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## How to Find a Publisher

by Dan Poynter

HOW TO FIND A PUBLISHER. Perhaps you would rather a publisher handle the production and distribution of your book. The secret is to match your manuscript to the publisher. Better publishers specialize in one or two niche markets. They know their subjects and do not have to send your manuscript out to a reader for evaluation. They also know how to reach the potential buyer and can jump-start your sales by plugging your book into their existing distribution system to specialty shops.

To find these specialized publishers, check your own bookshelf and visit a couple of larger bookstores. Look on that shelf where your book will be. Search your topic at an online bookstore such as Amazon.com. Then go to your nearby larger public library and consult *Books In Print*, a multi-volume reference listing all the books that are currently available for sale. Look for smaller publishers who do good work. Then look up their addresses in the last volume of BIP. When you contact a smaller, specialized publisher, you will often get through to the top person. The editor or publisher will know what you are talking about and they are usually very helpful. They will be able to tell you instantly whether the proposed book will fit into their line.

Another way to match your manuscript to the publisher is to see the listings of appropriate acquisition editors in *Literary Market Place* but remember that *LMP* lists larger publishers not all of them. Also check the Acknowledgments in books similar to yours; authors often reference their editor.

Call the editor (or the publisher in a smaller house), reference the similar title they published and ask if he or she would like to see your manuscript. Then you will have someone to send your work to.

Never just mail a manuscript off to a publishing company; always send it to a specific person. Larger publishers receive more than 200 unsolicited manuscripts every day. Most are not opened. They are rubber-stamped "Return to Sender". You are getting rejected without being read.

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Don't send manuscripts, proposals or query letters randomly out to just any publisher. Send to publishers who know what you're talking about, want to hear from you and know where to sell your book. Do your homework.

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