

OPPORTUNITIES IN

# Publishing Careers



ROBERT A. CARTER AND S. WILLIAM PATTIS

VGM Opportunities Series

# OPPORTUNITIES IN PUBLISHING CAREERS

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Revised by  
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## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Robert A. Carter is a writer, educator, and marketing consultant with wide and intensive publishing experience. He has served on the faculty of Pace University, where he helped create Pace's Master of Science Program in Publishing; at Hofstra University; and at New York University, where for six years he directed the Summer Publishing Institute. He is a frequent lecturer on publishing topics at other colleges and universities. He also has been a contributing editor to *Publishers Weekly*, the international magazine of book publishing, for ten years.

During his distinguished publishing career, Mr. Carter worked for such firms as Doubleday, McGraw-Hill, and as director of publications for the Museum of Modern Art in New York City. In addition he served as an account supervisor for ten years at Franklin Spier, the leading book publishing advertising agency.

His published books include *Manhattan Primitive*, a novel; *Opportunities in Book Publishing Careers*; and *Trade Book Marketing: A Practical Guide*, of which he was general editor. He is also the author of two mystery novels, *Casual Slaughters* and *Final Edit*, both published by Mysterious Press/Warner Books.

S. William Pattis founded and served as Chairman/CEO of NTC Publishing Group from 1961 until 1996, when the firm was acquired by Tribune Company (NYSE). NTC published more than four thousand titles under various imprints including Passport Books, National Textbook, NTC Business Books, VGM Career Books, Teach Yourself, and The Quilt Digest Press. Pattis also served as Chairman/CEO of 3M/Pattis, an advertising sales firm he founded in 1959 and operated as The Pattis Group. In 1988 the business was acquired by the Advertising Services Group of the 3M Company (NYSE).

In addition, for more than two decades, Pattis served as President and Director of P-B Communications, publisher of Chicago's *NORTH SHORE Magazine*, which was purchased by Hollinger International (NYSE) in 1997. In September

Publishers Representatives, The Overseas Press and Media Association, and the Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University.

In 1986, under the sponsorship of the U.S. Information Agency, he conducted seminars for Chinese educators in Beijing, China, in the teaching of American English. He was a key speaker at the first Face-to-Face International Publishing Conference in The Hague, Netherlands, and was a principal speaker at the annual meeting of the Periodical Publishers Association of the United Kingdom.

In the spring of 1992 Pattis received the Senator Paul Simon Award, which is given annually to the person who has made the greatest contribution to the field of international studies and foreign language education. In 1997 he was the recipient of the Distinguished Service Award, which is awarded annually within the book publishing industry.

He is married to the former Bette Z. Levin of Los Angeles and has two married children, Mark R. Pattis of Highland Park, Illinois, and Robin Q.P. Himovitz of Montecito, California, and five grandchildren. Bill Pattis is a resident of Highland Park, Illinois, and is a winter resident of Rancho Mirage, California.

This edition has been thoroughly revised by Blythe Camenson, a full-time writer of career books. Camenson's main concern is helping job seekers make educated choices. She firmly believes that with enough information, readers can find long-term, satisfying careers.

Camenson's interests range from history and photography to writing novels. She is also director of Fiction Writer's Connection, a membership organization whose function is to help new writers improve their craft and learn the ropes to getting published. Her website can be found at [www.fictionwriters.com](http://www.fictionwriters.com).

Camenson has more than three dozen books in print, most published by NTC/Contemporary Books. She is also the coauthor of *Your Novel Proposal: From Creation to Contract* (Writer's Digest Books, 1999). Upcoming titles include *Careers in Writing* and *Careers in Publishing*.

She was educated in Boston, earning her B.A. in English and psychology from the University of Massachusetts and her M.Ed. in counseling from Northeastern University.

## FOREWORD

Publishing! I fell in love with books at an early age, but never dreamt I would spend my life in the publishing business. Like so many people with varied interests and a liberal arts education, I ended up in publishing by accident. How, I wondered, could all these varied interests be useful? They are all useful in the book business, and twenty-five years later I still find my work challenging and interesting.

