

**Bringing Self-Publishing Services
to Corporate Clients:
A Business Development
Feasibility Study**

by
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Abstract

This report aims to evaluate the feasibility of Page Two Strategy's (Page Two) proposed venture to expand the reach of their self-publishing services to new corporate clients in a service offering called Corporate Publishing Consulting (CPC). The evaluation is based on information provided by Page Two principals Finkelstein and White throughout various discussions. Chapter one outlines Page Two's existing business model, as it relates to corporate clients, and breaks down the company's unique service structure. Chapter two evaluates Page Two's tangible and intangible company resources, and analyzes the strengths and weaknesses of CPC, and its expansion. Chapter three discusses the external market factors that drive and challenge the expansion of CPC. Chapter four outlines Page Two's current operations model—how they attract clients and the process through which they complete a self-publishing project—in order to determine how the expansion of CPC might affect operations.

Keywords: self-publishing; content marketing; corporate publishing; custom publishing; publishing process; feasibility study

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Introduction

In 2013, Trena White and Jesse Finkelstein co-founded Page Two Strategies (Page Two) with a mission to offer their clients sound strategic advice, innovative publishing ideas, and a level of service customization that is unique to each client and project. White and Finkelstein each began their careers in traditional publishing. Before Page Two, White was an editor with McClelland & Stewart and later moved on to work as an editor and then a publisher with Douglas & McIntyre (D&M) and Greystone Books. Finkelstein was formerly the associate publisher at Raincoast Books and eventually became chief operating officer at D&M. Both were in key positions at D&M when the company filed for creditor protection in 2012, an event that shocked much of the Canadian publishing industry. Says Finkelstein, “that was when the idea for building a company together really took root... We both felt we wanted to continue working in publishing and we knew that if we did, it would need to be under very different circumstances... It couldn’t look uniquely like a traditional publishing company, because we had seen how difficult it is to do that. We had seen how much risk is involved, and we had also seen how it’s difficult to be as nimble and flexible as we really wanted to be.”¹

Finkelstein maintains that the idea for their start-up is not a direct result of D&M’s closure, but somehow it is difficult to discuss Page Two without recognizing the massive disruptions that have occurred since White and Finkelstein first began in the industry—disruptions that are still occurring today. In the preface to the fifth edition of Thomas Woll’s *Publishing for Profit*, he says, “I think it’s fair to say that these [past] fifteen years have witnessed the most fundamental changes to the publishing industry since Gutenberg.”² Regardless of whether or not Woll’s assessment is accurate, no one in the publishing industry can deny the importance of disruptive innovations like portable reading devices, ecommerce, online media, print on demand, and the explosion of self-publishing tools, on our current conception of books and publishing.

¹ Jesse Finkelstein (principal, Page Two Strategies), in discussion with the author, September 10, 2015.

² Thomas Woll, *Publishing for Profit: Successful Bottom-Line Management for Book Publishers*, 5th ed. (Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 2014), xvii.

Page Two is many things: it is the principals' attempt to redefine the business of publishing, to try something new, to provide solutions for an industry in flux. Page Two is not simply a consultancy, and it is not a publisher in the traditional sense (although it may fit Michael Bhaskar's definition of publishers as "the overseers of a process resulting in cultural products entering the public realm," whereby "that process need not be specified in advance"³). Page Two is best described as an agency: bringing clients and publishing professionals or platforms together, project by project, helping "authors and companies make smart publishing decisions and produce their non-fiction work to the highest possible standards."⁴ In this way, Page Two is wholly service-driven rather than product-driven, and their services range greatly.

During my time as an intern with Page Two, in the summer of 2015, I saw their broad spectrum of services and the diverse clientele who benefits from them. I sat in on consultations to help authors develop book concepts and strategies, wrote new material and copy for self-published books, edited and evaluated non-fiction manuscripts for first-time and experienced self-published authors, wrote a publishing strategy document for a memoirist who needed marketing advice, helped develop a corporate publishing strategy for an NGO with an in-house publishing program, developed pitch lists for Page Two's literary agency work, and edited book proposals for new authors looking to land the best book deal. These are just some examples of the multifarious projects that Page Two takes on.

For now, though it is still early days, Page Two seems to be enjoying healthy growth. According to Page Two principals, their resources are extensive and well tested, their clientele is happy and growing, their overhead is minimal and their cash flow is steady, their operations are manageable and they are able to scale up as they get busier. So, the principals are ready for the next step in expanding their business. White and Finkelstein see immediate growth opportunity in one particular service offering, called

³ Michael Bhaskar, *The Content Machine: Towards a Theory of Publishing from the Printing Press to the Digital Network*, (New York: Anthem Press, 2013), 37.

⁴ Jesse Finkelstein and Trena White, "Home," accessed November 24, 2015, Page Two Strategies, <http://www.pagetwostrategies.com/>.

Corporate Publishing Consulting (CPC), a corporate self-publishing service that shares similarities with content marketing. Says Finkelstein, “in order to grow, we need to continue to work on projects of various size and scale, with clients who vary in scale as well... [Corporate Publishing Consulting] projects tend to be larger in scope, they tend to be slightly longer term in some cases, and they also bring in more revenue per project than most of the individual author projects.”⁵

Although Page Two has landed a handful of big corporate projects, they are not consistently attracting these corporate clients as much as they are attracting smaller projects from their well-established authorpreneur client base. This client base makes up the bulk of Page Two’s business; the CPC service, on the other hand, is in its infancy, and the principals are still looking for ways to better define, market, and deliver the service to new corporate clients. While the principals strive to “be very nimble and flexible in [their] approach to publishing and to client services,”⁶ they also know that any efforts to develop a clear business development plan will only increase the success of CPC. The first step of that plan is to evaluate how CPC will fit into their current business model.

As such, this report aims to evaluate the feasibility of Page Two’s proposed venture to expand the reach of their self-publishing services to new corporate clients. The evaluation is based on information provided by White and Finkelstein throughout various discussions. Chapter one outlines Page Two’s existing business model, as it relates to corporate clients, and breaks down the company’s unique service structure. Chapter two evaluates Page Two’s tangible and intangible company resources, and analyzes the strengths and weaknesses of CPC, and its expansion. Chapter three discusses the external market factors that drive and challenge the expansion of CPC. Chapter four outlines Page Two’s current operations model—how they attract clients and the process through which they complete a self-publishing project—in order to determine how the expansion of CPC might affect operations.

⁵ Finkelstein, interview, September 10, 2015.

⁶ *ibid.*

Chapter 1: Company Overview

Combating Overhead with a Lean Business Model

According to their website copy, the principals launched Page Two “with a desire to work at the forefront of the changing publishing landscape,” and they would do this by tapping into newly emerging industry trends and technologies like self-publishing, increased use of freelancers, and print on demand services (all of which are conducive to nimbleness and flexibility in their business model.)⁷ The principals took advantage of increased interest in self-publishing—an obvious area for service development. They realized “traditional publishing really didn’t make sense for all authors and all books,” and they “wanted to bring best practices they learned in traditional publishing to self-publishers.”⁸ They also struck an alliance with Toronto-based Transatlantic Agency, affording them associate agent status and giving their authors “access to the infrastructure of an established, respected literary agency.”⁹

They drew from their roster of industry connections in the freelance world. Contract work was (and still is) quickly on the rise and was encompassing a significant portion of the Canadian labour market,¹⁰ especially in industries like publishing where company mergers, downsizing, or bankruptcies were becoming the status quo. The principals created a list of trusted freelancers who could provide Page Two with all the human capital (i.e. the collection of skills, expertise, and talent) needed to run multifaceted publishing services. Their industry connections were also invaluable assets in helping them secure trade distribution for their clients into brick-and-mortar stores, a channel that is notoriously difficult for self-publishers to access. They continually stay apprised of publishing technologies that could benefit their clientele, and they often recommend or even manage their client’s projects on platforms like IngramSpark and

⁷ “Home,” Page Two Strategies, <http://www.pagetwostrategies.com/>.

⁸ Trena White (principal, Page Two Strategies), in discussion with the author, March 2, 2015.

⁹ Jesse Finkelstein and Trena White, “Literary Agency,” accessed November 24, 2015, Page Two Strategies, <http://www.pagetwostrategies.com/services/literary-agency/>.

