

Publisher vs. Producer: what's the difference

by Chazda Albright -

<http://greatstorybook.com/publisher-vs-producer/>

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Both a publisher and a book producer accept submissions from authors and artists, both put these talents together to create a salable product, both work with distributors and market their books and make deals at book fairs... so where's the difference? Here are the 7 things they do differently.

Just to be clear: when I say *book producer*, I am NOT talking about a printing plant or a vanity publisher that will produce what you specify for a fee. **They produce books but that doesn't make them a book producer.** A book producer is a publishing professional that creates books and other novelty items for the market - just like a publisher. But they do things rather differently.

1. A book producer creates a book or book series based on an idea that has already been sold. A publisher doesn't. What I mean by this is that a book producer will first make a deal with a major buyer - someone in charge of the books and novelty items sold in a chain of stores - and based on the success of that deal, get to work on creating the product that has essentially already been sold. The buyer has agreed to a certain quantity for each shop, and the book producer pulls all the talent needed to get it ready for that client.

2. A book producer will often use a team of artists to get just one book on the market. A publisher uses one artist for one book, and a book designer to handle the front and back cover design. Book production needs to move along quickly once it has been green-lit, and as produced books are often novelty items as well, that means they are rich in visuals.

3. A book publisher will sometimes have a greater marketing budget for a book than a book producer. When they have a bestselling author to back-up, they will. A book producer is more about marketing an idea and they will establish a marketing budget based on the distribution deal they've made.

To get an idea of what I mean, probably the best example of a highly successful book production series is [Dragonology: The Complete Book of Dragons](#). This was quickly followed by [Egyptology: Search for the Tomb of Osiris](#). These are book productions, with lavish artwork and complex design put together by a team of talented people. The author's name is a pseudonym, probably one assigned to the two or three people who actually wrote the manuscript.

4. Though both have a presence at international book fairs and both work hard to land deals with other industry professionals while there, publishers and producers go about this in slightly different ways. Book publishers will have larger stands showcasing their newest titles. Generally speaking, the producers are there in person to make more deals and also to establish new working relationships. They don't really need to have a large stand because their products are being displayed by their distributors. When you go to major book fairs, you primarily see book publishers, book distributors, and small independent presses who can afford to attend.

5. When you [submit a manuscript](#) to a publisher, you are pitching a particular project you would like them to publish. When you submit your work to a producer, you are pitching *yourself* and your abilities, hoping that they might consider you for a future project.

6. When you submit your artwork (no manuscript, just portfolio samples) to a publisher or a producer, it is with the hope that they might commission you for a future project. The difference is that if you do get hired, your work with a producer will often mean working with a team of other artists and designers, as well as a project manager. If you work with a publisher, you will only be working with the editor and maybe the writer.

7. If you decide to bring your own book to the market, you are acting as a publisher - even if you hire or partner up with an artist. That isn't a production, that's a publication. If you decide to produce a book, that means you already have made a distribution deal and have money to make your book a reality.

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