

Juggling the Publishing Plates Time Management for Entrepreneurial Publishers

“Run your business everyday as if you were getting ready to sell it.” Howard Fisher

Task Management

Category	Task	Priority	Date started	Due date	Time Zone/State
Acquisitions	Talk to M.B. about next book	B	5/3/09	7/1/09	CT/IL
Marketing	Research mission organizations in Colorado Springs	C	5/1/07	5/1/09	
Legal	Secretary of State filing – due every year on August 1 st .	C	7/15/06	7/15/09	
Production (Book title)					
Awards	CSPA Book of the Year – due 11/15/09	C	2/10/07	10/15/09	
Distribution	XYZ Press, Mr Smith, 303-555-1212 – 3/3 lm; 3/6 lm; 3/10 lm; 3/17 talked to Mr. Smith, requested sample materials to review, sent DAD, SBG, and GUY, call back in two weeks.	B	3/3/09	4/1/09	PT/WA
Financial	Royalty reports run	A	11/05/06	7/1/09	
Financial	Royalty checks sent	B	11/05/06	8/15/09	
Financial	Royalty reports filed – hard copy	B	11/05/09	8/15/09	
Financial	Royalty reports filed – electronic copy	B	11/05/09	8/15/09	

-Tasks are items that can be accomplished in 15-20 minutes. Anything more than that is a project. You may have hundreds of items on your task list at any given time, some of which may be due a year out.

-Create project templates that can be pasted into the task list, i.e., a new title can have 200 discrete task items from creating the agreement, sending to the author, receiving the signed copy, countersigning the agreement, sending it back to the author, etc. all the way to filing copyright paperwork and fees. Other templates might be conference travel prep, tax filing prep, creating a one-page, etc.

-Works better than putting tasks on a calendar. Anything can change the priorities of the day: sickness, new opportunity, phone calls, and IT problems to name a few. This method is fluid. You can sort by category to check on the status of any project or you can sort by due date to see what you have coming up in the next day, week, or month.

-Make sure your paperwork is in order, even if you are the author and the publisher.

-Ensures that you don't forget anything!

Tools for the Tasks

- Publishers Assistant or a similar software program is a MUST! Too many people are running a business on scraps of paper, disjointed Word documents, or memory. Can you really remember how something was shipped or when it was shipped? Can you really remember to put that return back into your inventory calculations?

- Inventory, royalties, invoices, marketing reports, sales tax reports and much more with just a few clicks.
 - Reduces time
 - Eliminates errors
 - Creates efficiency

- Look for software that has the following capabilities:
 - Sales
 - Orders
 - Returns
 - Backorders
 - Standing orders
 - Finances
 - Receivables
 - Payables
 - Inventory
 - Marketing contacts
 - Other sample features
 - Sales by title
 - Sales by customer
 - Net sales
 - Gross sales
 - Profit by title
 - Inventory movements
 - Labels
 - Mailing lists
 - Contacts by code
 - Marketing initiatives by code
 - Titles sent to reviewers
 - Consignment sales
 - Multiple warehouses (distribution)

- Create systems the first time you do something. You can always modify it as you refine your work. Examples: entering new contacts, shipping procedures, uploading items to your Web site, creating agreements, file naming protocol, etc. Your system should be fool proof (Hit by the bus test).

- Create a master marketing calendar for your customer base. Who will you contact when about what and by what means? Stick to the schedule but be flexible.