¹⁰ Chris Sorensen, “The End of the Job,” *Macleans.ca*, January 20, 2012, <http://www.macleans.ca/economy/business/the-end-of-the-job/>.

BookBaby. Platforms that offer ebook and print on demand distribution to ecommerce sites, like Amazon and Chapters.ca, became so integral to Page Two's recommended self-publishing process that the principals had to become expert users themselves.

These core components of Page Two's business model allow the principals to promote various publishing services geared to the differing needs of prospective clients—services that are not limited to the following: book production, editing, distribution, marketing, project management, publishing consulting, and literary agency representation. As a result of their varied services, they earn revenue in two ways: directly from clients through fee-for-service projects and from book deal commissions. Combined, these methods offer a fairly low-risk alternative to a traditional publishing model based on upfront investment through acquisition, author advances, and royalties. So far, Page Two's lean business model maintains low overhead: a part-time salary for only one staff member, full-time salaries for the two principals, a small budget for travel and marketing that is stipulated by revenue surpluses, costs for internet, server space, subscriptions, and memberships. They reduce fixed costs where they can, particularly through in-kind service exchanges. For example, they have access to free office space in exchange for free book production.

For now, White and Finkelstein are at the heart of Page Two, managing the day-to-day operations of the company as any small business owners would, and often taking on all or many of the responsibilities of publishers, agents, editors, and marketers in their interactions with clients. For example, White and Finkelstein are responsible for leading consultations, writing publishing strategy documents, managing book production, and acting as literary agents. Page Two also has a part-time project manager as the third member of their modest staff. Their alliance with Transatlantic Agency provides them with agency support, including leads and infrastructure for their agency authors. Beyond that, Page Two relies solely on its network of freelancers—writers, editors, designers, marketers, publicists, and consultants—who are subcontracted as collaborators or advisors for virtually any scope of project.

The principals built this lean business model for two reasons: (1) it is scalable and allows them to pivot their business to meet demand, without maxing out on resources, and (2) it adds value to their suite of service offerings because they can customize a team of professionals for each unique publishing project. Furthermore, taking on the role of a service provider allows Page Two to ride the wave of disruption rolling through the industry today, especially because the principals don't lock their clients into any specific service package. Bhaskar notes the advantages to service-centered businesses, saying, "the difference between product and service businesses may ultimately be the difference between those that survive and those that don't."¹¹ Finally, Page Two hasn't invested all its resources into self-publishing; it also operates within the traditional publishing model through its literary agency work. The spectrum of different clients and projects afforded to them because of their adaptive business model and customizable services "keeps Page Two on its toes," according to Finkelstein.¹² The principals are constantly learning from and engaging with new publishing ideas and innovations, so they are always ready to offer creative solutions to publishing challenges.

Using Self-Publishing to Page Two's Advantage

Self-publishing has been around for a long time, but within that time, we have seen many more failed self-publishers than success stories. Woll notes, "authors who self-published were viewed as somewhat inferior to authors accepted for publication by "legitimate" publishers."¹³ Even historic self-publishers like Jane Austen and Marcel Proust only resorted to self-publishing through vanity presses after often numerous rejections from publishing houses.¹⁴ It is not until recently that self-publishing has earned an acceptable reputation in the publishing world—not until recently that the roles of "the author as self-publisher and the publisher as a fee-for-service entity" have been legitimized.¹⁵ This

¹¹ Bhaskar, *The Content Machine*, 119-120.

¹² Finkelstein, interview, September 10, 2015.

¹³ Woll, *Publishing for Profit*, 8-9.

¹⁴ Jamie FitzGerald, "Notable Moments in Self-Publishing History: A Timeline," *Poets & Writers*, posted November 1, 2013,

http://www.pw.org/content/notable_moments_in_selfpublishing_history_a_timeline?cmnt_all=1

¹⁵ *ibid.*

change has occurred for many reasons, not all of which are because of demand in niche categories, accessibility of digital content, and improvements in the quality of self-published titles. At Page Two, clients are often attracted to self-publishing because they are established thought leaders and subject matter experts who already have direct access to their book market. Traditional publishing may not entice them because trade sales and the extra few hundred dollars in marketing spend that a publisher might provide are not essential to the success of their book.

Now, because of the rise in self-publishing services, publishing is more accessible than ever. Anyone can produce, publish, distribute, and market a book using various online tools, like IngramSpark, BookBaby, iBooks, Kobo Writing Life, Kindle Direct Publishing, not to mention a slew of other platforms outside the trade publishing realm that can facilitate publication of innumerable content formats. These tools and services allow many self-publishers to compete for market share against established publishing companies. A 2015 *Author Earnings Report* notes forty-eight percent of ebooks purchased by consumers in 2014 through ecommerce sites like Amazon, Apple's iBookstore, the Barnes & Noble Nook store, the Kobo US Bookstore, and the GooglePlay bookstore were published either by self-published indie authors or Amazon imprints.¹⁶ (Of course, these numbers showcase self-publishing in terms of trade distribution and sales; self-publishing that occurs outside of these trade channels without ISBNs is nearly impossible to track.)

Despite these numbers, however, publishing houses still dominate the print market, and according to the same study, they also overshadow self-publishers in terms of gross revenue for ebook sales. Furthermore, curated bestseller lists like the *New York Times*, *The Globe and Mail*, and even lists through Amazon and Chapters either shut out self-published titles or isolate self-published titles into separate lists. Major literary awards, like the Governor General's Literary Awards and the Scotiabank Giller Prize, do

¹⁶ "September 2015 Author Earnings Report," AuthorEarnings.com, accessed January 20, 2016, <http://authorearnings.com/report/september-2015-author-earnings-report/>.

the same. Although the market has shifted in favour of self-publishers—especially since the advent of the ebook—there are still many barriers to success.

At Page Two, author clients who want to self-publish are often inexperienced with publishing processes and best practices. Sometimes they lack fundamental skills needed to publish a book, or sometimes they simply lack the time it takes to truly pursue the role of a writer *and* publisher. It is true that now, more than ever, book authors have a slew of publishing options at their fingertips, but for new authors, this makes the publishing process that much more complicated and overwhelming. To help balance the playing field, Page Two gives self-publishers the resources, guidance, and support it takes to make high-quality products, compete in the market strategically, and “make the most of all the industry has to offer.”¹⁷ Page Two believes that the business of publishing does not need to be arcane or exclusive to publishing professionals.¹⁸ They educate new entrants to the field in industry trends, standards, and best practices, pushing them to think critically and to make informed decisions about target audiences, formats, pricing, scheduling, budget, production, distribution, sales, and marketing. Page Two also recommends the best service providers, contractors, and platforms for an author’s specific self-publishing project. They even manage the project if the client so chooses. “We wanted to create a kind of agency that would allow us to support the work of authors, experts, and organizations in a wide variety of ways, because we knew that as publishing is changing, so are the people who are interested in publishing,” says Finkelstein, “they have different motives, different needs and goals, and we wanted to be able to support those needs and goals in ways that are most true to the individual project and client.”¹⁹

Page Two’s consulting and self-publishing services are appealing to authors: they give authors the professional support they need to publish their book successfully, while allowing them to benefit from self-publishing perks like expedited publication, higher

¹⁷ “Home,” Page Two Strategies, <http://www.pagetwostrategies.com/>.

¹⁸ “Publishing Doesn’t Need to Be Exclusive,” Page Two Strategies, February 14, 2014, <http://www.pagetwostrategies.com/publishing-doesnt-need-to-be-exclusive/>.

¹⁹ Finkelstein, interview, September 10, 2015.

royalties, creative control, and copyright control. Page Two's services are also simply meant to provide authors with the professional resources they might receive from a traditional publisher in order to create the best possible product. Sometimes this means that Page Two's self-published authors grab the attention of traditional publishers, helping to complete a circuit where self-publishers and traditional publishers can benefit from one another. This is the kind of publishing ecosystem that Page Two has built: one where unique ideas and expertise are harnessed from self-published authors and perfected for trade publication, where an author might self-publish one book and then traditionally publish the next, and where Page Two serves as the hub between two worlds that are not mutually exclusive.

