

Publishing Rights Manager: Job description

A rights manager develops and oversees publishing rights for books and related products in order to ensure that a publishing company makes a maximum profit.

This might include arranging foreign rights, as well as the sale of rights to book clubs or for reprint paperbacks, North American editions, serials and extracts, audio and electronic formats and translations.

Rights managers coordinate the whole process, from initiating the sale of a publication to new contacts, through to ensuring that the particular publication is produced on schedule. Their work involves liaison with editors and other publishers.

Typical work activities

The nature of the work varies according to the type of publication you work on. Illustrated books, for example, require a more technical and structured approach than selling rights in fiction.

In general, however, typical work activities are focused on increasing the profitability of a company's publications and usually include:

- managing a small team (both freelance and in-house staff);
- liaising with publishers, editors and production teams, face-to-face and via phone and email;
- agreeing rights for foreign editions, updates and co-editions;
- negotiating translation rights;
- maintaining positive working relationships with publishers;
- sharing information and opinions with contacts about the company's range of books;
- keeping contacts informed about new publications;
- developing new links with UK-based and overseas publishers;
- writing 'pitch' letters to new contacts and 'soft selling' publications;
- undertaking high-level negotiations with relevant partners regarding, for example, complex legal agreements and contracts;
- identifying new publication opportunities and initiating contact;
- submitting proposals for new publications to the editorial team, using your market knowledge;
- preparing for and attending major trade events, such as book fairs, to make new contacts and sell publications;
- ensuring that the publication of specific books progresses to schedule;
- travelling overseas to attend meetings and develop new contacts;
- assessing the financial viability of agreements;
- overseeing invoicing systems and monitoring payments;
- keeping accurate and up-to-date records;
- setting departmental targets and ensuring these are met.