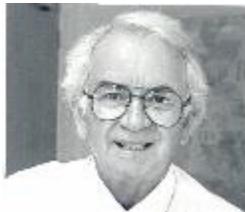


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Thank you for purchasing my tutorial. It contains everything you need to get started on the journey towards empowering your writing to generate residual income. Study the material carefully on your first reading and then read it all over again, cross-referencing as required by using the built-in search engine to switch back and forth from one page to another. Do it this way and you will get the best out of your adventure.



*Jim Green*

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# 1

## Mastering the mental blocks

There is an age-old adage that is as true today as when it was first mooted.

*"Everyone has at least one good book in them"*

The problem is that most people never get around to writing it because they hamper progress by cluttering their minds with blocks. Could you produce a niche-carving bestseller in your spare time? With professional guidance you could.

I never suspected I would but I have managed to produce several over the years on a part time basis, and so too could you if you set about matters with conviction.

This unique tutorial will show you how to plan to achieve success as a niche non-fiction writer in your own time, your spare time, and increment your earnings in the process.

### **SO YOU'VE NEVER EVER WRITTEN ANYTHING CREATIVE?**

You have, you know, and you've been doing it all of your life.

When you were sitting exams at school, you were engaging in the creative writing process, addressing questions and providing answers with well reasoned argument. When you sit down to compose a letter, produce a thesis or develop a business proposal, you are in the creative mode. All of these exercises have something common: they are works of non-fiction, and so it follows that the creation of a full-length book in that genre is any and all of these activities writ large.

You are adept at creative writing but so far you have only skimmed the surface of your latent ability.

### **SO YOU'VE TRIED AND TRIED AGAIN WITHOUT SUCCESS?**

Perhaps on the other hand you have been activating your innate skills for years and all you have to show for it is a never-ending stream of rejection slips. Perhaps too you have been focusing your energies on fiction, the most notoriously difficult of genres to break into as a writer aspiring to achieve the recognition that leads to publication. Could it be you have

now decided that the only way you'll ever see your work in print is to become a self-publisher?

You wouldn't be the first. These famous masters of fiction were all obliged to take the route of shelling out hard cash to have their debut novels printed.

Alexandre Dumas  
D.H. Lawrence  
Edgar Allan Poe  
Edgar Rice Burroughs  
George Bernard Shaw  
Gertrude Stein  
James Joyce  
John Grisham  
Mark Twain

Mary Baker Eddy  
Rudyard Kipling  
Stephen Crane  
Upton Sinclair  
Virginia Woolf  
Walt Whitman  
William Blake  
Zane Grey

John Grisham, incidentally, sold copies of his first novel *A Time to Kill* out of the boot of a car which at the outset was his sole 'vehicle' for distribution...

But we are concerned here with another genre, a genre that permits self-expression under predetermined guidelines designed to give you a better than evens chance of publication without the necessity of paying for the privilege, providing always that your work and its presentation are painstakingly and professionally executed.

## **DETERMINE YOUR PROPENSITY FOR CREATING NICHE NON-FICTION**

Ask yourself these questions and spend a few minutes in quiet reflection before you provide the answers.

- 🚦 Do you like to read, be it fiction or non-fiction?
- 🚦 Do you enjoy writing letters, reports, or whatever?
- 🚦 Do you have a better than average vocabulary?

- ✚ Do you strive at every opportunity to enhance your personal word power?
- ✚ Do you persist with crosswords until you've solved all the clues?
- ✚ Do you have an enquiring mind?
- ✚ Do you have special interests?
- ✚ Do you have expertise in any particular subject(s)?
- ✚ Would you undertake research to confirm and expand on what you *think* you know?
- ✚ Would you be prepared to share this knowledge with others?
- ✚ Would you be willing to make time to write about it for pleasure and profit?
- ✚ Are you comfortable about committing your private thoughts to paper?
- ✚ Are you self-disciplined?
- ✚ Are you relaxed about working on your own?

If you can genuinely answer 'yes' to all of these questions, you already have the nucleus of a powerful propensity for creating niche non-fiction in the shape of self-help and how-to guides. The chapters that follow will provide you with the attributes for professional execution.

- ✚ If on the other hand you answered 'yes' to most and 'no' to a few, then work on those negative areas.
- ✚ If you answered 'no' to Question 8, then think again and dig deeply this time. Most people have expert knowledge on something or other. It could be a job, a hobby, or any of a thousand disparate topics. **And should you consider that what you know would be of little value to anyone else, you would be wrong.** Many people share a passion for your particular area of interest and are anxious to become even better informed.

