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Fashion Your Book to Match the Others in its Field

by Dan Poynter

As you survey the shelves in the bookstore, you will note that each genre or category has its own unique look. For example, business books usually have a hard cover and a dust jacket. Books for professionals such as doctors, lawyers and accountants are hardcover without a dust jacket. Children's books have a larger trim size, are four color and have 32 pages. Cookbooks are wider than they are tall so they will open and lie flat. Travel books are lightweight, slim and may have rounded corners to make them easy to slip into a pocket or pack.

Milt Strong writes and publishes books on square dancing. All his books measure about 4½ x 8 inches. He explains that dancers want a tall, skinny book so they can read the steps—and then slip the book into a back pocket.

Your book must look like the rest on its shelf. It must have the same dimensions, type of cover, a common typeface and so on. Do not break out of the mold on your first attempt. If your book is *different*, it will lose credibility. Potential buyers will think you are an amateur and not ready to be a serious author-publisher. In book design, *different* risks avoidance.

If you want your book to *sell* like a book, it has to *look* like a book.

Give your buyer what he or she expects, wants and deserves—and you will sell more books. Respect your category.

 **Writing periodicals:**

Dan Poynter does not want you to die with a book still inside you. You have the ingredients and he has your recipe. Dan has written more than 100 books since 1969 including *Writing Nonfiction* and *The Self-Publishing Manual*. For more help on book writing, see

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Book Publishing periodicals:

Dan Poynter, the Voice of Self-Publishing, has written more than 100 books since 1969 including *Writing Nonfiction* and *The Self-Publishing Manual*. Dan is a past vice-president of the Publishers Marketing Association. For more help on book publishing and promoting, see

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Professional Speaking periodicals:

Dan Poynter has written more than 100 books since 1969 including *Writing Nonfiction* and *The Self-Publishing Manual*. He is past-chair of NSA's Writer-Publisher PEG and the founder of the PEG newsletter. For more help on book writing, publishing and promoting, see

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