



DIP SUCCESS: KUBICEK & ASSOCIATES

by Steven A. Arts

Kubicek and Associates of Lincoln, Nebraska, has been in the small-press business since 1988. Before that, David Kubicek, the president of the company, was a freelance writer and editor. He took the experience gathered doing those jobs and created his own book publishing firm. The company started in Kubicek's home, then a year later moved to a small office, where it is today.

In his small office, Kubicek does the editing, marketing, sales, and mailing lists of companies. He uses outside readers for manuscripts. The company is a desktop publishing operation using an IBM PS-30 computer with a Hewlett-Packard Deskjet printer and a Panasonic KX-P1080 dot matrix printer.

The company publishes two or three books per year. Among the books that Kubicek and Associates publishes is one on 1890's airships. Others are a book on nannies, and a horror anthology. Soon the company plans on publishing fiction books.

There are no sales people, so David Kubicek does all the selling himself. Much

advertising is by word-of-mouth, although he also advertises in appropriate trade journals and magazines. For instance, he has placed advertisements for the book on airships in UFO publications.

For the convenience of prospective authors, as well as his own, Kubicek offers a sheet of writers' guidelines. Kubicek's guidelines show what the fiction and non-fiction needs are, as well as payment (royalties), reporting time, and submissions information. You should tell the writer just how you want the manuscript typed. When a writer requests guidelines, include your present book list with prices or advertising sheets for certain books. Those writers could be potential buyers of your books.

A relatively new venture for Kubicek and Associates is a division of theirs called Pencrest Books. It is what is known in the trade as a vanity press or subsidy publishing. Here a writer may not want to go the way of "traditional" or royalty publishing. The author pays to have his/her book printed or distributed by the printer/publisher. With this service the company will print an author's book for so much money. For instance, a 200-page book for 2,000 copies would cost the author \$5 per book. That adds up to a whopping \$10,000. Of course, not all authors will want that many copies, but it could be a lucrative side of the desktop publishing business you decide to operate. Services included for vanity publishing include: limited inclusion of photos and line art; copy editing for grammar, spelling, and punctuation; proofreading; advice on format; and how to self-promote the book.

The books that Pencrest Books prints are 5½ by 8½-inch perfect-bound books. Extra costs are added, if requested, for a hard cover, a second color of ink in the text, spiral binding, manuscript critique, help with revision, marketing, storage, distribution and fulfillment of orders. Pencrest Books also provides sixty-pound

white paper, fifty-five-pound natural paper, a U.S. copyright in the author's name, an ISBN number, a Library of Congress number, and bar code. They also provide artwork, if needed.

Kubicek and Associates advertises this service in trade journals. Recently, they have received reviews in such trade publications as *Publisher's Weekly*, *Booklist*, and *Writer's Digest*.

Another means of advertising, and one that David Kubicek uses, is a writer's group. The one Kubicek belongs to (he is the group's treasurer) is the Nebraska Writers Guild. The guild has about 180 members consisting of freelance writers, poets, photographers, journalists, columnists, editors, literary agents and publishers. The self-publisher can use such people as authors, for financial backing, or contacts.

David Kubicek says that anyone wanting to start their own small publishing company should have at least \$50,000 to \$60,000 to invest, especially if going into the business full time. It would cost, according to Kubicek, about \$8,300 for printing costs alone to start. An average book costs the company \$13 per page for 1,000 copies of a book, or \$1,700 to \$2,100 per book title.

It costs the company about \$1.60 per book, and they charge anywhere from \$6.95 to \$9.95 per book in the stores. The author gets royalties of 10 percent on the first 2,500 copies; 12 percent on the next 2,500 copies, and 15 percent after 5,100 copies have been sold. A normal press-run is 1,000 copies of a book.

Kubicek hopes to gross \$50,000 in 1992. Yet he reinvests 75 percent of his profits into the company.

If you decide to go into this business, Kubicek suggests that you keep your regular job, and work at publishing part time. Then after a few years you can go to full time.