

# MWP FACT SHEET FOR AUTHORS

As of September 25, 2006

## Who is MWP?

Michael Wiese Productions (MWP) was founded in 1976 in San Francisco primarily to produce films. In 1981, MWP published its first book, "The Independent Film and Videomaker's Guide" by Michael Wiese which, in its various editions has sold over 50,000 copies.

Over the past 26 years, MWP has become America's leading "how-to" film book publishers with a line of nearly 100 books on filmmaking including many bestsellers that would make any major publisher proud. In addition, MWP books are published in over a dozen languages and bring worldwide attention to their authors.

MWP is known for creating highly-accessible books that guide filmmakers in all aspects of their craft including writing, directing, storyboarding, camera, producing, financing, marketing, distributing, new media, and more.

Here's what book reviewers have said about the line:

"In a sea of filmmaking self-help books, the practical primers from Michael Wiese Productions always stand out." FILMMAKER Magazine

*"MWP Books allows you, the reader, to explore the various aspects of the Entertainment Industry. Their writers give you a hands-on experience on the tricks of the trade and tips on how to successfully build a desired career. From screenwriting, to budgeting, to directing and production management, the Michael Wiese books should be your guide."* Chris Robertson, Hollywood Writers Block

*"I've read many of Michael Wiese's line of books, and I haven't found a clinker among 'em. The writers are people in the trenches, people who've been there and done that. Further, they've come out the other side wiser, braver, and willing to share their insights. Since the bewildering field of film slides between craft and art, a new or experienced filmmaker needs some maps. Michael Wiese's books are road signs."* Mary J. Schirmer, absolutewrite.com

*"The first step in the difficult journey of filmmaking and screenwriting is knowledge of the craft and industry. The books from Michael Wiese Productions will start you in the right direction and serve as reliable reference points on your path to success."* Shelly Mellot, Script Magazine

## Who is your audience?

The audience for our books ranges from the wanna-be, through student filmmakers, emerging filmmakers and advanced professionals. The books are understandable to the beginner yet sophisticated enough to be of value to the working professional. That's why they are used in both film schools and in the field. We often hear about how are books are used on the sets of major films.

## How and where are the books distributed?

In the U. S., MWP books are distributed by Ingram Publishers Services (IPS) (an entrepreneurial division within Ingram, America's largest wholesaler with over 22,000 bookstore accounts). MWP books are also distributed in England and Europe by Publisher's Group-UK and Publisher's Group-World and in Australia/New Zealand by Harcourt. Since joining IPS in June 2006 our revenues have gone up 75% (and returns fallen) and we've opened hundreds of new accounts.

MWP books are found in all major book chains including Barnes & Noble, Borders, B. Dalton, etc. as well as independent bookstores. Most years we do special on-floor co-op marketing with Barnes & Noble in hundreds of stores. MWP books are also sold at all the top film/theater bookshops across the country including Samuel French, Dramabooks, City Lights and Larry Edmunds. We also have relationships with numerous bookstores for author book signings.

*How can you compete with the major publishers?*

Easily. We know and work our niche infinitely harder and in a more focused manner. Why? Because we have to, it's the only thing we do. We work every nook and cranny where books may be of interest. Also, we are filmmakers so we can more easily separate worthy information from nonsense. We know our audience very well and what they want and through their careers they come back to us for more information.

*Yes, but you are miniscule. What about on the distribution side?*

We are tiny, yes. But we have all the resources that the majors have and more. We are distributed through Ingram which means we have exactly the same lightning fast distribution delivery as Amazon! We can get our books to the buyers within 24 hours because we have access to the most sophisticated state-of-the-art order and fulfillment system in the world.

In addition, because we cut out a middle man (by selling the major accounts ourselves), we can do two things that make us highly competitive. We offer the bookstores greater margins and can keep greater margins for ourselves and our authors. Most publishers cannot do this.

This is probably a more lengthy explanation than you need, but let's just say that our success in marketing and distribution comes from five factors; 1) content – we have the best books, 2) service and delivery – lightning fast, 3) price to the trade – greater profits for the bookstore, 4) MWP are the “go to guys” for film and screenwriting books and 5) authors get greater net royalties through higher margin sales.

*What about book club sales?*

In the past, MWP has sold many of its books through book clubs such as Book of the Month Club, Entertainment Book Club, Writer's Digest Book Club

and others, however in recent years there's been a huge decline in the film-related book clubs.