Customizing Services to Meet Clients' Needs

Page Two promotes a long list of service offerings, but their service model is most clearly defined by the three types of clients they serve: agency authors, individual self-publishers, and corporate clients. Agency authors are hand selected or headhunted by Page Two's principals, often through the author's proposal submission or from other leads. Individual self-publishers, who are paying clients, approach Page Two for a variety of reasons and at various stages of their book development. Often they need assistance and advice on book production, distribution, and marketing options. Sometimes they pay Page Two to produce their book under their own imprint name. Corporate clients rely on similar self-publishing expertise to that which Page Two provides to their individual clients. Depending on the scale of the company and the intricacy of its publishing program (or lack thereof), Page Two can assist and advise on issues of program alignment, audience development, content strategy, content repurposing, editorial mission, publishing operations, production workflow, and distribution and marketing strategies.

Client Type	Publishing Model	Service Offering 1	Service Offering 2
Agency Authors	Traditional Publishing	Agency Representation	N/A
Individual Self-Publishers	Self-Publishing	Self-Publishing Consulting	Book Production and/or Project Management
Corporate Clients		Corporate Publishing Consulting	

Figure 1: Page Two’s customizable service model

The difference between an individual self-publisher and a corporate client is not always clear-cut. The majority of Page Two’s individual self-publishers are clients who consider themselves “authorpreneurs”; they use book publishing as “part of a broader business model,”²⁰ as a way to extend their business brands, or to develop their small businesses. Often, they use book publishing as a way to market their expertise and businesses, but they also use it as an ancillary activity to generate supplemental revenue. On occasion, Page Two will assist in the production of a memoir or other personal passion project that does not relate to the client’s business activities, but on the whole, authorpreneurs are Page Two’s core client base. However, authorpreneurs—and the self-owned businesses they wish to promote—still function on a smaller scale than the corporate clients Page Two is now looking to attract. Corporate clients are generally scaled up in terms of expanded workload, greater number of staff, higher profit margins, and more robust systems to deal with a higher number of services or product lines. Unlike many authorpreneurs, the businesses or organizations that use CPC often have corporate identities and brands that are separate from their owners or stakeholders. More importantly, the books they create are sometimes not monetized, but are used solely as marketing and communications material.

²⁰ Jennifer McCartney, “A Look Ahead to Self-Publishing in 2015,” *PublishersWeekly.com*, January 16, 2015, <http://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/authors/pw-select/article/65299-a-look-ahead-to-self-publishing-in-2015.html>.

Although Page Two categorizes their clients in this way and filters them through a somewhat prescribed service model, there is still a level of customization that goes into every project depending on the client’s needs. For example, an individual self-publisher might approach Page Two for consulting and expedited book production services, whereby upon evaluation of the book, the author platform, and their expertise, Page Two and the client might deem it feasible to secure a traditional trade book deal with an interested publisher, which would afford the author wider distribution and stronger marketing. In that case, Page Two would instead represent the client in their proposal submissions and contract negotiations. Another example: Page Two offers editorial consulting to authors who are looking for feedback on finished manuscripts or book ideas that are still in development. These authors are sometimes undecided as to whether they want to self-publish or seek a traditional book deal. In these examples, Page Two cannot adhere to a linear service model (nor do they want to); sometimes clients move through their service model backward or across their service model laterally, depending on the client’s needs and the state and potential of the project. Says Finkelstein, “our competitive edge is the fact that we are so nimble and we can take a very customized approach to any project. We don’t have a certain packaged offering or a pipeline that you would either fit into or not... In terms of Corporate Publishing Consulting, I would say all of those things apply. Organizations or corporations really of any size will have constraints on their time, on budget, on resources, and we can design programs around who they are and what they need, rather than the other way around.”²¹

²¹ Finkelstein, interview, September 10, 2015.

Chapter 2: Internal Analysis

This chapter assesses Page Two’s financial position, analyzing revenue earned by each client type: agency authors, individual self-publishers, and corporate clients. It also outlines the strongest and weakest points of CPC and the resources needed for its expansion.

Expanding Corporate Publishing Consulting

Page Two is attracting fewer corporate clients than any other type of client, but both principals see great potential for growth in this area. According to White, “the work we do with individual authors (agency authors and individual self-publishers) consumes most of our time, but corporate projects represent the greatest revenue.”²² For example, Page Two has approximately thirty-five agency authors and twenty individual self-publishers at any given time, which account for about five percent and forty-five percent of their revenue respectively. Whereas the five or so corporate clients that they take on at any given time account for about fifty percent of their revenue.²³

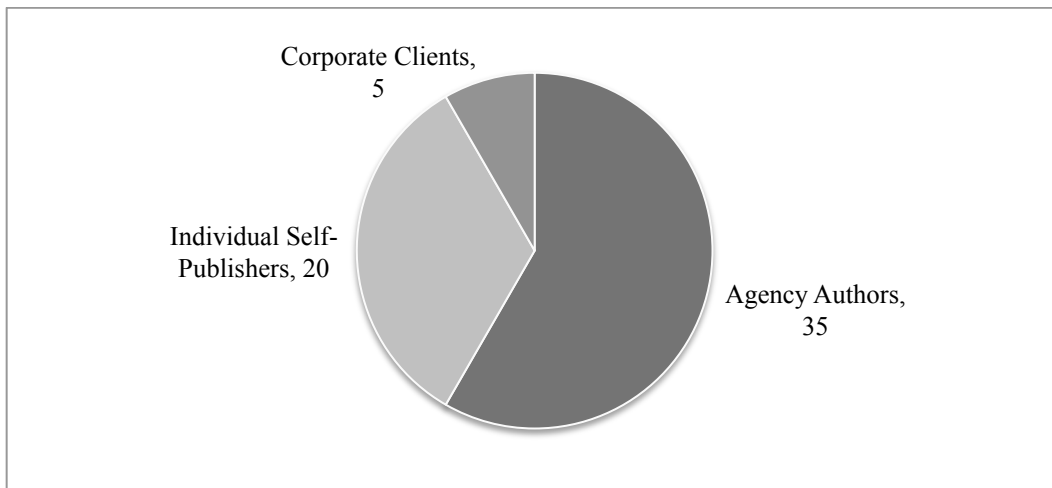


Figure 2: Number of Page Two clients by client type.

²² Trena White (principal, Page Two Strategies), email to author, December 4, 2015.

²³ *ibid.*

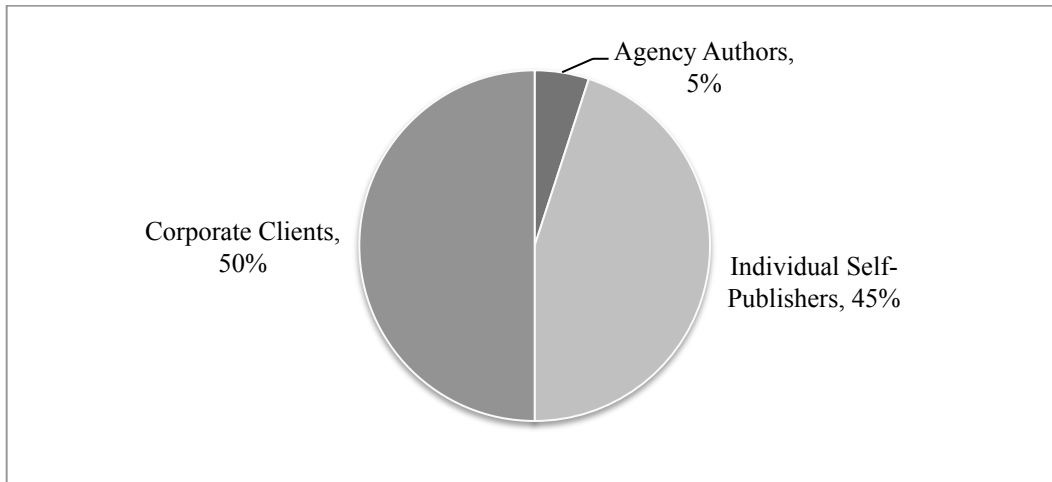


Figure 3: Page Two's revenue by client type.

