

Questions from Background Briefing to Barry Dorr, CEO of JoJo Publishing

- 1 You say JoJo is a traditional publisher, even though you charge authors to publish. On what basis do you say that you are a traditional publisher, and what percentage of your authors pay to publish?
- 2 Do you agree that requiring authors to contribute to the costs of publishing is not a practice consistent with traditional publishing?
- 3 Do you invest money into your authors 'projects' as stipulated in your letters of offer? If so, why is this commitment not set out in the contracts with many authors?
- 4 We spoke to a large number of your authors. None have received any money from sales of their books with the exception of 2 authors who received a minimal amount that they felt was unacceptable

Is it the case that many, if not most of your authors receive no money from the sales of their book? If so, why ?

- 5 In your contracts with authors you commit to providing 6 monthly statements, however the many authors we've spoken to say they don't receive the statements [and some have said they haven't received them despite repeated written requests]. A small number told us they did receive a statement from you, but only after demands from their lawyers. Do you acknowledge the failure to provide these statements is breaching the terms of your contract with those authors?
- 6 Will you honour your contractual obligations and now provide all those authors with their 6 monthly statements as a matter of urgency?
- 7 Authors who received a statement were shocked to discover they had paid for costs such as taxis, emails, photocopying, phone calls, international travel and restaurant meals. Traditional publishers consider those costs to be the responsibility of the business. Why does JoJo publishing charge its authors for these type of expenses?
- 8 A number of authors who were invited to a restaurant by you and Jo Costello were surprised to see in their statement that the meal costs were charged to them. Is this acceptable practice in the publishing industry?
- 9 How many authors did you charge for the cost of your attendance at the Frankfurt book-fair in 2011 and 2012? How much money all up did JoJo collect to go to Frankfurt during each of those years, and do you think that amount is justified?
- 10 Have many of the books you've published sold at the Frankfurt book fair?
- 11 Authors we have spoken to (who are contracted to JoJo) say that as soon as their books are published they stop receiving any communication from JoJo, or you. Why is that?
- 12 Many authors are disappointed when they discover their books cannot be found in bookstores. Do you believe the representations you make to authors about the nature and

extent of marketing and distribution you provide are accurate and honest? Do you acknowledge that your distribution and marketing efforts have failed your authors, or at least not met the expectations you led them to have?

13 How many of your authors' books have been pulped?

14 Do you acknowledge the long trail of authors, contracted to JoJo, who are disappointed and angry with their treatment by the company?

15 What do you say to those authors?

Response from Barry Dorr to Background Briefing's questions

Thank you for the chance to respond to the matters that appear to have been raised by certain people.

As you can appreciate, general questions that arise from specific cases are almost impossible to respond to adequately if it can't be contextualised with specific instances.

Also, you seem to be coming from a fundamental misconception of what our business is about and what we have achieved in almost 15 years in the Australian publishing industry. We have had over 250 authors in that time without the "disappointment and anger" (your words) you seem to think is occurring with a "long line of authors".

Our approach to publishing is fully transparent and discussed at length with new authors and well documented. Due to risk factors, not all authors can fit into the model of receiving an advance and royalties – although many have this arrangement with us. These authors, who would not find publishers elsewhere, may enter into a business arrangement where they make a capital investment and share in the profits. All these details are provided in a written proposal and if the author agrees, formal documentation is provided. Even in such circumstances, we will take care of the editing, design work, illustrations, photography, proof-reading, printing, distribution and marketing of the book, together with the author's full involvement.

Sometimes, a book will not sell well, especially in today's books environment, through no fault of anyone - that is something no book publisher is immune to. Naturally, there will be disappointment on both sides. Any book that we publish which does not do well also means a loss to us. In fact a recent example of a disgruntled author, who I am sure is the instigator of your interest in us, has 3 books with us. In the time we have been handling her works, we have incurred an out of pocket loss exceeding \$24,000 - something she fails to appreciate or let other people know.

On the issue of your alleged "long trail of authors" who appear to have difficulties, it should be known that we have had only a few authors over the last 2 years you might describe as "angry". We maintain an open door policy with all of our authors and always respond to any queries they may have. We make sure authors know they can approach us at anytime, with any problem. To suggest otherwise is simply not true.

We commenced JoJo Publishing because we saw a need for thousands of authors who could not find a publishing house and had to resort to 'self publishing' their 'dream', then print 1,000 books at great expense, sell 100 to friends and have another 900 stored in the garage or 'under the bed', What should have been a 'dream come true' would be a constant reminder of frustration and failure. Our publishing venture has provided authors with the opportunity to have their books published, distributed and marketed in ways they would not have otherwise had. If they have a business arrangement with us and make a loss, then we make a loss too. There is nothing hidden or opaque here.

Please ensure any report of our business you might make is balanced. We are a small company and we are rightfully proud of what we do. We have a great reputation within the industry and to have it unfairly criticised would be wasteful and cause hurt to a great number of people, including our staff.

Regards Barry...."