

It's important to advice your partner and not to persuade him

做版贸要给对方提建议而不是去说服他

■ Andreas Rötzer, publisher, Matthes & Seitz



□ You and your company have won great fame and many awards these years. Can you share your insights about how to be a good publisher?

■ A good publisher must be a player, he must be afraid of the market, but permanently fight his fear. I am convinced that truthfulness is

conveyed through the product. The customers when feel a book is made out of calculation don't buy it. So a good publisher has to be authentic. If he fails economically due to his authenticity was not synchronized with the spirit of the age, then at least he was successful in expressing himself and doing something he believed in. For me, I learn through every book as if it were a lecture, I learn through our authors, for whom I have as much respect as I had for my professors during my studies.

□ How do you raise a topic and initiate a new publishing program successfully?

■ One of the first successes we had was the publication of the complete works of Warlam Schalamow. He's a disarming unique Russian author I had discovered when I was a student. As there were only small selections of his texts available in German, I used my new position as publisher to discover the rest of the text by

initiating a huge edition. It was naive from today's perspective, but it worked out, the further texts turned out to be ingenious and the booksellers and journalists admired his writings as I did. This success was a good education as it taught me not to follow the market but to create a market. I am sure that for smaller publishers this is the only way to be successful or at least to survive.

□ Can you talk about your Asian publishing program? Where do you get info about Chinese culture and decide to publish?

■ Unfortunately I do not speak Chinese, but I admire the Chinese culture as it meets me in its literature and philosophy. Therefore I would like to read as much as possible myself and make it accessible for others. The most important interlocutors are the translators, most of whom are passionate about translation and have extensive knowledge about Chinese literature. But I am also closely connected to sinologists and to French and American publishers who have a much better tradition in translating Chinese literature and thinking than the German publishers.

However, the German market is not ready for Chinese literature yet. Of course there was tremendous success of Liu Cixin but in general the German perception of Chinese culture is determined by skepticism and fear of the new world power. For me, this is reason enough to learn more about this culture, and with our program we want to fight against these prejudices and bring on enlightenment.

□ Do you explore some new marketing channels over the Covid-19 period?

■ We started a very intense social media and internet campaign in order to create direct sales. This worked out quite well so that we were able to compensate the decline in sales. We are sticking to that new mode of working even after the lockdown and one of our main aims in distribution today is to even increase the direct sales in order to become more and more independent.

□ How do you keep in touch with foreign to do rights business with German publishers?

■ With foreign publishers we keep in touch via Zoom, email and phone. One year this might be OK, but if the situation lasts I see the danger of international disconnection, which would be all the worse as it would run parallel to a deglobalization that is to be feared.

I think the main important task to do rights business is to create a network and act trustfully. The book business is a man-to-man business and it takes some time to create an atmosphere of trust that is the precondition to buy rights from a language you don't speak. Therefore it is important to see the foreign editor or publisher as partner and selling books as common aim. The foreign publisher will only buy again if he will be successful, so it's important to advice your partner and not to persuade him. For this you have to know the foreign market by own experience and by talking a lot with foreign editors, about their market but also about trends, fears and dangers.

Creating win-win publishing partnerships with De Gruyter

与德古意特共创双赢出版合作关系

■ Lyndsey Dixon, Global Journals Director & VP Partnerships Asia Pacific, De Gruyter

□ What's your strengths compared with other big STM publishing groups? How do you tackle with these new challenges?

■ De Gruyter stands for excellence in publishing and quality solutions for the challenges that researchers and professionals face. That has been the case since 1749. We remain an independent, family owned business, operating globally. Our adaptable size allows us to offer customized services which distinguish us from our competitors. Our independence provides the ability to be nimble and flexible, and to experiment with our partners. And our reach, our content and the partners with whom we work allow us to have influence and impact on a global stage. We are big enough to matter, yet small enough to listen.

De Gruyter is an early adopter of open access and today two thirds of De Gruyter's journals portfolio are published on a Gold OA basis, and nearly all of our journals offer the option to publish work through Gold or Green OA routes. With over 2,800 OA books available on degruyter.com, we are one of the largest publishers of OA books in the world.

Digital technology is at the heart of what we do. Our website degruyter.com is visited by more than 12 million users each year and we are currently building a new digital platform that will be faster, more stable and offer better search and user experience for our content and readers.

□ Which are your important publishing partners and how do you expand global customers around the world?

■ De Gruyter offers an essential collection of top-class scholarly content under one roof through University Press Library program from 13 outstanding university presses on degruyter.com. We make use of our global reach and infrastructure to achieve sales and marketing promotion in geographies for assistance in enhancing the global visibility for our partners' titles.

Besides our publishing partners, we also partner with many key academic associations. The benefits are that they retain complete editorial control and ownership of their journals, and we provide technologies, services and processes to these journals to enable them to be competitive on a global stage.

We are looking to internationalise the content we publish and have invested in growing our APAC presence. Wendy Ding now heads up our team based in Beijing, and I'm in charge of our entire journals



portfolio based in Hong Kong. We want to ensure that research that is undertaken in APAC is getting visibility and making impact on a global stage.

□ In China, what kind of cooperation do you have with Chinese publishers?

■ We work with excellent Chinese publishing partners to create mutually beneficial partnerships. We also partner with various societies and institutions in China. Through partnering with such entities, we understand better what are the needs of Chinese researchers so we can tailor and improve our services specifically to Chinese researchers, and understand the requirements of Chinese market.

□ Have you changed the mode of data services for scholars among the epidemic? Do you explore some new marketing channels these months?

■ As a response to library closures around the world and to help researchers get remote access to our (digital) titles, we have offered libraries free access to 75,000 ebooks on degruyter.com; an offer signed up for by many institutions. We have also published two free digital essay collections with humanities and social science perspectives on the Covid crisis and organized a series of digital lectures and talks on the history of pandemics, all of which is collected and free to watch and download on our website.