

# THE CORPORATE ARTICULATION OF BOUTIQUE PUBLISHING

*by*

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## ABSTRACT

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This report aims to define corporate boutique publishing and its unique positioning, while placing it in a wider boutique landscape. This includes examining the wider application of the term ‘boutique’ in the book world and establishing how the corporate articulation of this is both similar and different. Finding itself at the crossroads of small, specialized publishing and powerful, big league publishing, corporate boutique imprints can boast of having the best of both worlds. This report concludes with a number of recommendations on how such publishers can better take advantage of this place of power.

Keywords: *boutique; corporate publishing; boutique publisher; imprints*

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

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ii	Approval
iii	Abstract
iv	Acknowledgments
v	Table of Contents
vi	List of Figures
1	Introduction
3	Boutique origins
5	Boutique in the publishing world
5	Self-publishing—small and specialized
7	Custom Publishing—an alternative
9	Traditional Publishers & Personalized Support
12	Corporate articulation of boutique
14	Branding in corporate publishing
17	Corporate boutique case studies
17	Small size
18	Specialization
19	Personalized attention and service
21	High quality production and design
25	Recommendations
25	Recommendation one: Seek inspiration
27	Recommendation two: Branding
30	Recommendation three: Growth potential
32	Conclusion
33	Bibliography

## LIST OF FIGURES

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10	Figure 1: Pen Name Publishing business chart
16	Figure 2: Corporate publisher logos
16	Figure 3: Penguin Random House Canada logo
22	Figure 4: Selection for Appetite titles
23	Figure 5: Selection of Square Peg titles
23	Figure 6: Selection of Touchstone titles
28	Figure 7: <i>Batch</i> cover
29	Figure 8: <i>WellPreserved.ca</i> logo & recipe selection
29	Figure 9: <i>Batch</i> interior page sample

# INTRODUCTION

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Over the course of my four-month internship in the summer of 2016 at Appetite by Penguin Random House Canada, I learned a lot about cookbook publishing and working with a small team as part of a large and very successful national publisher. Through the support of Robert McCullough, their well-respected publisher, and the other staff in Vancouver, I was given the great opportunity to witness the inner workings of a modern boutique publisher.

As I became more immersed in this world, one question began to surface time and again. This question seemed so basic and yet answers to it kept shifting and evading me. This simple question was, what is “boutique publishing”? If this is simply ‘small and niche’ then how can this exist in the large, corporate publishing world?

Appetite prides itself on being a successful and dynamic boutique publisher. In the first line of its mission statement it states, “Appetite by Random House is the boutique lifestyle imprint of Random House of Canada.”<sup>1</sup> In my graduate studies in publishing up to this point, I had heard the term boutique thrown around here and there. I therefore had a vague sense that in the publishing context it referred to a press that was specialized or small. And yet, here I was interning at an imprint of Penguin Random House Canada, an imprint with the editorial, design, marketing, publicity, and sales support of one of Canada’s largest publishers—and it is calling itself boutique. So what is boutique if not just small and niche and how is this expressed in the corporate publishing setting?

This is the central question that this report will attempt to answer. Boutique in and outside of the book world is a slippery term to pin down because of the breadth of its application. It is applied across a number of industries in a variety of ways and therefore one might assume that its meaning shifts significantly. And yet, there are still key features that can be seen across the board. Therefore, in order to narrow down its application in publishing, a brief overview of the general origins of the

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1 “About,” *Appetite*, accessed August 5, 2016 <http://penguinrandomhouse.ca/imprints/appetite-random-house/about>

term 'boutique' will be made to aid in seeing how this term became what it is today. This overview of the term leads into a discussion of boutique in publishing and how self-publishing, custom publishing, and traditional publishing all offer us examples of boutique publishing today. Through brief sections on each of these publishing models and how they define themselves as boutique, four key features of boutique publishing will emerge.

This report will finally argue that yet another form of boutique publishing exists: corporate boutique publishing as illustrated by imprints such as Appetite. These corporate imprints have identifiable features many of which are similar to other kinds of boutique publishers, and yet they also bring something new to the table. These corporate boutique imprints are in fact in a unique position, at the crossroads between small, niche publishers and the powerful corporate world, and there is great potential there. Through the examination of three imprints of large, corporate publishers across the US, Canada and the UK, this report will illuminate what it means to be boutique in a corporate world. By looking at the visual identity, mission statements, and websites of these publishers, a picture will begin to emerge of what it takes to inhabit the corporate boutique book world.

It is also my hope that this report as a whole will provide a valuable resource in the publishing industry as more corporate boutique imprints emerge and attempt to define themselves. This report will conclude with some recommendations as to how imprints like this can better utilize their unique market position.



## BOUTIQUE ORIGINS

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Before diving into the uses of the word boutique in the world of books, some time must be spent on looking at where this word comes from. It was not invented for the sole purpose of describing a phenomenon in the book industry. In fact, it originally described an environment more than anything else.

The word boutique is originally French and in that language, it means ‘shop’ or ‘store.’<sup>1</sup> The early origins of the French can be traced further back through Latin to the Greek word *apothēke* meaning ‘storehouse.’ This linguistic trail shows that at the time of its origin, when shops were more often than not small and specialized in one way or the other, this word described the retail environment. Today, one can still see these classic roots.

The Oxford English Dictionary (OED), that definitive archive of the English language that has been trusted and referred to for decades, still defines boutique first and foremost as ‘a small shop.’<sup>2</sup> Clearly boutiques are still shops, but appropriately the OED has now added on the word ‘small’ to clarify their defining feature as opposed to larger department stores or superstores. The key word here is small and the products these shops sell are often somewhat specialized and unique. The OED goes on to provide a more detailed explanation: “designating a product or service offered by a small, exclusive, or specialized business; (hence more generally) exclusive, highly specialized, appealing to connoisseurs.”<sup>3</sup> The definition has thus shifted slightly away from solely retail environments and towards niche product. And yet the key is that it still embodies both. This is where a variety of industries have taken up the term. Boutique retail and products can be found in wine, film, fashion, and finance, to name just a few.

For example, the financial resource website QFinance, defines boutique stock-holding, investments, and banking as follows: “a small specialized firm... that offers a limited number of investments or services” or “a

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1 “Boutique” *WordReference*, accessed Sep. 1, 2016, <http://www.wordreference.com/fren/boutique>

2 “Boutique,” *Oxford English Dictionary*, accessed August 03, 2016, <http://www.oed.com/>

3 “Boutique,” *Oxford English Dictionary*, accessed August 03, 2016, <http://www.oed.com/>

small investment bank.”<sup>4</sup> These banks thus claim to be both physically small and deal in specialized products—once again demonstrating the crossover embodied in this term of both retail environment size and product type.

To give another, quite different example, the NZ Boutique Wine Festival describes its industry participants as “often single vineyard, hand picked, premium wines, that are only available from the cellar door, independent retailers, top bars, and fine dining restaurants.”<sup>5</sup> Note here words like “hand picked” and “premium” denoting high quality and individual attention—themes we will see highlighted in the book world as well.

