

## PUBLISHING PROCESS AND TIMELINE

Congratulations, you have an agreement and an **Acquisitions Editor (AE)** in place. You have survived the Submission Process. Now we move on to a new phase: The Publication Process.

- I. **ANNOUNCING YOUR BOOK.** The first thing you will want to do is to tell everyone. Great! Any book, no matter if this is your first or your fortieth, is an accomplishment. Let your family, friends and colleagues know. You have earned it. From a publishing perspective, your agent and your AE will decide the best time to announce your book to the trade. For competitively strategic reasons, there may be a delay. You should discuss this with your agent because until your book is announced to the trade, you should refrain from notifying the media and other professional outlets. The most effective, and platform building method, of positioning yourself, to announce your book to potential buyers, is to review your virtual footprint. When the time is right to announce your book to the world, do you have a vehicle to communicate with interested parties and spawn bookseller “pre-orders”. Triggering pre-orders has become the publishing phenomenon created by online bookselling that is equivalent to the ages old publicity Holy Grail of generating “buzz”. Publishers and booksellers track pre-orders. Preorders beget notice; notice spurs attention. Attention gets more attention, discussion, tweets, posts, etc., etc. It all starts with you, building your list of virtual followers that will preorder your book...at the right time. The right time is approximately seven (7) months prior to publication, when the Meta Data for your book is posted online. You will read more about this in the Timeline below call META DATA POSTED ONLINE. For now, let’s have this conversation about nurturing your virtual footprint. The first two tasks will be:
  - a. *Identify how you are going to collect followers.*
  - b. *Change your email signature to point to where you are collecting followers.*
  
- II. **COMMUNICATIONS DURING THE PUB PROCESS PHASE** As we move into this next phase, one point of order regarding communications. For any editorial concerns, your AE will be your contact at the publishing house. Ultimately, your AE is looking for you to deliver a polished manuscript. Discuss with your editorial if you can submit in installments if you want their feedback on a chapter, or a manuscript draft. It is her/his job to work with you on the narrative and the structure of your book. Editors do, however, have different preferences. Most will discuss individual chapters during the writing process, however most want to see a finished polished manuscript prior to their input.

**AE’S ROLE** It is important to understand, now that the agreement has been signed, your AE’s responsibilities change. Their role shifts from AE to project manager. Beyond the obvious traditional editorial responsibilities, your AE will be your internal spokesperson and your champion to muster enthusiasm and support from

her/his colleagues. Your AE's role is not unlike the role of a movie producer. S/he is raising resources, spreading the word, spinning many plates; tracking deadlines, reviewing sales goals and budgets, negotiated marketing plans and budgets, devising publicity plans and budgets...notice a theme here? Budgets. It's all about what kind of time and money will be spent on making your book a success.

You always want to keep your AE as your contact. When you have a publicist assigned to you, or if the art director calls you, then you can be in touch with those people directly. It is still best, always, to cc your AE, and your agent. Most importantly, do not start initiating calls to other people in the publishing house, such as calling up the president to invite her to lunch. It makes a publishing house crazy.

You should make your interactions with other people in the publishing house as pleasant as possible. You want people at every point in the process to care about the project. Be ready to introduce yourself to key players inside your publishing house at the appropriate times. Most AEs will not go very far out of their way to introduce you to key people. If your AE suggests introductions, that is great. Be sure to follow up via e-mail in a timely manner. However, it is not appropriate to take up too much time or to offer coffee dates/gifts. Keep your correspondence brief and professional. Be sure that everyone in the house is left with the impression that you are able and willing to help upon request. And when you get a request, follow up quickly.

**AGENT'S ROLE** No doubt you will also have questions about the jacket, marketing, sales, and publicity. These are all business questions. During this phase, your agent's role also shifts from agent, to business manager. As your business manager, ask your agent the questions about the business aspects of publishing. Your agent is in regular communications with the AE, and understands the business processes unique to your publisher.

