

Paper 208-2011

So, You Want to Be a SAS® Press Author!

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ABSTRACT

This panel discussion will feature a group of SAS Press authors who will be talking about their experiences of writing and publishing SAS books. The discussion will be led by a moderator who will pose specific questions that will elicit information that prospective SAS authors will find interesting as they consider their own SAS book ideas. The point of this discussion is to offer SAS book authoring tips, techniques, and best practices to future authors of SAS Press books.

INTRODUCTION

SAS Press began more than 20 years ago as the Books by Users Program. What started as a few statistics titles authored by SAS users, Rudi Freund, Ray Littell, and Michael Friendly, has grown into a series of more than 200 titles that cover not only statistics, but also SAS Programming, JMP topics, and business titles. SAS Press books are used in academia, as well as in business. Written by SAS users for SAS users, SAS Press books are favorites among SAS users because of the examples, case studies, and tried-and-true techniques shared in them.

WHY CHOOSE SAS PRESS AS YOUR PUBLISHER?

With so many publishing houses to choose from, why would you choose SAS Press over others? Simply stated, we know SAS content, we'll treat you like royalty, and we can market your books directly to SAS users. Here are some of the specific advantages of publishing through SAS Press:

- **Complete editorial and publishing support.** A dedicated staff of professionals - editors, designers, and production specialists - work with you from the earliest stages of your project through publication to ensure high quality. Your book will receive two levels of edits: a developmental edit as you write the book and a copyedit when it's complete. The developmental edit focuses on high-level organization and structure, while the copyedit focuses on details such as punctuation, spelling and formatting. Although some publishers might charge you for these services, our high level of support is standard for every project and is provided at no cost to you. You concentrate on the writing and leave the rest to us.
- **Technical advice and assistance.** Thorough technical reviews by SAS staff and users who are experts on the topic of your book will be provided at two different stages during your project, when sample chapters are drafted and when the manuscript is completed.
- **Marketing that directly targets your largest audience - SAS users.** Your book can benefit from SAS' endorsement and our unique ability to market to SAS users.
- **Competitive royalties.** Our approach to handling royalty payments is straightforward and free of complicated rates or schedules.
- **Flexibility in meeting the needs of your project.** Whether your needs include a companion Web site, or a special book format, we will work with you to meet those needs.
- **Free SAS software and documentation while you write.** We supply you with the SAS software and documentation that you need to develop and test examples.
- **A publishing schedule that's comfortable for you.** Because we are a small publisher, we can be flexible as you write your book. We know that you have a job (and a life) competing for your time.

So, You Want to Be a SAS Press Author! continued

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Some of the questions routinely asked by prospective authors are these:

- How much money am I going to make?
- How are you going to market my book?
- What topic should I write about?
- How do I get started?
- How long does it take to write a book?

THE MONEY

In the back of everyone's mind is the question: How much money am I going to make? First, royalties are paid to you as a percentage of the selling price of each book. The royalty percentage that we offer is competitive in the industry. We regularly survey the royalty range that is being offered by other publishers and ensure that we're offering a competitive rate. Although we can't guarantee a specific level of return in royalties, we do have years of data from which we can draw some conclusions:

- Topics that have a broad appeal typically have higher sales.
- In the publishing industry, technical books typically sell 2000-4000 copies. We have found that many SAS Press books are in this range and many exceed it.

In the years that the publishing program has been in place, we've found that an author's return can be a nice supplemental income.

PROMOTION AND MARKETING

We approach the marketing of your project in a holistic way, promoting both your book and you as the author. We develop a comprehensive marketing plan for your book that includes digital marketing, as well as direct mail and direct-to-consumer marketing. In addition, we promote you as the author, developing your individual Author page (support.sas.com/authors), featuring you through social media channels, and looking for opportunities for speaking engagements.

Every time that your book is promoted, you are promoted as the author and as an expert on that topic.

WHAT ABOUT A TOPIC?

Inspiration can come to you in many ways.

- Consider techniques that you've learned along the way and that others may benefit from learning.
- You might teach a class that could become the basis for a book.
- You might have written a SAS Global Forum paper that could be expanded into a book.

Some of the best ideas for a SAS Press book come from your experience.

GETTING STARTED

It's easy! Once you've decided on your topic, you're ready to submit your proposal.

We try to make preparing your proposal as easy as possible and require only five pieces of information:

1. A completed Author questionnaire, which is a brief questionnaire that provides us with an overview of your book idea.
2. A detailed outline.
3. A copy of your resume.
4. A writing sample. This can be a section from the book that you're planning or a piece that you've written previously. It should be representative of the approach that you expect to take in your book.
5. A signed Information Release Agreement, which is a legal document that gives us permission to circulate your materials for review.

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One question authors often ask is how detailed the outline needs to be. The outline needs to provide enough detail to give the reviewers a clear understanding of your plan. An approach that is generally well-received is to break your topic down into chapters, describe the general goals for each chapter, and then list the topics that will be covered in each chapter.

Once we receive your proposal, we'll circulate it internally at SAS for review. The review team will include SAS staff who are experienced in your subject area. They will consider your outline with respect to the audience you've defined and any complementary or competing topics. The review process generally takes 4-6 weeks.

If your proposal is accepted, we will issue a contract and get your project underway.

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO WRITE A BOOK?

The amount of time it takes from initial drafting to printed book varies depending on the length of the book and the complexity of the material. Our standard schedule is about 18-20 months, and we can work with you to accommodate the needs for your project. Some books can be written much faster, and some may need a little more time. We do encourage you, however, to move the project forward at a steady pace once you have committed to it. Otherwise, you may find that software updates require revisions before your book is even published or that you may miss the peak of interest in the SAS user community for your particular topic.

TAKE THE NEXT STEP!

If you think you may be interested in writing a book, contact SAS Press (saspress@sas.com) or visit the SAS Press Web site at support.sas.com/saspress. We'll be happy to talk with you about ideas you have, whether they are ones you've been developing over time or ideas that you're just starting to consider. We can help you on your way to becoming a published author!

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