Bring your Book to Life: a 5-step Guide

THE BASICS OF SELF-PUBLISHING

THE BINDERY

Start your next project with us!

Once your content is complete, The Bindery can assist with any step in this guide.

Not a book creation expert? That's ok: we are!

CONTACT US

(414) 482-3630
info@binderymke.com
347 E Ward St.
Milwaukee, WI 53207
Open Weekdays
10AM–6PM

These are the main points we'll walk you through in this guide:

1. **Finish your content (& reach out for assistance)**
2. **Layout and design pages**
3. **Prepare for press**
4. **Design your cover**
5. **Create/Publish**

1. Finish your content, edit, and proofread it.

The bulk of your creative energy and time will be spent here, ensuring that your work is complete, impeccable, and ready to face the world! Your text has been proofed, and all pictures or graphics are properly formatted, in high resolution, CMYK color mode. At this stage, you may be working in a basic word-processing program like *Microsoft Word*. **Do not start formatting your work until all the content is done**: move to step two once you're certain that *not a single edit is left to be made!* If you have overarching questions during this stage, a book consultation with us at The Bindery is the perfect solution. Schedule a meeting to kick things off with our team!

2. Interior: format and layout your pages.

"Formatting" includes choosing your finished book size, picking legible fonts and assigning them to various categories of text (like big chapter headings or small page numbers), building in proper margins, gutter, and bleeds, ensuring you have the right page count—and so much more. You don't need a lot of experience with book layout: that's where The Bindery can help! Laying out the interior of your book can overwhelming (especially if you're using desktop publishing software that you are not confident in, like *Adobe InDesign,* which we recommend). A well-formatted interior is a huge part of making your book both look professional and be a joy to read. Once you've made it through step one, our team can tackle formatting for you, or provide a template for you to work off yourself.

3. It's time for pre-press!

Getting ready for printing involves both file prep and paper selection. To get started, check that your back and front matter—table of contents, dedication, colophon, etc.—are set to go. Then, **save your file out as a print-ready PDF** and check that every choice you made is still intact. You

don't want anything getting lost in digital translation. Think of the PDF file as a *shared language* between how you intend your book pages to look, and how the printer understands it. Once you send your PDF to print, there should be no surprises when you get it back as a fully-fledged book! (It typically takes an experienced layout specialist to get all the details right at this stage.) Next, make an appropriate paper selection. Paper comes in different colors, thicknesses, textures and qualities. A beautifully designed file deserves a beautiful paper! Feeling overwhelmed? That's what our team is here for: The Bindery is happy to assist with all pre-press needs from formatting to material selection.

4. Exterior: Design your book's cover.

When you take a book off a shelf, you're likely seeing its spine first, then looking at the front of it, or flipping it over to read the blurb on the back. The cover of your book often wraps around from the front, to the spine, and onto the back in one piece. This means covers have different formatting and material considerations than book interiors, and this can get complex. For example, a paper cover or jacket often requires *full bleed* color and graphic design even when the interior does not... and a cloth cover may require inset, inlay, or foil stamping work. Don't fret, The Bindery can help here as well: bring your ideals and we'll craft a custom exterior for you.

5. Create/Publish your book.

The Bindery helps folks "self-publish" work which means we assist with design, and produce your books here— but the intellectual rights remain yours! Our team works collaboratively *with* you to understand the vision and scope of your project from the start. We craft books in-house and by hand using a variety of traditional-to-modern methods: sewing, gluing, coiling, etc. Everything is done custom, to your wishes.

By the time you're ready to "hit go" we've already made note of all your material choices; you've approved all layout and designed elements; your down-payment will have been made on a quote we presented you... and all that's left to do is send final files to go to press and get bound!

Our team then sets to work, creating your final peice(s). Because we've collaborated with you for the entire process, we know exactly what you want, and will execute it to perfection at an extremely high quality. We'll let you know when they're ready! Congrats: your books are done.

FACTORS THAT MAY DECREASE YOUR PROJECT COST

- ☑ Being prepared and organized with complete, edited, and 100% finished content to hand off
- ☑ Black & white [only] printing
- ☑ No full-bleed pages ("full bleed" means color all the way to the edge of the sheet)
- ☑ Choosing a book size that uses industry-standard US paper sheet sizes, like 8.5 in x 11 (letter) or 11 in x 17 (tabloid). Specialty sized sheets are more expensive to source
- ☑ Taking a class and/or using our tools and makerspace to complete components of your book yourself
- ☑ Using The Bindery's in-house type creation service for stamping your books (rather than ordering-in new)

... OR THAT MAY INCREASE YOUR PROJECT COST

- ☑ Improper file formatting
- ☑ Very "short" runs (quantities less than 50 or 100). Printing/binding is a bulk industry!
- ☑ Rush deadlines. (Anything shorter than three weeks for basic projects: five weeks for speciality work)
- ☑ Specialty printing (e.g. Letterpress, Risography, hot foiling)
- ☑ Speciality papers and covering materials (fine cloths, top-grade leathers, etc.)
- ☑ Custom finishing (e.g. blind embossing, cover cut-outs, rounded corners)

Prepare Print-Ready Files

CHECKLIST

Ready to export your book out as a PDF? Check off each item on this list before sending us your file:

Book Interior

- ☑ Your document's page size (at 100%) matches the physical finished book size you want
- ☑ Gutter margins are wide enough for your book format and page count (e.g. a thick, perfect bound book would likely require a wider gutter margin than a wire-stitched booklet of only a few pages)
- ☑ No imagery or text is sitting outside the "safe zone" (to avoid getting unintentionally trimmed off)
- ☑ Total number of reading pages is divisible cleanly by 2 (for books with stacked pages) or by 4 (for books with nested pages or signatures)
- ☑ Page numbers are where you want them to be and appear in the right order
- ☑ Table of contents is corresponding to the correct pages

Imagery + Graphics

- ☑ Digital images are saved at 300dpi resolution
- ☑ Digital images are in CMYK color mode
- ☑ Full document is in CMYK color mode
- ☑ Vector text is outlined
- ☑ Original pieces of artwork or photographs are safely saved in a different location (e.g. sitting in a flat file, backed-up on a hard drive, saved on the cloud, or all of the above)!

Book Cover

- ☑ Exported as a separate file from the interior
- ☑ Spine width is calculated correctly
- ☑ Full-bleed designs feature at least an eighth-inch of bleed around all sides

Export Your Files as PDFs*

1. When working from an Adobe program, export your file as an "Adobe PDF (Print)"
2. Select the preset "Press Quality"
3. Export as **single pages** (not spreads)
4. **Do not** include any printers marks (e.g. crop marks, registration marks, etc.)
5. Include ⅛" bleed on head, foot, and fore-edges **only** (not spine side)
6. In "Output", convert color "to destination" as "Working CMYK U.S. Web Coated (SWOP) v2"
7. Name your file as: YYYYMMDD_yourfullname_projectname.pdf *For example: 20250923_jamiehiggins_cookbook.pdf*

*These are The Bindery's default preferences that could change on a project-by-project basis. Please contact us to see if these suggestions are right for your project.

Questions?

CONTACT US

(414) 482-3630
info@binderymke.com
347 E Ward St.
Milwaukee, WI 53207
Open Weekdays
10AM–6PM