In general, if you plan to send an email on any topic that could potentially cause bad blood between you and your AE, run it by your agent first. (Complaining about the cover is an example, but also if you have disagreements about the editing process, if you are wondering where your money is, etc.) Your agent can then tell you if: (a) you should change the tone or language in the email; (b) the topic is a matter better handled by the agent, not the author, (c) the issue is smaller than you think it is, or (d) the email is fine and you should go ahead and send it. In all cases, you will be glad you asked.

You do not need to keep your agent up-to-date with every editorial correspondence. The exceptions are:

- A. Let your agent know if the AE makes additional requests that seem to (or actually do) go beyond the extent of the contract.

- B. It is crucial that your agent is included on any emails concerning **delivery of the manuscript**. Be sure to either send your manuscript to your agent for delivery, or, alternatively cc your agent when you send in your installments or your manuscript. **This date is contractual.** It could be a serious matter if you miss the Manuscript Due Date. In some cases, the Publisher has the right to actually cancel your agreement and you will be required to return any advance monies paid. If you need to adjust the date for a few days, or over the weekend, generally that is fine. But if it's going to be more than a few days late, let me, or your AE know **well in advance**. Depending on the situation, your agent may need to formalize this agreement by getting a letter of extension for you.
- C. Let your agent know if you are encountering major disagreements with the AE regarding the content or acceptability of the manuscript. (Ex. Rearranging paragraphs or moving chapters is not a major disagreement. Being told that a key chapter in the book needs to be cut is a major disagreement.)
- II. **DEADLINES** At each stage of the process, you should be given a deadline by which the manuscript (galley, etc.) needs to be returned. If not, be sure to ask. If the deadline is unreasonable (less than a week is usually unreasonable), bring it to the attention of your agent before registering any complaint with your AE.
- III. **WRITING YOUR BOOK** Unless you anticipate major change requests from the publisher, never stop writing your book. Make it your goal to turn in everything early and get it done even earlier. You will have a better product if you get a chance to edit your work without deadline pressure.

If the AE has requested installments and has said s/he will give you feedback, make a polite inquiry to find out when to expect feedback. Don't stop writing (while you wait for feedback) unless you have a very specific issue that needs to be addressed before you go on. If you do not hear back from your AE in a day or two, be patient. If you do not hear back within a week, let your agent know.

- III. **GETTING PAID** Mark the payment due date in the contract on your calendar. If that date passes with no check or mention of a check, ask your agent to follow up. This job is much better handled by the agent than the author.

Many editors will not authorize "D&A" (Delivery and Acceptance) payment until they have read your full manuscript, and until all illustrations and permissions also have been submitted. Start the permission process for art and extensive quotes while you are still working on the manuscript. In some cases, it can take many weeks for permissions to come through, so plan accordingly.

Confirm with your agent via email, that manuscript as well as art, appendices, etc., have been submitted and accepted in order to track advance due on delivery and

acceptance. If the AE has recommended changes, this may delay acceptance. If the changes are controversial, the agent should know about this early on. Some publishers pay this installment only after manuscript has been put through to production.

#### IV. PUBLISHING TIMELINE

A. **TRADITIONAL** The following is a traditional timeline, which is generally about twelve (12) months long. This timeline has been prepared with the novice author in mind; so if you have multiple titles under your belt, you will be familiar with many of these steps. But, even for a seasoned author, the industry is evolving very quickly. Your experience with a prior title may not be the same with this book. We may be with a new publisher, a new AE, or even if we are with the same AE as with your prior work, the internal players may have changed. So every project is different. At the very least, a refresher course in the process of how your manuscript is presented to the market can both spark ideas, and answer some questions. The process items are not always going to be in this exact order as outlined here. The dates are approximate. They are subject to change, depending on the publishing house, and the publisher's own schedule.

B. **CRASH SCHEDULE** Some books may be on a "crash" schedule; that is, a compressed publishing schedule to meet the market needs. So this general outline of process steps of the time between signing the contract, and when your book is published. A "crash" book will compress this entire schedule to the degree that many of the steps within the timeline will happen concurrently, or even leap way ahead of schedule. If we are on a crash schedule, each process step will still happen, just much faster.