And finally, many people think of fashion and clothing when the word boutique or boutique shop comes up. A quick Google search of ‘boutique fashion’ or ‘boutique clothing’ will immediately pull up all the small shops in your area that sell a particular brand or fashion of clothes. These are, once again, the shops that specialize in a certain style, brand or philosophy (for example sustainable clothing, plus size boutiques, luxury brands, or men’s clothing, to name a few). This specialization is enabled by their size which in turn gives them the opportunity to provide exceptional customer-centered service. Misch, a small shop on Granville Street in Vancouver, BC, is an example of this. The shop carries a number of brands that embody the “elegant, dreamy and gentle.”<sup>6</sup>

From these cursory examples, it starts to become apparent that boutique is being applied in industry-specific ways to mean small, unique, customer service focused, and niche. So, what does this look like in the publishing industry?

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4 “Definition of Boutique,” *QFinance*, accessed Sep 1, 2016, <http://www.financepractitioner.com/dictionary/boutique>

5 “Vineyards,” *NZ Boutique Wine Festival*, accessed Sep 1, 2016, <http://www.boutiquewine.co.nz/>

6 “Welcome to misch,” *misch*, accessed Sep 1, 2016, <http://www.misch.ca/about.html>

# BOUTIQUE IN THE PUBLISHING WORLD

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Today publishing spans all kinds of genres and mediums from online food erotica magazines that send you daily content via email and social media to an annotated 2,000 page printed special edition of Shakespeare's works, complete with hand applied illustrated prints and debossed cover type. So where in this wide world of modern publishing can we find boutique?

Just like with so many other terms in today's publishing landscape, there are a number of different ways in which 'boutique' is used by publishers. Different styles of boutique publishing emphasize various aspects of boutique depending on their business model. The following sections will break down these various manifestations to illustrate the four main elements that all boutique publishers have in one way or the other: small size, specialized/niche focus, an alternative to traditional corporate publishing, and personalized attention and service.

## Self-publishing — small and specialized

A common association with boutique publishing is self-publishing. If one transfers into the book world the definition of boutique from other industries—small and specialized—then self-publishing easily fits. There are a number of meanings associated with the term 'self-publishing,' so for the purpose of clarity, the following unpacks the definition used in this report.

According to the website Go Publish Yourself that provides resources and information to authors wanting to self publish their own work, "Self-publishing will be defined differently depending on who you ask. According to people who work in traditional publishing houses, authors who pay for their editing, formatting, and/or cover design are self-

publishing their work.”<sup>1</sup> Sometimes a middle-man never comes into the equation. Self-publishing can also be the author trying to do all of their own design and editing work and then distributing their book through Amazon. Although the classic OED does not grace us with a definition of the term, good-old Wikipedia does have an entry that states, “Self-publishing is the publication of any book or other media by its author without the involvement of an established publisher.”<sup>2</sup> The key here is that “established publishers” have nothing to do with this kind of publishing. It is often a decentralized process where the author does everything themselves or seeks various specialists to do the different tasks of publishing as an alternative to going to a publishing house.

Another style of self-publishing is where the author starts his or her own press. As one *Huffington Post* article, aiming to give authors advice, recently suggested, “Rather than becoming self-published [through custom publishing by a publishing house], a very good option is opening your own small or boutique publishing house by yourself or with other authors.”<sup>3</sup> Yet another interesting twist on this was explored in a *Publishers Weekly* article from 2013 entitled, “Indie Booksellers, Authors Team Up.”<sup>4</sup> Here Rosen discusses how a number of booksellers are teaming up with a small number of authors to establish self-publishing enterprises. An example of this is The Troy Book Makers based out of New York.<sup>5</sup> This publisher was established when a small group of people made up of booksellers within the author community decided to collaborate to create their own self-publishing company as an easy alternative to traditional, corporate publishing. Now they publish a number of small projects with short print runs every year. Perhaps because of their small size, these kinds of self-publishers often, but still not always, use the term ‘boutique’ to describe themselves. Troy Book Makers is also as specialized as it gets because it publishes only itself. Self-publishing in all its forms is therefore the smallest manifestation of boutique publishing.

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1 “What is Self Publishing?” *go-publish-yourself*, accessed on Sep 2, 2016, <http://www.go-publish-yourself.com/self-publishing/what-is-self-publishing>.

2 “Self-publishing,” *Wikipedia*, accessed Sep 2, 2016, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Self-publishing>

3 Houghton, Kristen, 2015. “Becoming a Publisher: A Positive Choice for Authors,” *Huffington Post*, July 13. [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/kristen-houghton/becoming-a-publisher-pos\\_b\\_7773810.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/kristen-houghton/becoming-a-publisher-pos_b_7773810.html)

4 Rosen, Judith, “Indie Booksellers, Authors Team Up,” accessed November 25, 2016. <http://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/industry-news/bookselling/article/60382-indie-booksellers-authors-team-up.html>

5 *The Troy Book Makers*, accessed Nov. 25, 2016. <http://thetroybookmakers.com/>

One example of such a publisher is Purple Cottage Press which, according to its simple website, is based out of Sausalito, California. It is often not 100% apparent from a publisher like this that it exists only for publishing one author, however, considering that Purple Cottage Press has only published and promoted one book that is only sold through them, it is a fair guess that it was established to self-publish themselves. Their short but clear mission statement states, “Purple Cottage Press is an independent boutique publisher of beautifully designed books.”<sup>6</sup> Boutique in this instance reflects its small size in the same way that the wine, finance and fashion examples above did. Many such publishers never go as far as to write up a mission statement, so Purple Cottage Press offers us a concrete, written example of how boutique is used in this particular self-publishing environment.

## Custom Publishing — an alternative to corporate publishing

Custom publishing is self-publishing done by a company on behalf of an author who hires them to do the work of publication. In this case the publisher is employed by the author to custom publish their text, normally complete with some combination of design, editing, marketing, distribution, and promotion. In this model, the custom publisher and the author agree on the combination of services included in their publishing package.

There can sometimes be a fine line between custom publishing and content marketing,<sup>7</sup> especially if that is the intent of the author. Therefore custom publishing is often, but not always, associated with self or organizational promotion. The Custom Content Council of the US Association of Custom Publishers states that this kind of publishing “... marries the marketing ambitions of a company with the information needs of its target audience. This occurs through the delivery of editorial content—via print, Internet, and other media—so intrinsically valuable that it moves the recipient’s behavior in a desired direction.”<sup>8</sup>

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6 “Purple Cottage Press,” *Purple Cottage Press*, accessed Sep 20, 2016, <http://www.purplecottage-press.com/>

7 Definition of content marketing: “Content marketing is the marketing and business process for creating and distributing relevant and valuable content to attract, acquire, and engage a clearly defined and understood target audience—with the objective of driving profitable customer action”.From *Content Marketing Institute*, accessed Nov. 25, 2016 <http://contentmarketinginstitute.com/2012/06/content-marketing-definition/>

8 *The Content Council*, accessed Sep 12, 2016, <http://thecontentcouncil.org/>

This definition of custom publishing equates it with content marketing. However, for the purpose of this report, the broader definition will do: that custom publishing is done by publishers for hire, whatever the final intent of the author who hires them. Boutique is a term frequently applied to these publishing houses. There are a number of good examples of boutique self-publishers, two of which are pulled out for discussion below.