And just what, I've often been asked, is the publishing business? For some, it's the experience of retail, whether in an independent bookstore or as part of one of the chains. Retail bookselling puts you at the crux of the publishing business—the place where all the work of writer and publisher meets the reader.

For others it is work in a publishing house, where there are many opportunities: editorial, design, publicity, marketing, or sales. There are few large publishers, primarily in New York, and many independent publishers located throughout the country. All product quality books, and the working atmosphere is as varied as the books each publishes. Yet another group (one to which I now belong) who feeds the publishers is that of literary agents, who look for new writing talent and new ideas for books and make the connections between writer and publisher.

All of us in the book business share a love of books and find kindred spirits among our colleagues. As a group, publishing people tend to be independent and creative thinkers, intellectually curious, quirky, savvy, and interesting. Be they editorial assistants or top executives, they are almost always congenial.

The publishing world—from writer to publisher to bookstore—has an aura that's difficult to explain but palpable to anyone in the business. Although it is a business and is concerned with profit, it generally does not attract anyone

whose primary goal is making money. Rather, the attraction is to be a participant in the process of creating and marketing books. There are opportunities to make a good living in the publishing business, but an underpaid apprenticeship is often required.

One of the best things about publishing is its unpredictability. This is, of course, one of the most frustrating things as well. The public reaction—or lack thereof—to books is often surprising and provides us all with continual challenges.

In the end, though, for me it's about love of books, ideas, and writing. I love the feeling of being in a room (or warehouse or store) full of books. I love the thrill of discovering a new writer. I love seeing a finished book in my hands—a book that came to me as an idea from a writer. I love introducing readers to new writers. I love talking with others who are doing the same thing. I have a sense of mission about my work and know that many others do, too.

Although many who begin a career in publishing spend their lives in it, others do not. In any case, if you are not sure what you want to do in life and are attracted to the publishing industry, give it a try. Whether it becomes your lifelong passion or is merely a way station to another career, you will find it stimulating.

Linda Roghaar  
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# INTRODUCTION

## THE HISTORY OF BOOK PUBLISHING

“**pub.lish** *v.* To bring to the public attention; to announce. From Latin *pub-licare*, to make public.”—*The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*.

Publishing is described in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* as “the activity that involves selection, preparation, and marketing of printed matter. It has grown from small and ancient beginnings into a vast and complex industry responsible for the dissemination of all kinds of cultural material, from the most elevated to the most trivial. Its impact upon civilization is impossible to calculate.”

To begin with, books, in one form or another, have been around for 4,000 to 5,000 years. Papyrus rolls were used in Egypt as early as the year 3,000 B.C. The first modern form of the book was the Roman *codex*, in which sheets of papyrus were folded vertically to make leaves.

The idea of the newspaper, too, is as old as ancient Rome, where the events of each day were published in a scroll called the *Acta Diurna*, roughly “the acts of the day.” Started around 59 B.C., it was the first newspaper of any kind.

As for magazines, they appeared much later on the scene. Though there may have been approaches to a magazine in antiquity, especially in China, the magazine as it is now known began only after the invention of the printing press in the West. The word *magazine* comes to us from France, where one of the world’s first magazines, called *Journal des Scavans*, was first published in Paris in 1655.

The history of publishing in its various forms—book, newspaper, and magazine—is characterized by the interplay of technical innovation and social change. Publishing as it is known today is dependent on three major inventions—writing, paper, and printing—and one crucial social development—the spread of literacy.



Before the invention of writing, information could only be exchanged by word of mouth, with all its limitations of time and space. Writing originally was confined to the recording of codes of law, genealogies, and religious formulations. Not until the monopoly of letters, usually held by a priestly caste, was broken could writing finally be used to disseminate information.

The Chinese are generally considered to have invented printing in the sixth century A.D. in the form of wooden block printing. The fifteenth century witnessed the two most important developments in the history of publishing: paper, which the Chinese had invented in 105 A.D. and which the Arabs brought to Europe; and the invention of movable type, generally attributed to Johannes Gutenberg.

