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Small Publishing Presses

Despite advantages of large publishing companies such as strong distribution networks or brand names, small publishing presses have remained an essential part of the publishing industry, and will continue to do so for many years to come. Because of their personal investment in each work, their myriad of publishing options, and their risk taking ability to pursue innovations and create new trends, small publishing presses will continue to revolutionize the industry and allow tons of authors and artists to publish their works and make a name for themselves.

Small publishing presses are presses that publish approximately ten to fifteen books per year and have average annual sales around $50 million. These presses make up approximately 21% of the publishing industry, which makes up a significant portion of the industry considering mid-size takes up 28% and the “Top Ten” publishers make up 26% (Statista: Types of Publishing Houses Used in 2018). Small publishing companies are very important for writers because they provide personalized service and work very closely with the authors to finalize the author’s work. They also provide a wide array of publishing options and services such as greater formatting freedom or unconventional marketing techniques (Standout Books: What You Need to Know About Publishing With a Small Press). Many authors and readers also appreciate small publishing presses’ role in influencing art, as these presses foster a robust environment that pursues more opportunities and pushes new literary and artistic limits that bigger publishers would not consider. Small publishing presses are also of great importance to the publishing industry as a whole as they often introduce the hottest trends of the most influential innovations. For instance, small publishers helped the steampunk genre rise in popularity and played a big role in the development of audiobooks (TCK Publishing: Complete Guide to Small Press Publishing: The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly of Small Presses for Writers).

Today, many small publishing presses continue to succeed and retain their role in the publishing industry. Some of the most popular small publishers include the Graywolf Press, the Coffee House Press, and Forest Avenue Press. Many of these presses establish themselves through their groundbreaking innovations or their specialization of certain genres and topics. For instance, Graywolf Press is a leading independent publisher that focuses on contemporary American and international literature and takes risks on publishing controversial and unusual works (Powell’s Books: 24 of Our Favorite Small Presses). However, despite their successes, this sector still faces many difficulties and headwinds. One of the greatest difficulties is trying to retain business as self-publishing increases in popularity with the rise of digital publishing and technologies. These publishers are also threatened by tighter margins and changing consumer tastes and preferences. Despite these difficulties and issues, small publishers’ competitive advantages, such as individualized service, and ability to innovate and revolutionize the publishing industry will allow them to retain their position in the industry as they have for the past 100 years.

Citations

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