Regardless of the status of your manuscript delivery date, or timeline in play, at some point just before, or just after your delivery date your AE will move your book into their internal schedule. Even if your manuscript is due in the future, we like to explain this process now. Since the industry is changing so dramatically, all timelines are being compressed. While it is important that you focus on just preparing the best book possible, it is equally important to understand your AE's role, and how, as your agency, we will be involved moving forward.

1. **AUTHOR QUESTIONNAIRE (AQ)** (12 Months Prior to Pub Date (Pub Date is explained below))

The AQ is the foundation of the marketing process.

- a. In addition to being used to write the catalog copy for your book,
- b. The AQ is a resource for developing sales handles for your publisher's sales reps,
- c. To development of a marketing plan, including the increasingly important online and social media initiatives,
- d. Obtaining endorsements for your book,

- e. Identifying review publications,
- f. Developing advertising campaigns,
- g. Targeting possible locations for book signings and speaking engagements.
- h. Along with the AQ, you need to supply an official author photo. The photo is important for the promotion of your book and it may be used in a variety of ways-to feed the publisher's Web site, on the jacket of the book, promotional pieces, ads, etc. The photo must be 300 dpi (900 x 1350 pixels; 3 x 4.5 inches) jpeg. It is a good idea to send both color and black & white, but if you are only going to send one, send color. You send your photo(s) as a separate file to the agent. Your photo(s) must have the photographer's written permission for our promotional use. I have supplied the permission form with your AQ packet.

Coupled with the publisher's TIP sheet, the AQ is the main source for the information that is used by the marketing staff to develop content for their web site, amazon.com, B&N.com, and other online bookselling resources. Publishers have their own AQ. We like to send it to you as soon as the contract is executed. This way, if and when the publisher's AQ comes, we will already have completed the task.

2. LAUNCH DATE (12 Months Prior to Pub) "Launch" is a term that most houses use for the internal meeting when your AE will present the project to all of the departmental directors; Sales, Marketing, Publicity, Rights, and in some houses, the Art Director (who will be responsible for the book cover). You may already be a bestselling author, but for almost everyone at this meeting it will be the first time they are being introduced to your work and to you. Prior to the Launch meeting, the AE will circulate the TIP, AQ, Proposal, and sometimes the manuscript, or some sample chapters. Each of these directors will be responsible to prepare for the Launch meeting by reading the materials. It is at this meeting where your book will be "positioned." Much of the planning is done. Each of the directors will respond to the AE's expectations on matters regarding the number of units that are tasked to achieve the sales goals, the resources that will be allocated to support a project, the publication date, and much, much more. The more we can do to help the AE prepare for a successful launch, the better positioned we will be to realize our own goals.
3. MANUSCRIPT EDITS DUE (10 - 12 Months Prior to Pub) Your AE will give you a deadline on when the manuscript edits are due. When you get that date, be realistic. Let your AE know if that date works for you. Stick to that date. As with the Manuscript Due Date, if you need to adjust the date for a few days, or over the weekend, generally that is fine. But if it's going to be more than a few days late, let me, or your AE know well in advance. When you send in your manuscript edits it is very important that you let your AE know your personal

calendar over the next few months. Once your manuscript edits are approved by your AE, the manuscript is sent to the Compositor in the Production Department. The Production Dept. now becomes the pilot of the publishing schedule. If you are going to be on vacation, on assignment, or unavailable for any block of time, your AE will need to know so they can inform the production department well in advance. (see *UNCORRECTED PAGE PROOFS DUE*).

