

Chameleon Publishing FAQ

Q. What deal is Chameleon offering authors?

A. A 50-50% split of net revenue across all platforms (e-book, trade paper, hardcover)

Q. Where will Chameleon books be sold?

A. In North America in major retail outlets, including Barnes & Noble, Chapters Indigo, WalMart and outlets served by distributors such as TNG (supermarkets, drugstores, others), as well as all online booksellers.

Q. How can you afford to do this?

A. We are using a manufacturing-oriented business model, principles of lean operations, continuous improvement, and a non-siloed business structure and plan. We are projecting average per-title sales of 12,000 copies for the first full year of operation. This is "not a bestseller." This is an average, decent-selling book.

Q. Industry analysts say that book publishing revenues are projected to be flat. Why should we invest in a non-growth industry?

A. Industry analysts are working with extremely limited data based upon a small group of companies that have been in operation for an average of over 170 years and which have not changed many aspects of their operations and attitudes since the time they were founded to serve a reading public with an approximate 10% literacy rate. Since we now have near 100% literacy and a 40% college graduation rate – there's some growth possible there. Steve Jobs was wrong when he said "people don't read any more." Give them something they enjoy reading and get something out of? They will read.

Q. What do you mean, legacy publishers don't do marketing?

A. They do not. They conduct market research based in devolving, ever shrinking market segments . This guarantees that over time sales will devolve to smaller and smaller numbers of sales to smaller and smaller groups interested in specific things. This phenomenon is evident in a variety of metrics and is misinterpreted as "people don't read books any longer" and "books have to compete with all other forms of entertainment." When marketing is done, it is after the fact (of purchase) and has little to nothing to do with book production or the creative/editorial process. They ask the wrong questions of their market. However, most critically and importantly, the entire legacy publishing system pays as little as possible for the product it sells – and selects it based in neither genuine market metrics (what readers truly enjoy, what motivates them to purchase) nor any other known, quantifiable metric. Books are pre-selected by literary agents (who operate based on rumor, articles by inexperienced journalists, or Twitter chat) who do not even work for the publishers. Editorial selection is a matter of personal taste or lucky guesswork. "Gee, this book reminds me of ..."

Imagine if that happened at Nabisco (Mondelez). Imagine that it happened ... anywhere ... It is a mark of the power and strength of books despite all of this that nearly 1 billion were verifiably sold last year in the U.S., not a mark that "no one reads any longer."

Q. You say Chameleon will be paying people like Henry Ford. What do you mean?

A. Authors will be partners in the company. If an author is a partner with Chameleon, the company commits to publishing any book the author desires to publish during the term of partnership, even if the book appears to be in a less-commercial market space. The financial structure is designed to accommodate lesser-selling books along with books selling in greater numbers. Partners will be paid monthly, and will have opportunities for annual and longer-term profit-sharing, as well as options for health and retirement benefits (in years 2 and 3 of successful operation and ongoing).

Q. Does Chameleon have a social benefit component?

A. Yes. Legacy publishing at present is not diverse. It is not accepting of diverse authorial voices and talent, who are writing work coming out of non-white, non-male traditions. This is rooted in its history, the people who developed the companies, traditions, and work processes. Neither the legacy publishing system nor the self-publishing system (which works only in pre-established market niches and segments) is able to address this issue on a systemic basis. Chameleon will be partnering with diverse authors, including authors of color, LGBTQ authors, and female authors who are writing what they wish to write and believe in, as opposed to what they can publish (romance, chick lit, women's fiction, certain types of fantasy, etc.) Because Chameleon is marketing and selling the books to real readers, which include 58% female current book-buyers (who are relatively poorly served at present), readers of color, LGBTQ readers, and others, these authors and books will be author-partners, professionals, and will find their readership. They will not have to write "what is expected" to accomplish this task.

Q. What will I get if I invest?

A. A fair return on your investment. As a profit-making company, we cannot guarantee you 100% but this business takes publishing from speculative to sustainable. You may also be participating in something that could truly institute a new renaissance in creative thought – because we really are treating authors like Henry Ford treated the employees on that long-ago assembly line. We are endeavoring to pay them and treat them as they are truly worth. Because without them: there would be no books to sell, nor read. And this will be the first time – to our knowledge – in history that this has occurred.

Q. Can my agent send you my book?

A. Sadly, no. Chameleon has no ability to talk to literary agents. Chameleon will partner with authors and will not purchase single titles.

Q. What is Chameleon's policy regarding agented manuscripts?

A. Chameleon's operations and financial projections are based on a manufacturing model based upon new/emerging green and sustainable companies. We are paying authors 50-50 of net revenue across all platforms. If an agented author wishes to partner with Chameleon, it is the author's responsibility to understand that they will be providing their agent with 15% of their revenue from any Chameleon books – basically for no reason whatsoever. While it is certainly possible there may be some literary agents out there somewhere who are investing in genuine marketing metrics and research for their clients, this is highly unlikely given the cost of developing such information and its author-specific nature. Since Chameleon is unable to speak directly to literary agents and Chameleon author-partner contracts will be very simple and based upon 1099 independent contractor and consultation contracts from other industries, author-partners are advised to take this into consideration as well.

Q. I am a new author and have not been conventionally published (or I have self-published my work and am not satisfied with the results). How do I work with Chameleon?

A. How do you apply for a job or a consulting position in the non-publishing world?

Q. Will Chameleon be hiring developmental editors and copy editors?

A. Yes. At prevailing industry rates, with potential for higher earnings and profit-sharing after years two and three.

Q. I am an artist and would like to provide cover art and interior illustrations for Chameleon books.

A. If you like to work as part of a creative team with others, we are glad to talk with you.

