

Should I look for a new illustrator for my rights-reverted picture book before submitting to other publishers?

Q: My book, which told a story to help children understand the notion of death, was purchased by a children's publisher, but the rights reverted back to me before it was published. I would like to get this book sold again. Would it be best to approach publishers directly, or to attempt to get an illustrator with industry contacts interested in the project and have the illustrator help place the book?

While it would be good to have the help of someone with industry contacts, finding an illustrator first is not your best bet because providing art and text together generally does not enhance the salability of a book. Most publishers prefer to select their own illustrator. This is because the editor and art director want to decide what they'd like the format, style and look of a book to be before approaching illustrators who they feel can achieve the look they want. Publishing houses also often pair the text from a new author with art by an established illustrator to help ensure sales.

You can network in other ways to find people to recommend publishers who may be interested in your book. Librarians, teachers, children's booksellers and, in this case, even psychologists might have suggestions about companies you could try. Another option is to approach special interest organizations, like Hospice, which may have their own publishing programs for books, or might want to use the material in another format. 11:12/99