



# Pictures Mean Business

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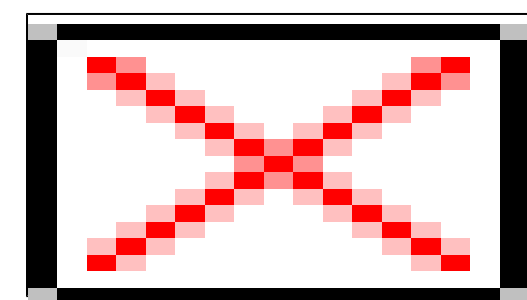
[Sarah McIntyre](#) [1]

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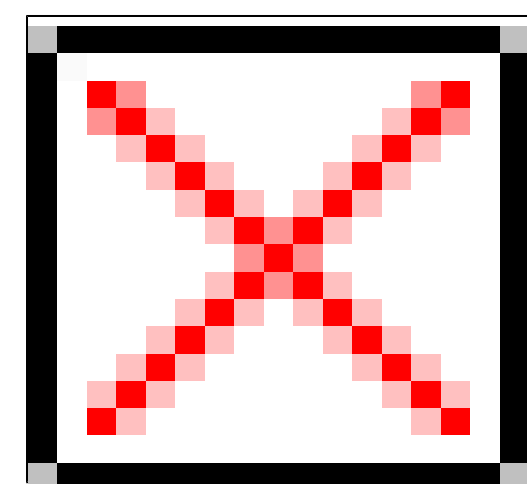
**Sarah McIntyre** tells us why **Pictures Mean Business**

**Sarah McIntyre** explains why we'll all be better off if illustrators get the credit they deserve.



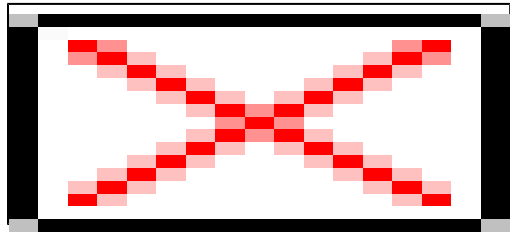
Children's book illustrators don't always let people know when they're angry. They tend to be gentle folk who don't like to offend, or scared because they worry that speaking up might make publishers overlook them next time a commission comes around. But there's one issue that not only drives illustrators into rages, depressions and even poverty, but actually hurts readers and the book industry overall when they ignore it: that's credit.

Before James Mayhew and I came up with the #PicturesMeanBusiness name for a campaign, I'd talked with veteran illustrators who shook their heads ruefully, saying that they'd been complaining for decades about the lack of credit for their work, but that nothing ever changed. In a world where branding is more and more important, how can illustrators build a name for themselves in a business that constantly refuses to mention their names and treats their work like a dirty little secret?



And then I realised we might be using the wrong tactic. Complaining about our individual mistreatments and appealing to people's love for illustration wasn't working. I realised that we as illustrators needed to come together with our readers and writers, argue each other's cases, and make people see how *everyone* benefits when they credit illustrators properly for their work.

And fortunately it's a strong case!

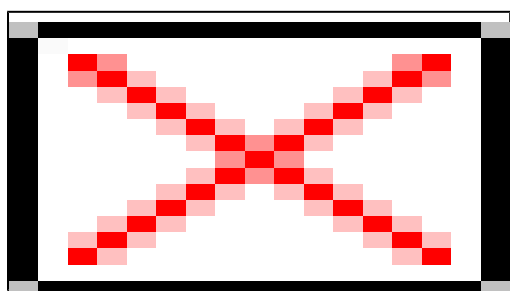


For children, teachers and parents: crediting the illustrators of picture books seems the most obvious (the clue's in the name), but many publishers, teachers and reviewers will still talk about picture books as being 'by' writers and leave out illustrators' names, despite the pictures telling so much of the story. But pre-literate children aren't first drawn to books because of the words, they'll reach for a book because they connect with the pictures. Even when children learn how to read, many of them still come to stories through the pictures, but unless they're told, they don't immediately understand that the pictures are created by real people. When they discover this, a light goes on in their heads, they realise they like drawing, too, and that they can make stories by drawing. I've seen many times how children will balk at putting words on a blank sheet of paper, but if they've drawn a character, a story about that character will bubble out of them. When they learn about illustrators, children will develop favourites, and look out for their books by their best-loved illustrators. Help them gain a hero by crediting picture book illustrators by name, and letting publishers know that we expect the names of illustrators to appear on picture book covers if the writer hasn't drawn the pictures themselves.

For publishers and writers: by crediting illustrators by name and linking to them on social media, publishers and writers can widen the fan bases for their books. Images drive the Internet for all ages, and many people love to find out about artists and will buy books based on their love for the illustrators' work. Plus, publishers and writers will gain illustrator loyalty; if illustrators have to choose between two jobs that pay the same, we'll jump for the job that will advance our careers. And it costs little or nothing to use our names!

By making a point of entering the illustrators' names into their book data, publishers will make their books more searchable. Imagine an illustrator wins a big award and people search for books they've illustrated to buy; it's in publishers' and writers' interests to have their books appear in these searches!

As a reader: you'll want to be able to get the best books you can. To get wonderfully illustrated books, our top illustrators need to be able to devote themselves full-time to their profession. If they have to waste huge amounts of time simply trying to get professional recognition for their work, their work will suffer and we won't get the best books we could get. It's not about ego: no one would expect a company like **Starbucks** or **McDonald's** to smile humbly as someone covered up their sign or insisted they couldn't have their logos on their coffee cups. If no one knows which artist made an image, no one's going to commission that artist to make another one. Illustrators' styles and faces may change through the years, but their names are their brands. One major way you can help is by crediting artists on social media; if you use their image, tell people who made that image, or you're implying that you created it. Whatever you do, don't crop off artists' signatures. We need more diversity in publishing, so don't give illustrators a completely unnecessary hurdle they need to get over; they'll have enough challenges ahead without having to fight for credit.



As translators and journalists: we're all in the same boat! Most of us work freelance and we're all trying to build our names in the business. So let's help each other out by recognising each other by name when we share each other's work.

James and I have a bigger team now with **Pictures Mean Business**: Woodrow Phoenix represent illustrators on the Society of Authors General Management committee, and Soni Speight built a beautiful new [Pictures Mean Business](#) [3] website explaining how everyone benefits from crediting illustrators. We're seeing progress: more designers adding illustrator names to the covers of junior fiction, writers crediting artists when they first reveal their cover art, publishers including illustrators in their metadata, and bloggers adding references to illustrators and their work in reviews. Agents have told me they now use the term 'Pictures Mean Business' as shorthand with publishers so they don't have to go through all the reasons their artists need credited. I've even heard from a school who support the campaign and have named all of their classes after illustrators! So it's happening... find out how you can take part at [PicturesMeanBusiness.com](http://PicturesMeanBusiness.com) and spread the word!

[Kevin?s Great Escape: A Roly-Poly-Flying Pony Adventure](#) [4] by Sarah McIntyre and Philip Reeve, is out now, 978-0-19-276612-0, £8.99 hbk

Page Number:

20

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