Flirt Publishing is a straightforward example of a custom boutique publisher. It is a small publisher that provides editing and design services to authors that may not otherwise get published. Their specialization is in romance, which fits well with the boutique model we have seen so far. In addition, it has a very small team of staff members made up of the original owners, two bestselling authors turned custom publishers. Flirt's tag line states that it is a "boutique publisher of romantic fiction."<sup>9</sup> However, despite how it embodies boutique features such as small size and specialization, it is interesting to note that nowhere does it define boutique or directly address what boutique means for its business. This isn't uncommon among boutique publishers. This is also why, even among publishing professionals, the details of what makes a boutique publisher boutique can be cloudy or at least changeable at times.

Yet Flirt, in their mission statement, does directly touch upon one key feature of boutique that is also often implied but not directly addressed—the fact that boutique is seen as the alternative to traditional publishing with the corporate publishers. In their mission statement, Flirt Publishing puts themselves forward as an alternative to traditional, or as the website calls it indie, publishing: "...because we know that indie publishing isn't for everyone, but we think that shouldn't stop writers from pursuing their dreams of publication."<sup>10</sup>

Rockit Press is a custom publisher that works with the same model as Flirt Publishing and it similarly presents itself as an alternative publisher: "At Rockit Press, you can avoid the challenges of securing an agent to shop your book to one of the few major publishing houses by going directly with a boutique publisher like us."<sup>11</sup> Here Rockit Press is clearly setting itself apart from big publishing, which suggests that the two are distinctly different in its eyes. These two presses examined

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9 *Flirt Publishing*, accessed Sep 15, 2016, <http://flirtpublishing.com/>

10 *ibid*

11 "Get Your Book Published," *Rockit Press*, accessed Sep 15, 2016. <https://www.rockitpress.com/get-your-book-published.html>

in parallel make it possible to start to understand custom boutique. However, it is surprising that nowhere do either directly highlight the one-on-one, specialized service that they are able to provide given their small team size and the small number of titles they publish. They see themselves as the alternative to traditional publishing.

## Traditional Publishers & Personalized Support

Despite what the previous two sections may suggest, you do not have to be self-publishing to call yourself a boutique publisher. Boutique is not synonymous with self-publishing. Many publishers that operate in the traditional models of publishing take on this term as well. The key difference between traditional and self-publishing publishers is that traditional presses call for submissions and do not charge their authors a fee to get published, but instead offer their selected authors a royalty percentage based on sales and often an advance.

Entangled Publishing is a boutique romance publisher that, in a lot of respects, looks similar to Flirt Publishing, except their business model is not custom, it is traditional. Entangled calls itself “a boutique romance publisher, specializing in high quality romance and teen fiction sure to delight any reader.”<sup>12</sup> Flirt Publishing, because of its custom model, publishes as authors hire them to do so and thus does not list the number of titles published per year—although it is not unreasonable to assume this number is not large given the small team of staff it has. Entangled, on the other hand, publishes 30-40 ebooks per month and 48 print/ebook combinations per year.

Since Entangled is a digital first publisher, it is arguable whether or not it can still maintain the criteria for boutique status. It may not sell a lot of print books but its digital sales do well. Either way, Entangled chooses to emphasize another feature of its boutique status instead of the size of its list. Instead, this example of boutique publishing highlights quality, and a feature yet to be explored by our other publishing examples, personalized attention. This feature of boutique publishing applies to all the previously discussed publishers in self and custom arenas as well, but they did not talk about it or call it out directly. Entangled claims that, “[we are] our authors’ loudest supporter and advocate... Every book we publish receives a unique, custom-

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12 *Entangled Publishing*, accessed Sep 21, 2016, <http://entangledpublishing.com/>

tailored marketing plan.”<sup>13</sup> Since its reason to call itself boutique isn’t singularly centered around the size of its list, it instead emphasize the qualities it demonstrate that small publishers would have-time to give each author the attention they deserve.

Entangled isn’t the only traditional boutique publisher that chooses to focus on and highlight the attention it gives its authors. Pen Name Publishing similarly emphasizes author support: “We are boutique publishing for authors who want a team and to be taken care of, not lose their work in the process of publishing.”<sup>14</sup> It trumpets its “unparalleled support” of authors—a theme in almost every section on this web page. The chart below illustrates in even greater detailed how it is author-centered.



Figure 1: Pen Name Publishing business chart

Even though Pen Name Publishing is not self-publishing its own work, or custom publishing for hire, it still provides the personalized attention that a small publisher can offer. This is what makes it boutique.

To summarize, there are four key features that must combine to make a boutique publisher. Although *all* of these features are found in each of the articulations of boutique described above—self-publishing, custom publishing, and traditional publishing—some of these boutique publishers do not highlight all of the features directly. Often two or three of the

<sup>13</sup> “About us,” *Entangled Publishing*, accessed Sep 21, 2016, <http://entangledpublishing.com/about-us/>

<sup>14</sup> *Pen Name Publishing*, accessed Sep 21, 2016, <http://www.pennamepublishing.com/about/>



features are emphasized, while the others exist, but are not highlighted.  
The four features are as follows:

1. Small size
2. Specialized/niche focus
3. An alternative to the big/traditional publishers
4. Personalized attention and service

# CORPORATE ARTICULATION OF BOUTIQUE

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An article by Houghton from the *Huffington Post* in 2015, updated in 2016, made the following assertion: “Your boutique publishing house is a smaller version of the big league [publishers].”<sup>1</sup> The purpose of this article was to encourage authors to create their own self-publishing enterprises, to become boutique publishers. And in doing this, Houghton believes they will establish themselves as an alternative to traditional corporate publishing. Just like Rokit Press did on its website, Houghton is setting boutique publishing apart from large, corporate publishing.

This finally brings us back to Appetite. Appetite is a boutique publisher but it is also part of one of the largest and most established, traditional corporate publishers in Canada—Penguin Random House Canada (PRHC). Penguin Random House Canada is the Canadian division of Penguin Random House that claims to be “the world’s most global trade book publisher.”<sup>2</sup> They employ more than 10,000 people worldwide and publish more than 15,000 new titles each year.<sup>3</sup> There is absolutely no denying that this is one of the biggest publishers in the big league. This is a corporate publisher. And yet one of its imprints calls itself a boutique publisher. How can this be? Clearly from my analysis in the above sections, people do not tend to identify larger publishers with the boutique scene; in fact we consider them by definition to be opposites of one another. However, in truth, boutique is sprouting there too.

The remainder of this report will examine three successful boutique imprints that are all part of large traditional publishers: Appetite by Penguin Random House Canada, Square Peg by Penguin Random House UK, and Touchstone by Simon & Schuster. This analysis will illuminate what it means to be boutique in the corporate world of big publishing.

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1 Houghton, Kristen. 2015 “Becoming a Publisher: A Positive Choice for Authors,” *Huffington Post*. July 13. [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/kristen-houghton/becoming-a-publishera-pos\\_b\\_7773810.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/kristen-houghton/becoming-a-publishera-pos_b_7773810.html)

2 “About Penguin Random House Canada,” *Penguin Random House Canada*, accessed Sep 23, 2016, <http://penguinrandomhouse.ca/content/about-penguin-random-house-canada>

3 *ibid*

Each of these case studies is an imprint of a corporate publisher. An imprint is a specialized department of a publisher. It has its own mandate to publish for a certain segment of the market or to publish certain kinds of books. For instance, Appetite is the lifestyle and cookbook imprint of Penguin Random House Canada. The Book Designer Blog, which gives practical advice to help build better books, defines imprints as follows: “Imprints allow a publisher to establish a brand identity for a cohesive line of books some of which may be aimed at specific segments of the market.”<sup>4</sup> So although Appetite has its own name and logo as a publisher, it is actually a division of the Penguin Random House powerhouse and therefore uses all of the PRHC financial, creative, and developmental resources.

