



Publishers & Writers Monthly

The Newsletter of Publishers & Writers of San Diego

January 2025

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**Publishers & Writers of San Diego (PWSD)** is a professional association of the San Diego publishing community. PWSD educates business-minded self-publishers and authors through networking, guest experts, open discussions, and field trips.

Meetings are held on the last Saturday of each month (except November and December). If held in person, they take place from 10:00 a.m. to noon, usually at the Carlsbad Dove Library (1775 Dove Lane, Carlsbad, CA 92011). If held virtually, they take place from 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon. *Always check meeting information in the newsletter for current location and times.*

- Meeting:** Saturday, January 25, 2025
- Time:** 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 Noon
- Location:** Webinar—Zoom (watch for details)
- Topic:** “Breaking Down Book Reviews—Editorial, Consumer, Social Media Influencer and More”
- Speaker:** Desireé Duffy

**Please watch for the link in the meeting notices sent to your email inbox twice during the next few days before this FREE online meeting.**

Understanding the landscape of book reviews is essential for authors and small presses looking to elevate their marketing and promotional strategies. In this comprehensive webinar, we will explore the different types of book reviews—editorial, consumer, and social media influencer—and discuss how each plays a unique role in shaping a book’s visibility and credibility. Learn how to:

- Identify and seek out the right types of reviews for your book
- Effectively use reviews as part of your promotional campaigns
- Plan timelines to align with key publishing milestones
- Discover resources and platforms to secure meaningful reviews

Join Desireé Duffy as she shares insights and actionable tips to help writers and small presses harness the power of book reviews.

Whether you are preparing for a book launch or strategizing for 2025, this webinar will provide the tools and knowledge you need to turn reviews into valuable assets for your book’s success.

**About the Speaker:** *Desireé Duffy is the founder of Black Chateau, a marketing and public relations agency; Books that Make You, a Webby Award-winning multi-media brand that promotes books and authors through its website, podcast, and radio show; and The Desireé BookFest Adventure, a biannual online event uniting book lovers nationwide.*



## *President's Message*



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## **By Karla Olson President, Publishers & Writers of San Diego**

Welcome to 2025! I hope everyone had a wonderful holiday. And, I hope that we are approaching this next year with excitement and vigor, ready to achieve our goals and follow our dreams.

Those who joined us for the October meeting learned all about the book design process from the award-winning Claudine Mansour. I've had the pleasure of working with Claudine on a number of books, which is a treat since I admire her work so much. She gave us a very clear picture of the process and importance of working with an experienced book designer. Thank you, Claudine.

I took the opportunity to survey attendees on their preferences for virtual versus in person meetings. We are generally continuing with alternating months, with a few suggested adjustments around the summer holidays. Here is our schedule this year:

- January 25: Virtual
- February 22: In person
- March 29: Virtual
- April 26: In person
- May 31 (Memorial Day weekend): Virtual
- June 28: In person
- July 26: In person
- August 30 (Labor Day weekend): Virtual
- September 27: In person
- October 25: In person

This is a good balance, and I'm looking forward to a variety of speakers for both virtual and in person meetings.

This month, we welcome Desireé Duffy of Black Chateau Enterprises. Desireé is one of the most knowledgeable book promotion experts I know, and she's going to speak to us about book reviews—editorial, consumer, social media influencers, and more. This is one of the most important book marketing tools, but also one of the most difficult to understand.

*Continued on next page*

## *President's Message—continued from previous page*

You need to plan months ahead. And, if you manage to get one review—or more—what are the best ways to use them to promote your book? Desireé will unlock all of this and more. Join us!

As mentioned above, this is a virtual meeting, so [join us on Zoom](#).

Please support PWSD by making sure your membership is up to date. We do have expenses around hosting the meetings and sending out the newsletters, so your contribution through membership is very helpful and appreciated. We'll send out an update if your membership needs renewal, or please contact [Robbie@bookstudiobooks.com](mailto:Robbie@bookstudiobooks.com) if you are not sure.

### **PWSD News**

A couple of notes about meeting etiquette at webinar meetings held this year: Please be sure you are muted while our speaker is presenting, as background noise is distracting for all other participants. If you have a question during the presentation, put it in the chat, and the host (me!) will monitor the questions.

Please save general questions for the Q&A at the end of the presentation. The host will call on you and ask you to speak if your question needs clarification.

The meetings are not recorded. Instead, most speakers have been sharing their slides, so be sure to go to the [blog](#) to find presentations by many of our past speakers.

