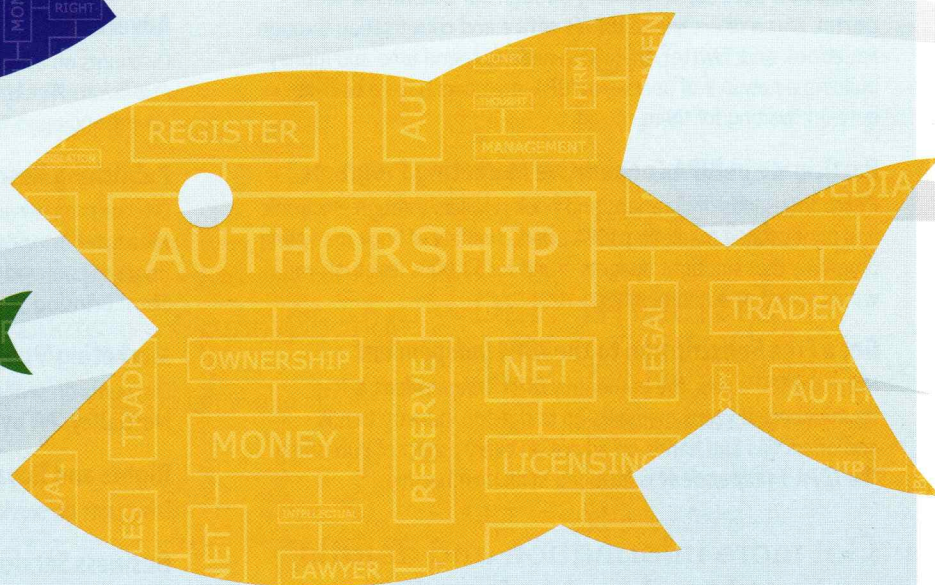
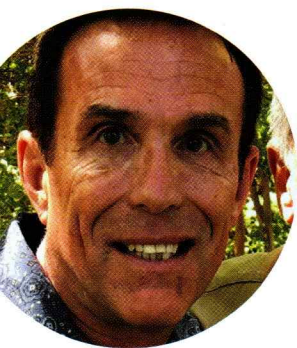


THINK BEYOND THE BOOK

Book sales are not the only way
to boost your bottom line



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How Books Can Lead to Adventures ... and More Revenue

by Michael C. Higgins, Ph.D.

How many times have you heard someone say to you, "You're never going to make a lot of money from selling your books. Money is made from how your books can open doors to make money in other ways."

I've definitely heard that way too many times. And while I don't want to believe it, I was fortunate to be thinking this way at the start. From the beginning, my company, Exploring Wine Regions, began looking at other ways to make money with our books. First, we signed a deal with one of the largest book distributors to sell our books to the traditional bookstore market, giving us the freedom to pursue other nontraditional markets. I looked at non-bookstore avenues to sell our books. Being that we produce wine and travel books, we expanded our retail base by selling our books through wine shops and travel stores. This has been an excellent source of additional revenue. Selling through wine shops and travel stores gives us a much bigger margin; because our distributor is not set up or interested in this distribution, we get to keep the profit. Further, we've worked with our wine shop owners to produce author-led trips to wine regions.

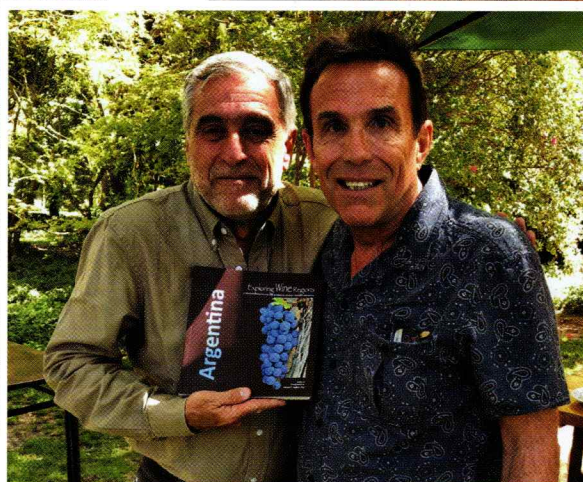
Today, our author-led trips have become our best source of revenue. (And they're a whole lot of fun!) Think about it: This additional business forces us to be in beautiful wine regions, often times sitting outside taking in the spectacular views, drinking extraordinary wines, eating sensational foods, and hanging out with professionals and consumers who are passionate about food and wine experiences. There's nothing more exciting than traveling to wine regions and enjoying the amazing foods, wine, and cultures in a behind-the-scenes insiders' experience. This is what we offer to our readers, which creates considerable additional revenues.



Do the math. When selling to bookstores, typically 50 percent of the revenues go to the bookstore and then another 25 percent to the distributor and wholesaler. Add on top of that the cost of producing and printing the books, plus promotion. In the end, I do not need to tell you how many pennies might be left over to keep.

The math is better for producing trips. When travelers are paying thousands of dollars to go on a trip, it's easy to keep hundreds of dollars as a profit from each person. This is a dramatically different comparison from profiting only a few dollars on book sales.

Exploring Wine Regions produces two types of author-led trips. One is where we work with our wine shops, whereby they market our author-led trips to their customers and get a profit for their success as well. The math is similar for them; they can make a few dollars on a bottle wine or a few hundred dollars on a trip. It's a great value added for the wine shops to give their customers opportunities to learn and experience more



about wine. Our books help them sell wine and trips, and their wines help sell our books and trips. This is a very good relationship we have created with our customers, which goes well beyond the straight bookstore sale. It's significantly more profitable for everyone.

The other author-led trips we produce are for our direct relationships with readers. Over time, we have built a good database and an excellent reputation with wine lovers who can't wait to go on the next trip with us. Why? We share their passion. We offer them unique trips they could never buy. That's what makes it so desirable and profitable. They are not just going on a trip with an author; they're going in the back door to meet the people at the forefront of food, wine, and hospitality. Through producing our books, we develop extraordinary relationships and personal friendships that become the backbone to what we offer our readers who travel with us.

So, how can you translate this opportunity to your book business? Hopefully, you are passionate about your books and their content. And your readers must be passionate as well, which is why they are buying your books. Take this passion and figure out how to give your readers an extraordinary experience with the passions you both share. You certainly have the insight to deliver what your readers are reading about in your books in

a manner they could never do themselves. If you can do this, then you now have an excellent alternative revenue stream—in a very big way.

Nonfiction and how-to books might seem the easiest to find these opportunities. How-to books can translate into greater how-to events you could produce. Anything nonfiction has factual content that you can expand upon for additional activities with your readers, bringing in alternative revenues. Fiction could work as well. We all love fantasies. If you can carry out and deliver the opportunity for fantasies related to your books, you've got a big winner. Even people who don't read your books will pay to experience the fantasy.

The old saying "Do what you love, and the money will come" is the right inspiration here. Whatever your passion is behind your books, it is the resource for creating alternative revenues. This is a passion both you and your readers share, so the opportunity is exciting and profitable. ●

Michael C. Higgins, Ph.D., has over 25 years of experience as a photojournalist and publisher of books and magazines focused on luxury travel, food and wine, and experiential journeys. He can be reached at trips@exploringwineregions.com.