

Tips on How to Avoid Scams or Missteps Associated with Traditional Publishing

by Lyn Cote

The business of publishing is one that most people have no working knowledge. I know I didn't. The thing to keep in mind is that it is better to educate yourself instead of making a costly mistake.

Here are a few tips:

1- Never pay \$ to a publisher or agent. A publisher who charges more than a setup fee is called a vanity press. They aren't scams but all they do is print the book, nothing else. Unless you have a large group who are ready to buy it (For example, a family history that you've researched and is wanted by extended family members), don't choose this lightly. You could end up with a garage full of books and disappointment.

Same for an agent. No reputable agent charges a writer. A reputable agent only makes money when they have sold one of your manuscripts to a publisher.

2- Take time to browse in a bookstore and see what books are similar to yours. Who is publishing them? Find out more about these publishers.

3- Google your type of book (for instance, mystery+publishers) and see what results comes up.

4- Don't believe what your mother or best friend say about your writing.

Use a manuscript review service such as The Writer's Edge (P.O. Box 1266, Wheaton, IL 60189), or the Evangelical Christian Publishers Association's online manuscript service (www.ChristianManuscriptSubmissions.com).

5- Join local, regional and online writing groups and forums. Again, just google and you'll find many.

6-Finally, realize that most writers write an average of five books before publishing with a traditional house though a few have written as many as twelve. Do you have what it takes to weather perhaps years of disappointment and rejection? That comes with the territory.