Imprints, therefore, in their very nature are established to serve a specific niche. Because of this, one might assume they would be a natural fit for the boutique world. However, few imprints actually use the term boutique. As discussed earlier, historically there is a divide between traditional corporate publishers and the boutique world. Therefore, applying the term boutique to the corporate publishing world seems contradictory. Unlike the little boutique publishers that have been examined so far in this report, the few imprints that do call themselves boutique are *not* an alternative to traditional corporate publishing. They *are* corporate publishing. So how do the boutique imprints that do exist position themselves in the boutique world?

There are four main reasons to focus on this unusual articulation of boutique publishing:

1. Since corporate boutique imprints are unusual in adopting the term ‘boutique,’ establishing how they can claim this status despite their corporate alignment will provide further insight into what it means to be a boutique publisher today.
2. Corporate publishing has enormous power behind it—large editorial, design and marketing teams that small publishers just don’t have. Corporate boutique is therefore at an advantage in the boutique world.
3. Boutique in this corporate environment holds a position where it can benefit from the best of both worlds in a way that other boutique

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4 “A Quick Lesson About Publishers, Imprints, Createspace and Bowker” The Book Designer, accessed Sep 24, 2016. <http://www.thebookdesigner.com/2015/02/a-quick-lesson-about-publishers-imprints-createspace-and-bowker/>

publishers cannot. On the one hand, boutique imprints stay true to the roots of boutique that are small, specialized, and personalized, and on the other hand, they have access to the large staff, wide distribution, often international reputation, and financial stability and backing of corporate publishing.

4. This unique positioning provides these corporate boutique publishers with an incredible opportunity that centers on how they brand themselves.

## Branding in corporate publishing

Before diving into corporate boutique publishing and the potential branding opportunities that corporate boutique publishers have, a brief introduction to what branding looks like in the book world is important. The Oxford English Dictionary defines branding as follows: “the promotion of customer awareness of a particular brand of goods or services.”<sup>5</sup> Even more simply put, branding is the public image of a company—it is all the ways in which the public recognizes the organization due to its manifestations in the world: its website, social media, promotional materials, logo, product packaging, consistent fonts or colour usage etc.

Branding for a business is pretty hard to somehow opt out of or ignore. If a business puts itself out there in any way—such as through a website, brochures, logo etc.—it automatically represents its ‘brand.’ The question is whether this is done with very specific strategy and goals in mind, or whether it just is what it is with little targeted planning involved. A strategic brand is shaped to target a specific audience that the company would like to attract. In the publishing arena, conscious branding to attract a specific audience—most obviously readers—is not commonly done. However, publishers still have logos and a certain platform on which they promote themselves. This platform is essential for attracting bookstore and gift store buyers and sales representatives, and increasingly for author wannabes seeking a publisher in a complex publishing landscape, but it does not often go beyond that.

As a result of this, publisher awareness is very minimal in the general public. If you ask the barista at your local coffee shop, or the mom next

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5 *Oxford English Dictionary*, accessed Sep 24, 2016 <http://www.oed.com.proxy.lib.sfu.ca/view/Entry/22645?rskey=DX8IDH&result=1&isAdvanced=false#eid>

to you at a little league game, what their favorite author or book is, they should not have too much trouble coming up with something. However, if you ask them what imprints or publishers they read, you will most likely be met with blank stares. Not only is the publishing processes often a mystery to the public eye—everything that is required to introduce a successful book to the world—but who is doing this work and how one publisher is different from another press is elusive to most people.

There have been a number of suggestions made by scholars and people in the book world that this should change. In fact, Angelina Tagliafierro, graduate of the Simon Fraser University Master of Publishing program in 2014, wrote a project report arguing that Appetite by Random House should establish itself as a recognized imprint brand. She writes, “...it is in publishers’ interest to establish a long term plan to strengthen branding and nurture consumer relations and, ultimately, achieve brand preference among target consumers [readers].”<sup>6</sup> She argued that if Appetite could set themselves up so that readers would not merely come in contact with Appetite because they were looking for one of its authors, but also because they knew the excellent reputation Appetite has for high quality, beautifully designed lifestyle and food books, their audience would grow even more and it may be easier to introduce new and less known authors to the reader because they trusted the imprint brand.

In an article on the blog, Publishing Perspectives, Erin L. Cox continues this sentiment by saying, “I believe publishers should offer branding that is addressed directly to readers, instead of relying solely on the bookstores to translate their message for them.”<sup>7</sup> However, an article from the website Book Business Magazine noted how “Very few publishing brands, in fact, mean much to consumers.”<sup>8</sup> The reality is that although conscious publisher and imprint branding seems like a good idea and has been encouraged by many, this hasn’t happened in any significant ways.

And yet, if the public recognizes any publishers it’s the big name ones such as the formerly Penguin Group, Random House, or Harper

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6 Tagliafierro, Angelina. “Building Repeat Customers: Publisher Branding in Food & Lifestyle Publishing” Simon Fraser University. 2014. pg. 22.

7 Cox, Erin L. 2010. “[Insert Publisher Here]: Why branding to readers should matter to publishers,” Publishing Perspectives, March 30. <http://publishingperspectives.com/2010/03/insert-publisher-here-why-branding-to-readers-should-matter-to-publishers/#.V-liNJMrKRt>

8 Kingsland, William & Satyal, Rakesh, 2014. “Note to Book Publishers: Turn the Page and Invest in Brand” Book Business Mag, May 22. <http://www.bookbusinessmag.com/post/book-publishers-must-invest-brand/>

Collins—the corporate publishers who have long histories and big marketing power. Their logos as illustrated below, have been on thousands of books for so long that as a reader you cannot help but recognize them or know their names.



*Figure 2: Corporate Publishing logos*

The now-combined Penguin Random House, took the recognizable colour and graphic from Penguin Group and combined it with the stacking of the Random House logo to produce their new logo as illustrated in the Penguin Random House Canada logo below:



*Figure 3: Penguin Random House Canada logo*

However, those little boutique publishers, as outlined earlier in this report, are far less in the public eye because of their often-shorter history and their small size that prevents large distribution, large number of titles published each year, and large marketing and publicity budgets for individual titles.

So yes, corporate publishers are sometimes recognized by the public in ways that small presses are not—but where their real branding potential lies is in branding their authors, not themselves. And boutique imprints of these large publishers are in particular position to do this.

## Corporate boutique case studies

To demonstrate the branding potential in this unique expression of boutique publishing in the corporate book world, three imprints will be examined to demonstrate the following: what makes them boutique despite their positioning in corporate publishing, what their strengths are due to this positioning, and how they can utilize it.

