



Sourcebooks Facts

Location: Naperville, IL; satellite offices in New York and Connecticut

Warehouse: Wisconsin

Employees: 80

Frontlist: 300–400 new titles annually

Competitors: Both large and niche publishers, depending on genre

Mission: To reach as many people as possible with books that will enlighten their lives

Contributor Information

Jamie Carter
Publisher Alley
jcarter@ybp.com



Subscriber Profile

Sourcebooks

There probably aren't many independent, medium-sized publishers who see success in such diverse categories as reference, romance, and children's titles. Take a look at Sourcebooks' top ten titles through Baker & Taylor in 2008 (based on sales through March 31), and you'll be surprised by the company's achievement across a wide range of genres:

1. *Fiske Guide to Colleges, 2008* (Study AIDS: College Guides)
2. *Confessions of a Political Hitman* (Political Science: Political Process/Elections)
3. *I Love You More* (Juvenile Fiction: Family/General)
4. *Social Security Benefits Handbook* (Business and Economics: Personal Finance/Retirement Planning)
5. *50 Ways to Hex Your Lover* (Fiction: Romance/Paranormal)
6. *The Darcys Give a Ball* (Fiction: Historical)
7. *Mimosa and the River of Wisdom* (Juvenile Fiction: Science Fiction, Fantasy, Magic)
8. *I Wasn't Ready to Say Goodbye* (Self-Help: Death, Grief, Bereavement)
9. *The Playskool Guide for Expectant Fathers* (Family and Relationships: Parenting/Fatherhood)
10. *Cinnabar and the Island of Shadows* (Juvenile Fiction: Science Fiction, Fantasy, Magic)

Source: Publisher Alley®

Some Standouts:

I Wasn't Ready to Say Goodbye, at number 8, was published in 2000, with a new edition out this year. It has been a steady seller since publication, largely in the retail market. (It's not alone: other Sourcebooks titles have been in print for twenty years.) Number 4, the *Social Security Benefits Handbook*, is a fifth edition with notable public library appeal. *Confessions* and *I Love You More* are cloth titles, while the other eight are paper. List prices range from \$6.99 to \$23.95.

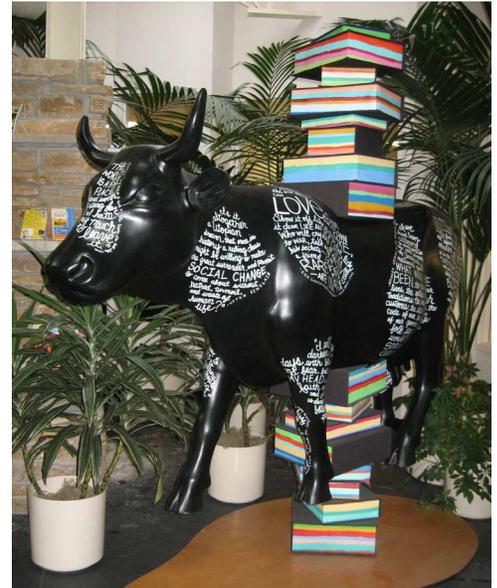
The picture that forms is one of an agile publishing house—not to mention a unique industry player. In fact, in its twenty-plus years, Sourcebooks has become the country's largest woman-owned publisher, as well as one of the leading independent presses overall. Its founder, Dominique Raccach, started the business in her house with seed money from her 401(K) plan, and she remains today a hands-on CEO in the Naperville, IL, office.

Publisher Alley spoke with Mayla Sanchez, Sourcebooks sales representative, for further insight on the company's corporate culture. We asked about the company's relationship with its authors, who are featured prominently on the

Industry Relationships

- Book Industry Study Group (BISG)
- Licensing Industry Merchandiser's Association
- Direct Marketing Association
- Association of Booksellers for Children
- Book Sense
- Romance Writers of America (RWA)
- Society of Children's Bookwriters and Illustrators
- PMA—The Independent Book Publishers Association
- National Orientation Directors Association (NODA)

Right: The Well-Read Cow inhabits Sourcebooks offices in Illinois. Sourcebooks offices in Illinois won the bovine at a live auction following Chicago's "Cows on Parade" exhibit. Literacy Chicago, a not-for-profit organization that supports adult literacy learning, received proceeds from the auction.



company's website. "To help authors reach as many people as possible is part of our mission," said Mayla.

Acquisitions editor Deb Werksman gave further details on Sourcebooks' author recruiting and retention efforts. Not surprisingly, a fair amount of old-fashioned networking and communication is involved:

"Authors come to us through agents, through our website, through hearing our editors speak at writers conferences or industry events, (and) through word of mouth from other authors."

Industry relationships seem particularly important in this connection, and Sourcebooks is involved with a wide variety of professional organizations. The impressive list (at left) showcases Sourcebooks' connections to publishing professionals, the business community, retailers, and authors. The NODA affiliation demonstrates a particular content-area strength in college and university admissions, the fruits of which are apparent in the best-selling *Fiske Guide to Colleges*. When asked to cite some of the company's biggest selling lines, "reference" and "romance" came to mind first for sales rep Mayla Sanchez. Unusual though they may sound juxtaposed with one another, the two categories are borne out with Sourcebooks' connection to NODA and RWA. (RWA, incidentally, is a Pub Alley partner.)

Sourcebooks' "author care" policy, expressed by editor Deb Werksman, is familiar to the best medium-sized publishers: "We pride ourselves on our good author relationships, and think of ourselves as offering a publishing home, rather than a book-by-book experience." Consistent communication is required to keep authors in the loop throughout the course of publication and marketing, which, of course, are unfamiliar and sometimes complicated processes for first-time authors. Even veteran authors benefit from receiving information about the publisher's specific efforts on behalf of their book.

"We always need a reason to publish and a clear vision of how we're going to market and sell each book,"

says Werksman. With so many subject categories, this is an especially challenging task. Industry data from sources including Publisher Alley can make such planning more informed, leading to higher numbers of successful titles and the most effective use of marketing budgets.

Sourcebooks, a Publisher Alley subscriber, uses the product to manage inventory, communicate with Baker & Taylor, check title and sales data, and compile buy reports.

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