### **PWSD Membership**

In-person meetings are \$10 for members and \$20 for nonmembers. We are happy to continue offering virtual meetings free to participants, but we hope you will support PWSD in the following ways:

1. **Make sure your membership is up to date.** Watch your inbox for a notice if your membership has expired. (If you wish, email [Robbie@bookstudiobooks.com](mailto:Robbie@bookstudiobooks.com) and he will check your membership.) *Note: we are likely to raise the membership fee in the next few months (darned inflation!), so renew your membership now.*
2. **If you are not a member, please consider joining.** Right now, membership is only \$47 per year, which helps us to get the best speakers and provide other benefits to our members. Go to [PublishersWriters.org](http://PublishersWriters.org) to join.
3. **Tell your publishing and author friends and colleagues about PWSD** and invite them to join us!

When you join PWSD, in addition to the reduced meeting fee, you get many other benefits, as listed on page 5. You can easily join by clicking on the link to PayPal on our website, or send a check, made out to PWSD, to P.O. Box 387, Ventura, CA 93002.

1. **Make sure your membership is up to date.** Watch your inbox for a notice if your membership has expired. (If you wish, email [Robbie@bookstudiobooks.com](mailto:Robbie@bookstudiobooks.com) and he will check your membership status.)
2. **If your membership is up to date, please consider paying the meeting fee even at virtual meetings.** You can do this at [PublishersWriters.org](http://PublishersWriters.org) and clicking on RSVP.
3. **If you are not a member, please consider joining.** Membership is only \$47 per year, which helps us to get the best speakers and provide other benefits to our members. Go to [PublishersWriters.org](http://PublishersWriters.org) to join.
4. **Tell your publishing and author friends and colleagues about PWSD** and have them join us!

## **IBPA Membership**

If you have launched on your publishing journey and you don't yet know about IBPA, which can be a great support for you, I encourage you to explore the benefits of joining. This is the national association that includes such regional affiliates as PWSD. You can find information on their very robust and informative website at [IBPA-online.org/](http://IBPA-online.org/). IBPA membership is very affordable, and to make it even better, PWSD members get a \$30 discount. Just enter PWSDibpa30 in the coupon code.

IBPA has a monthly Roundtable that I highly recommend. It allows publishers of all shapes and sizes to share success strategies and brainstorm publishing challenges. I often attend and find them very valuable. Also, IBPA has recently created an education hub called [PubSpot](#), which assembles, in one easy-to-navigate site, all the invaluable information IBPA offers about how to succeed in publishing. From editorial to distribution and more, check out all the great articles and webinars that will help you succeed on your publishing journey.



**“PWSD likes Facebook!”**  
**[Visit us on Facebook today](#)**  
**to let us know you like us  
and join the conversation!**



## Care to Join Us?

**Save more and learn more:** Attend PWSD meetings at reduced member rates! Yearly dues are only \$47—one of the most economical memberships available. As a member, you save \$10 at every PWSD meeting you attend, versus the \$20 nonmember meeting fee. (Get meeting details for PWSD in each newsletter issue.) And take a look in the next section below at all the other extras you get as a member!

## Member Welcome and Reminders

**If you're a new or returning member, welcome to the PWSD family!** Congratulations on joining Publishers & Writers of San Diego, the only publishing group in San Diego County focused on the business of publishing and writing! You have made a wise investment, as you'll see later on this page.

**Subscribe to PWSD in order to optimize your membership:**

Receiving the email that accompanied this newsletter does not mean your name has been added to the regular notice distribution list. Go to [PublishersWriters.org](http://PublishersWriters.org) and click on the button that looks like what you see at right. This is necessary for you to receive any and all notices from PWSD.

### Free PWSD Newsletter

✉ **Subscribe to the PWSD Newsletter**  
Subscription is free: get monthly articles from our speakers, writing tips, announcements, upcoming events, and more.

**Get found in the PWSD online member directory:** Email your new or revised bio & headshot to [Webmaster@publisherswriters.org](mailto:Webmaster@publisherswriters.org) as soon as you can, for valuable publicity! Our website is very highly ranked on Google, which means you will get broader exposure by being part of the member directory at [PublishersWriters.org/member-directory](http://PublishersWriters.org/member-directory). You must be an up-to-date member to be in the directory. Unsure when you should renew? Email [Robbie@bookstudiobooks.com](mailto:Robbie@bookstudiobooks.com) and he will let you know.

**Get a snazzy permanent name badge to wear at on-site meetings:** Your badge will be available at in-person meetings. (Please remember to turn it in as you leave.)

**Participate in occasional regional collaborative marketing efforts:** If you're subscribed (see above), you'll be notified of these events whenever they occur.