### **Small size**

Appetite is a proud and successful articulation of boutique in the corporate publishing world. Up front in its mission statement it acknowledges this positioning directly:

Appetite by Random House is the boutique lifestyle imprint of Random House of Canada, based in Vancouver on Canada's west coast. Appetite publishes across a range of subjects, marrying books of regional, national, and international flavour in one unified lifestyle list. Whether it's food, wine, health, or design, Appetite by Random House publishes books to celebrate and satisfy your appetite for life!<sup>9</sup>

The first sentence of this mandate establishes both that Appetite is boutique and that it is a division of a corporate press. Although it says it publishes “across a range of subjects,” these subjects clearly lie within the lifestyle and food categories. This is demonstrated by its authors that include celebrity chefs such as Anna Olson, Ottolenghi, Nigella Lawson, and Curtis Stone; well-loved bloggers like Sarah Britton of the blog *My New Roots* and the Thai food blogger Pailin Chongchitnant; as well as healthy diet advocates like Julie Clove of *Alkaline Sister* and Meghan Telpner, author of *The Undiet Cookbook*.

Furthermore, although Appetite is integrated into a large publisher where designers, publicists, the marketing team, and even certain editors from the Canadian Penguin Random House office in Toronto work on its titles, the actual Appetite team based out of Vancouver, BC is very small. This is absolutely key for Appetite's boutique status. It publishes within a small press environment despite its corporate positioning. The office at Appetite consists of one editor, a publishing assistant, a part-time office assistant and the publisher. Because of this, each book that comes through its office is given personalized attention and care and is

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<sup>9</sup> *Appetite*, accessed Sep 20, 2016. <http://penguinrandomhouse.ca/imprints/appetite-random-house/about>

considered in full by everyone. In addition, Appetite publishes only 15-20 titles per year, allowing for even more individual attention to detail, design and editing. Right off the bat, this fulfills two defining features of boutique: small-size environment and personalized attention.

Touchstone, on the other hand, publishes closer to 50-60 books per year with a staff of twenty-five, but it is still the smallest imprint at Simon & Schuster, its parent company. It calls itself a boutique imprint for many of the same reasons as Appetite. According to its website, Simon & Schuster is “a division of the CBS Corporation, one of the world’s premier media companies.”<sup>10</sup> Just like Penguin Random House, Simon & Schuster has a large number of imprints and divisions all over the world. However, Touchstone sets itself apart within this large corporation by emphasizing its “nimble, close-knit, and devoted team.”<sup>11</sup>

Square Peg by Penguin Random House UK has a similar mission statement to Appetite’s:

Each year we handpick just 20 projects, spanning narrative non-fiction, cookery, humour, design-led, illustrated books and entertaining reference. Each Square Peg book is unique, be it a gutsy memoir, a lovingly created cookbook, a killer idea, or simply laugh-out-loud humour.<sup>12</sup>

Right up front Square Peg highlights the small size of its annual list and therefore emphasizes the intimate and small nature of its imprint as well. Since Square Peg is so closely tied into the larger Penguin Random House UK organization, its website does not list the imprint staff. However, with such a small annual list, the number of staff dedicated to Square Peg titles alone would be small. Once again, all three of these imprints maintain a small-press atmosphere within the larger corporate organization.

## **Specialization**

For non-corporate boutique publishers, specialization is always a part of what makes them boutique. This is not as consistently true with corporate boutique publishing. Our three case studies are a good

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10 “About Simon & Schuster Canada” *Simon & Schuster*, accessed Sep 24, 2016 <http://www.simonandschuster.ca/pages/about-ss-canada>

11 *ibid*

12 “A Brief History of Square Peg” *Penguin Random House UK*, accessed Sep 15, 2016. <https://www.penguinrandomhouse.co.uk/publishers/vintage/square-peg/>



illustration of this inconsistency. As mentioned earlier, the reason for a corporate publisher to establish an imprint is often to allow for a particular line of books to be published, a line of books that targets a specific niche in the market. It would then seem reasonable to assume that imprints are more specialized or niche departments of the corporate publisher they belong to. However, the resulting mandate of an imprint is not always focused on one niche subject. Alternatively, a particular editor or publisher in the company is given the opportunity to start a new imprint in order to focus on their own editorial vision that can end up embracing a far broader range of genres.

Therefore, the reality is that imprints, even the boutique ones examined here, are not always as specialized in subject matter as one might expect. They are also often not as specialized as their non-corporate boutique publishing counterparts. Touchstone and Square Peg are examples of this. They both publish across a wide variety of subjects. This is particularly true for Touchstone. The only specificity that Touchstone offers on its website is that it seek “the projects that speak to us on a meaningful level.”<sup>13</sup> This has resulted in a backlist of books in categories that include literary and commercial fiction, pop culture and humor, self-help, narrative non-fiction and history, memoir and biography, and health and diet. Square Peg sticks to non-fiction, arguably a bit more specialized, but it still publishes across a wide range of topics including humour, reference books, memoirs, and history.

Appetite is the exception here since it focuses on lifestyle books and cookbooks—a specialization that further strengthens its boutique status. However, in the corporate boutique publishing world, being specialized is not mandatory in order to call oneself boutique.

### **Personalized attention and service**

All three of these imprints use specific vocabulary to describe their lists, vocabulary that describes how they handle the titles they publish. Words like “hand-picked,” “unique,” “crafted,” “original,” and “tailor-made.” All of these words point to a hands-on, personalized service that is given to each book. No matter the mandate of the boutique imprint or how specialized they are, the way they treat their titles is what stands out. And ultimately, this is also one of the biggest contributor to what makes them boutique. This is the result of all of the other features.

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13 *Touchstone*, accessed Nov 15, 2016. <http://www.simonandschusterpublishing.com/touchstone/>

Touchstone highlights this specifically in its ‘about’ section on its website: “[we deliver] each book on our list [with] careful feedback and crafting from a seasoned editor, a gorgeous, fresh package that speaks to the book’s audience and marketplace, and an original, tailor-made publicity and marketing campaign.”<sup>14</sup> It goes on to acknowledge in this same section that, “Every story is original, and every publishing program should be just as unique.”<sup>15</sup> This core value drives the high quality and tailored customer service that Touchstone provides.

Square Peg, on the other hand, does not address this feature directly on its own website. Instead, it links from its simple imprint landing page to the Penguin Random House UK (PRHUK) web page on author-publisher and agent-author relationships. It adopts its parent company’s statement as follows: “From the moment you submit your manuscript to the day when you hold your book for the first time, we are right beside you.”<sup>16</sup> What is intriguing is that Penguin Random House UK is a huge corporate publisher with a very large staff and many imprints, and yet it claims to give this individual attention across the board to all of its books. However, Square Peg could make a strong case that as the boutique imprint of PRHUK, it is in the best position within the corporate company to provide this personalized service. Square Peg, with its small publishing team, could highlight this a lot more on its imprint website. It already provides this very tailored service, all it need do is present it a lot better as a strength to its clients.

Appetite similarly does not directly call out the attention and service it provides all its authors, although it certainly does offer that personalized care—something I witnessed in my internship at Appetite. Appetite may address this in the welcome package they give new authors, but not on its public platform where future authors or agents would see it. A reputation for this kind of care and service for authors is developed and circulated in the small publishing world over time, but it is important for imprints to not solely rely on this and instead to also recognize these strengths in themselves up front and call them out for the public to see.

