

Life Cycle of a New Title - Best Practice Guidelines

INTRODUCTION

The aim of these guidelines is to help publishers and booksellers sell more books by providing an indicative outline of the life cycle of a new title and the information required by all parties to enable everyone to meet their commercial objectives in a timely fashion.

What follows is a **minimal framework** and **not** hard and fast 'rules'. The life cycle for different types of publishing and individual titles will vary greatly, as will individual company requirements. Certain aspects of this document will apply only to UK general trade publishing and their trading arrangements with key customers for black and white titles. Nevertheless we hope everyone involved in book publishing and bookselling can use these guidelines to think carefully about how they provide information and communicate this, so that key commercial decisions can be made more accurately; enabling a more efficient supply chain and thus avoiding unnecessary wastage.

Summary of the main points:

- Timing standards should be followed where they exist (eg BIC Product Data for the supply of product information, notification of Embargoed Titles and IRI for returns parameters).
- Publishers should conform to the BIC Product Data timelines for providing key product data (regardless of whether they are accredited under the BIC Product Data Excellence Awards or not) and supply data in an agreed electronic format, preferably ONIX.
- Publishers should set provisional publication dates, prices and print runs in a structured way well ahead of publication.
- Publishers should prioritise their titles and have AIs, jackets and proof copies (where available) ready before presentations to key customers.
- Publishers should provide information on which titles have been licensed for cheap/exclusive/special editions to key customers and inform them if this changes.
- Publishers should provide information on which titles are subject to Embargo Dates in a timely fashion to the BA website, bibliographic agencies, key customers and the trade press.
- Booksellers and intermediaries (ie wholesalers/merchandisers/retailer DCs) should agree promotions and place subscription orders before the initial print decision is made.
- Publishers and booksellers should allocate an agreed industry standard promotional code for specific time limited promotions.
- Publishers should validate transactional information held on distributors systems before publication.
- Distributors systems should work towards just in time to avoid titles 'leaking out' early and should also make suitable arrangements for earlier deliveries to intermediaries.
- Publishers should use sales data and inventory reports to assess possible reprint requirements.

- All parties should subscribe to the standard terms of the Industry Returns Initiative (IRI).
- All parties should use book industry electronic communications standards and should aspire to be accredited under BIC's Supply Chain Excellence Awards.

Typical Process Flow

NINE MONTHS TO PUBLICATION

Publishers

- Titles prioritised for bi-annual presentations - eg a) Key b) Let's talk c) Backlist
- Advance Information Sheets (AIs) and book jackets produced (including ISBN if already allocated)
- First presentation to key customers: February/March for September/January titles
- Second presentation to key customers: August/September for February/August titles

SEVEN MONTHS (30 WEEKS) TO PUBLICATION

Publishers

- ISBN-13 and bar code allocated and BIC Product Data new title record supplied to the bibliographic agencies and key customers - preferably in an agreed electronic format such as ONIX

SIX MONTHS (26 WEEKS) TO PUBLICATION

Publishers

- Core bibliographic record (including publication day/month/year and anticipated RRP) complete with the bibliographic agencies and key customers

FIVE MONTHS (20 WEEKS) TO PUBLICATION

Publishers

- Bibliographic record complete for BIC Product Data accreditation
- First monthly presentations to key customers
- First notification of serialisations and Embargoed Titles to the BA website, bibliographic agencies, key customers and the trade press (where possible)
- First notification of licensing of cheap/exclusive/special edition(s) and date on market (where possible)

FOUR MONTHS (16 WEEKS) TO PUBLICATION

Publishers

- Completeness of bibliographic record measured for BIC Product Data Excellence Awards
- Bibliographic information submitted to the British Library's Cataloguing-in-Publication (CIP) Programme

- Details of Embargoed Titles to the BA website, bibliographic agencies, key customers and the trade press (where possible)
- Promotions agreed with key customers, promotional codes allocated and distributors informed

Booksellers & Intermediaries

- Key customers to give indication of subscription orders and projected sales (if possible)

THREE MONTHS (12 WEEKS) TO PUBLICATION

Publishers

- Final notification of serialisations and any Embargoed Titles to the BA website, bibliographic agencies, key customers and the trade press
- Final date for notification of licensing of cheap/exclusive/special edition(s) and date on market
- Decision taken on first print run and confirmation of RRP to the bibliographic agencies and key customers

Booksellers & Intermediaries

- Final date for key customers to place subscription orders (black & white titles)
- (Note: Promotional codes to be included in orders where agreed)

TWO MONTHS (8 WEEKS) TO PUBLICATION

Publishers & Distributors

- First printing and delivery to distributor (may depend on type of book)
- (Note: There may be further changes at any time between this point and publication, eg serial)

SIX WEEKS TO PUBLICATION

Publishers

- Final date for notification of a change to an Embargo Date to the BA website, bibliographic agencies, key customers and the trade press

ONE MONTH (4 WEEKS) TO PUBLICATION

Booksellers & Intermediaries

- Final opportunity to place top up orders to ensure addition to distribution release schedules
- (Note: The closer to publication, the less guarantee of stock availability as print decisions will already have been made)

THREE WEEKS TO PUBLICATION

Publishers & Distributors

- Validation of full product record held by the bibliographic agencies
- Validation of transactional information held on distributors systems
- Price and availability information to be included in daily electronic feeds to bibliographic agencies and key customers

ONE/TWO WEEKS TO PUBLICATION

Distributors

- Delivery to merchandising wholesalers, retail DCs and library suppliers

ONE WEEK TO PUBLICATION

Distributors

- Delivery to trade wholesalers, retail bookstores and internet booksellers

ONE/TWO DAYS TO PUBLICATION

Booksellers & Intermediaries

- Books shipped from internet booksellers/mail order suppliers to consumers

PUBLICATION DATE

Publishers

- An official publication date should be recorded, ie a specific day rather than simply a month of publication

Booksellers

- Books go on sale to consumers in retail bookstores
- (Note: Books must not be sold before publication if subject to an Embargo Date)

POST PUBLICATION

Publishers & Distributors

- Books supplied for legal deposit to the British Library
- Daily changes to price and availability information should be sent to bibliographic agencies while titles remain in print
- (Note: Formal notification of Out of Print status should be provided to bibliographic agencies only when titles reach the end of their life. All other temporarily unavailable statements - eg Reprinting, Reprinting Under Consideration, Temporarily Out of Stock - may be provided between Publication Date and formal confirmation of OP status)

THREE MONTHS AFTER PUBLICATION

Booksellers & Intermediaries

- First returns allowed under Industry Returns Initiative
- (Note: May be subject to promotional agreements)

FIFTEEN MONTHS AFTER PUBLICATION

Booksellers & Intermediaries

- Last returns allowed (from date of last invoice) under Industry Returns Initiative
- (Note: May be subject to promotional agreements)

Further Information

[Book Industry Communication](#)

BIC Product Data Excellence Awards/ONIX

BIC Supply Chain Excellence Awards

BIC Industry Returns Initiative (IRI)

[UK ISBN Agency](#)

[Bibliographic Data Services](#)

[Bowker UK](#)

[Nielsen BookData](#)

[Embargoed Titles](#)

[The Bookseller](#)

[Legal Deposit](#)

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