4. **ENDORSEMENTS (10-12 Months Prior to Pub)** One of the most effective ways of marketing any book is obtaining endorsements from high profile leaders in the field. As soon as possible, begin to list people who can endorse the book. Galleys will be sent out with a request-for-endorsement letter from your AE unless you specifically ask to send a galley to a contact. It is unlikely that your AE or agent will add more than a name or two to your list. The endorsement list is primarily your responsibility. Aim for 4-6 endorsements. Don't be afraid to try to get endorsements yourself. A request from an author is more personal than one from a publisher. The fact that your book is being published adds credibility to your personal request. ("I've been reading your books for ten years, and I'd be honored if you looked at my book before it comes out on (date), with (publishing company).") Send a letter asking if the potential endorser is willing to read and endorse your book. If they accept, send them a cover letter and the most recent version of your manuscript. Don't forget to tell them the deadline. Ideal endorsements are 1-2 sentences long and address the book, the author, the audience, and/or why your book stands apart from others on the subject. You don't have to know endorsers personally. An endorser can be a well-known professional colleague, a public figure associated with your topic, or anyone with appeal to parts of or the whole of your audience. Be sure to check with your publisher about whether or not your galley will be in hard copy or e-galley form. It might help if you can offer a choice to potential endorsers, though most publishers lean towards e-galley form. Months ahead of your endorsement process, download the inexpensive e-book, *The Endorsement Quest* by Gregory A. Kompes, available at <http://www.endorsementquest.com/>. It's well-worth the \$10 investment for the simple strategies you'll learn.

If the manuscript needs to go to production before it can be approved, the AE should tell you when it goes to the **Production Editor (PE)**, **Managing Editor (ME)**, or **Developmental Editor (DE)**. You may or may not have direct contact with these other editors. If you do, and you find that the PE, ME, or DE is making requests or demands that you deem unreasonable, contact your agent **before** you get in touch with the AE. Be sure to keep a file (virtual, or real) of any correspondence with the PE, ME, or DE.



5. TIP. (10-12 Months Prior to Pub) As a client, you are already familiar with the TIP process. Your AE is responsible for this internal task. Since we supply a TIP with each project, this task is more fluid and we have presented some good ideas for the sales, marketing and publicity teams to launch your book.
6. SOCIAL MEDIA/DIGITAL OUTREACH PLANNING (12 Months Prior to Pub) In this era of web presence, Facebooking, twittering, Wikipedia, blogging et cetera, publishers are going to be very aggressive about wired marketing. How wired are you? We need to look at your web site. Do you even have one? How can it be leveraged to promote this project? We need to discuss YOUR digital media plan. Should you create a Facebook Fan Page? What about twitter? Do you have a Wikipedia entry as an author/for your work? Do you, or should you, have a blog? How are you digitally promoting yourself - what is your virtual handshake with your audience? This is another whole process document. But get ready, this conversation begins now.
7. UNCORRECTED PAGE PROOFS DUE (10 Months Prior to Pub) Page proofs (the book being typeset) usually happens about 4 to 8 weeks after the copyedited manuscript has been returned from the author. Hopefully, when you delivered your Manuscript Edits (*see above*) you made your calendar clear to your AE because the Page Proofs Due date can be a frustrating date for both you and your AE. Depending on their internal workload, the production department may not get the proofs to the AE for weeks. Then when they send the proofs to the AE, the due date almost always has a very quick turnaround. There is bumper built in, but you will need to be prepared to block out the time to get the corrected proofs back on schedule. *It is important to remember that the corrections on the proofs need to be absolutely minimal; punctuation, proper nouns. No adding new paragraphs.* That costs money, and in most cases, the publisher will charge you for the changes. Your last chance to make story/content changes was during the Manuscript Edits, six months ago (see Manuscript Edits Due).
9. DRAFT COVER DUE (10 Months Prior to Pub) Do not wait for the publishers to ask for your opinion on the cover. If you have ideas for the cover, submit them with the manuscript and make a case for them at that time. If you do not send in your cover thoughts when you deliver your manuscript, you should expect to see some cover variations, or cover "comps" about this time. Optimally, the AE will send the author and the agent the cover at the same time. Email the agent the cover if you see that was not the case.

There are myriad mysterious criteria that got into a book cover - too few of which the author is ever privy. At the top of the list is what the AE and sales director want, what the art director is willing to do, and most importantly, what the publisher likes. Each are thinking of what voices they will need to satisfy with the design. We will be able to comment on a draft covers, but when we see

the draft cover from your AE, be prepared. Cover design decisions have to be made quickly.

You can give your honest opinion of the cover and the jacket copy. Keep in mind, however, that the AE probably approved the cover design and jacket copy before you received it, so comments should be professional, not personal. Ex: "This cover seems likely to attract young readers, and I don't think they're the target of this book," rather than, "I hate this cover." You don't know who, internally, may love it. We don't want to offend the wrong person!