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<sup>14</sup> “About Touchstone,” *Simon & Schuster*, accessed Sep 24, 2016 <http://www.simonandschusterpublishing.com/touchstone/about.html>

<sup>15</sup> *ibid*

<sup>16</sup> “Authors and Agents,” *Penguin Random House UK*. Accessed Nov. 26, 2016. <https://www.penguin-randomhouse.co.uk/work-with-us/authors-agents/>

Thus, whether or not they directly address their ability to focus on individualized attention and service, all three case studies, enabled by the close-knit, relatively small publishing teams they have, mirror non-corporate boutique publishing and further illustrate how these corporate imprints can take on the boutique label.

### **High quality production and design**

Although this was not one of the four key features of boutique publishing, in the corporate world, where bigger budgets and more creative resources are available, personalized attention and service also translates into signature high quality, dynamic design, and ultimately giftability. This is not to say that small boutiques outside of the corporate world cannot have high quality design or production value, but in corporate boutiques, this is a defining feature that their access to resources allows.

Our three case studies all demonstrate this attention to quality. Square Peg directly acknowledges its design and production strengths in its mandate: “Our books are beautifully designed, stylishly produced and published with flair.”<sup>17</sup> Touchstone pitches itself in the same way, highlighting how its books are presented as a “gorgeous, fresh package.”<sup>18</sup> And finally, Appetite does not directly address production and design in its mission statement, but a quick examination of the books it has published, places it firmly in the same category.

On the following page are some examples from both the Appetite, Square Peg, and Touchstone lists that illustrate these production and design strengths.

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17 *Square Peg*, accessed Nov 15, 2016. <https://www.penguinrandomhouse.co.uk/publishers/vintage/square-peg/>

18 “About Simon & Schuster Canada” *Simon & Schuster*, accessed Sep 24, 2016 <http://www.simonandschuster.ca/pages/about-ss-canada>

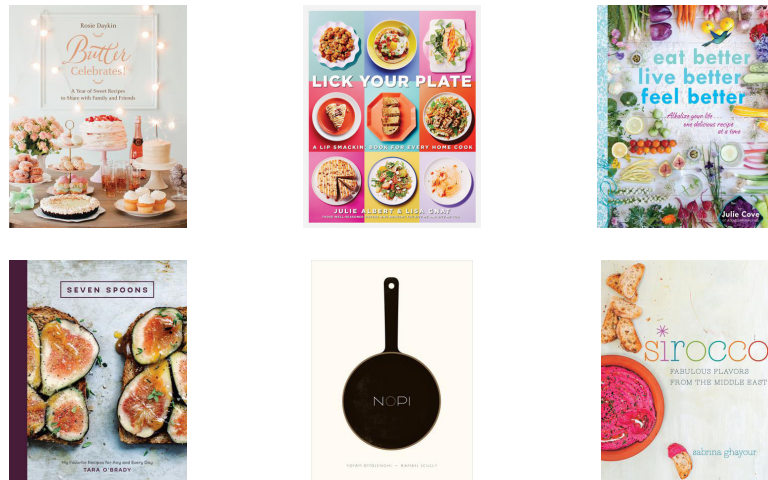


Figure 4: A selection of Appetite titles

The Appetite examples above illustrate the diverse approaches they take with their books. What unifies all of these is the dynamic colour and bold font that produce bright, fresh designs. *Butter Celebrates*, for instance, has the unique soft and delicate feel of Rosie Daykin’s work while *Lick Your Plate* has a more modern, crisp look. And yet, both hold to the Appetite values of clean photography and sweeping type that brings out the personality of each author. The Appetite designers took both of these author’s already established aesthetics, such as Daykin’s pastel coloured frosting and dainty decoration, and extend it into book form.

All Appetite books also have a distinct giftable quality to them. Yes, they are full of practical cooking, health, lifestyle and travel information and tips, but they are also full of colour photography, illustrative graphics and creative font usage that makes them more than reference books. Cookbooks in particular used to be mostly plain, full of mostly text. Small sketches or the occasional photo to highlight a dish may have accompanied the recipes and narrative. There is no longer the market for this. Think back to your mother or grandmother’s kitchen, the *Joy of Cooking* up on a high shelf, always there for the essentials. Cookbooks like this were reference texts used only for cooks. Cookbooks as presented by Appetite are gifts, beautiful pieces of art in and of themselves that are an extension of often already established visual staples of the author. And because of this, boutique cookbooks are also often not used purely for cooking—they may sit around beautifying the owner’s kitchen more than providing useful culinary tips. This gift element ties in very well with the origins of boutique: the small boutique shops that often sold gifts or other prized and beautiful objects.

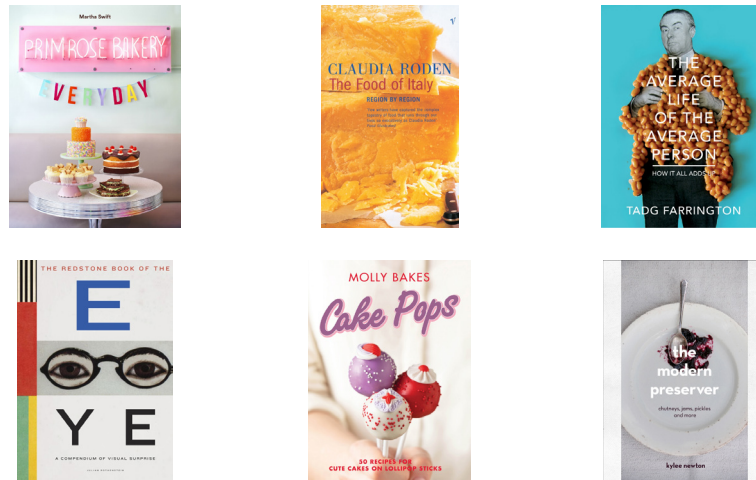


Figure 5: A selection of Square Peg titles

Square Peg books would also look great adorning your shelves or appearing out of the folds of wrapping paper on your friend's lap. They too are highly giftable. Square Peg is based out of the UK so its design has a more European touch. Photography overflows the boundaries of the page more often than not, feeling less framed-in in comparison to North American designs. However, the treatment of each author according to their own style, as with Appetite books, is also present here. Bright, colourful and bold, their designs look good on your bookshelf as much as their content ruminates well in your mind. Once again, having access to the entire Penguin Random House UK design staff gives the corporate boutique publishers the potential opportunity to pick designers according to each project's needs.

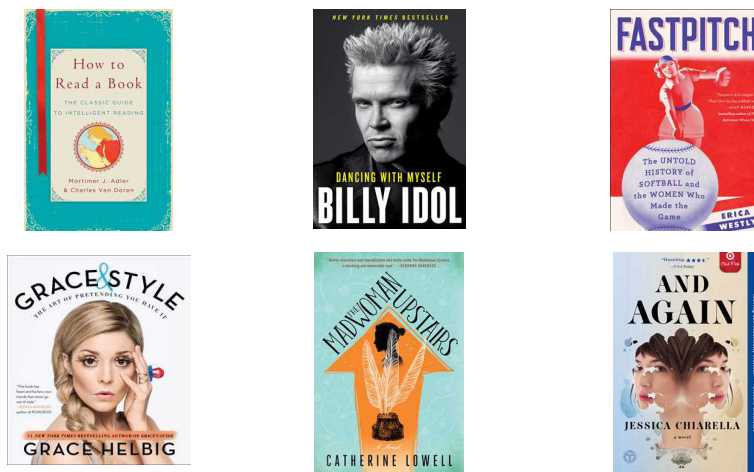


Figure 6: A selection of Touchstone titles

Touchstone publishes a more diverse array of genres than any of the other corporate imprints here examined. However, this also means that a wider variety of design needs need to be met in order to maintain the “tailor-made” service that they proclaim to have.<sup>19</sup> As one can see from the examples above, strong, individualized designs are seen across their backlist, each highlighting not only the subject matter and genre of the book, but also the flavour of the author.

