



CITY OWL
PRESS

GUIDE FOR AUTHORS





CITY OWL PRESS

Escape Your World ♦ Get Lost in Ours

Table of Contents

Introduction	2
Publishing Process	2
Behind the Scenes	3
Author's Checklist	4
Marketing Plans	5
Tutorials (And What you can do)	6
Additional Resources	7

INTRODUCTION

Congratulations on joining City Owl Press! We're so excited to have the opportunity to work with you and to bring your book to market. Here's a few details about us and what we're all about.

City Owl Press is a cutting-edge indie publishing company, bringing the world of romance and speculative fiction to discerning readers. Co-founded by award-winning authors, Yelena Casale and Tina Moss, in 2014, and grown to a team of over a dozen editors, associate editors, and copy editors, along with industry partners in cover design, gaming, mobile reading apps, audio, foreign translations, film, and television, City Owl Press combines the knowledge of professionals in business, writing, editing, design, marketing, advertising, and publishing experience.

To learn more about the team, please visit: <https://cityowlpress.com/team/>

To best serve your needs, we've constructed this guide to be your roadmap into the world of publishing with City Owl Press. However, we have additional resources available to you through our website and Facebook groups. If you cannot find the answer to your questions in this guide, please don't hesitate to reach out directly.

PUBLISHING PROCESS

What happens after you sign a contract with City Owl Press? We'll break it down step-by-step.

1. A welcome email is sent to your inbox that includes links to our Facebook groups, website, this welcome guide, a cover art form, and a request for your tax information.
2. The book will be assigned a place on your content editor's schedule, and then to the main editorial calendar, which determines your release date.
3. Your content editor will communicate with you via email and/or phone about their editorial process, including their editing and communication style. Standard: 1-2 rounds of developmental edits and time to release between 6 – 14 months.
4. While you are going through developmental edits, our marketing team is developing a plan for your book. (Details about marketing plans in a separate section).
5. Additionally, you'll fill out a cover art form, and your book will go on the cover art design calendar. You will also work on the sales copy (blurb) for your book. This is what you see on the sales page or back cover of books. Approximately 3 – 6 months before release date.
6. After developmental edits are complete, your book will be placed on a copy editor's schedule. Depending on the depth of edits required, this will range from simple grammar, spelling, and continuity edits (proofreads) to more in-depth edits to style and sentence structure (line edits). Approximately 1 – 2 months before release date.

7. When copy edits are complete, you will review the changes and accept/request each. Your content editor may request to review the copy edits as well.
8. Now, your book will be placed on the formatter's schedule. Your book will be turned into eBook and paperback format. For some books, a hard cover is also included, but this depends on the genre. Approximately 1 month before release.
9. Pre-order links will go up for your book, and it will go to various review sites and our review team.

BEHIND THE SCENES

As you're going through the production process, many occurrences are happening behind-the-scenes. Here's a list several of them (please note, this is not all inclusive as the industry is constantly changing):

- Your book will be assigned ISBNs that allow for the sale of your book in various markets. Additionally, barcodes are created for paperback (and if applicable, hardback) versions.
- Trade ARCs are created and distributed to trade reviewers, such as Publisher's Weekly, Library Journal, InD'tale, Fresh Fiction, Reader's Favorite, and more.
- Your book is placed on the list for pitching to our audiobook partners based on the season. We have four seasons Winter (Jan – Feb), Spring (Mar – May), Summer (June – August), and Fall (Sept – Nov); (Side note: we don't typically publish books in December, but if we do, it goes on the fall calendar). We pitch to Tantor, Blackstone, Podium, Dreamscape, Spotify, Audible, and others. Tantor is currently our main audio partner.
- Our foreign rights team, Brower Literary, receives a copy of upcoming book releases 2 – 4 times per year. They pitch at all the large international book fairs as well as directly to foreign publishers. At this time, we have made foreign deals in Brazil, Spain, France, Italy, and Portugal, and more are continuously coming.
- Our film/tv rights team, Alliance Rights Agency, reviews our titles monthly and provides "hot sheets" bi-monthly. Hot sheets are what current industry people (producers, agents, studios, etc.) are looking for at that time. If your book matches a hot sheet list, it goes to our pitch deck. The pitch deck is a collection of books in presentation format that our agent partners use. If it does not match a hot sheet, it may still go to a specialty pitch deck; examples of such are LGBTQ+ titles, holiday titles, steamy titles, fantasy titles, etc.
- Our social media team analyzes past, current, and upcoming books for inclusion on our social media platforms including, TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter. Danielle DeVor is in charge of our social media content on IG, FB and TW, and our authors all create content for TikTok. Don't forget to tag @cityowlpress or #cityowlpress when posting on your own social media platforms, we love to re-post and share. And see the pinned post in our FB group about submitting TikTok videos to our dropbox.
- Partnership opportunities, and the books that fit the differing markets, are continually analyzed, and negotiated. For example, we have completed

