

McHugh Publishing Reprint

How to Launch a New Book into Production

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What is a Book Launch?

A **book launch** is that meeting that occurs at a publishing company, when the editorial development is completed and the production phase can be started for that book. The content and coverage is fixed and the author's job is to work with the production department and not revise or rewrite the manuscript. The company is now ready to spend both marketing and production dollars on this title.

Publishers need a system to launch a book into production. The purpose of a launch is to systematically summarize all relevant editorial, production and marketing information to all who will be involved with the book. The launch gets all of the publishing team on the same page. The acquisitions editor should run the book launch.

Who Should Attend A Book Launch?

The individuals attending a launch will vary from company to company. The list should be inclusive enough so that "all who need to be in the know" attend. Attendance should be required. Attempt to streamline the meeting by requiring participants to be prepared.

Therefore attending the book launch should be the:

- Editorial Director/Editor-in-Chief
- Acquisitions Editor
- Production Editor/Manager
- Marketing/Sales Managers
- President/Top Executives (for a very important book.)

Another way to maximize the results from the time spent in launch meetings is to batch similar books together or books that will be assigned to the same production editor. Launching multiple titles is efficient use of everyone's time.

What Information Should be Included in the Launch Report?

Prior to the launch meeting, the acquisitions editor should prepare and distribute the launch report. Companies will vary in terms of the information contained in the launch report but at a minimum it should contain:

1. A description of the book, the ISBN, and final title and author's name as it is to appear on the book.
2. Target market/audience: (set the stage for marketing).
3. Specifications-Length, trim size, artwork, number, cover colors, binding, and any special production requirements. List of components: Instructors, Manual, CD, etc.
4. Permissions status: any outstanding, any anticipated problems.
5. Updated sales forecasts, proposed price, market size, market share, budget.
6. Schedule: requested publication date.
7. Author information: phone, fax, e-mail and address plus any other pertinent information about the author.
8. Competition: brief summary and how our book compares.
9. Marketing Information:
 - A. Author Suggestion Form,
 - B. Manuscript Reviews,
 - C. Preface,
 - D. Forward (if any),
 - E. Table of Contents,
 - F. Manuscript in print and disk,

10. Due date of any missing elements.

A sample launch form follows this discussion.

Launch Form for a New Book

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Working title of book: _____
2. Subtitle: _____
3. Series title if applicable: _____
4. Exact author listing: _____
5. Is this the final title? Y / N If no, schedule date for title/cover concept meeting: _____
6. Author Information Questionnaire available: Y / N Location: _____
7. All files (complete manuscript) available? Y / N
8. If no, what's missing and when will it be available? _____

9. Import file name and location: _____
10. Raw manuscript page count: _____ double spaced [] single spaced []
11. Index? Y / N Glossary? Y / N References? Y / N
12. Approximate number of figures: _____
13. Are all figures included in electronic file? Y / N
14. Permissions needed? Y / N Which ones? _____

15. Assigned ISBN: _____
16. CIP submit date: _____
17. Editor: _____
18. Cover designer: _____
19. Layout designer: _____
20. Expected start date (Editing): _____
21. Tentative press date: _____
22. Tentative publication month: _____
23. Tentative price (member): _____ Final price: _____
24. Tentative price (non-member): _____ Final price: _____
25. Primary audience? general, libraries, IT field, construction, etc.: _____
26. Print quantity: _____
27. Trim size of book: 6 x 9 [] 7 x 10 [] 8½ x 11 [] Special [] _____
28. Cover: Soft [] Hardbound [] Dust cover needed? Y / N
29. Any special flaps? Y / N If yes, explain: _____
30. Bleed size of book: _____
31. Number of Colors: _____
32. Size of spine: _____ If unknown, then when will it be available? _____
33. Type of binding: Perfect [] Saddle stitch [] Spiral [] Indicate type _____
Other: [] _____
34. Market copy for back cover (w/ quotes & Bio) due: _____
35. Additional copy for front cover (if applicable): Y / N Due: _____
36. Author photograph available? Y / N If no, when will it arrive? _____
37. Special category: (Business Management, etc.) _____
38. Location of photo? Picture in file [] Electronic image in [filename] _____
39. Special Instructions: _____

The Book Launch and Group Dynamics

The information shared at the book launch is important as for the first time in the lifetime of the launched book the entire publishing team is brought together. If the book is to reach its full potential, it's vital to get all members of the book publishing team working together at this point. This is the objective of the book launch meeting.

About John B. McHugh

John B. McHugh is a publishing management consultant and industry commentator. He has held management positions at Houghton Mifflin, Richard D. Irwin, and Wadsworth, Inc. At the American Society for Quality, McHugh served as Publisher and Director of Programs.

McHugh's articles have appeared in *Association Publishing*, *Association Trends*, *The Book Marketing Update*, the *COSMEP Newsletter*, *Independent Publishing*, the *PMA Newsletter* and *Small Press*. McHugh also conducts on-site training workshops for publishers.

Other McHugh Publications of Interest:

Managing Publishing Rights: Acquiring, Protecting and Selling, 158 pp., 1998. \$90.00. Item M-16

Permissions Management for Requestors and Grantors: Dealing with Copyright and Fair Use, 62 pp., 1996. \$70.00. Item M-14

Publishing Management for Nonprofit Organizations: Principles for Associations, Foundations and Societies, 162 pp., 1997. \$85.00. Item M-15

Book Publishing Contracts: An Introduction, 68 pp., 1996. \$70.00. Item M-13

Managing Book Acquisitions: An Introduction, 100 pp., 1995. \$65.00. Item M-12

College Publishing Market, Third Edition, 100 pp., 1995. \$65.00. Item M-11