For all three of these imprints the larger stable of designers they are able to draw from enables them to truly tailor each cover and interior layout to the author’s needs and previously established visual identity. This is a key benefit of being a corporate boutique publisher.

To summarize, because of the power of the large marketing, design, distribution, editorial, and publicity teams that make up a corporate publisher, each imprint has the resources and ability to personalize and celebrate each author in a sophisticated, unique, and dynamic way. The ability to harness this power is key for corporate boutique imprints. Every imprint in a corporate publisher has these resources, but when you combine this with the other boutique features as detailed above—a small-press atmosphere, a publicly stated emphasis on personalized attention, and a certain level of specialization—you get the unique corporate boutique phenomena.

The non-corporate boutique publishers claim that it is their boutique elements of size, specialization, and service that set them apart from corporate publishing, and yet these corporate boutique imprints are proving that they too can occupy this space. It is these exact same boutique features found in these corporate imprints that make them similar to the small presses, not different. Corporate boutique is claiming a slice of the boutique pie.

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19 *Touchstone*, accessed Nov 15, 2016. <http://www.simonandschusterpublishing.com/touchstone/>

## RECOMMENDATIONS

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Based on of the above research and analysis, I have developed three recommendations. These are suggestions for corporate publishers who already have boutique imprints or others who wish to enter this field.

### Recommendation one: Seek inspiration

Each one of the corporate boutique imprints analyzed above has their own strengths. There are aspects of each presentation and business that give them their edge, their particular take on boutique. The earlier analysis was focused primarily on what they had in common with one another to make them boutique. Below is a list that establishes their distinct strengths, the aspects of their positioning that are unique to them and their individual boutique articulation. They are what branding can then highlight and celebrate:

#### Square Peg:

- Creative, clean mission statement that concisely puts forward what they are looking for — “a taste for something a bit different” — as well as establishes how they treat the books they take on — “Our books are beautifully designed, stylishly produced and published with flair.”<sup>1</sup>
- Excellent use of vocabulary to describe their work, vocabulary that solidifies their boutique status: “eclectic” and “hand-picked” list.
- Diverse range of cover design styles. This shows potential authors and agents that each title gets personalized attention and the individual author’s voice and visual identity is fostered.

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1 “A Brief History of Square Peg,” *Penguin Random House UK*, accessed Sep 27, 2016, <https://www.penguinrandomhouse.co.uk/publishers/vintage/square-peg/>

#### Touchstone:

- Ability to publish across a wide range of subjects and genres with the same boutique values. Touchstone proves that you can maintain boutique status while diversifying what you publish.
- On their website they directly state their position of advantage: “We like to call ourselves a boutique imprint with the power of a Big 5 publishing house supporting our efforts.”<sup>2</sup>
- They directly acknowledge on their website the personalized attention and service that they provide their authors.
- They have a website of their own — versus a small section on their parent publisher’s website — with a full catalogue of all their books; clear introduction to their aesthetics, values, social media connections, authors etc.; and detailed descriptions of their staff. Including staff introductions on the website is very smart for a boutique providing specialized attention to each author.

#### Appetite:

- Appetite already does a great job of adhering to their authors’ brands or visual identity while maintaining a visually cohesive list.
- They produce, not only well-designed, but also highly giftable books — a quality that can be emulated across genre and tie a list together. Out of the three case studies, Appetite is the strongest example of this.
- Their imprint logo design, colour, and kerning reflect the overall dynamic design of their titles.

Each imprint, and any new corporate boutique aiming to establish themselves, can learn from these strengths. These are the elements that make corporate boutique imprints a success. However, there is something across the board that all of these examples could take more to heart.

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2 “About Us,” *Simon & Schuster – Touchstone*, accessed Sep 27, 2016 <http://www.simonandschuster-publishing.com/touchstone/about.html>



## Recommendation two: Branding

As mentioned earlier, corporate publishing often lacks strategic branding of their imprints. The visual identity that is created for the publisher across digital and print platforms is seen by readers when they purchase books, if they even notice it. Increasing customer, or in the case of books, reader awareness of the imprint's brand is rarely prioritized. Of course, the books that are published by the imprint need to be sold, so naturally they are what is promoted and made visible through marketing efforts. I believe this focus on individual authors instead of on promoting the imprint as a brand to readers is inevitable. However, where there is huge branding potential is not in increasing awareness of the imprint among readers, but in creating an imprint brand that targets authors and agents directly. Forget branding for the public reader or customer, sell yourself as a corporate boutique imprint to authors and agents. These are the real customers you are poised to serve.

Yes, every publisher tries to attract great authors, without authors publishers would not exist. Yes, other imprints can offer excellent design and editorial support. However, I believe that corporate boutique imprints are in the best position in the publishing world today to promote and celebrate an author's already existing brand. The imprint has the small-press environment to be able to provide personalized care and service with the power and resources of the corporate publishing world behind them. This is what makes them stand out both against other imprints and against non-corporate boutique publishers. And this is what corporate boutique imprints need to shout to the world; this is what they need to *consciously highlight* in order to stand out.

Today, more and more authors that are selected to be traditionally published—as opposed to self-published—already have a well-established platform. This is often one of the main reasons they are selected for publication. They have platforms in their day-to-day lives as lecturers, teachers, TV hosts, actors, celebrated artists, victims of tragedy, successful professionals, bloggers, Youtubers, Instagramers... Or anything else that makes readers want to hear from them. Because of this, it is often no longer a straightforward task for the publisher to represent the author. The publisher must take into account all the previous exposure the author has had to the public. This includes the visual identity and voice the author has created for themselves through their web presence, their social media activity, their public persona, and sometimes even commercial products already associated with the author. Corporate boutique imprints are in the perfect place to best serve these

kinds of authors. And yes, these imprints already try to attract authors and agents, but by making this effort more *conscious*, by directly pointing out why they are in the best position to serve this kind of author, corporate imprints will greatly benefit. The following will illustrate briefly what this could look like.

Out of the case studies examined in this report, Appetite does the best job of this with their authors; although even they could emphasize this strength more directly in their recruitment of new authors and in the wording of their mandate.

One of Appetite's most successful example of supporting author branding is seen in *Batch* by Joel MacCharles and Dana Harrison. In 2008, MacCharles and Harrison launched the blog, *WellPreserved.ca*. They began sharing their cooking, foraging, hunting, farming, and fishing experiences and quickly grew their following. They have now archived over 1,700 articles online and have Facebook, Twitter, Reddit, and Pinterest pages boasting a considerable audience. Appetite took the visual identity that *WellPreserved* already had and through clever cooperation between in-house designers and the authors, they extended it into a book concept. This kind of creative process has the potential to help expand the author's brand across all of their platforms. For example, through the production process for *Batch*, author Joel MacCharles created a number of gorgeous graphics and illustrations that now can be found sprinkled not only throughout the book but also on the author's website. Through working closely with Appetite publishers and designers, MacCharles was able to access the expertise of an award-winning team, that not only informed the book, but ultimately has the potential to also influence their visual identity across all platforms. The following is their striking cover:



Figure 7: Batch final cover

When you flip through the pages of their book, you see a well-developed and recognizable style throughout that parallel their online aesthetic. The following screenshot from their website shows the rusty-shaded photography that is then reflected on the cover of the print book, above. Earthy tones and a combination of handwritten and bold fonts appear in both print and digital articulations as well.

