



A short summary from SEPM 2011:

## An eye opener for the publishing industry

Leading publishing executives attended the Scandinavian Executive Publishing Meeting that was held this year at the Carlsberg Museum – a unique Danish culture-historical place oozing creativity and inspiration. Openness and enthusiasm were abundant among the participants, and many new relations were created between publishers from European, American, and Scandinavian companies. The many thought-provoking presentations and discussions made the conference a very special event that finished off in style with an exquisite Carlsberg banquet with good food and a beer menu of special brews from Jacobsen's cellars.

### Many possibilities for publishers to utilise their products

Apple claim that they still have not quite figured out what the iPad is actually for. In comparison, the iPod was initially thought to be a kind of external mobile hard disk for the IT industry but, as we all know well today, it turned out to be something completely different. Similarly, the iPad keeps cropping up as a tool with a surprising number of innovative functions – from being a content creation tool to a business-supporting mobile unit – unpredictable and innovative.

### A formula for innovation in the publishing industry

Innovation was the key word in Marianne Toft Poulsen's examples of how innovation can be a systematic tool to run a successful business. Publishers can create a culture of innovation by sharing ideas instead of being afraid that others might steal them, by working together, thinking big, and taking risks. SR Industries has supplied the world with inventions such as the computer mouse, HDTV, and robot surgery, using a range of well-structured innovation techniques – techniques that can be implemented in any company at very little cost, if you have the courage.... Being innovative is not just about finding new ways to solve problems – you have to spot and create sustainable solutions that will yield positive financial results. Marianne's presentation was an eye opener for everybody.

### Many similarities between the fashion and the publishing industry

Henrik Theilbjørn, board executive and investor in fashion, represented an industry that faces challenges as big as those of the publishing industry. The similarities between the fashion and the publishing industry were striking, as Henrik took us through the disciplines of the fashion industry and gave us plenty of inspiration for how to balance the need for control and creativity. He showed us how precise information can be used to change track and create productions for the future, and how you turn facts into business opportunities. Henrik provided the attending publishers with inspiration to improve their business by knowing your facts and figures and being close to your customers.

### **Music industry executive is optimistic on behalf of publishing**

The story of the downturn in the music industry has been told many times, and we have heard many comparisons with the problems faced by the publishing industry. Pete Downtown who, as Director of Warner Music, has personally experienced the decline, explained why he felt optimistic on behalf of the publishing industry. If the publishing industry is able to put the right focus on its business strategies, there is a bright – if different – future ahead. Pete's presentation was a real and sincere invitation to all publishers to embrace the new digital opportunities.

### **Nyree Belleville sold 350.000 ebooks as a DIY publisher**

Here was a true story from the digital frontier: Nyree Belleville has gone new ways to publish her books. She decided to put her books up for sale on her own. 270 ebooks in the first two weeks grew to an annual sales of more than 350.000 as a result of the incredible energy and drive she put into the project. By self-publishing her books as ebooks Nyree has earned more than 1 million USD this year. Nyree represents a challenge to conventional publishing – how will the publishing industry respond? She certainly gave publishers more than a hint to shape up and make their services clear to authors.

### **New business models and new ways of distribution**

How would you distribute the works of 32.000 authors? Not easy? This is just what Mark Coker and his team of seven people are doing with SmashWords – a California-based start-up provider of global ebook distribution for indie authors and small presses. Valobox, 24symbols, and Jellybooks – also recent start-up companies – presented their business models of offering ebooks to readers, either as ebook social commerce such as Groupon, as a freemium subscription service model that helps publishers sell books or as pay-as-you-read social commerce for ebooks. These are all new ways of distributing content. It was both inspiring and amazing to feel the ease and energy they all showed in their new approaches to publishing. There is no limit to the opportunities out there.

### **Authors' expectations to their publishers**

Finally, three authors told us what they thought was best and worst about digital publishing. And it was fascinating to hear what they expected from publishers, what they cared about most when they created their content, and what was most important to them when their books were published. If you ever thought that authors are all the same – but then you probably didn't – you'd better think again!

At the end of the conference the participants left the Carlsberg Museum, filled with inspiration and new optimism, aware of the immense digital potential for publishers.

---

We have received a lot of positive feedback from the audience and speakers alike who thought that the event offered important and relevant insights to a broad range of topics and challenges. If you were not able to participate – or if you did and would like to revisit parts of the event – you will soon be able to read feedback from the event and see and hear interviews with the speakers on our website. We shall publish them over the next month, so watch [www.schilling.dk](http://www.schilling.dk)!

We hope to see you at next year's Scandinavian Executive Publishing Meeting – the quality of speakers will be as high as this year.