*Do you attend the major book or trade shows?*

MWP has exhibited at Book Expo America (formerly ABA), NAB (National Association of Broadcasters) and various Screenwriting and Show Biz expos. We also attend the UFVA (University Film and Video Association) where we get our books into the hands of hundreds of film school professors and deans. We attend the Frankfurt International Book Fair (Germany) and the London Book Show where we sell foreign language rights to Germany, France, Iceland, Finland, England, Korea, Japan, Italy, Russia, China, Spain, Brazil, and others.

MWP has become well known at the Frankfurt Book Fair among over 400 buyers for not only selling foreign rights of MWP books but also the rights to film books from other U. S. publishers and authors such as Linda Seger and others.

*What about catalogs?*

Over the years, we have compiled a large database ("the house list") of everyone who has ordered a book from MWP. Each year we send a direct mail catalog (and sometimes post card announcements) to a highly-targeted list including filmmakers, writers, film schools, professional organizations and others. These include AFI, AIVF, FAF, IFP, IDA, UAVF, and many others.

The catalog is also available as a PDF file on our website: [www.mwp.com](http://www.mwp.com) Nearly 10,000 a year are downloaded from the website.

*Are you on the Internet?*

Yes, since 1996 our web site has been on the Internet. In June 2007 an entirely new upgrade site was released maximizing the latest in e-commerce marketing. People may order books via a secure credit card order form. One sample chapter and a table of contents are provided so potential buyers can browse a book. We also market our book through many other web sites. For example, through a cross promotion with the Internet Movie Database (IMDB) we obtained over 1 million impressions with filmmakers throughout the world. Google shows 156,000 links and references to MWP.

Speaking of Amazon, Amazon is one of our biggest customers. Our books are consistently in the top 10 among the "screenwriting", "filmmaking", and other film categories. Do a search and see for yourself.

We also send out frequent email blasts announcing new books and promotions to people who have registered on our website.

*How are the books sold?*

When someone gets a catalog they may order books 24 hours a day, every day of the week, from 1-800 833-5738. We have dedicated telephone operators standing by, who know our books. This operation is set up in Michigan near our printing plant and warehouse facility. Orders may be placed on the web site at anytime as well. When authors send people to our web site they end up with a larger royalty than when a book is sold through a bookstore or Amazon.

*What about the educational market?*

To date, MWP books are used in over 600 university film courses in the U. S. and abroad. MWP also has a relationship with the leading organization of film schools called The University Film and Video Association. We've attended their national convention and invite our authors to speak. This gets our books in front of the teachers who may adopt them for their classes. We also have a very successful program called "MWP Associates" where filmmaking organizations offer our books to their members at a discount.

*Do you cross promote your books?*

Absolutely. Every which way! We use a variety of means to keep our books in front of our target audience. For example, besides full page ads in the back of our books, we have printed the covers of 60 books on the inside front and back jacket of the book along with an order page. In essence, every one of the thousands who buy or read one of our books also has a book catalog in their hands!

*What kind of publicity do you do?*

Publicity is our most important vehicle for sales. Word of mouth, which is generated by publicity, is what creates sales. Three month or more before the publication date each book, receives its own publicity campaign. For every book, we send out galleys/review copies and press releases to our extensive house list of key magazines, newspapers, web sites, radio stations, key wholesalers and buyers most likely to review or promote our books.

In some cases, depending entirely on the nature of the book, we may arrange a nationwide radio interview campaign tied in with seminars, book signing and public appearances.

The more publicity an author is able to generate, in conjunction with our publicity, the more sales a book will generate. Not all books lend themselves to nationwide publicity however, and the little specialized niches must be mined. The two-punch combination of author and publisher working together on promotion is what sells books. Writing a book and handing it over to us is not a path to the best-seller charts.

We love authors who give seminars and workshops, do radio interviews, write magazine articles, and love to talk! All this builds a book's (and author's) reputation.

### *What about advertising?*

Advertising is extremely expensive and, of its own, not terribly effective for our highly specialized books. Nevertheless, we feel that it is important to get as many impressions as possible with our target audience.

Through special trade barter deals we have had ads appear in Publisher's Weekly, Script Magazine, Scriptwriter, Videography, Moviemaker, The Independent, Digital Cinema, and numerous other magazines.

### *Do you do any special promotions?*

Specialty marketing is the name of the game. You cannot broadly market our special books to everyone, consequently we must get into the nooks and crannies in order to find our readers. This is something large publishers are not equipped to do on individual books. For us, it's our bread and butter. We must do whatever we can to sell each and every book, one at a time, for years and years.

