

25 Steps to Publishing Success on Amazon

1. Make a Plan

To have the most success, you need to start planning your book launch long before you write your novel. Only by approaching it from a marketing standpoint can you do everything within your power to ensure publishing success.

2. Identify your Genre / Category / Niche

Genre is a marketing term used to help potential readers get a feel for what to expect. By identifying your genre you'll know what kind of book to write. I believe this is broken into 3 tiers. Genre is a broad term, such as **Fantasy** or **Romance**. Category is the specific type of genre, such as **Epic Fantasy**, or **Urban Fantasy**. And lastly, niche is a targeted category that caters to a specific theme, such as **Occult Detective Urban Fantasy** or **Sword and Sorcery Epic Fantasy**.

3. Target your Audience

Similar to genre, you need to know who you're writing your book for. If you can target your audience you'll be able to appeal to them from the start rather than having to tailor to them after the fact.

4. Finished Draft

Writing a novel is a big undertaking but you've managed to make it happen. Now you need to revise and get it as good as you can possibly make it in preparation for the next step.

5. Editing your Manuscript

An edited book is a polished book. It's extremely rare for anything to be ready right out the gate. You'll need to edit your work and get other sets of eyes on it to ensure you have a professional product. This is important for gaining return readers as well as building a reputation for quality work.

6. Authors & Contributors

Anyone who works on your book needs to be credited. Most of the time it's sufficient to list them on the copyright page within the manuscript but occasionally they'll need to be listed on the product page or cover as well.

7. Title / Subtitle

The title is the most important piece of information about your book. It's often the first thing anyone sees and therefore should be decided on with a marketing strategy in mind. If you can use keywords to help it turn up in search results, all the better.

8. Keywords

Keywords should be called search words. They're the words or phrases readers type into the search bar in hopes of finding what they're looking for. By using ranked keywords, and applying them to your title and description, you'll have a better chance being discovered by potential new readers.

9. Description

Your description is a sales funnel which is supposed to hook a potential reader and convert them into a purchaser. Descriptions should be short and easy to follow, but engaging enough make a reader want more.

10. Bleed & Trim

Bleed is the distance to the margin inside the manuscript. Trip is the physical size of the manuscript. Both of these must be decided before formatting can begin.

11. Formatting

You want your end product to look as professional as possible. Aside from having a well edited manuscript, formatting is what makes this happen.

12. Print Cover

Despite the old adage stating not to judge a book by its cover, people do. You need a good cover to gain reader attention. It will also need to be sized correctly for your print book. The manuscript trim size, total page count, and type of paper used will be the deciding factors for your cover size. Fortunately there are templates which you can input these factors and get the right size every time.

13. Cover Finish

Amazon offers the option between a glossy or matte finish when it comes to your print covers. This decision should depend on the cover art.

14. Kindle Cover

Like your print cover, the art itself should attract potential readers. Assuming you've already got a good cover, you'll need to ensure your Kindle cover is the proper size. Amazon recommends 2500 by 1600 pixels for their devices. I tend to do this at a 72 dpi as it's digital and won't lose resolution like a print cover will.

15. Paper & Ink Color

Amazon offers two types of paper, White and Crème. Both are available with Black ink.

White is the only paper available for Colored ink.

16. ISBN & Barcode

Most distributors have the option to use a free ISBN provided by them. This will list the distributor as the publisher. You cannot use this ISBN anywhere else.

If you wish to have more authority over your work, you can purchase your own ISBNs directly from Bowker. I advise you to buy in bulk as you're likely to use 4 ISBNs for each title if you publish in all major formats.

You only need to purchase barcodes if you want to change the barcode location. If you're okay with the default location, the printer will add it from the registered ISBN.

17. Advanced / Beta Readers

As an author it's easy to become biased when it comes to your work. For this reason, you need to find people who are willing to beta read your work. This will tell you if there's a problem before you go to print and will save you a ton of rework.

These are also the people who will drop the first reviews which can make a major difference between success or failure of a book.

18. Pricing

Amazon offers two royalty plans for Kindle books and a single plan for print books

35% Royalty – allows open pricing from \$0.99 - \$199.99

70% Royalty – must be between \$2.99 - \$9.99 (Delivery cost is taken from you cut)

60% Print Royalty minus printing cost (40% for expanded distribution)

19. KDP Select

A subscription program which adds qualifying books to the Kindle Unlimited Library and allows users of this service to read as many books as they want free of charge.

As an author, this program locks you into Amazon exclusivity in regard to your ebooks for a 90-day period. There are pros and cons to participating in this program.

20. Digital Rights Management

This is supposed to be an anti-piracy feature. Most authors don't use it because those who can get around it do, and it creates unneeded problems for people who want to share your book with their friend.

21. Launch Team

An important marketing strategy for every author. A launch team is a group of people who agree to help you get your book off the ground when it goes live. This team is generally comprised of your superfans, beta readers, and friends. They'll be the first ones to purchase a new release and leave a review, which will help other potential readers decide if your book is for them.

22. First 30 Days

The first 30 days of a book's life are the most important to its success. Amazon helps new releases by boosting their ranking, placing them on new release lists, and notifying readers of its existence. You need to use all the previous steps in this resource in conjunction with one another to have the best launch possible.

23. Qualified Purchasers

Every Amazon user has a buyer profile. If the wrong buyers purchase your book, it can be tagged incorrectly by the algorithms which will hurt sales and minimize your success. You need to ensure all members of your launch team, beta readers, and anyone you refer your book to are genuinely interested in the books you write. They need to have a history of making similar purchases to avoid incorrect tagging.

24. Email List

An email list is one of the most marketing tools an author can have. It's the only audience you own. Social media, Amazon customers, YouTube followers – The host site owns these contacts. If you were to lose your account, these audiences are gone. By building an email list you can continue to talk to your customers with or without the support of external mediums.

It also helps for generating qualified hype about your new releases.

25. Ads & Promotions

We're in a pay to play market right now. The days of putting a book on Amazon and collecting a paycheck are over. Ads will place you on a level playing field with all the other people using them. Without an existing audience, they're sadly one of the only marketing tools you have at your disposal.

Fortunately you have options as to where you advertise. You can also do promotions with other authors, do Goodreads giveaways, newsletter swaps, and more.

Everything needs to be planned out and in conjunction with the first 30 days of your book release.