



# SETTING UP A PUBLISHING COMPANY

Jamie Tipton ▪ Open Heart Designs ▪ 406-360-7141  
jamie@openheartdesigns.com ▪ www.OpenHeartDesigns.com

As an independent/self-publisher planning to sell your books, you will want to set up a publishing company. Some authors already own businesses, so they use the same business for their publishing venture. There are many details in establishing a business, so I'm sharing what I know to help you get started. For more information, seek advice from professionals in each category and you may want to consult an attorney.

At a minimum you'll need a company name, address (this can be a PO Box), phone number, and email address in order to obtain the publishing numbers for your book.

## Terminology

**Publisher:** *that's you!*

**Book designer:** *that's me.*

**Book printer/manufacturer:** *this is not the publisher. This is where your books are printed and bound.*

## Company Name

Think carefully about your company name. Choosing a name that ends in "Publishing" or "Press" provides credibility. If you use your name (e.g., Jamie Tipton Publishing), it looks more like a small operation.

Make sure your company name is not already taken. As a start, search the your state's website for information.

Register the company name that you've chosen with your state. If you want to trademark your company name, contact the United States Patent and Trademark Office (<http://www.uspto.gov>). I've heard this referred to as registering your company name nationally. Start with your state.

### For Montana:

Montana Capitol Building, Rm 260  
P.O. Box 202801  
Helena, MT 59620-2801

406-444-2034

<https://sosmt.gov/>



### Legal Structures

Choose a business structure.

- **Sole proprietorship:** simple structure, provides no legal protection, the business is you. If you choose this structure, consider applying for an Employer ID Number (EIN) instead of using your social security number. See <https://www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/employer-id-numbers> for more details on EINs.
- **Partnership:** simple structure, two or more people, should have a partnership agreement going into it.
- **Limited Liability Company (LLC):** rules are easier to meet than that of a corporation, provides some legal protection.
- **Corporation:** provides the most protection, more fees involved, an individual can have a corporation but you must have a board of directors and meetings with minutes.

### Bookkeeping

In treating your publishing venture as a business, keep all your business expenses and income separate from your personal expenses and income. This will make accounting and tax preparation easier. Open a business checking account in your company name. I also recommend using accounting software such as Quickbooks.

### Website

Secure a domain name and establish a web presence in order to sell your books online (and at a minimum have a link on your website for people to click and buy your book on Amazon.com).

Some options for your domain name:

- the name of your book
- the name of your publishing company
- or your name.
- Or perhaps all of the above. You can purchase multiple domain names and have them all point to your primary one. Ask your website developer for more information.

### Resources

**Starting a Business in Montana:** [business.mt.gov/Business-Navigator/Start](https://business.mt.gov/Business-Navigator/Start)

**SCORE (Service Corps of Retired Executives)**

**SCORE national:** [score.org](https://score.org)

**SCORE Western Montana:** <https://westernmontana.score.org/>

***Dan Poynter's Self-Publishing Manual: How to Write, Print and Sell Your Own Book***, Chapter 3: "Starting Your Own Publishing Company"