



Revenue Trickles, Streams, and Floods

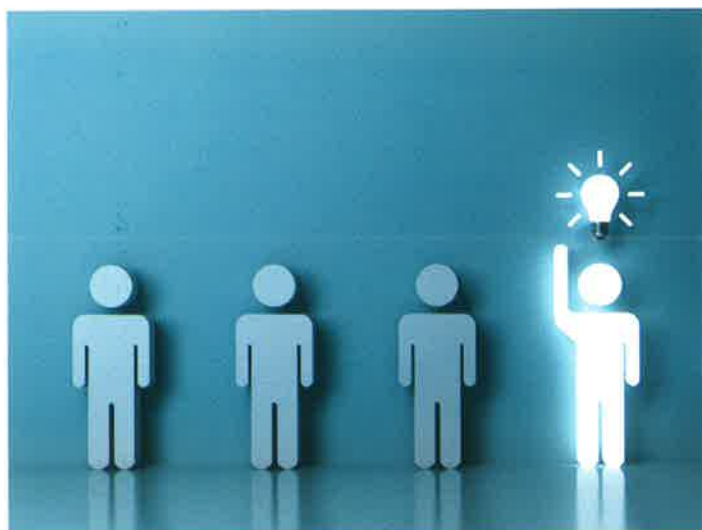
by Judith Kolberg

For three decades, I have supported myself with a variety of revenue streams emanating from the river that is entrepreneurship. I suspect many author/publishers are entrepreneurs with the heart of a writer. Back in the day, one's "platform" was not fans, friends, and followers on social media, but your field of expertise and how prominent you were in it. Mine is professional organizing.

My organizing company, FileHeads, hit its stride shortly after the publication of my first book, *Conquering Chronic Disorganization*, which I call "the little book that could." It never occurred to me to seek a traditional publisher. I joined IBPA, gobbled up *IBPA Independent* magazine, and followed the advice of an organization dedicated to self-publishing. Squall Press was born. As a serial author, it was a way to publish my own books. Then it became a major way for professional organizers worldwide to buy my books. Today, sales are at over half a million copies. (That's for all five of the books over 25 years—not exactly an overnight success.)

Armed with knowledge from this magazine, "the little book that could" secured foreign rights in Spanish, Japanese, French, and Dutch. All the books were converted into e-books. Squall Press published its first title by an author other than myself, and it became a source of publishing services for other authors in the categories of how-to, self-help, memoir, and inspiration. I provided ISBNs, filed the copyright registration, created the EAN bar, advised on pricing, and referred authors to vetted proofreaders, graphic designers, and printers.

But my real skill is developmental editing. I worked with each author to turn their content into a great manuscript with quality flow, interest, and readability. With a great



manuscript in hand, my authors could start their own publishing company, seek a traditional publisher, or self-publish with KDP or another on-demand book publisher. Maybe it's not kosher, but Squall Press was never royalty-based. I made my money on upfront publishing service fees.

So now I was a professional organizer, author, publisher, and public speaker, and I earned a reputation as a thought leader in the organizing industry. Some of my books are texts for all organizers seeking various certificates and certifications. I was also approached by a leading psychologist in the field of attention deficit disorder, and we co-authored a book with Routledge, an academic press. It was my first traditionally published book. Based on *Organize for Disaster*, I developed a virtual certificate program called the "Disaster Prepared Professional Organizer." *Creating Your Digital Estate Plan*, my first digital book, spawned the online course "Become a Digital Estate Plan Consultant," complete with a digital badge. Both programs sure came in handy during the shut-in days of COVID-19.

Now, as I age out of hands-on, intensive professional organizing, it has become time to innovate yet again. I have consolidated my beloved Squall Press and FileHeads into judithkolberg.com, my very own brand (if not now, when?). The thought leadership banner still flies, and I continue to speak and write. Book coach is a new hat I wear, with that developmental/content editing tucked neatly underneath, and I find that helping others write their books is as satisfying as writing my own. The latest is *Emotional Labor: Why A Woman's Work is Never Done and What to do About It* with author Dr. Regina Lark. Like me, my books have aged, and the plan is to revise them all.

As you can see from my own journey, it takes lots of energy, information, and creativity to thrive. But it's possible if you think like an entrepreneur and thought leader. ●

Judith Kolberg founded FileHeads Professional Organizers in 1989. She is credited with launching an entire field of professional organizing specifically dedicated to addressing the needs of individuals who are challenged by chronic disorganization. Kolberg founded Squall Press in 1995 and has published five titles. She is now a book coach.

Think Like an Entrepreneur

Entrepreneurs are great at leveraging. Every book project can be leveraged into revenue streams, and revenue streams are how you will stay in the business of writing, publishing, or both. Some ideas:

- Derive a script and slide presentation from the content, and get your author on the road.
- Make custom lists of book festivals all over the country specially designed for your authors.
- Slice and dice the content of a book into guest blogs.
- Design a class, podcast, or webinar based on the content of a book.

Think Like a Thought Leader

Let's say you or your author writes sci-fi or fantasy, but there are countless others who do the same. You need some way to stand out. Some ideas:

- Be an expert on the history of your brand of sci-fi. Talk about that on a panel.
- Blog about upcoming trends in sci-fi.
- Invite real scientists to advise you on your book and have them write a testimonial.