

THE PUBLISHING ROADMAP

Your Step-by-Step Guide from Manuscript to Published Book

A Boshers Publishing Author Resource

Welcome

Finishing a manuscript is a huge accomplishment.

But for many authors, the question becomes:

"What happens next?"

The publishing process can feel overwhelming when you're trying to figure out editing, cover design, ISBNs, distribution, marketing, and launch plans all at once.

The good news?

Publishing becomes much simpler when you break it into manageable steps.

This roadmap will walk you through the journey from finished manuscript to published book.

STAGE 1: FINISH THE MANUSCRIPT

The Goal

Complete your manuscript before worrying about publishing.

Many writers spend months researching publishing while their book remains unfinished.

Your first priority is getting the story onto the page.

Checklist

☐ Complete first draft

- ☐ Finish entire manuscript
 - ☐ Resist editing every chapter repeatedly
 - ☐ Focus on completion
-

Common Mistake

Many authors start designing covers, building websites, or running advertisements before the manuscript is complete.

Publishing begins with a finished book.

STAGE 2: SELF-EDITING

The Goal

Make the manuscript the best version possible before involving others.

Review:

- Plot consistency
- Character development
- Pacing
- Dialogue
- Structure
- Grammar

Ask Yourself

- Does every chapter matter?
 - Does the ending satisfy readers?
 - Are there unnecessary scenes?
 - Does the opening hook readers?
-

Self-Editing Checklist

- ☐ Remove unnecessary scenes
 - ☐ Strengthen chapter endings
 - ☐ Fix pacing issues
 - ☐ Check for plot holes
 - ☐ Improve dialogue
 - ☐ Verify character consistency
-

STAGE 3: FEEDBACK

The Goal

Receive honest input before professional production begins.

Feedback helps identify issues you may no longer see.

Options

Beta Readers

Ideal readers who enjoy your genre.

They focus on:

- Enjoyment
- Clarity
- Engagement

Critique Partners

Fellow writers who offer craft-focused feedback.

Professional Evaluation

A publishing professional reviews the manuscript and identifies strengths and weaknesses.

Questions to Ask Readers

- Where were you bored?
 - Which character did you love?
 - Which character frustrated you?
 - Were any scenes confusing?
 - Did you finish the book?
-

STAGE 4: PROFESSIONAL EDITING

The Goal

Polish your manuscript to professional standards.

Editing is one of the most important investments an author can make.

Types of Editing

Developmental Editing

Focuses on:

- Structure
- Plot
- Character arcs
- Pacing

Big-picture improvements.

Line Editing

Focuses on:

- Sentence flow
- Word choice
- Clarity
- Style

Copyediting

Focuses on:

- Grammar
- Punctuation
- Consistency
- Accuracy

Proofreading

The final quality check before publication.

Checklist

- ☐ Developmental review completed
- ☐ Line editing completed
- ☐ Copyediting completed
- ☐ Proofreading completed

STAGE 5: COVER DESIGN

The Goal

Create a cover that attracts your ideal reader.

Readers absolutely judge books by their covers.

Your cover acts as a marketing tool.

Strong Covers Include

- ✓ Genre expectations
 - ✓ Readable typography
 - ✓ Strong visual hierarchy
 - ✓ Professional design
 - ✓ Thumbnail visibility
-

Ask Yourself

Would readers instantly recognize my genre?

Can the title be read at a small size?

Does the design look professional?

STAGE 6: INTERIOR FORMATTING

The Goal

Create a professional reading experience.

Formatting affects readability and reader perception.

Interior Includes

- Chapter headings
- Page numbers
- Margins
- Fonts
- Scene breaks
- Front matter
- Back matter

Formats

Paperback

Most common format.

Hardcover

Premium edition.

Ebook

Digital reading devices.

Many authors release all three.

STAGE 7: ISBNs AND METADATA

ISBN

An ISBN is your book's unique identification number.

Each format requires its own ISBN.

Example:

Paperback = One ISBN

Hardcover = One ISBN

Ebook = One ISBN

Metadata

Metadata helps readers discover your book.

Includes:

- Title
- Subtitle
- Author name
- Categories
- Keywords
- Description

Good metadata improves discoverability.

STAGE 8: DISTRIBUTION

The Goal

Make your book available for purchase.

Common Distribution Channels

Amazon KDP

Best for:

- Amazon sales
 - Ebook publishing
 - Print-on-demand paperbacks
-

IngramSpark

Best for:

- Bookstore access
 - Library distribution
 - Expanded global reach
-

Many Authors Use Both

Amazon KDP for Amazon visibility.

IngramSpark for broader distribution.

STAGE 9: BUILD YOUR PLATFORM

The Goal

Create ways for readers to find you.

Marketing should begin before launch.

Author Website

Your online home.

Email List

Your most valuable marketing asset.

Social Media

Choose one or two platforms you enjoy.

Reader Community

Build relationships with readers.

STAGE 10: PRE-LAUNCH

Timeline

Approximately 60-90 days before launch.

Tasks

- ☐ Final cover revealed
- ☐ Website updated
- ☐ Email subscribers notified
- ☐ ARC readers recruited
- ☐ Launch team formed
- ☐ Marketing graphics created
- ☐ Social media content scheduled

ARC Readers

Advance Reader Copy readers receive the book before launch.

Their reviews help create momentum.

STAGE 11: LAUNCH

Launch Week Goals

Drive awareness.

Generate reviews.

Encourage purchases.

Celebrate your accomplishment.

Launch Activities

- ☐ Email announcements
 - ☐ Social media posts
 - ☐ Live videos
 - ☐ Interviews
 - ☐ Launch party
 - ☐ Reader engagement
-

Remember

Launch week is important.

But books often sell for years after release.

STAGE 12: POST-LAUNCH

What Happens Next?

Many authors stop marketing after launch.

Don't.

This is where long-term growth begins.

Continue:

- ☐ Building email list
- ☐ Running promotions
- ☐ Seeking reviews
- ☐ Booking speaking engagements

- Attending events
 - Creating content
 - Growing readership
-

THE COMPLETE ROADMAP

Writing

Finish Manuscript



Self-Edit



Feedback

Production

Editing



Cover Design



Formatting



ISBNs & Metadata



Distribution Setup

Marketing

Website



Email List



ARC Team



Launch Preparation



Book Launch



Ongoing Marketing

QUICK AUTHOR CHECKLIST

Manuscript

- ☐ Finished
 - ☐ Revised
 - ☐ Feedback received
-

Production

- ☐ Edited
- ☐ Cover designed
- ☐ Formatted

- ☐ ISBN assigned
 - ☐ Metadata completed
-

Distribution

- ☐ Amazon KDP
 - ☐ IngramSpark
 - ☐ Ebook uploaded
-

Marketing

- ☐ Website live
 - ☐ Email list started
 - ☐ ARC team recruited
 - ☐ Launch plan created
-

FINAL THOUGHT

Publishing isn't one giant leap.

It's a series of manageable steps.

Focus on the stage you're currently in.

Complete it.

Then move to the next.

One step at a time, your manuscript becomes a book.

And your book reaches readers.

That's the journey.

Ready for Your Next Step?

Whether you're still writing, preparing for publication, or planning a launch, Boshers Publishing offers resources, education, coaching, manuscript evaluations, self-publishing services, and hybrid publishing support.

Free Manuscript Evaluation

Get professional feedback on your manuscript and discover the best publishing path for your goals.

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