**Get a 30% discount on IBPA membership and optionally apply for a scholarship to IBPA's annual Publishing University:** If you've launched your publishing journey, join the Independent Book Publishers Association at [IBPA-online.org/](http://IBPA-online.org/) and use PWSD30 as the code to get your discount.

**Want to be profiled in PWSD's newsletter?** Contact Andrea Glass at [Andrea@writersway.com](mailto:Andrea@writersway.com). If your membership is current, she will provide you with nine simple questions to answer. Then, along with your answers, send her your full contact information, a head shot, and one or two other images, such as book covers or action shots, and she will publish your finished profile in *Publishers & Writers Monthly*.

**Do you have newsletter feature articles or ideas?** Send them to Managing Editor Glenna Bloemen at [gab11853@aol.com](mailto:gab11853@aol.com). We are currently seeking feature articles for the upcoming issues of the newsletter. If you've read something great or have an idea or an article that you believe would be of interest to your fellow members, please submit it to Glenna. Thank you for your continued support.

# Marketing Planning for First-Time Planners

**Brian Jud**

*Reprinted with permission. This article was first published in December 2024 by the Independent Book Publishers Association, [IBPA-Online.org](http://IBPA-Online.org).*

Although there is still time to plan your marketing activities for 2025, some authors and publishers avoid planning in general because they do not know how to do it. Those who do know typically use a conventional, platform-based marketing plan that builds upon previous experience, with goals described as an increase over last year's achievements. Planners know what did and did not work in the past, so their lists of strategies and actions are based on that familiarity.

First-time planners have no history of marketing their books, and there is a high ratio of assumption to knowledge. In their haste to do something, they often "wing it." Their actions typically turn out to be wrong because sometimes the neophyte author does not sufficiently understand the publishing business.

There are two different ways for inexperienced planners to chart their future marketing actions. One solution is discovery-driven planning in which much is still assumed, but the plan evolves over time through trial and error. A second technique views planning as narrative, conducted as you would when writing a novel.

## **1. Discovery-Driven Planning**

In this case, the word plan is viewed as a verb. You do something, but actions are based upon proven marketing advice instead of historical data. Then track the results of your efforts and make adjustments as you go along. Describe your target readers and buyers, then take these actions.

**Start at the end.** Discovery-driven planning is not a blind approach to marketing, but traditional marketing done in a nontraditional way. Instead of estimating future revenues and then assuming profits will come, create a "reverse income statement." Determine the profit required to make the venture worthwhile. Then calculate the revenues needed to deliver that profit.

**Learn effective marketing techniques.** Find out what should be done to generate that revenue. Read books about marketing. Read this magazine and the

Book Marketing Matters newsletter ([marketingmattersnews.blogspot.com](http://marketingmattersnews.blogspot.com)), and other sources of book-marketing information. Attend seminars and webinars. Learn all you can about how to profitably manipulate the four Ps of marketing (product, place, price, and promotion).

**Calculate applicable costs.** Decide which actions to take and estimate the cost to do everything required to produce, distribute, promote, and sell your books. If you deduct those costs from predicted revenues, will your plan deliver a sufficient return? If not, go back through it making calculated changes.

**Perform the relevant actions.** If the answer to the question above is yes, implement an assorted, proven (by others) series of sustainable actions. Decide upon a price that will enable you to reach your profit objectives given your costs. Contact distribution partners for selling to retailers (bookstore and non-bookstore retailers). Arrange for sales to non-retail buyers in corporations, associations, the military, and schools. Perform publicity, media appearances, social media actions, and personal selling activities.

**Test assumptions at milestones.** New ventures often require redirection of action, and therein lies the key to successful discovery-driven planning. As you begin to experience results—either positive or negative—evaluate your relative success. Do more of what works, and make changes to, or eliminate, actions that do not work.

## 2. Planning as Narrative

In this technique, you approach your marketing activities as you would writing a novel, particularly effective for fiction writers.

**Step One: Define the characters and their motivations.** The author is the primary character. What are your strengths and weaknesses? Another important character in your story is your target reader. Precisely define this person in terms of demographics, but particularly why they would want to purchase your book. Describe where they shop, for this is where your book should be available. Another character is your publisher. How will you find the right one? What should be in your proposal? Will an agent assist you?

If you choose independent publishing, there are more characters to describe. Buyers at retailers—both inline and online (bookstores, supermarkets, gift shops, Amazon.com, etc.)—take on products that will build store traffic, increase inventory turns, and improve profit per square foot. Distributors to brick-and-mortar retailers want quality books that are supported by the author's promotion. Librarians want books that will help their patrons. Corporate buyers want to use your content to sell more of their products. Describe how your characters will perform.

