

Sona Partners Case Study: Editorial Collaboration

Sona Partners has helped thought leaders clarify and communicate ideas to grab the attention of publishers, book sellers, and book buyers. We strongly believe it is possible to gain recognition without diluting the message into meaninglessness—because we’ve helped our clients do so over and over again.

Sustainability Book. Collaboration

A business school professor and global thought leader on business sustainability faced a dilemma: how to meet a tight deadline for delivery of the manuscript for his first book to Harvard Business Press, while juggling a full teaching schedule and consulting load. The book outlined a set of practices manufacturing companies could adopt to make their businesses more environmentally friendly and sustainable. With just a few months left until the delivery date for the manuscript to HBP for peer review, the professor found himself struggling to balance definition, context and insight, and case studies to maximum effect. An additional challenge was how to structure all of the material into a true narrative that flowed from beginning to end. To ensure his thought-leadership on the subject of business sustainability was getting through and the book would have maximum impact, his editor at HBP suggested he work with a collaborator.

Sona Partners principals Timothy Ogden and Laura Starita began by reading through all of the extant materials and providing high level perspective on where such aspects as structure, voice, and story-telling approach were obscuring or conflicting with the overall message. Sona Partners then created a standard structure for building each chapter and provided detailed suggestions for revisions that would: 1) Do away with inconsistencies and redundancies; 2) Address counterarguments; and 3) Make his arguments more compelling through elaboration, excision and improved case choice and story-telling. After revision suggestions were approved, Sona then divided the revision work based on the individual skills of the participants, documented those assignments and managed the process and the chapter versions in order to avoid duplication or loss of work. Sona also contributed secondary research on compelling case stories that illuminated a concept or idea.

As a result of Sona Partners' collaboration, the manuscript was delivered on time (and on budget). More importantly, the manuscript was accepted for peer review, a major step in Harvard Business Press' publishing process.