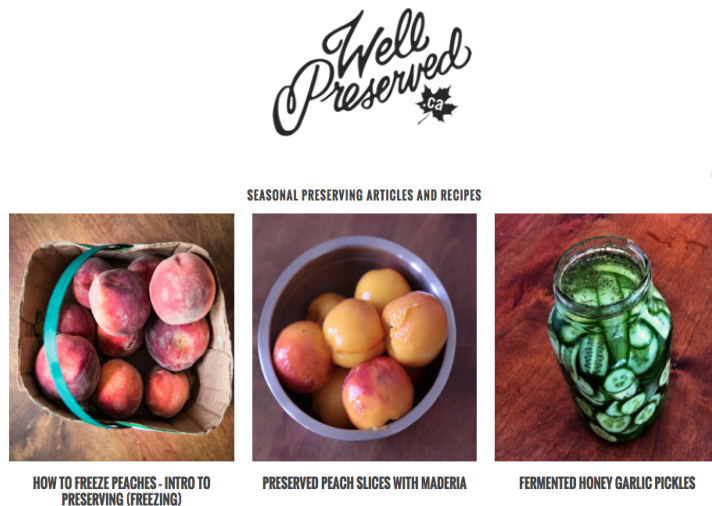


Figure 8: WellPreserved.ca logo and recipe selection from website

The paired use of embellished hand-lettering in their logo and sans serif font used for the author names, subtitle etc. was translated into the interior of the printed book as well:

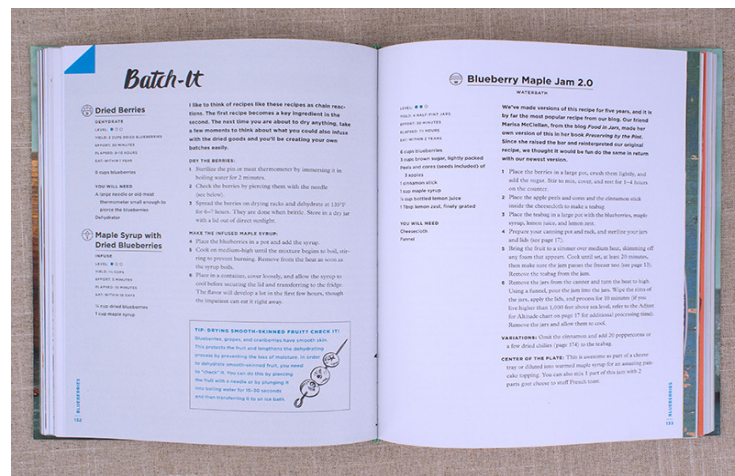


Figure 9: Bath interior pages example

Thus, through working with a strategic publishing team, authors like those of *Batch* have the opportunity to gain valuable feedback on their brand aesthetics that could be translated into more brand extensions beyond the book, if they choose to go that way. For instance, bloggers like these could use the style guides that were refined through the book publishing process, to create branded products. The authors of *Batch* have not taken it this far yet, but the potential is always there for authors served by corporate boutique imprints.

For Appetite, working to further develop and expand the branding of certain established authors across their print and web presence has seemingly developed naturally. However, this still is not as strategic as they could make it. There is great potential to utilize this further. For instance, corporate boutiques could offer an exit package for authors once their book is published. ‘Exit package’ here refers to a document that is given to the author once their book has been launched into the marketplace. This could include the style guides that were strategically refined and polished for the author’s brand throughout the publishing process. Appetite and all corporate boutique imprints out there have this great opportunity to highlight their ability to provide these services. They are in the perfect position from which to attract authors who need a powerful publisher to give them the individual attention necessary to carefully work with the brand they have already established online and in their professions.

If one is starting a corporate boutique imprint from scratch, one should set up this strategic author/agent oriented framing from the start and if one is like Appetite, Square Peg, or Touchstone, take the most successful backlist boutique publications of author brands and highlight these as examples of the incredible corporate boutique advantage.

### Recommendation three: Growth potential

Whether or not one decides to emphasize author targeted branding as encouraged above, one other possible direction for a corporate boutique imprint to expand into is custom publishing. This means taking on some of the features of other non-corporate boutiques: publishing and branding an organization or author’s book as a for-hire service provider.

This would mean dividing operations of a corporate boutique into two branches: traditional and custom. Both would receive boutique treatment

but the business model would be different. This doesn't have to be a big operation; it could look like just a few books per year but would bring in additional income and provide excellent samples of branded work for the traditional side of the model.

The unique opportunity in this business model, aside from the additional revenue stream, are the strong partnerships the publisher can build with companies, organizations, and individuals. These business partnerships can have a different working dynamic to traditional author-publisher relationships, depending on the project. For instance, some custom published books are intended as a promotional product for the organization and thus close coordination between the creative or marketing team of the company and professionals in the publishing house is necessary. This has the potential to lead to further opportunities for both parties beyond one book project and can also mean distribution of the imprint's books outside of normal distribution streams (e.g. trade fairs, museums, restaurants, non-profits, charity organizations, educational institutions etc.). Examples of this kind of project could look like a partnership with a local art museum to put together a promotional exhibit catalogue, publishing the cookbook for a large and successful restaurant chain, working to put together the history of a charity organization for distribution on their centennial, or working with the regional tourism center to produce a specialized newcomers guide.

This model also provides an excellent example to boutique publishers of putting author relationships first. When the funding for the project is coming from the author, the author's needs and desires are even more at the forefront. If a corporate boutique chooses to strategically target authors and agents, as was recommended above, then author relationship development and cultivation is key. So if the author is willing to pitch in financially, then why not be willing to enter into this kind of partnership as well?

## CONCLUSION

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To conclude, the term boutique originated from the French word to indicate a small, specialized shop. Used across many industries, ‘boutique’ still reflects its small origins. In the book world, many models of publishing have adopted this term too. This report explored the ways in which self-publishing, custom publishing, traditional small press publishing, and even corporate publishing use this term. Specialization, a small staff team, personalized attention and service, high quality design and production, and for the non-corporate book world the publisher’s status as an alternative to big publishing, all figure into this definition.

It turns out that a question about what ‘boutique publishing’ really is, taught me not only about the many flavors of boutique across self-publishing, custom, and small press, but also led me to believe that Appetite has a unique place in the boutique publishing world. The corporate articulation of boutique, as seen by a number of other corporate imprints, combines personalization and power in an unmatched concoction. These imprints are poised for even further success. With the awareness of their unique positioning and every advantage this gives them, corporate boutique imprints have the opportunity to consciously brand themselves to the right audience—authors and agents—and ultimately stand out both in the corporate and custom publishing worlds.

Appetite by Penguin Random House Canada is an exceptional example of corporate boutique publishing. Not only that, but Appetite has the potential to reach further heights if it highlights its strengths and strategically shares them with the authors and agents out there that wish to further explore and develop author branding through book publication.

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