

triarchy press - evaluating book proposals

There's currently a great deal of discussion about the future of books, the role of publishers, self-publishing and so on. In particular, the economics of publishing anything other than blockbusters get more challenging.

At the same time, self-publishing gets cheaper and easier and the number of self-published books is now colossal. But getting your book known in the self-publishing market is extremely difficult.

What a company like Triarchy does is to help authors to get heard about and to give potential readers some guidance. Our customers know the sort of books that we like and publish. If we decide to publish a book, it means that readers know it's passed a (significant) initial quality control test - namely that we think it's a good book.

That's the background to how we evaluate your proposal; here's what we actually do.

1. First, we will look at it briefly and acknowledge receipt within one week.
2. Next we'll read and discuss your proposal and the extract or chapter you have submitted, bearing in mind several things. These include:
 - Originality.
 - Relevance to the areas in which we already publish and to topics and themes that are of most interest to our readers currently.
 - The quality of your writing.
 - You - this includes how well known you are in the field, where you have worked in the past, your experience and your contacts.
 - How many copies of the book we can expect to sell and at what price.
 - Other competitive titles.
3. The first and most important decision we have to make is whether the book is one we want to publish - whether it fits our list, meets our standards and will appeal to our readers. This may involve us asking you for more information, asking to see more of the manuscript or discussing your proposed structure or contents with you.

We aim to make this first decision and tell you within 8 weeks.

When we contact you, if our answer is positive, we will normally ask you to complete a marketing proposal form so that we can evaluate sales and the cost of sales. (We cannot risk publishing too many books that cost more in editorial, production, marketing and distribution than they earn back in sales!)

4. We will now look at your marketing proposal and consider various options. For example:

- Whether we need to see guaranteed sales of a certain number of copies from bookshops or other sources (which might mean that we ask you to buy a set number of copies of the book).
 - What royalty we can offer - whether we can offer you royalties from the first copy sold, only after we've sold several hundred copies, or offer you no royalty at all.
 - Whether we need to suggest changes in the format or structure of the book.
5. When we've completed this process, we will contact you again. We aim to do this within 8 weeks of receiving your marketing proposal form. If we want to publish your book and believe that it is commercially viable, we will clearly set out our thinking about the various options and any conditions that would apply to royalties and guaranteed sales, and discuss this with you.

Whatever the outcome, please understand that our first decision (whether we want to publish) is based purely on the quality of your proposal, your writing and its relevance to our readership. Our second decision (whether we can afford to publish) and any conditions we decide to apply, reflects commercial realities and does not say anything about the quality of your writing or knowledge of your subject.