

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
FACULTY OF COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION SCIENCE
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE HONOURS DEGREE IN PUBLISHING
PART IV FIRST SEMESTER DECEMBER 2013 EXAMINATIONS
IPU 4101 STRATEGIC PLANS IN PUBLISHING

TIME: 3 HOURS

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

1. ANSWER QUESTION 1 AND ANY OTHER THREE QUESTIONS.
 2. QUESTION 1 CARRIES 40 MARKS AND ALL THE OTHER QUESTIONS CARRY 20 MARKS EACH.
 3. IMPORTANCE IS ATTACHED TO ACCURACY, CLARITY OF EXPRESSION AND LEGIBLE HANDWRITING.
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1. Read the following short case study and then answer the three questions listed below it.

Florida Attorney General files lawsuit against Robert Fletcher / Writers' Literary Agency

Attorney General Bill McCollum today announced that his office filed a lawsuit against a Boca Raton company that allegedly preyed on aspiring authors. According to the Attorney General's lawsuit, Writer's Literary Agency and owner Robert Fletcher used more than 20 websites and related companies to collect funds from potential authors, but misled victims about fees, costs, and promised results.

The Attorney General's Economic Crimes Division received more than 175 complaints from around the world claiming Fletcher and his associates, who claimed to act as literary agents and publishers, allegedly collected money from victims anxious to see their work published. Potential writers paid anywhere from \$89 for an initial critique to over \$600 for various services including editing and marketing of a manuscript to publishers. Allegedly, Fletcher also told potential writers that fees were paid from book sales when in fact all costs of publishing were paid by the authors. According to the lawsuit, few books were ever sold as a result of the efforts of Fletcher's companies.

Investigators determined Fletcher expanded into the field of publishing within the past year. Fletcher admitted to having no background as a literary agent and to using at least 10 aliases in his businesses.

The lawsuit seeks injunctive relief against Robert Fletcher and his associates, as well as his many businesses, prohibiting further business activities in the field of literary agencies or publishers. The Attorney General is also seeking full restitution on behalf of all victimized consumers, civil penalties of \$10,000 for each violation of the Florida Unfair and Deceptive Trade Practices Act, and reimbursement for fees and costs related to the investigation.

As is often the case in these situations, the information in the press release only skims the surface. Just 175 complaints are mentioned, but over the years (Fletcher started his business, a single fee-charging "literary agency" known as Sydra-Techniques, in 2001), Writer Beware has received hundreds, possibly well over a thousand, complaints about Fletcher and his companies. And although many of his victims did pay just a few hundred dollars, many others were relieved of several thousands for agency, editing, and publishing "services."

***NOTE FROM HANS:** I have a publishing contract with Strategic Book Publishing that is now in its final, cover-design, and phase. Suddenly, doing a related Google search, I came across the Writer Beware Blog and read all the negative opinions about Mr. Fletcher and his group. Other blogs echo similar concerns. I now have to decide whether to proceed with letting Strategic publish my book of fiction, or cancel the deal, and swallow the loss. I have two earlier, non-fiction, books to my name, published commercially, and I'm worried. I will welcome any comments!*

Hans B.

- a) How best can service providers address the changing dynamics in the book market to meet the demand, without losses to the customer, in this case literary agency and publishing services? In your answer try and bring out at least four service lines expected of a literary agent to authors. **(15 marks)**
 - b) Discuss fully how the aspiring and seasoned authors may be protected from such practice in the future. **(10 marks)**
 - c) What could be Hans B's worries? Suggest a best suiting way forward for Hans B and say why. **(15 marks)**
2. A successful book publishing planner in an open book market is always paying attention to the competitors' strategies. Critique. **(20 marks)**
 3. Comment on the role of any four (4) funding strategies that have been employed successfully in book development in Africa. **(20 marks)**
 4. "The human resources plan is the foundation for any organizational strategic planning." Discuss. **(20 marks)**
 5. Evaluate the role of market research in open book markets. **(20 marks)**
 6. Compare and contrast the publishing plan meant to seek funds and the plan-as-you-go approach to running a publishing business. **(20 marks)**

END OF PAPER