## WHY WRITING PART TIME WORKS BEST FOR SOME AUTHORS

Most established authors start out writing on a part time basis and while many go on to make a career of the art form, others find it more convenient to continue writing part time for a number of reasons, including:

- ✚ They are at liberty to pursue other commercial interests.
- ✚ They prefer to use their creative skills as an outlet from workaday pressures.
- ✚ They derive therapeutic benefits from part time writing.
- ✚ They find it hones their expertise in diverse directions.
- ✚ They reckon it adds to the quality of life.
- ✚ They enjoy financial advantages from a second income.

## **WHAT YOU WILL GAIN FROM CONSISTENT APPLICATION**

People who make a practice of writing about what they know quickly discover that they know a lot more than they ever imagined about matters they thought they knew little or nothing. Consistent application draws on all three levels of the mind and opens up the labyrinth of the subconscious, providing a steady stream of factual information and hitherto untapped ideas.

You will experience the magic of this phenomenon for yourself if after the first reading of this tutorial you decide to take the plunge and embark on your first assignment as a niche non-fiction writer.

## **WHY PERSISTENCE PAYS OFF IN THE END**

Persistence pays off in all walks of life because it utilises innate powers to inject increase in all that you undertake. Once you are clear in your own mind what it is you want to achieve, be prepared to persist until you have accomplished it. There is no point in putting thought, work and effort into developing a plan if you fail to carry it out.

The real achievers in life are those ordinary people who go about their business quietly and efficiently, ticking off each goal on the list as it is accomplished.

Plans don't just fall into line because progress never just 'happens'. You have to make it happen through persistent effort and as you persist you will find that inspiration flows more easily, your command of the project is enhanced and your writing skills improve effortlessly.

### **WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU?**

When you have completed your first assignment you will feel an enormous sense of fulfilment but you will have achieved more than that; you will have opened up the gateway to a stream of opportunities for incrementing your income.

Later in the tutorial (Chapter 13) we shall evaluate your earning potential in minute detail.

### **Writers Ink**

Mastering the mental blocks enables you to utilise inborn creative powers to help other like-minded people benefit from your skills by providing them with written guidelines in the form of a self-help book. But there will be something else in it for you apart from a sense of fulfilment and the prospect of augmenting your income. You will discover that as these inborn powers develop so too will your propensity for addressing and resolving irksome everyday problems. You will be analysing and rectifying uncertainties faster than you ever thought possible.

# Implanting essential disciplines

As with any worthwhile enterprise there are certain disciplines you have to set in motion before you'll get the best out of your part time writing activities. There are just a few, they are painless to implant, and you will need them to see you safely through the starting gate.

## **DECIDING THE WORKSPACE**

It can be spartan, it can be luxurious; the choice is yours. Try though to locate in a spot that's light and airy; a view to look out on is okay but avoid noisy distractions. We all live in a mind world but you will be spending a lot more time there than most people you know, so ensure that your surroundings are quiet and comfortable. That way you will be at ease with yourself and your creative output will prosper.

Treat the workspace as your den, a place of private solitude that you look forward to visiting for peace, inspiration and inner fulfilment.

## **ALLOCATING TIME TO WRITE**

Some people find it conducive to confine their writing to the early morning when the brain is refreshed, alert and eager to start work; others set an allotted time during the day which they stick to regardless of demands on their attention, while a fortunate few (who only ever seem to write when the muse is upon them) find that as soon as the pen is uncapped or the word processor switched on, their creativity is automatically unleashed.

Whichever path you follow, try to write a little every day and never allow a week to pass without some progress; otherwise

you may start to lose interest, or worse still, lose confidence in your ability to complete the project.

Individual circumstances also have a bearing on allocating time to write. If you are out working 9-5 on weekdays, then early morning and/or late evening may be your only options. If you are a homemaker, retired, or currently unemployed, you may be more relaxed about choosing times to write. In general terms though, the best advice anyone can give is to go with the flow and never try to force creativity. Write when you feel like writing don't write when you don't feel like it.

## **EVALUATING BASIC SKILLS**

You already possess the rudiments of the skills required to become an income-generating part time writer. All you have to do now is to attend to those areas that may be in need of some spit and polish to bring them up to snuff. You know your own strengths and you know your limitations, so evaluate and take requisite action to reduce the incidence of the latter.

Vocabulary and grammar are essential areas you might want to start with because they reflect on one's ability to commit measured thought to paper authoritatively.