MWP books are promoted and sold at film festivals throughout the U.S. and other special events that have included Sundance, IFFP, The Maui Writer's Conference, International Documentary Film Festival, The Hollywood Writer's Conference, Kodak seminars, Learning Annex, Roger Ebert's Film Festival, Raindance, Seattle Film Festival, SXSW, and hundreds of other venues.

For example, we've been a sponsor of many film festivals including the Seattle Film Festival, (our books are donated as prizes and gifts) and we appeared in the program and had a bookstall at the festival. We also create an in-store displays in Barnes and Nobles and other bookstores celebrating our books and the festival. For five years, at SXSW (South by Southwest) Festival, we've invited our authors to attend, present seminars and autograph books on the trade show floor.

Shortly after the "Blair Witch" phenomena, we paid Barnes & Nobles to do a special standalone shelf that our books which was very successful.

We have staff dedicated to finding new opportunities for marketing our books on a daily basis. We try to leave no stone unturned.

### *What if I want to do seminars and sell my books?*

Great! We encourage that. We have a sales program where our authors who do seminars (most of them do) can buy not only their own books but other MWP books at a 44% discount and sell them at the back of the room in their seminars. For some authors, they make more money selling these books than from their lecture fees!

### *How do I make money from my books?*

It takes a long time to write a book so in the short run you receive very little money for this enormous effort. So part of your interest in writing a book might be to educate others or share some of your knowledge. But in a year or two as your book sales climb you may be very surprised at the size of your royalty checks.

The real financial gains come from the fact that you are now “an author”. All kinds of opportunities will come your way. Although we tell all our prospective authors this - and it may sound like publisher’s hype - the fact is, most of authors will tell you that it’s absolutely true. Having a book out in the world, changed their life. (Read the quotes at the bottom of this FAQ.)

For example, authors have invited to conduct two week long seminars in Tokyo, to lecture in Helsinki, Spain, and Germany, to privately tutor Michael Jackson (no kidding!), to consult for a Pan-European DVD company, to organize a three-day event at the Cologne Film Festival, to direct a film in China, and much more. One author, who was totally broke during the writing of his book, made a six-figure salary two years later. All of this is a result of having a book in the marketplace.

*What about book competitions?*

Krausa-Kranz is the major international book award for film books and is held every other year. MWP books have received two nominations and cash awards in past. Cash prizes from book awards go directly to the author. We attend the awards ceremony in London where our books are displayed to important world book buyers.

*Can you help with seminars?*

Michael Wiese, Chris Vogler, Mark Travis, Judith Weston, Blake Snyder, Michael Hauge, and many of our others authors present seminars throughout the world. We can frequently help authors with many aspects of their seminars. In 2006, Michael brought MWP authors to two international film workshop events in Cornwall. The seminars are certainly a lucrative area for our authors that we wholeheartedly support. Authors can post their upcoming seminars on our website. At present, our focus is on selling as many books for you as we possibly can. Many of our authors’ seminars and consulting services are also promoted on our “consulting” page.

*What happens a year after you publish my book? Will you forget about it in favor of your new books?*

How can we? MWP is a small publisher and produces only 10-15 books a year. Consequently, we must continually promote and sell all our books, old or new! Our newest books do receive a large promotional push in order to set reorder patterns but once that’s accomplished, we must keep promoting. We never consider our books to be “back-listed”. In fact, some of our books are selling in greater numbers seven years after their publication date.

And, to keep the books fresh, we often ask authors to write 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> editions of their books. By updating 20-40% of the information we can re-release the book. With the reputation the book already has among readers and the book trade, we can continue to sell a book that would otherwise go out of print.

Over the last few years, we've organized a backlist promotion with our distributor on many of our titles. This is a year long promotion (3 times a year) that we do in the major chain and independent bookstores. This keeps the titles fresh in front of the buyers. If a book is selling well in one chain, we make sure than another chain knows about this and can push the title as well.

*The bottom line. How many of my books are you going to sell? The first year? Over time?*

As many as we possibly can. This, of course is a function of not only the subject, the quality and timeliness of a book, but the marketplace as well. The shocking news is that of all books sold in the U. S., 94% sell less than one thousand copies in their lifetime. Just about every one of our authors should be very pleased – they are in the top 6% of all U. S. authors and some are in the upper 2-3%!

On the average, one of our books will sell about 10,000 copies during its life. We do not consider publishing a book unless we believe it will sell at least 3,000 copies during the first year with a life-history sales potential of 20,000 or more. We may invest \$35,000 to produce, publish, and market a book before the first dollar comes back so we want to be very sure that it's a wise investment of money, staff time and precious release schedule slot. We have the same goal as the author: the more books sold, the better it is for everyone.