In catalog and jacket copy, pay close attention to accuracy, particularly in spelling of names and book titles. If you have serious issues with cover or copy, discuss them with your agent before digging in your heels with your AE.

10. NATIONAL ACCOUNTS SALES MEETING (8 Months Prior to Pub) At Launch, your work was presented to the senior sales staff, directors and above. At the National Accounts Meeting, your AE will have the opportunity to present your work to the Account Managers for Barnes & Noble, amazon.com, Ingram (the nation's largest wholesaler to the retail channel), Baker & Taylor (the nation's largest wholesaler to the wholesale channel), Special Sales, and a few others. During this meeting each of the Account Managers are considering their buyers. How are their buyers going to respond to different aspects of the TIP sheet? The reps consider all of the information presented and begin to make a projection on how many copies they may be able to sell in to their buyers. Like the Launch Meeting, we might expect some adjustments to the publishing plan after this meeting.
11. PUB DATE" SET (8 Months Prior to Pub) It will be at, or around the time of the National Accounts Sales Meeting, that the Pub Date, or more accurately, the "Street" Date will be set. The term Pub Date has been universally misunderstood. The "Pub" in Pub Date originally meant "Publicity." In the days when traditional newspaper, television, magazine and radio media drove consumers into bookstores to buy books, the Pub Date was a date announced on publishers' press releases to reviewers that was to signify when the publicity, or the stories about the book should be released. In this day and age, given the anarchy of online media philosophy that hinges on instant information any media left out there does not pay much attention to Pub Date. So the term, Pub Date, has now morphed into a more realistic moniker of Street Date. Street Date, theoretically, is the day on which full distribution should be reasonably achieved. The Street Date hinges on a combination of when the Production Department can determine the Bound Book Date, as outlined below, and when the Sales and Publicity Departments agree that it is strategically the most effective date for booksellers, and the media, know that the book is available to consumers. So if you want to let your friends and colleagues know when your book will be





available, you should wait until you get your official “Pub,” or “Street” date. As you will see below, you, as the author, may see finished books shortly after the Bound Book Date, but it is NEVER a good idea to assume that you can get books to friends and colleagues prior to the Street Date. If there is some compelling business reason to get books to someone early, ask. I might be able to work with the publisher to make that happen. But it has to be a VERY good reason.

12. CATALOG COPY (8 Months Prior to Pub) You will rarely actually see the catalog copy these days. Catalog copy is quickly morphing into simply a consumer facing version of your TIP sheet description. Often a marketing staffer will edit your TIP handle and description into jacket copy, digital catalog copy for booksellers.
13. META DATA DUE. (7 Months Prior to Pub) Meta Data is the basic book information that is sent to various industry databases. Since these listings are often posted online early due to the requirements of these sites, you may see draft versions of the title, jacket cover. The sites that are sent the information include retailers, such as amazon.com and bn.com; and wholesalers such as Ingram (the nation’s largest wholesaler to retailers) and Baker & Taylor (the nation’s largest wholesaler to libraries). Once all title information has been confirmed, all final updates are submitted to these sites regarding title, price, copy, biographic information and jacket art.
14. MARKETING MEETING (7 Months Prior to Pub) – As a follow up to the Launch and National Account Meetings, most houses have yet another meeting, generally referred to as Seasonal Launch. The Marketing Meeting will be our ultimate opportunity to put down on paper the full battery of sales, marketing and publicity plans that will be presented to all sales channels at the upcoming Seasonal Launch Meeting. The Author will never be invited to any internal marketing meeting, but we can ask to have a separate meeting prior to the internal meeting with the AE, and perhaps some representatives from marketing and sales.
  - a. Have they incorporated our ideas from the AQ?
  - b. Are all of the Sales Handles from the TIP being considered?
  - c. Is everyone on the same page with respect to the Digital Media/Social Networking plan?
  - d. This is when your publisher will want to know what YOU are going to do vis-à-vis social media
  - e. Hopefully by this time a Publicist has been assigned to your book and we can begin a fruitful relationship.
15. META DATA POSTED ONLINE (7-6 Months Prior to Pub) The ages old adage, “any publicity is good publicity”, be prepared. The book cover may not be the final cover, some of the marketing information may have since been updates, but your

book is now ready for prime time. Consumers will now see your book posted at the online bookseller web sites. NOW, is when we want to launch two important features in your virtual self promotion campaign.