Book publishing, the senior member of this triumvirate, began in the United States in 1638, when the first printers, Stephen Daye and his two sons, went from Cambridge, England, to Cambridge, Massachusetts. There they produced their first book, *The Whole Booke of Psalmes*, in 1640. It is known today as “The Bay Psalm Book”—and is understandably rare. The first newspaper in America appeared fifty years later, with the issuing of *Publick Occurrences Both Foreign and Domestick* in 1690, the work of a recently arrived English printer named Benjamin Harris. Fifty-one years after that, on February 16, 1741, came the first American magazine, appropriately named *American Magazine*, or *A Monthly View of the Political State of the British Colonies*, published by the Philadelphia printer Andrew Bradford. A few days later *The General Magazine, and Historical Chronicle, for All the British Plantations in America* appeared, published by a fellow Philadelphian and rival printer, Benjamin Franklin.

There was a good reason for the delay of the magazine. Books and newspapers came first because they were necessities as the colonies established themselves. Magazines had to wait until the literary and practical arts had developed enough in America to create an audience large enough for its own periodicals.

In the eighteenth century, American book production was substantial; in the nineteenth, it burgeoned, with some eight million titles published. A number of important technological developments, in the book trade as in other industries, dramatically raised output and lowered costs. Stereotyping, the iron press, the application of steam power, mechanical typesetting—these inventions amounted to a revolution in book production. A thirst for improvement and entertainment greatly expanded readership, leading to a rapid increase in every category of book from self-help to romantic novels. At this time, publishing assumed its characteristic blend of idealism and commerce.

Bestsellers appeared early along. The first of them was *Charlotte Temple*, a tear-jerking romantic novel about a girl seduced and abandoned by a British army officer. Written by Hannah Rawson and first published in 1797, the book

went into two hundred printings. In the eighteenth century, Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was a runaway bestseller here and in England and is given some credit, rightly or wrongly, for helping to precipitate our Civil War.

Newspapers in the colonial period were largely propaganda machines, spreading protest and eventual independence from Britain on the one hand and the views of Tory sympathizers on the other. The eighteenth century, however, saw the growth of a maturing American newspaper industry, fed by the First Amendment to the Constitution guaranteeing freedom of speech and the press. To appreciate fully what this freedom meant after the repression and censorship of colonial America, it is necessary to remember that the press that was being protected bore little resemblance to the one we know today. It was operating in a period often called the Dark Ages of Journalism, because newspapers had fallen into the hands of the rival political parties, the Federalists of George Washington and Alexander Hamilton, and the Anti-Federalists (later the Democrats) of Thomas Jefferson. No attempt was made to report news objectively, and the papers themselves were used by politicians to attack the other side, often in terms so vicious that they would make today's political editorials or columns seem mild and inoffensive. Men like Washington and Jefferson were accused of the most heinous crimes by the opposition papers.

The early nineteenth century saw the revolutionizing of the newspaper business by a single individual, James Gordon Bennett Sr., a tall, slim, eccentric Scotsman who had come to America penniless, worked on several papers from Boston to Savannah, and at last borrowed \$500 and started his own *New York Herald*, doing all the reporting himself and printing it in a Wall Street basement on an old press with battered type. Bennett and his *Herald* transformed newspapering by showing America and the world how to get the news. He organized a city room in much the same way it is today, established foreign correspondents, set up the first Washington bureau, and employed the newly invented telegraph to get the news first from everywhere the lines reached. Now the news—not politics—ranked first in importance. Bennett did not hesitate to be political, but he did it primarily on his editorial page.

Six years after the *Herald* appeared, Horace Greeley started the *New York Tribune*. Greeley was followed in 1851 by Henry J. Raymond, who founded the *New York Times*, with its slogan "All the news that's fit to print."

Following the Civil War, the newspaper business boomed as never before. The Gilded Age, as the period was known, produced such newspaper giants as rival publishers Joseph Pulitzer, with his *New York World*, and William Randolph Hearst, founder of the *San Francisco Examiner* and the *New York Journal*. It is Hearst who generally is credited with starting the Spanish-American War in 1898 by his coverage of events in Cuba, though Pulitzer also clamored for war.