### **Brush up on your word power every day**

No matter how strong you believe your vocabulary to be spend a few minutes each day in the company of a comprehensive dictionary. Open it at a random double spread and look for words that are either new to you or for which you are unsure of the precise meaning. Your memory loves to collect new words, which it will allow you to recall at will or even volunteer on occasion when you are stuck for inspiration.

This is the sure way to expand your vocabulary with minimum effort.

## **Growing in tandem**

Grammar and syntax can be a problem for some people but you will find that they grow in tandem with your increasing ability to analyse given facts and present a reasoned argument. The more you write, the better you become.

## **THE TOOLS YOU WILL NEED**

Apart from the best dictionary you can afford and a copy of Roget's Thesaurus, you ought also to equip yourself with a home computer containing a comprehensive word processing package. This is not a luxury but a vital tool if you are to become a serious writer. On the task bar you will have a raft of electronic devices to expedite your progress: facilities for spell checking, editing, formatting, inserting extraneous data straight onto the page, merging documents, and reviewing your output at every stage in the process. You will also have a virtual dictionary and Thesaurus of sorts but don't be cheeseparating over the hard copy versions. You will need these stacked on your desk for frequent access.

Make sure too that your computer is connected to the Internet, essential as you will realize when you read Chapter 5 on the subject of researching your first project.

## **CASHING IN ON INTROSPECTION**

Introspection as a discipline for writing how-to literature?

Very much so, if you are to become all you can be writing in that genre. In odd moments of your spare time when you are not writing, think over what you think you know for sure, and then put it to the test in small ways. For example, your project is embroidery and you are utterly convinced that a certain style of cross-stitching (which is to be the cornerstone of your teaching) is well within the capability of any novice. But is it? And how can you confirm your conviction? Visit the local

reference library and access several books on the topic (you'll find plenty). Compare alternative viewpoints to establish if you are on the right track or if at this early stage you should re-think your strategy.

Writing how-to literature is niche-carving and to be certain that your exposition of a topic will be convincing, you must be forever in touch with your thoughts and feelings as you string together the basic tenets for construction.

## **CULTIVATING INNATE INTUITION**

Introspection leads us neatly on to another essential discipline: making the most of your intuition. It is an incredible weapon to have at your command as a writer but intuition doesn't just happen and you cannot switch on at will until you first learn how to cultivate your innate power by listening to the inner voice that resides within.

There are several excellent works on the subject (including *Trusting Your Intuition* in the How-To-Books series) but here are some basic pointers to help you get started on your quest to reach the inner voice.

### **Slowing down and listening to the inner voice**

Information is proliferating at such a frenzied rate today that even with personal computers and cellular phones (*or perhaps because of them*) your attention is stretched to the extreme. Not only do you have more facts about more diverse fields of information than ever before, you are also subject to a greater array of outcries and opinions.

Fortunately, beneath all the cacophony of the information age, the quiet truth about problem solving and decision making is always available to you. By learning to slow down and pay attention to **what's right under your nose**, you have a chance to find your own authentic answers, unaided by media

and technology. To do that you must build up your 'intuition muscle' and learn to center yourself in the present moment. It's only at your core, in the here-and-now eye of the global information hurricane, that you can hear the inner voice.

### **How attuned are you to the subtle messages all around you?**

Messages like those hidden behind your spoken communication.

There is guidance available to you at all times, just below the surface of logic, just **after** you stop pushing and striving, just **before** you jump to conclusions. By cultivating the ability to pause and be comfortable with silence, and then by focusing steadily and listening for the first sounds or feeling for first impressions, you can help your intuition wake up suddenly and enthusiastically, as if from a long winter's nap.

In my own searching to cultivate the inner voice, I've learned to listen for the faintest of whispers, the nearly silent song. One of the most important skills in developing accurate intuition is the ability to tone down your domineering talk-addicted mind, which arrogantly thinks it knows how the world works without ever observing what's happening in the freshly occurring present moment. To know clearly, you must learn to observe neutrally, and true observation can only take place with a silent mind.

### **Soften your awareness**

Activating intuition always starts with a down gear shift into softness and silence. You'll never receive accurate information with a chattering mind, clenched as tight as a fist. Recall a little later how you feel when you're concentrating and worrying about finishing a chapter of your book in the time frame you've set yourself. Your brow is furrowed, you're shackled to the task in hand, and you're probably way ahead of yourself, anxious to achieve the intended goal. This is your 'masculine mind' in operation; the kind of awareness men and women alike must

use to achieve concrete results. You are in your linear, left-brained masculine mind so often, you've come to identify it as normal and you tend to forget that there is an equally powerful, complementary state of consciousness that is quiet, unhurried, highly creative and tension-free: the 'feminine mind', the right hand side of your brain. The feminine mind is not goal-oriented; it simply observes, includes, appreciates, and is present in whatever it notices.