- a. Change your email signature to point to the pre-order function at an online bookseller.
  - b. Send out an email blast to your followers, as well as post a link on your VSP sites to spur pre-orders.
16. CATALOGS TO BOOKSELLERS (6 Months Prior to Pub) For the larger corporate customers, catalogs are rarely used. B&N, amazon.com, and other national accounts may buy titles based on the TIP sheet, or other internal tools. Most publishers are shifting to an industry digital repository of catalogs at [edelweiss.abovethetreeline](http://edelweiss.abovethetreeline).
17. SEASONAL SALES LAUNCH (6 Months Prior to Pub) This is the final meeting, generally with all channels represented; Field Sales (reps to independent channels, Special Sales (retail outlets that sell products other than books that may be demographically disposed to sell your book), TeleSales (in house staff that proactively reach out to smaller market customers). Sales goals are discussed, questions from the reps are addressed, and the reps are given their marching orders to go collect up orders.
18. SALES PRESENTATION TO NATIONAL ACCOUNTS (6 Months Prior to Pub) Shortly after the Seasonal Sales Launch, the National Accounts sales staff meet with, and formally present your book to their buyers. Numbers are discussed, feedback is gained from the buyers, and the Nat Accts sales staff will report back on the reactions of their buyers. If there are any glaring objections to the cover, sales goals, or marketing plan, we hope that the AE will report back to us.
19. LONG LEAD MEDIA (6 Months Prior to Pub) Magazines are "long lead media." In the ancient days of publishing, like say...up until about 10 years ago, the Subsidiary Rights Dept would solicit magazines and sell the rights for real money. Not only would the author and publisher earn, but the book would gain some wonderful publicity. Alas, in this new age of "free content," this Sub Rights money has all but dried up. Most of the responsibility for sending materials to the long leads has shifted to the Publicity Dept. So let's review the magazines you have listed on your AQ and let's ask your AE to discuss with your publicist.
20. PR "ARC," OR GENERIC GALLEYS DUE. (4-5 Months Prior to Pub) Advance Reading Copies (ARCs), or Generic Galleys are used by the Publicity Dept. to send to the reviewers, newspapers, bloggers. The Sales Department will sometimes allocate ARCs/Galleys to their buyers. Galleys are Uncorrected Page Proofs that are designed as paperback versions of your book. Reviews are aware



that they are receiving uncorrected proofs. ARCs are different as they are Galleys wrapped in a designed version with your book cover. ARCs have marketing bullets on the back ad, and are meant to demonstrate a publisher's commitment to promote a title into the trade. Both ARCs and Galleys are expensive to produce and in the case of many titles, the cost to produce, then mail, may represent the largest percentage of the overall marketing and promotional expense.