*What are your bestsellers? How many copies have you sold of a single title? Any duds?*

In the U. S. only, *The Writer's Journey* (both editions) by Chris Vogler sold nearly 200,000 copies. *Film Directing: Shot by Shot* by Steve Katz sold over 180,000 copies. *Film and Video Budgets* (all editions) by Deke Simon sold over 40,000 copies. *Directing Actors* by Judith Weston sold over 40,000 copies. And that's only in the U. S.. Combined with foreign sales this positions these authors in high demand for speaking/consulting/production jobs worldwide.

Some of our other books have sold over 10,000 copies and just keep on selling. A dozen or so of our books have sold one or two thousand copies which is still more than 94% of all books sold.

*Who are your competitors?*

Focal Books (founded in the U. K.) publishes over 50 highly, technical academic books each year. Silman-James publishes a wide range of film

books. A handful of other publishers may publish one or two film books every now and then but we don't consider them competition. In our category we consistently have the best-selling books year in, year out as tracked by Nielsen Bookscan.

*How do you differ from your competition?*

Our books have a warm and informal tone. They've been called the industry's most "artistic and creative" film books by our distributors and the retail bookstores. They are reader-friendly, and convey a one-on-one relationship between the author and reader. It's like you are talking to an expert who gives you advice. Our authors are working professionals and are able to convey valuable advice to the reader about "how to get it done" in a highly entertaining fashion. We believe that's what has made our books so popular world-wide.

*What importance do you give to your book covers?*

We are told by our distributors and the major chain store buyers that we have great looking covers that distinguishes us from our competitors. We understand that we are marketing to the most highly visually sophisticated buyer in the world: filmmakers. Those who experience the world visually will accept no less than a well-designed book. The people who buy our books like to show them off. This identifies and says something about their owner so the books better look great.

*What input do I, the author, have on the book? Especially the title and cover design.*

The author gets to write the book he or she has been dreaming about with the assurance that it will be marketed in the best possible way in all venues. We'll help with editorial when that's needed. You'll hear more from us at the start about your structure, tone and organizational plans than on specific content, which is the author's job.

We will have several top graphic designers that we work with. We will prepare comp drafts of the cover. We will show a selection to you and to our distributor's marketing staff and sales force for comments. (The sales force are people at street level who really know their books.) MWP staff will comment as well. The final choice for the cover (and the title) will be ours, however, you will be very much included in this process. We want the author to be happy and proud of their book. At the same time, we are well known for producing the best books in the business. This dialogue between MWP, our distributor, and you, the author gives us the best shot at picking the right title and designing the right cover: the end result, more book sales.

*How do you create books?*

Our job is to help authors focus on a concept that we believe will be marketable. Sometimes – in the early stages – we will make suggestions how

the book can be broadened or more tightly focused. Remember we've seen and studied hundreds of film books and know what works and what doesn't. Once we agree on the concept for the book and select an author we pretty much stay out of the way until the first manuscript is delivered. At that time, we have our copyeditors read it, and make corrections. The author then looks at the book again, makes final comments before the book is laid out.

*What do you need to decide?*

We ask for a table of contents, a sample chapter or two, a page or two on who the audience is, what are the competing books and why you think your book differs or is better from the others, how you the author can help sell it (through seminars or associations). We also that the author fill out a questionnaire that will help us better evaluate the book's potential. We will then use Nielsen's Bookscan service, to which we subscribe, to research competitive sales figures on similar books. No longer are buying decisions made on entirely a "gut level" as in the old days. Now – everything is computer modeled.

*How soon do you want the book?*

That's your call. A good book cannot be rushed. We look to the author to get a realistic idea of when they think they can deliver and we design our release and marketing campaign accordingly. There have been some instances where we are trying to hit a certain marketing window because it will be best for the book, but most of the time, we decide together, when a book should be published.

*How long from when I deliver my book to when I will see it in print?*

It doesn't take long at all to print a book – but that's not publishing. It takes from 20-28 weeks to properly launch a book. The manufacturing period is short but we must spend a lot of time before the book's publication date to make foreign rights sales and to properly promote and prepare the trade for the book long before it's printed. There is also a long ramp up of getting review quotes (a shared job with the author), sending out galleys to magazines and marketing to the major chains before the book even hits the bookstores. The world of publishing gets tougher and tougher and advance marketing is vitally important. Rushing a book out does not satisfy anyone's long term goals of building a book with on-going sales.

