

Self Publishing a Photobook

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Overview

- Planning
- Design & development
- Print preparation
- Promotion



Planning

Why produce a photobook?

- A tangible, more enriching, and engaging way for others to experience your work.
- Leave a legacy behind. Your family will not scan your hard drives after you are gone.
- Ensure the longevity of your work. After you are gone, work that only exists electronically may not be accessible when it's stored on obsolete storage medias in future.



Where to start?

- Identify what your book will be about or say
- The work should be a cohesive collection that shares a common theme, subject, story, or message.
- Give it a title. A title should be enticing and be an accurate reflection of the content of the work.
- Research photo books that you like and take note of aspects that you like from each to apply them to your own book.
- Imagine how your own book will look like
- Create a to do list and break up the project into smaller tasks!
- Starting is the hardest part!

Planning

Key decisions to make before you start

- What is the purpose of your book?
- Who will your audience be? This will help you to effectively promote your book.
- Outsourcing to a professional designer vs. designing yourself (i.e. using Adobe InDesign or printer's book design software).
- Hiring a professional editor vs. using a suitable friend or family member. If choosing to use a professional editor, Reedsy.com represents a good starting point.
- Find a printer. A decision that should be made early in the process as this will determine what options are available to you and to help you identify the cost.

- What size will your book be?
- How many pages? (typically needs to be in multiples of 4, 8, 12 or 16 pages depending on how the book is bound).
- Orientation (landscape, portrait or square)?
- Hardcover or softcover?





**Different types
of binding:**

Section sewn

Side sewn

Lay flat



- What paper?
- What cover material or will it be a printed cover?
- What type of binding (section, side, or lay-flat)?
- How many copies will you print or will it be print on demand?
The greater the volume, the cheaper per unit cost.



Frosted fly page

Dust jacket



Embossing

- Any special features? (i.e. embossing on the cover, frosted pages, dust jacket, etc.)
- How will you distribute your book? Selling on your website or using a distributor will have an enormous impact on how much you put in your pocket. More on this later.
- How much will your book cost? Seeking answers to all of the above will allow you to accurately identify an appropriate cost.
- All of your decisions here should be aligned with your book's purpose and audience.

Planning

Funding your book project

- How will you fund your book project?
 - i. Crowdfunding
 - ii. Pre-sales
 - iii. Personal savings (less desirable)

A green circle with a white border containing the word KICKSTARTER in white, bold, uppercase letters.

KICKSTARTER

A large, light blue circle with a dark blue border containing the word Pozible in a dark blue, cursive font.

Pozible

Crowdfunding

- Crowdfunding platforms like Pozible and Kickstarter allow you to create a campaign to share your project idea with your audience to raise the necessary funds to make the project a reality. This works by using a target \$ goal and where pledges made tally towards meeting your target. Once you have reached your target goal, pledges are automatically debited as pre-payments.
- The average Australian and New Zealand photo book crowdfunding campaign attracts approx. \$20,000.

Planning

- Crowdfunding Advantages vs Disadvantages:
 - i. Advantages:
 1. Your campaign could be shared to a larger audience if it is shared by the platform on their home page or social media channels.
 2. Your buyers will not be charged unless your target \$ goal is met.
 3. Easy to set-up a campaign and share it with your audience
 4. Easy goal tracking
 5. Easily create different packages to entice sales
 6. Ability to easily provide updates to all supporters
 - ii. Disadvantages:
 1. A commission is retained from each pre-sale

Pre-sales

To avoid commission payments, another alternative is to set up a landing page and form on your website to collect pre-sales immediately.

- Advantages:

- i. Maximize funds by avoiding any commission fees
- ii. Ability to collect a customer's contact details to engage in future book sales

- Disadvantages:

- i. Your website needs to have ecommerce capabilities which attract higher costs.
- ii. Supporters are charged immediately. If your project does not go ahead, then you will need to provide a refund and incur fees from the payment provider.
- iii. More difficult to interact with supporters and set-up different packages.

Planning

- Providing incentives to encourage pre-sales is key at this stage! Examples include:
 - i. Including a free print
 - ii. Signing the book
 - iii. Having all pre-sale customer names appear in the book



Design & development

Design layout

- If you're going for a minimalist approach, include lots of quiet white space
- Always think about the gutter when laying out images. You don't want images with the subject in the center spanning across a double-page spread. The subject will be lost in the book's gutter.

Image selection

- Less is more here. Be ruthless! Limit images to the very best.
- Every image selected should be aligned to the book's message, story or theme.

Design & development

Image grouping & sequencing

- Images that are positioned on opposite pages must be unified in some way. Something must transpire between them.
- Group images into sections/chapters where they share a common trait that binds them together in some way.

Writing the copy

- Foreword - Who will write it? Approach reputable individuals with a strong credibility that are aligned with the message, topic or theme of your book. Note, it is 'foreword', not 'foreward'!
- Introduction
- Chapter/section introductions
- Image captions
- Index of images displayed throughout the book as they appear
- Acknowledgements
- Bio (inside the flap on a dust jacket is a great spot!)
- Don't forget the Colophon section at the front or rear of the book which lists the printer, copyright information, edition, ISBN, etc.

Design & development

Include on the cover:

- Title
- Subtitle (optional)
- Your name
- Keep it simple but make an impact! You need to make people feel curious to look inside!

Feedback & refinements

- Don't hold back on requesting feedback. It's important that you are 100% happy and don't regret asking for changes after the book has been printed.
- Write a design brief for the designer if you are outsourcing the design.



Print preparation

Image preparation

- Aesthetic adjustments (review from peers is key here)
- Cropping
- Resizing
- Soft proofing for the specific paper stock. Ask your printer to supply their custom ICC profile for the printer and paper combination that you'll be printing on.

Print preparation

- Make colour, contrast and brightness adjustments to account for any colours that fall out of gamut or for a loss of contrast, presence or saturation. I.e. matte papers will make deep blacks appear muddy and washed out, and therefore cause a loss of tonality.
- 300ppi resolution
- Sharpen for print. Less sharpening is always better than over sharpening! If it looks good on screen at 50% then chances are it will also look good in print.
- Export to 8 bit JPEG max quality

Preparing and sending files to book printer

- A designer will do this if you have outsourced to a designer. For this reason, it is always a good idea to find a designer that has experience working with your chosen printer.
- Ordering a single unbound copy to hard proof before committing to a large volume run is a wise investment.

NEW BOOK COMING SOON



REGISTER TO BE NOTIFIED ONCE IT'S AVAILABLE AT:

ricardodacunha.com.au/new-book

Promotion

How to promote?

- This is the next hardest part after starting.
- A distributor has far greater channels to distribute your book and get it out there to retail bookstores. However, a distributor is likely to take 40% of the price!
- Holding an exhibition to launch your book featuring some of the hero images within your book.
- Newsletter database



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- Thru your website
 - Thru your social media networks
 - Hire a publicist. Something to consider for very large book production runs (i.e. 2,000+). Whilst this can be an expensive exercise, it may well reap a large return on investment.

If it is a commercial book that you are intending to make available in retail, apply for and display a unique ISBN for your book.

Thanks for your attention! Q&A

I use and recommend **momento**pro