21. PUBLICITY MAILING (4 - 5 Months Prior to Pub). Once the ARCs/Galleys are available, the publicity team will send the mailings out to the contacts soliciting media attention. To reach the review media, the publicist develops a customized campaign tailored to your book. Copies of the Uncorrected Proofs of your book, along with a press release, are sent four to five months in advance of Pub date to the review publications like *Publisher's Weekly*, *Library Journal*, *Booklist*, *The New York Times Book Review*, *Shelf Awareness* etc. After the Bound Book Date, publicity will then send a second mailing to other media outlets, book review publications as well as to radio, television and online publicity outlets. In addition to your publicist's efforts to generate reviews and publicity, you should also use any of your own contacts to confirm reviews, articles and interviews in newspapers, magazines, journals, radio and TV. Writing editorials, op-ed pieces, book reviews for other books, and blogging on related sites are also effective ways to draw attention to your work.
22. FINAL COVER DUE (5 Months Prior to Pub) After the input from the National Accounts Meeting, the Cover is finalized and sent to all the trading partners.
23. INITIALS DUE/ACTUAL PRINT RUN DETERMINED (3 Months Prior to Pub) For the twelve weeks after the Seasonal Sales Launch, all reps are following up with their buyers to secure the actual orders for your book. Initial Print Runs are determined based on a host of criteria: The combined orders in house, expected orders before ship date, the percentage of orders from retailers versus wholesalers, expected publicity, reprint turnaround time, just to name a few. There is always a big difference between the announced print run, and the actual print run. The announced print run is usually pure fiction set all the way back at the Launch meeting. If you want to believe the announced print run, you might as well play the lottery. That number rarely comes anywhere close to the actual print run. Given the actual print run, we can usually extrapolate and get a much more lucid picture on our chances of earning out any advance in a reasonable amount of time.
24. BOUND BOOK DATE (6 Weeks Prior to Pub) After the print run is set, it takes approximately four to six weeks for books to be printed and shipped to the publisher's warehouse.

25. SHIP DATE (4 Weeks Prior to Pub) Within a week or two of the Bound Book Date, books arrive from the printer at the publisher's warehouse. Your publisher will then begin shipping to their customers. Publisher's will ship to wholesalers first, then retailers. Publishers will ship by geographic zone - to those locations farthest from their warehouse to closest; theory being books will arrive everywhere at about the same time. Often, books will start popping up in different stores at different times. Also, some stores may have a backed up receiving room, so it is conceivable that two stores in the same town may be a few days apart in getting books onto the shelf. (4 weeks prior to Pub Date).
26. AUTHOR'S COPIES DUE (3 weeks prior to Pub Date) Shortly after the Bound Book Date, the editor will order the author's copies.
27. STREET, or PUB DATE
28. eBook RELEASE DATE Unless contractually agreed to otherwise, the release date for the eBook will be a marketing decision at the sole discretion of your publisher. We may get some idea when the online edition will be released sometime near the marketing meeting, but this may change. There are both advantages and disadvantages to having the eBook edition out before the "pBook," or print edition.
29. BOOKSCAN DATA REPORTS For six weeks after the Pub Date, I will be sending you BookScan data. [BookScan is a Nielsen company](#) that reports consumer book purchases; books that have actually been purchased by consumers through traditional retail book channels, both "bricks and mortar" and online booksellers. This is referred to in the industry as "[Point of Sale](#)" (POS) reporting. It does not include institutional (library) sales, specialty retailer sales, or certain mass merchant channels (*like Target*). BookScan does NOT include eBook POS. At this time, that is only available directly from the publisher.
30. BookScan data is consistently used by most publishers, but is subject to interpretation. Generally speaking, editors consider that BookScan POS data represents 80% to 90% of what consumers are actually buying. eBook sales are creeping up, and in some genres, eBook POS may be as much as thirty (30%) to forty (40%) percent. The key to understanding BookScan data is to keep in mind that while it may not be the complete picture, it is consistent. A true measure of how books are selling is to compare both the BookScan data and the sales activity from the nation's wholesalers, particularly Ingram. And always remember that BookScan POS data will not be the same as your royalty statement which reports books shipped to wholesalers and retailers (as opposed to books sold).

A few other notes about BookScan:

- a. BookScan launched in 2001, but really did not reach critical mass, either with participating publishers, or reporting channels, until mid 2004. So for the data for any ISBN released prior to 2004, one should discount the reported data.

- b. BookScan Channel specific POS (traditional retail vs. mass merchandisers) can give us a better picture on what the returns percentage might be.
- c. One final note about tracking book sales. The most inaccurate, confusing, and totally dysfunctional method of trying to determine sales is by trying to keep track of amazon.com rankings. First of all, amazon.com rankings are based on an algorithm that does not track actual sales, but relative sales between categorical book groups on amazon.com's site. Secondly, one qualifying data set includes all of the used, collectible and associate sales on amazon.com; so what you are thinking may be comparative sales, may only reflect exchange of low-priced editions between consumers of a book that has been over distributed by the publisher.