Cultivate your intuition and it will serve you well in every writing assignment you undertake.

### **GRASPING IDEAS AS THEY OCCUR**

Ideas occur at the oddest moments. You might be asleep, walking the dog, in the middle of a meeting; intuition leaves no calling cards. It just strikes. When it does, pay attention or the moment may be lost forever. To give you an example: I got the idea on how to close this tutorial (see final paragraph) when I was sorting out some old files - and that occurred before I had even started to work on the text...

### **WHY ENJOYING YOUR OWN COMPANY PRODUCES BETTER WORK**

It's a fact. If it does not faze you to be totally on your own for an hour or two every day you will discover that indulging in introspection and cultivating innate intuition comes easy. As a result, your output will rapidly increase and improve in quality.

This is not to imply that gregarious people don't make good writers. They do, providing there is no necessity for a backdrop of din and chatter while they work.

### **CONSIDERING YOUR WRITING AS A PART TIME BUSINESS**

It is a sound practice to take your writing activities so seriously that you treat them as you would any other part time home

business. In other words, work to strict disciplines and hold yourself accountable for all that you do.

## Writers Ink

To stimulate your intuitive prowess, try this simple exercise. Tomorrow - regardless of what's happening around you - take ten minutes out to reach the inner voice.

Here is how to do it.

Firstly, cut off all communication. Then lean back in your chair, empty your mind and enter a state of self-induced but *controlled* hypnosis. Instruct your subconscious to awake you in exactly ten minutes, count down from ten to one, and switch off completely.

Right on cue ten minutes later, you will come out of your reverie. Count up from one to ten, open your eyes and awake to a cleansed mind, disengaged from useless paraphernalia and brimful of new thoughts, ideas, and solutions to problems unresolved. Try it. You will be amazed at the results you'll receive. This technique is particularly useful when faced with a vexatious problem in writing up your material: a tricky passage that defies construction for example.

Intuition provides the answers when the subjective mind can not. Stick with this exercise every day for a month and soon your intuition will begin to work automatically during waking hours, providing you at will with a steady stream of solutions and new ideas.

# How to incorporate bestselling potential into niche non-fiction

Is it possible to do this, incorporate bestselling potential into a work of non-fiction?

Yes, it is, and some successful writers of how-to literature consciously use the technique wherever and whenever feasible while many others include it unwittingly but to equally good effect.

## THE LITTLE KNOWN SECRET TO CONTROLLING THE FLOODGATES

It is as uncomplicated as steering clear of the seasonality factor when choosing a topic for how-to execution. This sounds like a contraction in terms but it is not. A topic can be current but with inherent strands of durability attaching; conversely, a topic that is seasonal is almost certainly a fad or fashion, or at best, temporaneous in nature. The **identification of longevity is the little known secret to injecting bestselling potential** and thus opening the floodgates to the prospect of a successful first impression followed by subsequent editions.

Uncomplicated as this little secret is, it is never easy to uncover and calls for concentrated effort where introspection, intuition and research all have a part to play.

## UNCOVERING THE ELUSIVE INGREDIENT

In the next chapter we will be talking about choosing a topic for your first assignment and as you set about this task be on the lookout for the elusive ingredient that might hallmark your work as more than just another one-off.

1. Does the topic have appeal for both sexes?
2. Would it be of interest to most age groups?

3. Does it cut across the spectrum of socio-economic classifications?
4. Is the subject matter readily recognisable?
5. Is it niche-carving?
6. Does it possess a timeless quality?
7. Are there other books available on the topic?

On the face of it you may think this is a rather tall order and a constraint on anyone setting out to produce their first how-to book. But if you wish your work to incorporate bestselling potential, these are the questions you should be asking when choosing a topic for consideration. Even if you have already settled on one and are now doubtful whether it would meet these qualifications, look again at your topic from every angle to uncover any trace of potential durability.

To assist you, here are a few examples that always seem to meet the test of time, but the list is by no means exhaustive. There are others, many others, and yours may be among them.