White says this discrepancy is caused by a few things: (1) “it takes at least three years to start earning serious revenue from agenting”²⁴ because proposal development, pitching, and sales cycles can be long processes, advances are divided into payments throughout the book’s production, and annual royalties don’t start to trickle in until the advance is earned out, (2) individual self-publishers front the full cost of production and publication, so only about eight of the twenty self-publishers opt for full publishing support (i.e. “[Page Two] creates the book for them, almost like a mini-publishing house but under [the client’s] own imprint name”),²⁵ and (3) CPC can generate higher revenue from fewer clients because project pricing is not only based on time and expertise, but on the broader value that a company gains from developing professional publications, which can be measured through various key performance indicators (KPI), like return on investment (ROI), cost per lead, market growth, brand equity, and customer conversion.²⁶

Corporate Publishing Consulting: Strengths & Weaknesses

Financial Resources. Page Two’s financial resources are such that reinvestment in the company is possible. Although it has only been three years since Page Two’s establishment, they have no startup debt, and they maintain low overhead costs. From the beginning, Finkelstein explains that they were “in a really fortunate position to be

²⁴ *ibid.*

²⁵ *ibid.*

²⁶ Finkelstein, interview, September 10, 2015.

effectively in the black very close to the time that [they] launched, covering a lot of startup costs [through work they were doing for clients before their launch] and accommodating overhead through a number of different arrangements, including service exchanges.”²⁷ Finkelstein also notes that they do “yearly revenue projections, and [they’ve] exceeded those projections so far,”²⁸ at least enough to invest that surplus into more comprehensive marketing campaigns that will be needed to generate business through CPC.

Organizational Resources. CPC does not require extensive new resources to accommodate growth. CPC is modeled on Page Two’s existing production and consultation operations, and it is fee-for-service, which aligns with their business model. However, compared to Page Two’s other established services, CPC will most likely require more comprehensive and continued marketing resources for promotion of the service to clients outside the trade publishing industry. The target audience for CPC will likely span various industries and deal with different content marketing and publishing challenges. So, for their promotional materials, the principals will need to segment their audiences and offer precise messaging that is specific to their market segment.

Currently, the name of their service, Corporate Publishing Consulting, and their service description, which appear on Page Two’s website as of the date of this report, may not precisely describe their offering in a way that relates to corporate clients. According to Finkelstein, “that’s the closest we have come to describing it. And this is part of the issue... We recognize that it’s not necessarily doing the trick to express [the service] to a non-publisher. They can’t necessarily see themselves in it.”²⁹ Page Two’s primary challenge will be to position CPC in their website copy and other promotional materials, choosing language that will resonate with non-publishers. This is because their target corporate audience may perceive and understand publishing differently than publishing professionals: publishing as a means to an end, not an end in and of itself. Joe

²⁷ *ibid.*

²⁸ *ibid.*

²⁹ Jesse Finkelstein (principal, Page Two Strategies), in discussion with the author, September 22, 2015.

Pulizzi of the Content Marketing Institute (CMI) makes this distinction as well: “for a media company, content is created in order to make money directly off the creation of content through paid content sales... For a non-media company, content is created, not to profit directly from the content, but indirectly by attracting and retaining customers.”³⁰ If Page Two’s primary audience sees dissemination of content as a marketing endeavour rather than a publishing endeavour, the principals may need to adjust their promotional language to account for this contextual difference. So the more the principals are able to survey the needs and challenges of potential clients, the better they will be able to refine their service description and acquire new business.

The principals may also want to research methods for tracking the effectiveness of a corporate project. For example, where publishers typically track effectiveness in terms of sales, clients who distribute free content marketing need a way to track the content’s effectiveness in other ways (e.g. readership or customer conversion). Tracking will likely vary from client to client and project to project, and Page Two might not take on this job first-hand. However, the principals will likely need to discuss a tracking strategy with their clients in the early planning stage of a project and acquiring knowledge of different tracking methods will be beneficial going forward.

Page Two has recently invested in online project planning software, making their planning and scheduling processes more efficient. The principals should continue to streamline their operational processes where they can without losing the personalized attention they pay to all their clients. Although Page Two is a proponent of project customization and can facilitate comprehensive customization by engaging a custom team of freelancers, the two principals will likely remain at the core of client acquisition and initial project planning. As CPC grows, the principals’ time will be more and more valuable and restricted. Creating templated material for client acquisition and project planning (i.e. proposals, schedules, and reports), or investing in database software to store

³⁰ Joe Pulizzi, “The Rise of Storytelling as the New Marketing,” *Publishing Research Quarterly* 28, no. 2 (March 17, 2012): 117, doi:10.1007/s12109-012-9264-5.

agency information (i.e. contacts, leads, and resources) might help to alleviate time restrictions in the long run.

Human Capital. The expansion of Page Two's services beyond trade book production and into content marketing might seem problematic at first because Page Two currently has more trade publishing resources and tacit knowledge of books. However, Page Two's ability to connect their clients with other reputed professionals with varied skills helps to counteract this problem and speaks to the agency's strategic flexibility in terms of their adaptability to projects. Their agency model also alleviates the overhead costs of an in-house staff, and because their network of trusted freelancers are quite loyal to Page Two, this arrangement is an asset going forward. However, as CPC grows, Page Two's roster of freelancers will need to grow too, and they may even need to hire and train an additional project manager for corporate projects.

Reputation. Page Two has a strong reputation with clients, publishing freelancers, and within the trade publishing industry in general. Their online product portfolio and list of industry associates reaffirms their reputation for professionalism and high-achieving performance. Page Two's brand recognition is growing, and the principals' professional recognition is already well established, primarily within the trade publishing industry. Page Two's reputation is likely the reason for high freelancer loyalty and repeat customers. One of the principals' leading marketing challenges will be to bolster their reputation and brand outside the publishing industry. A way they might facilitate this is by joining specific trade networks or trade marketing associations, conferences, and speaking circuits, or by guest writing for trade association publications or websites.

Expertise & Industry Contacts. One of Page Two's core offerings is their publishing expertise, which remains a key resource in their expansion of CPC. The principals' connections to and understanding of the book trade is certainly a selling point to corporate clients, and it helps to further differentiate their offering from that of their competitors in marketing. On the other hand, as CPC expands, there may be greater need for Page Two to promote and draw on the expertise of marketing professionals with

specialties in content marketing strategy, social media management, digital marketing, and analytics.

This brief inventory of Page Two's tangible and intangible resources shows that their current business conditions are amenable to business development; Page Two already has key financial and organizational resources in place to begin actively promoting CPC. Apart from adjusting their website copy and CPC positioning, which should be done as soon as possible, steps like expanding their tacit knowledge of content marketing, streamlining their internal acquisitions and publishing processes, partnering with more freelance marketing professionals, and shoring up their reputation and expertise with their corporate audience can be accomplished organically as the service grows in popularity. Cultivating these resources will not only ensure successful long-term business development, they will also be sources of competitive advantage against existing competitors and new entrants to the field.

Chapter 3: Market Analysis

This chapter briefly discusses some of the external market factors that drive the expansion of CPC—in particular, the benefits and challenges of content marketing, and the need for collaboration between publishing and marketing professionals. It also explains Page Two’s competitive advantage within a marketplace that is increasingly saturated with content marketing service providers.

Using Content Marketing to Page Two’s Advantage

Corporate publishing, custom publishing, brand storytelling: the terms all refer to the same thing—content marketing. Content marketing, as defined by CMI, is “a strategic marketing approach focused on creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain a clearly defined audience—and, ultimately, to drive profitable customer action.”³¹ Back in 2012 on GoogleTrends, “content marketing” was “one of the fastest growing search terms in the business marketing space.”³² Today, content marketing is standard practice for most companies, it is less of a buzzword, and it is certainly no longer an experimental strategy within the marketing mix. According to CMI’s 2016 consumer marketing (B2C),³³ business marketing (B2B),³⁴ and non-profit marketing studies,³⁵ between seventy-six and eighty-eight percent of businesses use

³¹ Content Marketing Institute (CMI) and MarketingProfs, “B2C Content Marketing—2016 Benchmarks, Budgets and Trends—North America,” SlideShare slide show, posted October 9, 2015, from ContentMarketingInstitute.com, accessed November 24, 2015, slide 6, <http://www.slideshare.net/CMI/2016-b2c-research-benchmarks-budgets-and-trends-north-america?ref=http://contentmarketinginstitute.com/2015/10/b2c-content-marketing-research/>.

³² Pulizzi, “The Rise of Storytelling,” 116.

³³ CMI, “B2C Content Marketing 2016,” slide 6.

