

## Leadership & Management

# For New Publishers

by Emma Horta de Nieto

**A**re you ready to take on the challenge of creating a Christian publishing house? Do you dream of publishing the greatest bestsellers, but have little capital? It is hard to get off to a good start with a zero balance, but not impossible.

### *Examine your motives*

As a potential Christian publisher, first examine your motives for publishing. Here are some questions to get you started: Are you convinced that the printed page is an effective means for contributing to the fulfillment of the Great Commission? Do you believe that book publishing is a good business and as such, will rescue you from financial difficulties? Apart from gaining your living from your publishing firm, which is reasonable, do you hope to support other ministries? Do you want to create jobs?

### *Take advantage of communications*

Advances in communications are one of the greatest benefits we have today. E-mails are sent, and in a moment the answer, the photo or other requested materials arrive.

To publish translated books, begin by doing Internet searches for publishing houses. Once you have identified them, present your mission and vision. In general, publishing houses will send a questionnaire for you to complete. Do this, providing clear answers.

### *Choose books to publish*

After establishing a relationship with the publishing houses, ask them for catalogs or research their products on the Internet. Then ask for some reading samples. Most catalogs include a photo, a brief review and general details that give an overview of the book's content. Determine whether the books fit your publishing house's mission.

Do not ask for books simply because the catalog says thousands of copies have been sold. It is better to ask for God's guidance in prayer regarding which books to request. Publishing houses do not like to receive many requests for reading samples that do not result in requests for the translation rights.

If you want to request the rights to publish a particular book, you will receive correspondence from the publisher stat-

ing the conditions and the royalty rates, and the advance required to sign the contract. You can negotiate the advance and the royalty percentage. Most publishing houses expect royalties to be paid every six months. For various reasons, including the high costs of making such payments, you might prefer to negotiate an annual payment instead.

Some organizations support publishing. If you know that one is interested in the title you want to publish, a joint edition could be proposed. If the organization accepts, you may already have half of the budget secured for this project.

For translations, look for a good translator and a good editor, and pay them just wages. God's Word teaches "the worker deserves his wages" (Luke 10:7) and that means he deserves not just to be paid, but to be paid what is right.

Do not forget to support, encourage and train new translators and editors. Experienced workers do retire and need to be replaced.

### *Look for the right printer*

When you have the book ready, obtain estimates from several printers. Do not simply choose the printer with the lowest cost, but choose the printer that charges you a reasonable price for good quality books.

It is extremely important that you, as a publisher, understand the processes and publishing costs for a book. These include translation, editing, design, formatting and printing of the book and its cover, as well as publicity materials.

### *A final word*

I hope these suggestions are helpful to those who are starting, or hoping to start, a Christian publishing house. They come from my own experience with Libros Edén (Eden Books), the publishing house my family is starting from ground zero, with the purpose of generating financial support for missions. We have been very pleased to see this company advance, and pray that our motivations will continue to be just as we look to the Lord. ❖

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