

Book Cover Design

Thoughts from Stan C. Smith

Traditionally-published authors do not have a say in the cover design for their books.
Indie authors do have control over their cover design.

IMPORTANT: *The goal of any indie author should be to make your books **indistinguishable** from traditionally-published books.*

Typically, that means:

- Professionally-designed covers
- Professional editing

I do not have a graphic design degree, and if I did, I probably wouldn't have specialized in book cover design, so I have no choice but to hire a professional cover designer.

The least expensive way to get a professionally-designed cover is to buy a **pre-made cover** (\$25 to \$150):

Check out this site (click one of the genres - \$30 each): <http://goonwrite.com>

And here's another good site for pre-made covers: <https://thebookcoverdesigner.com/shop>

But if you cannot find a suitable pre-made cover, you will need to hire a cover designer to create a **custom cover** for your books.

Tips for hiring and working with professional cover designers:

- Good designers are *professionals*. They are experts on what current trends are for specific genres. Find a designer who specializes in your genre! A designer who does terrific romance covers cannot be expected to design terrific science fiction covers.
 - If you have a series, have the same designer do the entire series (all the books in the series should have a similar look).
 - Many designers have a discount if you hire them to do more than one book in a *series*. This is because the books have many of the same elements (fonts, overall appearance, theme, etc.).
 - Look for a designer willing to do numerous revisions (some only allow one or two, some allow three or four). My designer will do unlimited revisions... until you like the cover.
 - There's a fine line between telling the designer exactly what you want and giving the designer creative control. For my original Diffusion covers, I told the designer *exactly* what I wanted. She did great following my instructions. The problem is, I'm not a pro designer—I don't really know what works best for a particular genre. Eventually I had to have new covers made. I gave my new designer a few ideas and asked him to use his professional expertise (after all, that's what we pay designers for). He came up with MUCH better designs!
 - That's not to say you shouldn't give the designer lots of information. Provide information on the story, the setting, the appearance of your protagonist, the tone of your book (is it a cozy, a literary novel, a thriller?), and other details. Provide all the details your designer needs, but be sure to let them know you want them to be creative with the overall design.
 - For a print cover, you will need to know the *exact* numbers of pages (for the spine width). Including all front and back matter.
 - And for a print cover, you will need to compose a good blurb for the back cover (I use the same blurb used for the book's description on its Amazon product page).
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A few websites to help you get started finding the right designer:

<https://www.thecreativepenn.com/bookcoverdesign>

<https://insights.bookbub.com/fantastic-book-cover-design-resources>

My cover designer: <https://www.jcalebdesign.com>