³⁴ Content Marketing Institute (CMI) and MarketingProfs, “B2B Content Marketing—2016 Benchmarks, Budgets and Trends—North America,” SlideShare slide show, posted September 25, 2015, from ContentMarketingInstitute.com, accessed November 24, 2015, slide 6, <http://www.slideshare.net/CMI/b2b-content-marketing-2016-benchmarks-budgets-and-trends-north-america>.

³⁵ Content Marketing Institute (CMI) and MarketingProfs, “Nonprofit Content Marketing—2016 Benchmarks, Budgets and Trends—North America,” SlideShare slide show, posted October 30, 2015, from ContentMarketingInstitute.com, accessed November 24, 2015, slide 6,

content marketing. Those respondents reported having between fifteen and forty-six percent of their marketing budget dedicated to content marketing, with those numbers set to increase or remain the same through 2016.

The reason for the exponential growth in content marketing is that it seems to solve the problem of *how* and *where* to reach and convert customers, especially those customers who are increasingly less responsive to advertising. Use of content marketing is now normalized through social media tools, like Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. From an anecdotal standpoint, it is now considered unusual if a business does not have an active social media presence.

However, although content marketing through social media is next to mandatory for many businesses, even those channels are becoming saturated, and businesses are finding equal or better success within the list of seemingly endless possible content marketing tactics, like print or online articles, blogs, apps, e-newsletters, case studies, research reports, white papers, videos, webinars, podcasts, print and digital magazines, ebooks, and print books. In CMI's studies, they found that almost all respondents (upward of ninety percent) marked use of social media as part of their content marketing strategy.³⁶ On the other hand, when respondents were asked how effective those channels were in meeting their goals, sometimes less than fifty percent of respondents saw effectiveness.³⁷ In comparison, a separate CMI study for small businesses shows ebooks are the most effective content marketing tactic.³⁸ Among larger businesses and non-

<http://www.slideshare.net/CMI/2016-nonprofit-content-marketing-benchmarks-budgets-and-trends-north-america?ref=http://contentmarketinginstitute.com/2015/11/nonprofit-2016-content-marketing-research/>.

³⁶ CMI, "B2B Content Marketing—2016 Benchmarks, Budgets and Trends—North America"; "B2C Content Marketing—2016 Benchmarks, Budgets and Trends—North America"; "Nonprofit Content Marketing—2016 Benchmarks, Budgets and Trends—North America."

³⁷ *ibid.*

³⁸ Content Marketing Institute (CMI) and MarketingProfs, "B2B Small Business Content Marketing: 2015 Benchmarks, Budgets and Trends—North America," SlideShare slide show, posted January 23, 2015, from ContentMarketingInstitute.com, accessed November 24, 2015, slide 16,

<http://www.slideshare.net/CMI/b2b-small-business-content-marketing-2015-benchmarks-budgets-and-trends-north-america?related=1>.

profits, other long-form media (e.g. case studies, white papers, and research reports) or print media (e.g. magazines and newsletters) are often equally or more effective than social media.³⁹ These findings reveal that businesses are increasingly open to a broad range of content marketing tactics and media in order to achieve their marketing goals and to differentiate their offering from competitors’.

It also shows, despite recent industry insecurities, that print and long-form media are not out of date. Over the years, various studies have proven the benefits of printed material over digital material on relaying detailed information to readers. In 2009, a Bangor University and Millward Brown agency case study reported “physical material is more ‘real’ to the brain. It has a meaning, and a place. It is better connected to memory because it engages with its spatial memory networks.” They argued, “physical materials produced more brain responses connected with internal feelings, suggesting greater ‘internalization’ of the ads [or brand], and... physical material involves more emotional processing, which is important for memory and brand associations.”⁴⁰ In Pulizzi’s article “7 Reasons to Consider Print,” he suggests more practical advantages to using print media as content marketing tools, some of which are as follows:

- they target highly niche audiences,
- they suggest credibility and can help to establish a company’s authority as a subject matter expert,
- the audience development costs are low because audiences are usually already established,
- they facilitate the type of content that can be excitedly anticipated by audiences,
- fewer businesses publish books, so they become novelties,
- their design can be eye-catching, and they grab attention,
- they can be used for new customer acquisition, customer loyalty giveaways, and as recruitment tools,

³⁹ CMI, “B2B Content Marketing—2016 Benchmarks, Budgets and Trends—North America”; “B2C Content Marketing—2016 Benchmarks, Budgets and Trends—North America”; “Nonprofit Content Marketing—2016 Benchmarks, Budgets and Trends—North America.”

⁴⁰ “Using Neuroscience to Understand the Role of Direct Mail,” Millward Brown, accessed March 23, 2016, http://www.millwardbrown.com/docs/default-source/insight-documents/case-studies/MillwardBrown_CaseStudy_Neuroscience.pdf.

- other content can be repurposed into a book, or a book can cascade into content for other media,
- they allow audiences to disconnect or unplug,
- they provide audiences with in-depth information, and
- they can facilitate “evergreen” content and be used as reference material long after their publication dates.⁴¹

On the other hand, a business is rarely invested in only one form of content marketing. In their latest studies, CMI reported that businesses utilize an average of twelve different content marketing tactics at any given time, and these tactics speak to an average of four different audience profiles.⁴² If continued content creation is now a primary objective of a business’s marketing strategy, this goes way beyond the scope of a single book, which means (1) there is greater potential for Page Two to attract clients with varied projects that span different formats, (2) it is more likely that Page Two’s consulting services will be sought after (i.e. program alignment, audience development, content strategy, and operational guidance), and (3) it is possible that clients will be in need of long-term service.

The Need for Cross-Industry Collaboration & Strategic Alliance

The need for cross-industry collaboration has been written about on both sides of the publishing-marketing spectrum. For example, Pulizzi notes in his article “The Rise of Storytelling as Marketing,” “leading brands are working to dominate a content niche, not solely through internal content creators, but by leveraging outside industry experts as the majority of their thought leadership content creation.”⁴³ In CMI’s most recent studies, more respondents reported hiring a writer, editorial lead, and a content curator than a marketer in charge of paid media (i.e. advertising).⁴⁴ This signifies a major shift not only

⁴¹ Pulizzi, “7 Reasons to Consider Print,” October 20, 2012.

⁴² CMI, “B2B Content Marketing—2016 Benchmarks, Budgets and Trends—North America”; “B2C Content Marketing—2016 Benchmarks, Budgets and Trends—North America”; “Nonprofit Content Marketing—2016 Benchmarks, Budgets and Trends—North America.”

⁴³ Pulizzi, “The Rise of Storytelling,” 122.

⁴⁴ CMI, “B2B Content Marketing—2016 Benchmarks, Budgets and Trends—North America”; “B2C Content Marketing—2016 Benchmarks, Budgets and Trends—North America”; “Nonprofit Content Marketing—2016 Benchmarks, Budgets and Trends—North America.”

in the look and purpose of a company’s marketing department, but in the sense that more people with publishing skills and talent are signing on to corporate jobs instead of traditional publishing jobs. So, if publishers or publishing service companies, like Page Two, were to provide this kind of expertise and support first-hand, both parties would benefit.

An article in the *Journal of Brand Strategy* echoes this need, saying “publishers need to help advertisers create good content... a significant volume of content is needed to support paid and owned media that is also high quality and relevant. So, opportunities to work with publishers to create quality print, digital and video content that can be used in paid media, as well as repurposed and reused for other owned content platforms, provides enhanced value to the advertiser”⁴⁵ (the “advertiser” being the business or contractor promoting themselves or their client). The majority of businesses surveyed in CMI’s studies have consistent publishing challenges that Page Two can help to solve, namely producing engaging content, producing content consistently, and producing a variety of content.⁴⁶ Year after year, CMI reports that these are among the top challenges for businesses and content marketers. In 2016, CMI reported upward of 50 percent of respondents—including best-in-class marketers—said producing engaging content is their biggest challenge. Yet, producing engaging content is essentially the entire business of publishing. So, while marketers might traditionally excel at “creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for their audience,”⁴⁷ whereby the “offering” is usually a product or service, producing and disseminating *content* alone is a skill still honed by publishers.

⁴⁵ Barbara Basney, “Brands as Publishers: Using Content and Paid Media to Fuel a Brand Transformation,” *Journal of Brand Strategy* 3, no. 2, (June 1, 2014): 105.

⁴⁶ CMI, “B2B Content Marketing—2016 Benchmarks, Budgets and Trends—North America”; “B2C Content Marketing—2016 Benchmarks, Budgets and Trends—North America”; “Nonprofit Content Marketing—2016 Benchmarks, Budgets and Trends—North America.”

