

Desktop Publisher

2006-10-21 14:55:49



Once a business grows beyond the owner's bedroom chances are they need a professional publisher to handle many of their publishing needs. A desktop publisher or DTP is a digital artist with a flair for creativity in the world of commerce. There is no shortage of competition in this market but high demand ensures there is always a new niche to be conquered.

Before The Start-Up, Let's Not Get Ahead Of Ourselves

In an ideal world every desktop publisher would hold qualifications in design, marketing and communications or even better have taken a specialist course in DTP. However the world is less than ideal, many a digital artist learnt his trade through books, practice and plenty of trial and error. If you are artistic, have a flair for quickly learning design programmes and have some background in marketing or communications you're well on your way to being a desktop publisher.

The Start-Up

To begin with you'll need a work space, desk and computer. Graphics require a pretty fast computer with plenty of memory. If you can afford it Mac's are the graphic designers computer of choice, they are reliable, fast and virtually never crash! To do business you'll also need a high speed internet connection, scanner, laser printer and digital camera as well as business stationary such as a letterhead, business cards and an invoice and quote template. Desktop publishing requires specialist software; industry professionals all over the world rely on Adobe Indesign.

Desktop publishers produce a wide array of materials from full book and magazine layouts to newsletters and other marketing materials such as flyers and brochures. If you are new to desktop publishing gathering your portfolio will be the first step in establishing your business. While still learning offer your services to friends and family for a nominal fee.

Making It Work

Finding a place in the industry best suited to your skills will be the key to success. Many publishers choose to specialize in a niche or specific industry. If your talents lie in specific sections of DTP this might be the best route to take.

Alternatively establish yourself as a jack of all trades. Almost all small businesses use desktop publishers for an array of tasks and don't require award winning work. Offer as a broad range of services as possible including all services related to DTP as well as additional services such as copyrighting. Consider partnering with a web design and graphic design firm to out source work that falls beyond your field.

Marketing

Your portfolio will be the centre of your marketing efforts, divide marketing into on and offline mediums. Develop a website with a full listing of your services and a comprehensive portfolio. Leave mediocre work out of your portfolio and display a wide variety to demonstrate your versatility.

Market your services offline by advertising in the Yellow Pages, local business publications and newspaper classifieds. Word of mouth will be your biggest marketing asset; satisfied clients will

quickly recommend your services to their friends and colleagues. Always carry business cards with you and don't be afraid to actively market your services and network in the business community.

Don't Forget

This is a deadline driven job, managing your time and deadlines correctly will be difficult at first. Finally, keeping up to date with the latest software can be costly. Consider waiting several versions before updating software or alternatively buy an upgrade package whenever new versions are released. Upgrade packages are usually about one fifth of the full purchase price.