Hearst's brand of newspaper coverage was known as "yellow journalism," from Outcault's Yellow Kid, whose costume was printed in yellow ink, the first use of color in a newspaper. The phrase came to mean sensational journalism of any kind.

As for the magazine publishing business, its turning point came in 1825, a year of ferment and change at home and abroad. In Europe, a tide of revolution and reform was running; at home, a grassroots revolt had placed a Populist president from the West, Andrew Jackson, in the White House, and a new consciousness of their country as a nation had gripped Americans. Education was spreading rapidly, the illiteracy rate was falling, and the cities were mushrooming. Daily newspapers with circulations of more than one hundred thousand soon arose. Mass-audience paperbacks appeared for the first time in 1842, and for magazines, the result was a great outpouring of publications of every conceivable kind, reaching out to meet the needs of the new, large audiences created by growth and change.

The golden age for magazines came in the quarter-century from 1825 to 1850, when the business as we know it today really began. In 1825 there were fewer than a hundred magazines in America; by 1850 there were more than six hundred, the survivors of between four and five thousand periodicals issued in that quarter-century. Three magazines founded during this period are still surviving: *Scientific American*, begun in 1845, and *Harper's Magazine*, founded in 1850 as *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*. Its rival was and remains the *Atlantic Monthly*, established in 1857.

In the twentieth century, all three forms of publishing thrived and today are among the wonders of modern American life. Most of today's prominent book publishing houses were started in this century, from McGraw-Hill (1909), Alfred A. Knopf (1915), Simon & Schuster (1924), Random House and Viking (1925), to such later entries in the field as Crown (1936) and Atheneum (1959). The advent of the contemporary mass-market paperback in 1939 with Pocket Books was followed by houses such as Avon (1941) and Bantam Books (1946), among others, which came into existence to supply America's apparently insatiable demand for inexpensive and portable books. Magazine publishers such as American Heritage and Time-Life opened mail-order book divisions in the early 1960s. In recent years, the explosive growth of small presses, perhaps fifteen thousand or more altogether as of 1994, some publishing only one or two titles, must be noted. The last decades of the century also have seen the merging of many once individually owned firms or their purchase by major corporations—a trend not without its detractors who fear the concentration of power in a few hands.

In the newspaper field, this century has witnessed an increased objectivity of press coverage, largely due to the importance of advertising revenue over circulation; newspapers today are business institutions, increasingly run by business owners, and no longer the tools of a political party or an individual entrepreneur. Tabloids also appeared in the 1920s, beginning with the *New York Daily News*. With the threat to advertising lineage posed by competition from television, the press has become much more diversified. Newspapers today are likely to be parts of a chain under single ownership, such as the Gannett chain of more than one hundred papers, most prominently *USA Today*. The second primary change worth noting is the rise of syndication, allowing even small-town newspapers to have editorial material, information, and entertainment features they could not otherwise afford to publish. Newspapers are still changing, but this change is now primarily due to new technology, as we shall see in later chapters.

Highlights of the twentieth century in the magazine business include the rise (and fall) of such mass-circulation periodicals as *The Saturday Evening Post*, *Collier's*, *Liberty*, and *Life*. Success stories were written by the *Reader's Digest*, founded in October 1921 by De Witt and Lila Bell Wallace with an investment of \$5,000; *Time*, started on a shoestring in 1923 by Henry Luce and his partner Briton Hadden; and *The New Yorker*; the creation of editor Harold Ross in 1925. The so-called "little" magazines proliferated in the 1920s, introducing such important writers as Ernest Hemingway. The literary journals, more numerous than ever today, still serve the same function.

Since World War II several trends have emerged in the magazine business. There has been a continuing and decided trend toward special-interest publications because it has become difficult to edit a magazine for more than a relatively small part of our population. There is also a trend towards regional, city, and even demographic editions of national magazines in an effort to reach specific segments of an audience. Finally, there has been growth in the number of magazines with "controlled" circulation, meaning that they are sent free to members of a specific audience. For example, the nation's largest-circulation magazine, *Modern Maturity*, is sent to members of the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP).

In this book, we shall examine each aspect of publishing in turn and the career opportunities each presents. By the time you finish this book, we, the co-authors, are confident you will know which part of the many-faceted publishing business is for you—and you for it—and you will also know how to go about becoming a part of the fascinating publishing scene.

