

Doctor = Publisher

Building a Team

When building a team for a free medical textbook, you need to consider a number of important details:

1. Even if you have expertise and time, you should not write a medical textbook all by yourself. Standard textbooks are **joint efforts**. You should therefore know experienced colleagues who can competently take on a chapter of your project. This assumes that you know your way around the national and international scene and that you come from a university institute or one of the big teaching hospitals.
2. As an editor, don't limit yourself to organizing and delegating. You are entitled to take the jewellery, so reserve **pivotal chapters** for yourself. The more you write, the more you are qualified to give advice.
3. Procuring **contributors** may involve a whole science, but is feasible if you describe the implications and advantages of a free medical textbook. Your co-authors should enjoy writing and be good at it. Ask your potential contributors if they are prepared to make a number of editions over the years. Annual updates would be ideal.
4. You must be able to get your authors to commit themselves to a **deadline**. This is easier via friendship or authority – make sure that at least one of these conditions is fulfilled. Good deadlines are deadlines of 6 weeks to 4 months.
5. One person – call it the **editorial office** – has to keep track of the status of the manuscripts. Every manuscript passes through up to 8 stages before it is cleared for publication.
6. If, as an editor, you are not able to cope with the stylistic and didactic finish of the manuscripts, delegate the revision to **external editors**. In this case, allow for additional costs when planning the project. A good style is worth every penny.
7. If you are not a native English speaker, your manuscripts must be “tuned” by experienced **medical writers** – ideally a scientist or physician who is also a skilled writer. Finding the right person to do the “tuning” may be tedious.
8. Finally, every chapter needs to be checked by **proofreaders**. It is not easy to find good professionals. Again, prefer physicians and make sure you recruit them as early as possible for your project.

If you need any further information, please contact me at the email address you know.

Bernd Sebastian Kamps, www.bsk1.com – Paris, 20.5.2007