- 📖 Book-keeping
- 📖 Building self-confidence
- 📖 Buying a guest house
- 📖 Buying a house
- 📖 Buying a second home
- 📖 Changing careers
- 📖 Constructing a business plan
- 📖 Coping with stress
- 📖 Handling interviews
- 📖 Improving your memory
- 📖 Living abroad
- 📖 Making a speech
- 📖 Making a will
- 📖 Making money from property
- 📖 Managing other people
- 📖 Managing your finances
- 📖 Managing yourself

- ✚ Mastering business terminology
- ✚ Overcoming depression
- ✚ Passing exams
- ✚ Preparing reports
- ✚ Retiring abroad
- ✚ Returning to work
- ✚ Self assertion
- ✚ Setting up a business
- ✚ Surviving redundancy
- ✚ Using the Internet
- ✚ Working abroad
- ✚ Writing assignments
- ✚ Writing CVs
- ✚ Writing essays

Everything here passes the 7-point test (listed above) for uncovering the elusive ingredient. So too might your topic if you dissect it thoroughly.

## **DEVELOPING YOUR OWN SLANT ON A PRESCRIBED TOPIC**

The ability to develop your own particular slant on a given topic also contributes to bestselling potential. Everyone has their own way of looking at things, describing how they work and what makes them tick.

When Napoleon Hill and Clement Stone got together to produce the famous self-help book *Think and Grow Rich*, they took the timeless and much worked concept of mind over matter and subjected it to the twist of two disparate viewpoints blending together to yield a rich harvest. Interestingly, although both names appear on the cover, there was only one author, Napoleon Hill, the architect of the slant that transformed their work into a bestselling book spanning eight decades in worldwide bookstores.

If you can find an unusual angle, a different approach or a hitherto unworked technique for your topic, you are on the way to developing the unique proclivity that will set your work apart from similar tomes

## **ADOPTING PROVEN FORMATTING TECHNIQUES**

Taking the trouble to familiarize yourself with the various formatting techniques employed by the how-to publishing industry will also help enhance your chances of producing a bestselling title.

- ✚ How the title commands immediate attention.
- ✚ How the cover design varies from one publisher to another.
- ✚ How the contents list is laid out.
- ✚ How illustrations are employed to support the text where appropriate.
- ✚ How, where and where bullet points are included to highlight key aspects.
- ✚ How appendices are compiled to assist the reader.
- ✚ How the preface sparks off initial curiosity.
- ✚ How the back cover 'blurb' sells the book.

This is vital work because should you choose to approach a publisher with sample material devoid of appropriate formatting, your proposal is unlikely to be treated seriously.

## **CREATING A DISTINCTIVE WRITING STYLE**

Creating your own style comes evolves through practice, coupled with affording due diligence to the systematic approaches employed by established writers in the how-to genre. Study the various techniques and learn from them. When you writing exudes distinction you become recognisable in the industry and among the book buying public.

## WHAT IMPRESSES COMMISSIONING EDITORS

When the commissioning editor of a publishing house examines your proposal he/she is looking for more than the ability to write clearly and concisely on the chosen topic.

- ✚ You must demonstrate mastery of your subject.
- ✚ You must demonstrate the potential to produce further works in your specialist area.
- ✚ You must demonstrate a grasp on publishing techniques.

## Writers Ink

There are elements of longevity in every self-help subject but sometimes you have to dig deep to find them: once uncovered, work at how best to utilise them as underpinnings for the text.

Follow the instructions given here to uncover durability in a topic.

## 4

## Choosing a topic to start you off

Having reviewed in some depth the intelligence you have accumulated over the years, you ought now to be arriving at a view (if you haven't already done so) as to where your primary source of expertise lies. However, before cementing your choice of a topic it will be necessary to run the data through several tests to confirm its suitability as the subject matter for your first how-to book.

- ✚ Will the topic be convincing enough to warrant widespread appeal among devotees?
- ✚ Will you be capable of confirming its validity and expanding on received data?
- ✚ Will you be able to convert your expertise into a teaching module?
- ✚ Will the accumulated material manifest a disposition for regular updating?
- ✚ Will the topic have the potential for subsequent editions?
- ✚ Will it have the propensity to spawn more books on disparate aspects of the subject?
- ✚ Will you be tempted to abandon the project if your topic has already been covered?

You won't be able to resolve all of these questions right now but you will be by the time you've finished reading this tutorial.

## **WHAT ATTRACTS PEOPLE TO WORKS OF NON-FICTION?**

Autobiographies and biographies of celebrities are always in demand because they arouse the curiosity factor and particularly so when the material evokes an expectation of salacity.