⁴⁷ “About AMA: Definition of Marketing,” accessed January 10, 2016, American Marketing Association, <https://www.ama.org/AboutAMA/Pages/Definition-of-Marketing.aspx>.

This is something Brian O’Leary spoke on at BookNet Canada’s annual TechForum conference in 2015. He urged publishers to answer the call for collaboration, encouraging “publishers to engage with communities—and companies—to offer new sources and uses of what was once just book content,” pointing out the “immediate, perhaps growing need for publishing skills and book (or least book-like) content in the content marketing space.”⁴⁸ He suggested that publishers “might find themselves supplying marketers with expertise, not just products,”⁴⁹ which is exactly what Page Two’s CPC service aims to do: provide guidance and support—especially through their established self-publishing pipeline—so corporate clients can produce and disseminate content in effective ways through their own publishing program. Ideally, CPC would help corporate clients solve problems of engagement and reach, among other challenges reported by CMI, like measuring content effectiveness, finding more or better ways to repurpose content, becoming better storytellers and writers, better understanding audiences, and curating content. Businesses that currently produce branded books as part of their content marketing strategy may not be producing and distributing books to their fullest potential, as Basney suggests. From the perspective of a publishing professional, there are many more ways in which a branded book could be effective, including the following:

- paying greater attention to quality editorial and design,
- creating proper .epub or .mobi formats rather than .pdf,
- creating an imprint name,
- making use of book publisher distribution channels,
- partnering with a well-known author in their field,
- pitching to traditional publishers or trade distribution companies,
- applying for ISBNs or ISSNs through Bowker or their print on demand platform, and registering with Library and Archives Canada to improve discoverability,
- monetizing branded books for ancillary revenue, and
- creating both print *and* ebook versions. (Many more businesses produce ebooks, but they do not necessarily need to choose between print or digital since so many self-publishing platforms offer joint packages, print on demand technology diminishes upfront printing costs, the metadata derived from each format

⁴⁸ Brian O’Leary, “Content Marketing for Book Publishers,” Magellan Media Consulting Partners, April 10, 2015, <http://magellanmediapartners.com/content-marketing/content-marketing-book-publishers/>.

⁴⁹ *ibid.*

respectively would, again, increase discoverability, and readers enjoy having format options.)

Page Two's Competitive Advantage & Target Audience

In terms of competition, Page Two realizes their endeavour to expand CPC may leave them vulnerable to additional competition in the content marketing realm, including competition from marketing firms, content marketing consultants, design firms, technical writing firms, book printing and packaging companies, and of course, other publishers. However, their competitive advantage as publishing experts and book experts helps to narrow the field of their competition. Says O'Leary, "[publishers] are already in the business of linking content to markets, the purpose of content marketing; they are established as content curators, a core component of effective content marketing; they have access to and can offer the kind of longer-form content that is most likely to have an impact, whether measured in shares, inbound links, actual consumption or sales, and they are among those best able to recognize and know how to tell great stories."⁵⁰

Furthermore, unlike a publisher who might look to acquire corporate publications that fall within its mandate, Page Two's CPC service is available to a much broader scope of paying clients who need expertise and resources to facilitate their unique self-publishing projects. Through self-publishing, all publication rights remain the client's, and they are free to repurpose content for other marketing media as they please. Content that traditionally would have been the client's paid media through advertisements would now be their owned media through Page Two's CPC service.

Currently, there are a few publishers and agencies that stand out as Page Two's primary competition in terms of publishing expertise and similar book publication programs, but (1) their rosters of clients inhabit different industry segments than those of Page Two, and/or (2) their business models are somewhat different from that of Page Two. For example, ECW Press, in Toronto, a traditional mid-sized publisher, uses their corporate publishing program—entirely funded by corporate clients—to help them subsidize their primary business, which is literary publishing. Their in-house editorial staff is responsible for managing both corporate projects and literary titles. ECW has

⁵⁰ *ibid.*

been known to publish commemorative books for schools and sports teams or clubs, both in Canada and the United States. They also publish books for companies in finance and tourism sectors. Figure 1, in Vancouver, publishes client funded, heavily illustrated books for museums, galleries, restaurants, art and culinary schools, and they also publish corporate histories for companies like BC Hydro and TELUS. Echo, in Vancouver, calls itself a storytelling agency and is known for producing content marketing campaigns through books, magazines, videos, and social media. Many of their projects are highly illustrated commemorative books, histories, or biographies, either for singular personalities or corporate businesses. They have done corporate work in retail, tourism, finance, and food industries.

Page Two could gain competitive advantage by continuing to attract clients from different market segments than their primary competition. So far, they've served a small roster of corporate clients in educational and training services, health and social services, marketing and communications services, government services, and industry associations. Where Page Two may face challenges in attracting new corporate clients is in their lack of specialized in-house marketing expertise and traditional marketing service promotion. Established marketing firms can offer their clients full marketing packages, from planning and management, to regular content creation, across all marketing activities, including public relations, advertising, media buying, digital strategy, web development, and content marketing. For example, hybrid marketing/publishing agencies like Echo Storytelling have in-house teams of content strategists and social media managers. Page Two is not a marketing firm so they don't widely promote all of these types of services on their website; however, they've recently developed a stronger alliance with local marketing firm, ZG Communications, whom they regularly subcontract as part of their customized publishing team. They've also contracted freelance content marketing consultants in the past, like Forge & Spark Media. So far, Page Two's corporate clients have not been so interested in marketing expertise and have first and foremost sought out publishing expertise. However, if Page Two comes to see a heavier demand for marketing services as CPC grows, they are in the perfect position to collaborate more closely with their connections in marketing.

Finally, Page Two’s production services are not the be-all and end-all of CPC; they can also consult on a client’s content operations, helping businesses think like publishers.⁵¹ “Operational guidance” is a service offering that truly sets them apart from their competitors in the publishing realm—Page Two does not simply produce books, they help establish or improve upon a client’s full-fledged in-house publishing program. Per their website copy, “we work closely with your team to expand their knowledge of publishing best practices and workflow, and we help you establish effective production systems that take into account emerging technologies.”⁵² Page Two has not yet done this type of work for their corporate clients, so operational guidance is still very much in the early planning stages of development. However, Page Two principals recognize a demand for this service because the goals of a company’s marketing and communications departments are quickly changing. If businesses and organizations are to continue to develop comprehensive content marketing strategies as brand publishers, they will need proper publishing and editorial processes in place. Ideally, Page Two would offer personalized instructions and support to help transform a business into a brand publisher.

With these competitive advantages in mind, it is easy to see how Page Two is well positioned to benefit from the increased trend towards content marketing. Not only is CPC relevant and timely, it provides clients expert publishing resources and solutions to content marketing and brand publishing challenges, while fulfilling Page Two’s objective to serve large-scale corporate clients.

⁵¹ Jesse Finkelstein and Trena White, “Corporate Publishing Consulting,” accessed November 24, 2015, Page Two Strategies, <http://www.pagetwostrategies.com/services/corporate-publishing-consulting/>.

⁵² *ibid.*

Chapter 4: Operational Analysis

This chapter outlines Page Two's business operations model as it relates to acquiring and serving corporate clients. The following is an account of Page Two's current and future marketing plans for attracting corporate clients, followed by an explanation of Page Two's self-publishing process for CPC and its similarities with typical content marketing processes.

Attracting Corporate Clients

Page Two has always acquired clients in a somewhat organic way by taking advantage of referrals and aligning their service offerings with the needs of their clients. In terms of conscious marketing efforts, Page Two attracts potential clients—mostly authors and authorpreneurs—through their website and blog, converting them to e-newsletter subscribers and social media followers. Page Two is also greatly involved in the Canadian writing and publishing scene, speaking at workshops, festivals, and universities, and conducting webinars on topics relating to publishing innovations and self-publishing best practices. They have also been profiled in local magazines and interviewed quite regularly in publishing trade magazines and blogs. However, the principals have recognized that they need to continue to create a CPC marketing plan that is somewhat different and more direct than their marketing efforts towards authors and authorpreneurs for various reasons:

- corporate clients are not part of writing and publishing circles as much as they are part of their respective industry networks and associations,
- corporate clients don't identify as authors, but as corporate leaders of their respective fields,
- corporate clients may not have considered book publishing as a way to achieve their corporate goals, but may be convinced of their benefits,
- corporate clients don't consider their book project a publishing activity as much as they consider it a marketing activity, and
- corporate clients will most likely develop a book project through their marketing or communications divisions rather than from a single author.

