
13 Key Measures to Evaluate Book Publishing Effectiveness

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Effective book publishing management means not only tracking dollars but also tracking other nonfinancial numbers that affect the health of the business. For this reason, you should be aware of a number of key measures that affect your book publishing operations.

A key measure is a number that has a significant impact on the operation of your business. A key measure can be just about any number **you think** is important enough to track over time. A benefit of measurements, according to quality expert Joseph

Juran, is that “Saying it in numbers is the most effective remedy for language problems.”

Establish a base-line and then track those numbers periodically. Over time, you will see a pattern develop. From the pattern, you will be able to draw inferences that will help you to assess the effectiveness of your publishing program.

“If you can’t measure a problem, you can’t solve it.” It is with this spirit that I share with you thirteen key measures for evaluating the effectiveness of a book publishing program.

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1. Number of Books Published Annually
 2. Number of Manuscripts Received vs. Rejected
 3. Number of Manuscripts Acquired and Sales Estimate
 4. Number of Manuscripts put into Production and Sales Estimate
 5. Number of Contracts Signed and Sales Estimate
 6. Product Development Cycle Time
 7. Product under Development Sales Estimate
 8. Production Cycle Time
 9. Profit Margin on Books
 10. Inventory Value
 11. Inventory Value/Inventory to Sales Ratio
 12. Growth/Decline in Inventory Value
 13. Units Shipped
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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

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Electronic Rights for Publishers: Protecting Your Interests, 31 pp., 1996. \$22.00. Item MP-7

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