good deal.

**A Family Affair**

As noted above, several authors have mentioned in their acknowledgments that MSI Press is more than a publishing house, it is a family. We have found that to be true as authors have come forward and supported each other in their book production and sales efforts, as well as have provided other kinds of support to each other and the staff when dire personal circumstances have hit them, especially life-threatening ones. For example, our authors recently contributed to obtaining health care for our typesetter’s mother, who had developed breast cancer and was far from medical care.

MSI Press LLC is a family—and SJB is part of that family. In that regard, no one differentiates between the two styles of publication.