partnership deals with Fictum, Crazy Maple Studios, and Chapters; and ongoing partnerships deals with Tales Publishing and YONDER. These are eBook reading app and mobile gaming app companies. Depending on the current partner's needs, your book may be pitched for such opportunities.

- Review sites (outside of trade reviews), such as NetGalley, BookSprout, LibraryThing, and the City Owl Review Team, are given copies of the book for review. This happens close to release time. From 1 month to 1 week beforehand, depending on the platform. We do this as we want the majority of reviews to land on Amazon, and unfortunately, reviewers cannot post until the eBook or paperback is released on Amazon. We are also not concerned with the pre-order period (especially for new series or debut authors) as we concentrate efforts on the 30, 60, and 90 day post-release cycles. So, we want the majority of reviews to land within those three timeframes.
- Universal book links are created. The link allows you to use one link for the majority of retail sites where your book is available. This is run through Books2Read, and you'll be emailed this link along with a direct link to your book on Amazon, and a direct link to your book on the City Owl Press website.
- After release, your book is added to the City Owl Press website. If it is not in Amazon's Kindle Unlimited program, readers will be able to buy your book directly from the website. We recommend steering your readers to the City Owl Press website as it allows for the highest amount of royalties without a third-party distributor in place.

AUTHOR'S CHECKLIST

A guide for what you'll need to do as an author and working toward your book's release day.

- Claim your social media accounts.
 - We advise picking one or two platforms that you enjoy and posting content consistently. Daily, if you can, but a few times a week is great too.
 - You want to claim the same name on every platform (even if you never use it), make sure that it's available, and has your title for the algorithms. For example: AUTHORJANEDOE or JANEDOEWRITES is more likely to be available (and also gives a hint at who you are) instead of JANEDOE.

- Set up your website. Sections to include: About Me (with an author photo/logo and bio), Books (details about your book and buy links), Newsletter (with a way to sign up for your newsletter), Contact (with a way to contact you and all of your social media links), and any additional sections you like.

- Set up your newsletter. We use Mailerlite, but you can use any mailing service you prefer. You'll want to give away a reader magnet (this can be a short story, bonus content, or even an excerpt to your book) in exchange for a reader sign up. This will help you gain readers, especially in early stages before you have a book available.

- Find your author group. This is where networking comes in, either on a social media platform or in person. We have a built-in author network among City Owl authors that you can connect with via our Facebook group. Regardless of how you choose to do it, connecting with other authors is so helpful for your career.

You can promote each other's books, partner on projects, and provide general support.

- ❑ Create your author bio and take an author photo. If you're uncomfortable with an author photo, you may use a logo. You want your photo and bio to be representative of you and your voice. Look for examples of your favorite authors and books trending in your genre. If you're a debut, put the name of your book along with the debut year and publisher name (City Owl Press) in your bio too.
 - ❑ Create graphics, teasers, and/or videos for social media. Canva and BookBrush are two excellent platforms for graphic creation. InShot, Capcut, and the TikTok app on your phone are all great for making videos. You can also hire a designer to make graphics or videos for you. Options are available, but having content for social media is important.
 - ❑ Claim your author profiles on [Amazon](#), [Goodreads](#), and [BookBub](#). You'll add your author photo (or logo) and bio on these sites. And from them, you'll be able to add additional details about your book. How to claim your Amazon Author page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1658848147704995/permalink/1862939240629217/>
 - ❑ Connecting with readers / Building a review team. You want to build hype for your book and get those early readers interested. You can do this with a reader magnet (discussed above) and by asking readers if they'd be interested in reviewing once your book is available. Sharing your publication journey, snippets/teasers of your book, and/or recommendations for books that you love (bonus if they're like yours) are all great ways to connect with readers and build early interest.
 - ❑ Utilize author services sites. Two strong author services are BookFunnel and StoryOrigin. We recommend BookFunnel as it has a good amount of author services. You can connect with other authors and promote each other through newsletter swaps or group promos. You can also create landing pages or delivery of your reader magnet for newsletter sign-ups. It has an array of author services to use, so check it out and see if it will work for you.
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MARKETING PLANS

Each book has a marketing plan geared for its specific launch based on genre, trends, and number in series. Every book is sent for trade reviews, placed on the different review sites, and sent to our ARC (advanced reader team) regardless of where it falls in the below plans.