One antagonist is your competition. You are competing for your target readers' share of mind and wallet with a variety of titles and products, depending on which consumers, retailers, and non-retail characters you select. Do a quick search for competitive titles in your category. Do this on Amazon and go to bookstores to evaluate the other titles on the shelves. Corporate buyers have a large variety of promotional products from which to choose. You vie with these for limited budgeted dollars.

**Step Two: Write your story.** Describe the process of producing and marketing your book. What advice will your accountant, cover designers, and editors give you? What evil forces prevent you

from succeeding? Describe how you will get on and perform on television and radio shows. Tell about the trials and tribulations you experience when arranging distribution and shelf presence. What twists and turns could occur? What new characters might enter? Build to the climax when you reach the No. 1 position as a New York Times bestseller (or whatever your objective is).

**Step Three: Create the ending and plan for a sequel.** Close your story by pursuing the actions that will lead to a sequel or to your next book.

### **Creating a Functional Plan**

Of course, there is more to writing a book (plan) than described here, but you get the idea. Define and control the story as much as you do your actions in real life, so carefully describe how you will move ahead toward your destination.

Both of these techniques acknowledge that at the start of a new venture, little is known, and much is assumed. They systematically convert assumptions into knowledge as your strategic venture unfolds. Proceed with your best-guess estimates, then test and question them as you proceed. When new information is uncovered, incorporate it as necessary into your evolving plan. The real potential of your efforts is discovered as they develop.

What is the best form for a marketing plan? The best form is the one that works for you. Create a functional plan as an easy-to-use reference tool that guides your efforts. Implement your actions daily and update your initial thoughts as necessary. You will then have the experience of writing a platform-based plan next year.

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**Brian Jud** is the executive director of the Association of Publishers for Special Sales (bookapss.org) and author of *How to Make Real Money Selling Books* and *Beyond the Bookstore*. Contact Brian at [brianjud@bookmarketing.com](mailto:brianjud@bookmarketing.com) or [premiumbookcompany.com](http://premiumbookcompany.com).





## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **IBPA and PubWest to Combine to Become One Association for Independent Publishers**

**(November 20, 2024 – Manhattan Beach, CA)** – Following years of cooperation and overlap in their respective memberships and programming, members of the Independent Book Publishers Association (IBPA) and PubWest have voted to combine the associations.

The new entity will take effect on July 1, 2025, and will be known as the Independent Book Publishers Association. With over 3000 members, IBPA is the largest association for independent publishers in the United States. With the addition of PubWest’s members, programs, and services, the combined association will be the industry’s most powerful advocate and voice for independent publishing. “Now more than ever, independent publishers need a community where we can come together and, with a collective voice, push for better market access and distribution options, fairer terms and transparency from our trading partners, and the validation of diverse and legitimate publishing models,” said IBPA CEO Andrea Fleck-Nisbet.

The desire to serve more independent publishers nationally factored in PubWest’s decision to combine with IBPA. “We’ve been talking for years about rebranding, trying to have more of a national presence, trying to change our name, and trying to grow our membership,” said PubWest Board President Amy Barrett-Daffin. “The smartest thing to do is to join forces with another organization to have more of a national presence and expand our reach and our offerings.”

For IBPA, the addition of PubWest further strengthens its mission to be the association for all independent publishers. Said IBPA Board Chair Tieshena Davis, “The combination of IBPA and PubWest will unite our strengths and provide even greater opportunities for independent publishers to thrive. This allows us to better support our members through expanded resources, stronger advocacy, and a unified voice that champions the vital role of independent publishers.”

Following their respective boards’ approvals, members of both associations voted separately on November 13 and 19 to proceed. “Now begins the work to combine these entities. Before July 2025 we will continue to have two sets of programs,” said PubWest Executive Director Michele Cobb. “As we reach the combination date, PubWest members will be migrated into IBPA’s database and a new category of membership will be created to serve the unique needs of established independent publishers.” Former PubWest members will continue to enjoy current PubWest programs that are designed for independent publishers with larger catalogs and distribution under the combined association, as well as new IBPA programs now available to them.

IBPA members will experience no changes to their current benefits and will enjoy new benefits that come with the combination of entities. IBPA members who meet the criteria may elect to join the new category of membership to access additional programming designed for established publishers.

