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## Book Publishing Classics

B-21

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### CLASSICS AND SUCCESSFUL BOOK PUBLISHING

Every field has its foundational books. For the book publishing business, there are a number of books that are classic in the timelessness of the ideas they present. These books were formative in my thinking and still influence how I think about every aspect of the book business.

Some aspects of publishing have changed and these changes will not be reflected in these books. For example, the selling of books has changed dramatically with the emergence of chains, particularly Barnes and Noble, the dominance of Ingram, and the pervasiveness of Amazon.

The most significant development is the emergence of the Internet and its effect on the selling and distribution of books. The Internet has been much more influential on the selling and marketing side than on the editorial/product development side of the business.

Another major development in play for 30 or more years is the merger and acquisitions of book companies. However, great ideas have a timeless quality about them, and, therefore these books represent valuable information for executives.

### CRITERIA FOR SELECTING BOOKS

The books listed here were selected because they emphasize the organizational complexities of publishing books from a top-down perspective. These books are aimed at executives and managers, people in leadership roles who should understand the dynamics of a book publishing enterprise. Those in book publishing companies who make strategic decisions about the allocation of organizational resources in editorial and marketing will benefit from reading these books.

One other common denominator in these books is that there isn't one magic template for the optimal organization of a book publishing company.

### THE BOOKS

Some books may be available and others are out-of-print. Check with Amazon and Alibris.

- Bailey, Herbert, *Art and Science of Book Publishing*, Harper and Row, 1970  
Start with the Bailey, which is the finest work on the book publishing business from an executive viewpoint. The coverage of the economics of book publishing is unique and strong.
- Bodian, Nat G., *Book Marketing Handbook: Tips and Techniques*, 1980  
Book marketing expert Nat Bodian shares what he knows about selling books from his career as a top marketing executive at John Wiley and Sons. This book and its companion (see next entry) are simply the most useful compendiums ever written on the subject of marketing books.
- Bodian, Nat G., *Book Marketing Handbook: Over 1000 More Tips and Techniques, Volume Two*, R.R., Bowker, 1983. See above.
- Carter, Robert, A., *Trade Book Marketing: A Practical Guide*, R.R. Bowker, 1983  
This book is an anthology with contributions written on each subject by expert practitioners. It provides a foundation on how all of the marketing specialties contribute to the selling of a new book.

*Continued . . .*

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- Coser, Lewis; Kadushin, Charles; and Powell, Walter, *Books: The Culture and Commerce of Publishing*, Basic Books, 1982  
Three sociologists wrote this book. They provide an organizational examination of the interactions between the various departments in a book publishing company. Therefore, because of its unique, perspective, I consider this a “must read.”
- Dessauer, John P., *Book Publishing: What it is What it Does*, Continuum, 1981  
Along with the Bailey book, try to get a copy of this book. Dessauer walks you through the book enterprise department by department. The result is a handbook of how to operate a book company.
- Geiser, Elizabeth, *The Business of Book Publishing: Papers by Practitioners*, Westview Press, 1985  
The Geiser book is another useful anthology that was developed out of the curriculum of the successful Denver Publishing Institute.

## OTHER McHUGH PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST

- *Thirteen Key Measures to Evaluate Book Publishing Effectiveness*, 2 Pages, 1998, B-1, Free at [www.johnbmchugh.com](http://www.johnbmchugh.com)
- *How to Organize a Book Company: 15 Essential Organizational, Strategic, and Financial Elements*, 6 pages, 1999, \$6, B-5, Call 414-351-3056 to order.
- *The Book Publishing CEO Checklist of 50 Responsibilities*, 1998, 4 Pages, B-6, free at [www.johnbmchugh.com](http://www.johnbmchugh.com)
- *Book Publishing Financial and Statistical Reports Required to Manage a Book Publishing Company*, 2002, 5 Pages, B-11, free at [www.johnbmchugh.com](http://www.johnbmchugh.com)
- *McHugh's Core Concepts about Publishing*, 2002, 5 Pages, PM-3, free at [www.johnbmchugh.com](http://www.johnbmchugh.com)