*Who should I talk to about my book?*

There will be key contacts to assist you through every stage of the process. Michael Wiese is involved with selecting the books for publication, guiding the concept, the book's focus, and initial marketing strategy. Vice President Ken Lee oversees the entire publishing process and follows the book through the production, helping obtain materials, the printing and binding process, and early marketing stages. He'll quickly become your 'new best friend' in the process. Michele Chong focuses on special sales, customer relations and

also works with authors on book signing, tours and special events. We have several great people that copy-edit and layout your book and design the covers.

*How do I get started?*

Send a one-page letter (e-mail or snail mail or fax) telling us about yourself and your book concept. We'll respond quickly if we like it and ask for more materials and information. From there we will make you an offer and send a contract. We will respond as quickly as we can with a decision. Then you'll get busy and write a best seller!

Cheers,

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Here's what some of our authors have said about their experience of having their book published:

"I can absolutely divide my teaching career into two eras - "before the book" and "after the book." The publication of "Directing Actors" changed everything for me professionally - and I should say personally too, because teaching is very personal for me, and my students often become my friends and almost like family (and because my husband now works with me as business manager and producer).

In the first year after publication, my teaching income doubled from the year before, and I am now at my limit with literally as much work as I can possibly handle (well, of course that includes a January 1st deadline on my second book for MWP...). And don't forget travel - to teach in Europe, Canada, other US cities - that happened only because people found out about me through the book. Last but not least, Michael and Ken have become personal friends and I think the world of them.

But maybe the best part of all was how much I learned from writing the book. I won't lie to you - writing is torture for me - the amount of stuff I end up revising and throwing out is easily three or four times the length of the actual book. But the process of figuring out what I want to say and how to say it clearly has really been the biggest benefit of writing - because it has made me a more confident teacher."

**JUDITH WESTON**, Author of *Directing Actors* and *The Film Director's Intuition*

"Both of my books have been the greatest calling card imaginable, nationally and internationally. They have opened doors for me as a teacher, consultant, director and writer in such locations as: Tokyo, Hawaii, Malaysia, Nairobi, Munich, Berlin, Cologne, London, Poland, Istanbul, Moscow, Kiev, and Havana, Cuba. I am deeply grateful for the opportunities that have come my way to form immediate relationships with filmmakers from around the world. It has truly changed my life as a teacher, lecturer, writer and director. I believe that I am a more accomplished and more honest artist because of each of these opportunities and experiences."

**Mark W Travis**, author of *Directing Feature Films* and *The Director's Journey*

"Getting my ideas published was like getting a Ph.D., giving me a whole new platform for expressing myself and a credential that added to my credibility. It's truly been a magic carpet that has taken me to many new places and introduced me to many new people and ideas. I tell people who are about to be published "It will change your life." It's a major turning point and opens doors, most of them unexpected and surprising. It did what I wanted and more, giving me an identity and an influence beyond my expectations."

**Christopher Vogler**, author of *The Writer's Journey*

"I've had a wonderful experience with MWP, from my first talks with the company to the ultimate release of my book. Everyone I worked with at MWP did an amazing job, and I'm extremely proud of the final result. A few weeks after publication, I was invited to fly to Ireland and Canada to promote my book at film festivals -- an unexpected and extremely gratifying international embrace of my work!"

**Kim Adelman**, author of *The Ultimate Filmmaker's Guide to Short Films*

"Working with Michael and Ken and having a book published by MWP has been one of the most impactful events of my life. I am not kidding! When I wrote *Save The Cat!* I knew there were many books on screenwriting out there, but from the start Michael and Ken made me feel like mine was special and have been as interested, and sometimes more so, in all the success the book has brought me. And they have personally given me many of those opportunities. When the book first came out, Michael invited me to a Chicago event featuring film teachers from all over the world, I went, met several great people who gave me jobs giving seminars on my book's methods. Later, after I had begun lecturing all over the country because of this, Michael invited me to be the featured screenwriting teacher at his arts festival event in Cornwall, England. I was able to come over to the UK, promote my book, and make all new friends and contacts internationally because of this. From my normal job, slaving away in the trenches of Hollywood, trying to write and sell scripts, this adventure with Michael and Ken has given me a new and very exciting life I never thought was possible. I am now writing the sequel to my first book and have been asked to write three *Cat!* books in all. I am so grateful to the company Michael and Ken have started, it is human, caring, fun, fulfilling and enterprising. One of the best businesses I have ever been associated with and two of the finest people I have ever had the pleasure of knowing. I love these guys!!!"

**Blake Synder**, author of *Save the Cat*

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