

# Getting your book on the Shelves – course outline from **mostly books**

## Shelf Secrets – Practical Introduction to Selling into Bookshops - Course overview

Shelf Secrets is a course developed by bookshop owners which will give you the best possible chance if:

- getting a bookshop to stock your book
- helping a bookshop sell your book
- developing a long-term relationship for repeat and future sales

The course is intensive, practical, hands-on – and aims to give you an actionable plan for selling your book from the moment you finish the course. It also provides an opportunity to get feedback on all aspects of sales and marketing, and even sell your book during the day.

The aim is to give you the tools and the confidence to approach any bookshop – and allow you to take control of your future success as a profitable author.

## Shelf Secrets – Practical Introduction to Selling into Bookshops - Course outline

- 9.15 – 10.00 Registration**, coffee and croissants  
Informal opening exercise – rank the books
- 10.00 – 11.15 Session 1 – Think like a bookseller**  
Introduction and aims of the course  
The how and why of book selection – a never-ending task  
The wholesalers catalogue – frontlist, backlist and the ‘long tail’  
Developing unique (book)selling propositions  
Exercise – write your own blurb
- 11.15 – 11.30 Coffee**
- 11.30 – 12.45 Session 2 – The approach**  
Doing your homework – think global, start local  
Quiz – dos and don’ts of a bookshop approach  
Bookshop realities – understanding a good vs ‘best’ seller  
How to develop your strategy  
Exercise: an outline strategy for your book
- 12.45 – 13.30 Working lunch – self-publishing case studies / author interview**
- 13.30 – 14.45 Session 3 – Your sales collateral**  
Why sales tools (materials, collateral) beat “sales technique”  
The products and tools that you need  
The importance of Point of Sale (POS)  
Exercise: produce your list
- 14.45 – 15.00 Coffee**

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## 15.00 – 16.15 Session 4 – Closing the sale

Presenting irresistible terms – a win/win situation

Risk reversal – your secret weapon

Underpromising and overdelivering – ongoing support of the bookshop

Measuring your success

Exercise – producing your offer

## 16.15 – 16.30 Session 5 – Summary and goal setting

A review of the course, and setting your goals

*Note from Mark and Nicki Thornton, owners of Mostly Books, Abingdon, Oxon*

Our **Shelf Secrets** course was launched in response to the dozens of authors who have come into our Oxfordshire bookshop hoping to persuade us to stock their book. With so many varied approaches we quickly realised many authors are out there doing this with little support or guidance and we could see a need to offer the sort of insider help where we could see what they were doing right and wrong from a bookshop's point of view.

The feedback so far has been fantastic and has confirmed the everyday reality of the author turning themselves into a salesperson. We also know how welcome having such a starting point is for authors.

### **Some comments about Shelf Secrets from attendees:**

*"Shelf Secrets is a must for all authors, self-published or no. By the end of the day Mark had completely revolutionised the way I was thinking of approaching book stores...Mark taught us all about USPs, future pacing, long tails, risk reversal and many other excellent sales / business tips. I strode out of there at the end of the day feeling like the Richard Branson of the book world."*

- Siobhan Curham, author of *Finding The Plot*, *The Scene Stealers*, and *Sweet FA*

*"The course was interesting, stimulating and gave participants valuable insights and information. Any author should draw confidence from it and come away able to take new initiatives."*

- Patrick Forsythe, author of *The Gentle Art of Getting Your Own Way* and *First Class at Last*

*"A most useful day. I left with excellent knowledge and great inspiration as to how to market my novel to the book trade." – Mary Cavanagh, author of The Crowded Bed*

*"Thank you so much for running SHELF SECRETS for us last Sunday; it gave me a real insight into the way booksellers think and work, and I came away feeling far more confident about approaching indie bookshops. I thought you might like to know that yesterday I went to four indie bookshops in London. What I've just realised is that, once I'd begun to think at least a little like a bookseller, the conversations were easy, more than that, actively pleasant."*

- Angela Young, author of *Speaking of Love*

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The next course for authors takes place on August 24<sup>th</sup>, and costs £145 + VAT (£170.38). The course takes place in the Bear Room, Abingdon Guildhall (just down the road from the Mostly Books bookshop), and includes a working lunch. Book and pay by end of July for an early-bookers discount of £20 (pay £125 + VAT (£146.88)).

To reserve your place, email [books@mostly-books.co.uk](mailto:books@mostly-books.co.uk) or phone 01235 525880 to speak to Nicki or Mark.