

Sydney A. Clary a.k.a. Lacey Dancer

My publishing story began in New York with traditional publishers such as Simon & Schuster, Dell, Berkley-Jove, Zebra, and Meteor. My genres were historical romance and contemporary back in the day before computers. Success was top reviews and awards, including two lifetime achievements.

I enjoyed everything about that time but, most of all, I learned about the process of creating books, the editing, the business of marketing, the promotion, the idea of personal image, and professionalism. The downside to traditional publishing, for me, was that in order to make profitable the business aspect, creativity had to be tamed to bridle and bit. In short, the 'magic formula' of what sells a book in a particular genre was ever visible and ever-changing. I pushed the envelope time and again, touching on subjects that were definitely not popular. I still published and still got recognition for my work.

Life intervened and my husband almost died. His recovery was lengthy and, in that time, writing was not even on the back burner. It was completely out of the kitchen.

Computers happened and the universe changed for all of us.

My writing world opened up again. This time I had a choice. I could pick up my career and submit to my earlier houses or I could make the infinitely more appealing, if more challenging, jump into the freedom of self-publishing. After all, film stars have been successfully doing that for years.

Social media and self-publishing were babies, struggling out of the womb into the light of unlimited possibilities. Formulas were eagerly tossed out my personal window and creativity was off the bridle and bit. I was FREE to write what I wanted, the way I wanted, when I wanted. My kind of world.

However, knowing very well I was not Super Woman, I analyzed what I wanted to do and what I would need to make my choice happen. I created a PLAN with an eye to connecting with others who could teach me the things I did not know.

I learned from some of the best editors in the business so I would use that slice and dice skill on my own work. (I never edit for anyone else because I really do tear my stuff apart if it needs deconstructing to make it better. I would rather keep my friends than have them hate me for editing their books). During this time, I was fortunate enough to find someone who had a super discerning eye and was willing to be my proofreader.

Once I had a polished manuscript, not being a computer genius, I would hire the best graphics person I could find to create an uploadable file for the manuscript and design a cover for the book. Yes, templates are available and I actually used one on my non-fiction book but for the fiction I prefer an artist.

Once I had a book I considered good enough for release, I needed someone much more knowledgeable with computers and social media than I was. I was willing to learn but I needed a teacher. That hunt took time, but I found a social media coordinator who was delighted to join the team and she eventually became my graphics designer as well.

My first books were in paperback and Kindle. Audio was barely making an appearance in the industry. That market fascinated me from the beginning. I researched audio, the costs, the time, the benefit. It is expensive and it isn't going to be something that every self-published writer can afford. However, with three books complete in audio and one in production at this time, I have barely touched the surface of the market and the numbers are growing with every book. I have been fortunate enough to find in the fourth member of our team, the perfect voice actor for my stories. I have learned so much from her emotional and verbal interpretation of my characters. They come alive in a very different way than is found in the written word. Recently, we have begun creating commercials, videos, and voice-overs so she is on her way to becoming 'the voice' for Lacey Dancer.

The plan is working. Book sales are growing with the release of every new title. I have begun publishing in the Action/Adventure genre, something I have always wanted to do. The first book is doing so well that it is already in audio

Having a team to produce the books has so many benefits, not the least of which is that it allows me more time to write. The women who make up my production team aren't just talented in their own right. They are very involved and invested in creating the best book possible for me and using the ever-evolving resources to the fullest degree. Their insights and work make writing and publishing a wonderful marriage of creativity and business. Plus, most days it is just plain fun.