Robert A. Carter  
S. William Pattis

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1996 Pattis opened a family-investment office, Next Chapter Holdings, L.P., in Highland Park, Illinois, and that is currently the focus of his business activities.

His other business experiences include twenty-five years of service as Director of the Bank of Highwood in Highwood, Illinois, and twelve years as Director of the new Century Bank in Mundelein, Illinois. He is a past member of the Executive Committee of the Publishing Hall of Fame and has maintained active interest in real estate in Illinois, California, and Texas. Since 1989 he has served as Trustee of Eisenhower Medical Center in Rancho Mirage, California, and is a member of the Eisenhower Executive Committee. In addition he is a Director and for four years served as Vice Chairman of the Annenberg Center for the Health Sciences, also in Rancho Mirage. From 1996 through 1999 he served on the Board of the Fund for America's Libraries for the American Library Association. His current activities include involvement as a Director of the Israeli/American Internet firm, Versaware, Inc., and as Vice Chairman of the Stanford, Connecticut, publishing firm, Educational Media LLC.

During the period of 1986–1992, he served the U.S. government as Chairman of the Book & Library Advisory Committee of the United States Information Agency. He is a former member of the U.S. Department of Commerce Industry Sector Advisory Committee for Consumer Goods. In 1992 Pattis was honored with an appointment from President George Bush to the National Security Education Board of the Department of Defense.

In 1968 Bill Pattis received a commendation from Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey and again in 1970 from Vice President Spiro Agnew for his work on the President's Council for Youth Opportunity. In 1988 Bill Pattis joined Charles Z. Wick, Director of the U.S. Information Agency, and participated in the first U.S.–U.S.S.R. Bilateral Information Talks in Moscow, involving leaders from American media and Soviet counterparts. As a result of this work, he was named Chairman of the American Delegation for print media in follow-up talks with the Soviets in February 1990 in Washington, DC, and again in November in Moscow.

He is a former Trustee of the American Council of Teachers of Russian and has served as Trustee on the boards of the Photography for Youth Foundation, Directories International, and the Institute for Human Creativity. In 1971 Pattis received the Humanitarian Man-of-the-Year Award from the American Jewish Committee for his work with inner city youth. Pattis has authored five career books on media for young people including, *Opportunities in Advertising* (1995); *Opportunities in Publishing Careers* (1995), and *Careers in Advertising* (1996). Additional writings have appeared in media and publishing journals. His speaking engagements include appearances before The National Association of



## PART ONE

# BOOK PUBLISHING

## CHAPTER 1

### TODAY'S BOOK PUBLISHING INDUSTRY

More than 60,000 books will be published in North America this year. That's more than 160 books a day! We'll spend about \$20 billion buying those books. Book publishing is big business.

Who publishes all these books? Eight media conglomerates, along with perhaps a dozen of the largest independent publishers, corner between 75 and 85 percent of the market.

The eight megacorporations that dominate book publishing in North America are (with some of their major publishing imprints in parentheses):

1. Hearst Corporation (Avon, William Morrow)
2. News Corporation/Rupert Murdoch (HarperCollins)
3. Pearson PLC (Penguin, G.P. Putnam, Berkley)
4. Viacom (Simon & Schuster, Pocket Books)
5. Advance/Newhouse (Random House, Knopf, Modern Library, Ballentine)
6. Bertelsmann AG (Bantam, Doubleday, Dell, Dial)
7. Time Warner/Ted Turner (Little Brown, Book of the Month)
8. Holtzbrinck (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, St. Martin's Press, Henry Holt)

After the "Big Eight," another 2,200 publishers do enough business each year to qualify for listing by the U.S. Commerce Bureau. *Literary Market Place*, the industry reference published by R.R. Bowker, lists another 18,000 to 20,000 smaller and independent publishers.

### PUBLISHING'S ALLIED GROUPS

Although people use the words *book industry*, *book business*, and *book trade* interchangeably, the latter phrase is more specifically employed to describe retail booksellers. As a business, or industry, publishing is made up of eight closely allied groups.