Generating awareness for CPC will be the greatest challenge for Page Two, especially because their target corporate audience is fragmented across different industries. Their CPC marketing campaigns will need to be far-reaching and specific to a

given industry. Firstly, they will need to keyword optimize their website and perhaps invest in a Google AdWords campaign targeting corporate clients. Currently, Page Two's website is one of their primary marketing channels, but they are likely not yet attracting their target corporate audience to the website in a significant way because of imprecise positioning and keyword usage. The CPC web copy emphasizes keywords like "publishing," "publication," "publisher," and "book." In reality, potential corporate clients are more likely searching for information on "content marketing," "marketing strategy," "content strategy," "branded books," "brand publishers," or even "custom publishing." This discrepancy in messaging is likely contributing to the low click-through rate on the CPC service page relative to Page Two's other service pages, according to their Google Analytics reports.⁵³ An A/B test would reveal more conclusive results on effective messaging, and publishing more blog posts on corporate publishing and content marketing would increase their search traffic. (As of the date of this report, there is no other information specific to corporate publishing on Page Two's website, besides the service description for CPC.)

More than generating web traffic, however, the principals recognize that they will need to be more active in their search for corporate clients by campaigning through direct mail marketing. Segmenting their target market and creating various marketing materials for each segment will be important in promoting CPC, because potential clients will inhabit different industries and sectors, and thus, will have varying needs and challenges that will have to be addressed in promotional copy. Page Two has already seen the positive effects of direct mail marketing in creating awareness and interest from potential corporate clients. Recently they launched a direct mail campaign to government embassies promoting their book production services after having successfully completed a commemorative book for the U.S. Embassy of the State of Qatar. Page Two was charged with shipping the book to government representatives, embassies, and consulates across North America. Subsequently, they mailed a full-colour promotional brochure on commemorative book packaging to many of the recipients. Within a few weeks of following up with select recipients, Page Two received two requests for proposals for

⁵³ Page Two Strategies' Google Analytics. Accessed March 2, 2016.

commemorative books. Although direct mail marketing is often more costly than other tactics (in this example, there were extra printing costs), Page Two will continue to use this method to generate new business, as long as funds allow it.

Cold calling or direct B2B email marketing may be feasible once Page Two develops a list of prospects. Ideally, Page Two wants to target potential clients with established publishing programs. For example, Finkelstein says, “we could see great potential among NGOs who have a specific mission and mandate that needs to be expressed, especially for a number of different constituencies, and among organizations that handle and manage a lot of intellectual property.”⁵⁴ Specifically, the principals see potential among those who are struggling with content creation, production, and distribution: “[Page Two] can help those who could benefit from their material being produced in better and more elegant ways, in more efficient ways, and in ways that would allow for better distribution and marketing.”⁵⁵ Reaching out to these types of clients directly might be valuable in creating immediate relationships.

The principals have also decided to target select trade associations in various professional fields—including trade marketing associations—that could benefit from book production expertise through in-person events. Speaking at workshops, conferences, trade shows, and through webinars will not only garner awareness among their target audience, but will also expand Page Two’s reputation beyond the publishing industry. For example, Page Two recently pitched a content marketing workshop to the Legal Marketing Association (LMA) in B.C. after having produced a series of books for a lawyer in Toronto. Targeting marketing associations is particularly useful because it is often a business’ marketing department that will plan and oversee a book project. These audiences are also readily aware of the benefits of content marketing, but may not yet appreciate the value of books as effective marketing tools.

There are some other marketing strategies Page Two might want to consider pursuing: building awareness through press releases and media interviews, guest writing

⁵⁴ Finkelstein, interview, September 10, 2015.

⁵⁵ *ibid.*

for trade magazines or blogs, and creating a CPC e-newsletter geared specifically toward corporate clients that will also generate new lead information. The principals also continually request client testimonials to post on their website, so as CPC grows, so will Page Two's corporate testimonials and case studies.

Using Page Two's Self-Publishing Process as a Valid Content Marketing Workflow

Page Two's recommended self-publishing process has been tested and refined over the course of their work with numerous self-published authors. The steps in this process are either carried out directly by Page Two and their custom editorial, design, and marketing team on behalf of their clients, or they are recommended to clients who will manage their own projects. Not only is this process already in place for all of Page Two's self-published clients—corporate or otherwise—it is also extremely similar to most content marketing processes. This is not surprising; content marketers adopted their own workflows from newsrooms and publishing houses, and it is a common adage among content marketers to “think like a publisher.”

Project Planning & Publishing Strategy. What is notably similar between Page Two's process and that of most best-in-class content marketers is their emphasis on project planning and publishing strategy. At Page Two, each project begins at the planning and consulting stage where the principals discuss project scope with the client. Page Two determines whether or not a client's content is ready for production, or they work with the client to develop a project idea. At least one of the principals—and the project manager, if needed—work with the stakeholder(s) to outline their publishing goals. This means they:

- evaluate the company's mission, mandate, and goals for the publishing project or program,
- identify the company's content marketing goals, if applicable,
- evaluate the company's current content and formats, including existing websites, blogs, and other digital content, as well as printed content,
- identify and evaluate the company's target audience,
- create an editorial mission, and
- create a publishing imprint, if necessary.

Building a cohesive publishing strategy from the onset is a practice Page Two tries to encourage among all of their self-publishing clients, but particularly for corporate clients who are likely juggling various content marketing strategies at once and experiencing challenges aligning their goals and editorial mission through each content marketing campaign. Page Two offers guidance and production support for single projects or for entire corporate publishing programs in order to alleviate these challenges. At this stage of planning and consulting, along with the stakeholder(s), Page Two helps to:

- develop a publication concept, or recommend various types of publications and formats that meet the company’s editorial mission and content marketing goals,
- get a budget approved by the stakeholder(s),
- identify appropriate publication formats for the project or program,
- create a pricing strategy, if necessary,
- create a production plan and schedule, including milestones where the client’s approval will be needed,
- set a publication date, and
- begin to create a distribution plan, which may include sales and marketing strategies.

Financial Considerations. Financial considerations are an integral part of the planning process, especially if Page Two is managing the project on behalf of the client. Budgetary expectations have to be set from the get-go, which usually requires a realistic discussion of cost versus quality. Where possible, the project lead—one of the principals or the project manager—tries to recommend pricing options to clients based on contractor and subcontractor quotes. Says Finkelstein, “we try to allow our client to see all the potential outcomes of their project.”⁵⁶ Even if Page Two is only contracted for a portion of work, the principals still sometimes discuss what a client’s budget might be over the long term in case the client decides to engage them for further work.

Payments for Page Two’s services always begin with a deposit, and typically, payment installments are arranged throughout the project’s phases. However, it is not uncommon for project scope to change as it progresses, and the principals find this will be especially true for corporate clients. In spite of Page Two’s project planning stage,

⁵⁶ Finkelstein, interview, September 10, 2015.

Finkelstein says, “sometimes it’s hard to predict outcomes, and that can work in [Page Two’s] favour or not. It might be the case that an organization wants to invest in developing a certain part of their program, and in doing so they find some surprising opportunity in one particular part of that program.”⁵⁷

If a client has strayed away from their main objective, the project lead might work to refocus their client. Or, if a change of objective is needed, the project lead will accommodate the client’s prerogative: “if a pivot is needed, we can pivot with them.”⁵⁸ It is, after all, the client’s project, not Page Two’s, and Finkelstein says this flexibility is not so different from what you might experience with a traditional publishing house: “it’s true that contracts do bind authors to publishers, but we saw some authors who were under contract to write one type of book and who ended up discussing with that publisher the opportunity to write a different kind of book, and the contract could shift to accommodate that, if the publisher was on board.”⁵⁹

Assembling a Team. Assembling a cherry-picked team of publishing professionals is an element of Page Two’s business model that is unique. Since Page Two does not have the traditional full-time publishing staff on-hand, extra care and attention is paid when they engage with and assign freelancers or other self-publishing resources to their clients. The principals vet all their freelancers, and where possible, they frequently recommend or subcontract specific trusted freelancers whose work they admire. Before a new freelancer begins work on a project, the principals provide them with Page Two templates, checklists, and style guides, where possible. The principals also research and test alternate online self-publishing systems and services before recommending these to clients. The principals believe each project is inherently different, so the advantage to hand picking a publishing team is that the client receives specialized expertise.