More details about the combination of IBPA and PubWest can be found here: <https://www.ibpa-online.org/news/684929/IBPA-Announces-Intention-to-Combine-with-PubWest.htm/#FAQ>

### **The Independent Book Publishers Association**

Founded in 1983 to support independent publishers nationwide, the Independent Book Publishers Association (IBPA) leads and serves the independent publishing community through advocacy, education, and tools for success. With over 3,000 members, IBPA is the largest publishing association in the U.S. Its vision is a world where every independent publisher has the access, knowledge, and tools needed to professionally engage in all aspects of an inclusive publishing industry. For more information, visit [ibpa-online.org](http://ibpa-online.org).

### **The Publishers Association of the West**

The Publishers Association of the West (PubWest) is a national trade organization of publishers and of associated publishing-related members. Founded in 1977, PubWest is dedicated to offering professional education, providing publishing-related benefits, creating opportunities for our members and associate members to do business, speaking as an advocate for members, recognizing outstanding achievement in publishing, and providing a forum for networking to our publishing and associate members from across the United States and Canada. For more information, visit [pubwest.org](http://pubwest.org).

### *Calendar of Events*

Some conferences and workshops could go online or be cancelled, due to pandemic or other considerations, so check the newsletter or event websites for updates.

### **Southern California Writer's Conference February 14-16, 2025, San Diego, CA**

Any number of how-to books combined may not give a writer the one priceless bit of clarity that can make the difference between being published successfully or not. Rejection by an editor or agent seldom yields the reason as to why a manuscript doesn't grab them, and almost never reveals how it can be fixed to ensure that it ever will. Founded and run by professional writers the SCWC provides veteran and emerging talent with authoritative guidance to help distinguish those manuscripts that are ready for market consideration, having facilitated well over \$4 million worth of first-time authors' book and screen deals. With extended one-on-one evaluation of advance submissions and dozens of read & critique and practical information workshops to choose from, the

SCWC is among the only conferences specifically tailored to empower writers of every level with the vital tools, networking and industry prowess needed to sell their work. And since our surroundings afford it—and we certainly encourage it—plenty of other opportunities await those attending to sidle up next to editors, agents, executives, and others joining us to discuss things on a more intimate level.

Regardless which path to publication you are pursuing, whether you're a writer just starting out, a writer unable to determine why your work's not working, a writer simply in search of answers, a writer wanting feedback on what you've written, or just a writer who wants to hang with other writers and publishing professionals in a safe, supportive community, do yourself a favor and join us for our 39th Annual Southern California Writers' Conference San Diego. Your words are worth it!

Limited to 175 conferees. For more information go to: <https://writersconference.com/sd/>.



## **San Diego Writers Festival** **April 5, 2025, Coronado, CA**

Celebrate the craft of writing by joining the 6th Annual San Diego Writers Festival coming up on April 5, 2025! For more details: [info@sandiegowritersfestival.com](mailto:info@sandiegowritersfestival.com).



**Have more resources to share? Please email them to Newsletter Editor Glenna Bloemen at [gab11853@aol.com](mailto:gab11853@aol.com), and we will be happy to include them in this list.**

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|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
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| <b>Independent Book Publishers Association (IBPA)</b> .....                                                  | <a href="http://IBPA-online.org">IBPA-online.org</a>                                                                                                                     |
| <b>IBPA’s Distributors and Wholesalers</b> ( <i>distinctions and list</i> ) .....                            | <a href="http://IBPA-online.org/page/distributors">IBPA-online.org/page/distributors</a>                                                                                 |
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| <b>IBPA’s Industry Standards Checklist for a Professionally Published Book</b> .....                         | <a href="http://IBPA-online.org/page/standardschecklist">IBPA-online.org/page/standardschecklist</a>                                                                     |
| <b>Independent Writers of Southern California</b> .....                                                      | <a href="http://IWOSC.org/writer-resources/">IWOSC.org/writer-resources/</a>                                                                                             |
| <b>Mystery Writers of America</b> .....                                                                      | <a href="http://MysteryWriters.org">MysteryWriters.org</a>                                                                                                               |
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| <b>Sixty Writers Conferences for Authors, Bloggers, and Freelancers</b> .....                                | <a href="http://TheWriteLife.com/writers-conferences/">TheWriteLife.com/writers-conferences/</a>                                                                         |
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| <b>University of San Diego–Creative Writing</b> .....                                                        | <a href="http://SanDiego.edu/cas/creative-writing/">SanDiego.edu/cas/creative-writing/</a>                                                                               |
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| <b>The Writers Room</b> .....                                                                                | <a href="http://WritersRoom.org">WritersRoom.org</a>                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Writing Conferences and Events</b> .....                                                                  | <a href="http://NewPages.com/writers-resources/writing-conferences-events">NewPages.com/writers-resources/writing-conferences-events</a>                                 |

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