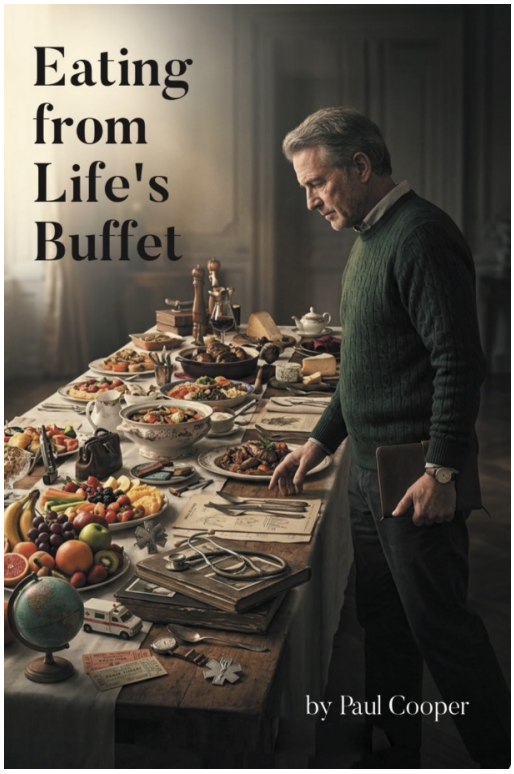
NOVEMBER 2026 / THE AUTHOR EDUCATION ISSUE

You Wrote the Book. Now What?

A practical guide to the business questions every independent author should be asking.



FROM THE CAPTAIN'S DESK

A new chapter. A new set of questions.

When I began writing Eating from Life's Buffet, my attention was on telling the story. But as publication approached, I discovered a second journey: learning to manage the business behind the book.

How many books should I order? What happens to copies left at a bookstore? How do I measure the value of a signing?

Those questions helped inspire Compass Rose Works and Author Business Manager. They also shape a new mission for this newsletter: helping authors ask better questions, find useful answers, and make more informed decisions.

— Paul A. Cooper

OUR NEW EDITORIAL COMPASS

The newsletter raises the questions. Webinars teach the skills. ABM is being developed to help authors put those skills into practice.

Education comes first. Every article should offer something useful, whether or not a reader ever uses our software.

FEATURED COLUMN / THE AUTHOR'S BUSINESS COMPASS

Ten Questions That Reveal the Business Behind Your Book

A published book is a creative achievement. Managing that book after publication is an ongoing business responsibility. How many of these questions could you answer today—without guessing?

01 How many copies do you actually have on hand?
02 How many copies are held by each bookstore or consignment partner?
03 Which locations are selling—and which are not?
04 When should each location be restocked?
05 What is your true income after commissions and other costs?
06 How much have you spent on marketing, travel, and supplies?
07 Which appearances produced sales, contacts, or follow-up opportunities?
08 Are your receipts and mileage records ready for tax preparation?
09 Which bookstores, event organizers, or readers need a follow-up?
10 Is your author business profitable, breaking even, or losing money?

WHY THE ANSWERS MATTER

Imagine placing ten books in each of five stores. After several weeks, one store has sold eight, another two, and three have sold none. Without location-by-location records, you might replenish every store equally. With those records, you can focus on the location where demand is strongest—and investigate what the others need.

Try this today: Choose just three questions above. Write down where you would find each answer, how reliable that source is, and what decision the answer would help you make.

PRACTICAL EDUCATION

A Simple System Beats a Perfect System

You do not need sophisticated software to begin managing your author business. You do need a repeatable way to capture what happens.

Start with four records: inventory (what came in and where it went), sales (what sold and for how much), expenses (what you spent and why), and contacts (who needs a response and when).

At the end of each event, reconcile books taken, books sold, and books returned. After a consignment delivery, record the store, quantity, date, and agreed terms. Once a month, compare income and expenses and review outstanding follow-ups.

The aim is not more paperwork. It is fewer surprises—and decisions based on evidence rather than memory.

LEARNING TOGETHER

Why We're Planning Author Webinars

Many authors are experts at telling stories but have never been taught inventory control, consignment tracking, or basic business reporting. Our planned educational webinars will address those gaps through practical scenarios and step-by-step instruction.

Potential sessions: "Your First Book Signing: What to Track," "Consignment Without Confusion," and "Know Your Numbers: Income, Expenses, and Profit." Each session should leave attendees with a method they can apply immediately—even with paper records or a spreadsheet.

Dates and registration details have not yet been announced. Watch future newsletters and the Compass Rose Works website for confirmed information.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Author Business Manager: Built Around Real Questions

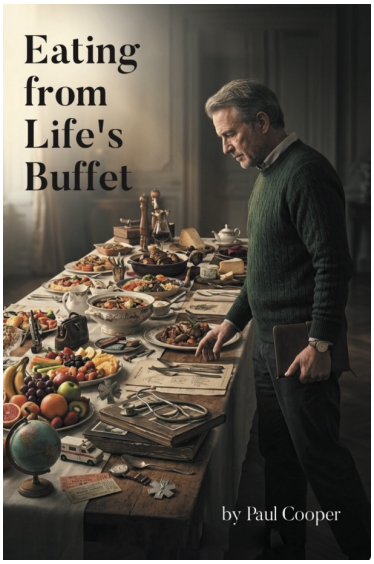
Author Business Manager (ABM) is in active development and testing. Work to date includes book inventory movements, bookstore consignment tracking, events and outreach records, income and expense tracking, and reporting. Current testing also examines location-specific restock thresholds and alerts.

The purpose is not simply to collect data. It is to help an author answer questions such as: "Where are my books?", "Which locations need attention?", and "What did this activity accomplish?"

Development status: ABM is not yet available for general release. Features and workflows may change as testing continues.

AUTHOR'S CORNER

Eating from Life's Buffet: A Cover Worth Sharing



The cover design for Eating from Life's Buffet has been finalized—an exciting milestone on the road to publication.

The memoir traces experiences in emergency medical services, flight paramedicine, nursing, and leadership, while reflecting on the people, faith, and unexpected turns that give a life its meaning.

The remaining production process is underway. Publication timing and availability will be shared when confirmed.

Look for: future updates on the release, bookstore outreach, and author events.

COMPASS ROSE WORKS NEWS

Growing With Purpose

Plans to organize Compass Rose Works as a Pennsylvania limited liability company are moving forward. We are also exploring potential academic collaboration to strengthen business planning and outreach. These initiatives are prospective, not completed partnerships or filings.

Our free Author Resource Library remains part of that mission: practical guidance should be accessible to writers at every stage. Visit the website to explore available materials.

YOUR NEXT STEP

Pick One Question. Find One Answer.

Before the next issue, choose one question from our ten-question list and create a dependable way to answer it. Then ask: What decision will I make differently because I know this?

That is where better business management begins.

"You wrote the book. Now learn to manage the business behind it."

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