For corporate projects, Page Two also works with personnel (e.g. writers, marketers, and managers) within the client’s organization, especially if a client has an

⁵⁷ *ibid.*

⁵⁸ *ibid.*

⁵⁹ *ibid.*

existing in-house publishing program. However, if Page Two needs to include the client's personnel in any stage of the production process, it is important to determine their time commitment to the project in advance.

Content Development. This is where Page Two feels they can contribute the most valuable resources, fulfilling the client's editorial mission and project goals while speaking to the client's established audience in engaging ways. In part, content development depends on whether or not Page Two can repurpose the client's existing content into other formats (e.g. repurposing a blog into a book), and whether or not the client chooses to be the author of the work. If original content is needed and the client cannot supply it, the project lead assigns content development accordingly:

- written content is assigned to writers and editors,
- design content, including book and ebook design, illustrations, and infographics, are assigned to designers,
- web development or apps are assigned to developers, and
- other media content that Page Two has yet to dabble in like video, online presentations, podcasts, and webinars, would be assigned appropriately.

Regardless of the medium, this step will usually involve creation of an outline, content research, and interviews, if necessary. The lead time for content creation depends on a number of factors related to scope. In the past, Page Two has produced book content in less than six months by subcontracting a professional writer.

For any kind of written content, Page Two urges clients to have their work copy edited and proofread. Sometimes Page Two's individual self-publishers question the value of hiring a professional editor because of the expense, but for corporate clients, producing polished, professional, high-quality work is often integral to their brand image and publications. Where possible, the client's corporate style guide is applied to any content. In early stages of the editing process, the project lead will apply for ISBN and CIP data, if it is applicable to the project. The writer or editor might also be asked to produce descriptive copy for the project's promotion. Once completed, edits are sent to the client for review and final approval.

At the design stage, a meeting is sometimes scheduled between the designer and stakeholders to plan a design rationale, particularly for heavily illustrated books or web design. If the client owns or has access to images, designs, or proprietary typefaces, this sometimes cuts down on time and expense. Otherwise the project lead hires a photographer or illustrator for custom work. Design work is sent to the client for review and final approval. If necessary, the project lead sends copies or samples of design work to the client's high-profile contacts for endorsements and early reviews before the project goes into final production.

Often the editorial and design revision processes can be slow and drawn out if the client chooses to circulate the content among stakeholders for approval. Page Two's project lead tries to anticipate this and build in extra contingency time in the initial planning and scheduling phase. However, the project lead can usually urge them to expedite their approval if they risk losing contractors, distribution agreements, or missing other imperative deadlines due to delays.

Production. For printed content, the project lead will have acquired quotes and schedules from local or overseas printers, and it is often the contracted designer who oversees the printing process. In cases where the client opts for print on demand service for lower print runs, Page Two usually works with IngramSpark and their service representative to solve any production issues. The project lead also makes sure to order advanced copies for early promotional opportunities. Page Two also works with an ebook designer on ebook conversions.

Distribution. Page Two helps facilitate online distribution of content through ecommerce sites, email lists, social media, or the client's own website, and they facilitate print distribution through custom shipment plans, private mailing lists, established book distributors, or by pitching to libraries and bookstores. Often, corporate clients also have valuable channels for getting their products to audiences, like through trade shows and conferences. Distribution is wholly dependent on the client's project goals, which are established in the planning and consulting stage. For example, if a book project is meant to generate ancillary revenue and establish a brand's reputation, Page Two might suggest

trade distribution through ecommerce sites, bookstores, and trade shows. If a book project is meant to fulfill a content marketing strategy by creating brand awareness or rewarding customer loyalty, the book would be distributed at certain points throughout the client's customer conversion funnel: for example, when a potential customer subscribes to the client's mailing list or an existing customer reaches a certain loyalty milestone, they might receive a free ebook download. Page Two might also recommend some combination of monetized content through trade distribution and free content through online giveaways.

Marketing. Sometimes clients do not require Page Two's marketing services if the project is only circulated internally or to specific stakeholders, or if the client uses their own established marketing processes in-house. Developing a sound marketing strategy for self-published clients is essential for books to compete in the market. To achieve this, Page Two often subcontracts ZG Communications as part of their team to plan, facilitate, and execute "marketing campaigns both small and complex, including everything from media relations and events to supporting social media and stakeholder outreach."⁶⁰

In sum, although it will be a challenge at first to generate awareness among potential clients outside the publishing industry, investing resources into awareness-building marketing strategies will help to create a reputation for Page Two as a corporate publishing services company. Most of Page Two's marketing activities, like direct mail marketing campaigns, cold calling, and in-person events, will be carried out over the long term; however, revising and optimizing their web copy to support content marketing keyword searches should be done immediately. No other immediate resources are needed to support new business; Page Two's recommended self-publishing process that is in place for authorpreneurs will remain the same for corporate clients looking to produce branded books. The fact that their self-publishing process is customizable to a client's needs and has already produced many successful and high-quality books means that Page Two's self-publishing operations are also a form of competitive advantage going forward.

⁶⁰ "Services," Page Two Strategies, <http://www.pagetwostrategies.com/services/#distribution>.

Conclusion

In 2015, *Publishers Weekly* released an article stating that the perception of self-publishing “as an outlet of last resort for desperate authors” is changing: “the negative stigma that’s long been associated with the industry is being discarded for a more progressive outlook.”⁶¹ Page Two principals had already noticed a change in perceptions before they first launched the company to high demand three years earlier with a range of self-publishing and strategic publishing consulting services. In many ways, self-publishing is to traditional publishing what content marketing is to advertising: they both emerged because of advances in digital technology, they are considered disruptive innovations in their respective industries, and they continue to grow in popularity and use. If authors are now legitimized as publishers, the industry must also recognize the legitimacy of brands as publishers. Self-publishing and content marketing may seem like outliers to a traditional publishing industry, but for Page Two, these innovations are at the core of their business because of growing demand for professional publishing skills and expertise outside the publishing industry.

For many businesses—and their respective marketing divisions—continued content creation is now their primary goal for driving profitable customer action. Yet, based on the findings of this report, those same businesses are not fully equipped to create a variety of engaging content on a consistent basis, often due to lack of skilled staff or insufficient production workflows. Says David Palmer, marketing director at Wiley, the process of “selecting, editing, and designing material, as well as arranging its production and distribution... have made publishing a distinct occupation, with skills and practices out of reach for most other industries.”⁶² Page Two’s competitive advantage in entering the corporate publishing domain is four-fold: (1) they are experts in both trade publishing and self-publishing practices, (2) they can connect their corporate clients to some of the best publishing and marketing talent in Canada, (3) their recommended self-

⁶¹ McCartney, “A Look Ahead to Self-Publishing in 2015,” January 16, 2015.

⁶² David Palmer, “Think Like a Publisher and Use These Six Types of Custom Content,” *MarketingProfs*, April 21, 2015. <http://www.marketingprofs.com/opinions/2015/27477/think-like-a-publisher-and-use-these-six-types-of-custom-content#ixzz44PML5zFb>

publishing process is time-tested and customizable to the client's needs, and (4) they don't simply produce books, they help brand publishers develop effective publishing workflows in-house.

Nevertheless, despite demand, Page Two will still need to invest time and money on marketing campaigns that attract new corporate clients in industries outside of traditional publishing. Generating awareness among potential corporate clients will be their biggest challenge, and they will need to start by repositioning their website copy and promotional messaging to incorporate content marketing keywords. Other awareness-building activities like Google AdWords campaigns, direct mail marketing, guest writing, and in-person events will help bolster Page Two's reputation beyond the publishing industry and produce new leads.

According to the internal and operational analyses outlined in this report, Page Two's current financial position and operations can support increased marketing activity and new business. However, maintaining low cost-to-income ratio on marketing activities and streamlining operations, particularly in acquisitions and project planning, will need to be priorities as CPC grows. With these recommendations in mind, Page Two can begin to develop a clear business and marketing strategy for short- and long-term success of CPC expansion.

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