DEBUT PLANS OR UNDER THREE BOOKS IN SERIES

- Digital Advertising Plan: this focuses on using ad services to promote a discounted title (typically, first book in series) at the FREE or \$0.99 price upon release and for 7-14 days after. Advertisers include ENT (eReaderNewsToday), BargainBooky/FreeBooksy, Red Roses Romance, and others.
- Goodreads Giveaway Plan: this focuses on utilizing the 100 eBook giveaway on Goodreads. It allows us to run a giveaway during the pre-order period, and it sends out a release email to all who enter the giveaway. We couple this with 1 or 2 digital ads.

- Second wave plan: if the book does not hit the sales marks in the 30-60-90 day periods after release, we evaluate whether a secondary campaign is needed using long-term ads (Amazon and Facebook), a new digital advertising campaign, or waiting for the next book in series.

ESTABLISHED AUTHORS OR THREE OR MORE BOOKS IN SERIES

- Digital Advertising Plan (+ BookBub): this focuses on using ad services to promote the first book in series at a discounted rate of FREE or \$0.99 price upon release of the new book and for 7-14 days after. In addition to the regular advertisers, we apply for BookBub Featured Deals. This is not restricted to a new release in series; we apply for BookBub Featured Deals monthly for all authors with 3+ books in series.
- Long Term Advertising Plan: for our established authors we run Amazon or Facebook ads on the first book in series, Amazon series pages, and if each book can stand alone, on each book in series. Ads are dependent on market trends and how ads are working vs. not working for each book/series.

TRENDING GENRE AND HOT MARKET BOOK

- PR Campaign: this is our newest plan and only done with a book that hits current market trends. It involves creating PR boxes for social media influencers and launching a title at full price. This is still in the test phases, and not done for most books.

TUTORIALS (AND WHAT YOU CAN DO)

We have a vast array of tutorials and resources in our Facebook group. Here's some of our favorites below.

- Facebook Ads: Want to run your own Facebook ads? No problem. We have a video tutorial for you.
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/CityOwlAuthorStaff/permalink/2633984970191303/>
- Amazon Ads: You can now run your own Amazon ads, if you wish. Updated policy from Amazon for all authors.
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/CityOwlAuthorStaff/posts/3095556137367515/>
- Book Launch Checklist: Our editor, Heather McCorkle, has put together a great launch checklist for you.
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/CityOwlAuthorStaff/permalink/2918663415056789/>
- Connect with Social Media Influencers: We break down our strategy of how you can connect with important book influencers.
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/CityOwlAuthorStaff/posts/3195755690680892/>
- Goodreads as a Tool: A How-To Guide on using the platform as an author.
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/CityOwlAuthorStaff/permalink/2828922917364173/>

- Getting Reviews: Advice on how to get reviews outside of what City Owl does <https://www.facebook.com/groups/CityOwlAuthorStaff/permalink/2762890183967447/> and information on ARC reviewer services <https://www.facebook.com/groups/CityOwlAuthorStaff/permalink/2336491369940666/>
- Creating Amazon A+ Content: Guidelines for creating awesome A+ content for Amazon (the pretty images at the bottom of your book listing): <https://www.facebook.com/groups/CityOwlAuthorStaff/permalink/2987413071515156/>

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

While we are not personally affiliated with these places, outside of the City Owl Press groups, we have found them to be valuable for our authors.

- Facebook City Owl Press Group for Authors and Team Members: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/CityOwlAuthorStaff/>

- Facebook City Owl Press Group for Authors ONLY (contact Danielle DeVor for admittance): <https://www.facebook.com/danielle.devor>

- Facebook City Owl Press Group for Readers (and connecting with them): <https://www.facebook.com/groups/CityOwlReaders/>

- Direct link to the "Your Guide to Everything" in the City Owl Press Facebook Group (this includes a lot of additional information, so be sure to read through): <https://www.facebook.com/groups/CityOwlAuthorStaff/permalink/3334567620133031>

- 20Bookto50k Author Group (a Facebook group geared toward indie authors, but excellent advice within and works for small press authors too): <https://www.facebook.com/groups/781495321956934>

- Author Support Network (another Facebook group with sound advice): <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1020661671348562>