The curiosity factor is equally evident in readers of how-to books, guides and manuals, but directed by a more responsible motive: the thirst for information on how to do something, do it better and excel at it. And so the chosen topic must be capable of fulfilling these wholesome expectations by ensuring that readers will become better informed on the subject matter for which you and they share a common interest.

Your personal expertise must be equal to the task you set yourself because otherwise, no matter how cleverly conceived or creatively scripted, your work will never be published. Commissioning editors can spot a fake a mile away. While they

may not be expert on your subject, they will very quickly ascertain whether or not **you** are.

## **PASSIVE V ACTIVE PARTICIPATION**

Levels of reader participation tend to vary between different genres and the differential with regard to commitment invariably favors non-fiction.

### **People read fiction to be entertained**

*(Passive participation: in one ear and out the other)*

### **People read non-fiction to...**

- ✚ Become better informed
- ✚ Learn new skills
- ✚ Hone existing talents

*(Active participation: invoking the faculties of reasoning and memory retention)*

Much popular fiction is in style for just a while but superior niche non-fiction can be around forever, earning the estates of its originators drip feed residuals in perpetuity. For example ***How to Win Friends and Influence People*** by Norman Vincent Peale was first published in the mid-1930s, sold millions of copies worldwide, and is still re-issued from time to time. This famous book has been through several publishing houses but it has only one originator.

Whenever people pick up a how-to book they are demonstrating willingness to engage in active participation. They know they are in for some work and you should in there pitching with them, providing an interesting topic and knowledgeable text in an easy-to-read format that transforms a chore into a pleasure.

## **WHY GUIDES, MANUALS, HOW-TO BOOKS ARE ALWAYS IN DEMAND**

No one willingly volunteers for instruction unless there is more, much more than mere passing interest in the topic, and therein lies the market for quality guides, instruction manuals and how-to books:

### **Qualified, targeted prospects**

You are preaching the partially converted: all the more reason then that you run your expertise through all the tests to ensure its validity. Your knowledge must be superior to that of the reader and it must be quantifiably so. Unsubstantiated opinion has no place in this classification of non-fiction and so you must validate all that you **think** you know and expand upon it responsibly with every means at your disposal. This calls for intensive research and without it you will end up with egg all over your face because your manuscript will never get past the first reading stage of *any* professional publisher you might approach.

### **ESTABLISHING THE DEPTH OF YOUR KNOWLEDGE**

Never take for granted that you already know enough about your special subject to fill a book. No one is that clever. Spend some time testing out the depth of your knowledge by making lists of what you know and what you don't know. Take particular note of those areas that require substantiation or where you are lacking corroborative detail.

### **CONFIRMING ITS VALIDITY AND EXPANDING ON THE INFORMATION**

This is where you start your research and it is so important that the whole of the next chapter is devoted to the subject. Most of what you need you will find online at home or in the free-to-use 'active learning' centres provided by your local library where you can double up by accessing appropriate hard copy references manuals.

## TESTING THE POTENTIAL FOR LONGEVITY IN YOUR CHOSEN TOPIC

Testing out the potential for life beyond a single edition is something you can do for yourself quite easily by carrying out this simple test.

### **Check if your topic possesses a 'timeless' niche-carving aspect**

In other words: that it is not associated with a fad or a fashion. For example, I've had several books published over the years, some of which have been in style for a while then disappeared, others have bombed, but two of these titles just keep going on from strength to strength. Why? Why should two out of several prove so popular? They are popular because they are directed at niche markets that are self-perpetuating and have a seemingly bottomless pit of prospective participants. Like the London buses, there's always another one coming along in a minute.

Back in 1994 when I wrote *Starting Your Own Business* (How-To-Books ISBN 1-85703-859-2) government initiatives on helping people to start up on their own were just beginning to bite all over the world. As these initiatives increased in volume, so too did interest in my work. Similarly, when I became increasingly aware of the hype on home based web operations, I wrote *Starting an Internet Business at Home* (Kogan Page ISBN 0-7494-3484-8). This latter tome has only been around since August 2001 but it is already selling well in bookstores all over the world and (as I suspected it would) as an Internet purchase via Amazon, BOL, Barnes & Noble, etc.

Now, spotting an opportunity and carving a niche for yourself only works when you know the market inside out and when it identifies **precisely** with your own expertise. Look again at the marketplace identified with your topic and establish whether there is a sector or sub-sector that is tailor made for exploitation through your special brand of knowledge. That is how to

position yourself in the right place at the right time. It has nothing to do with luck; the answer lies in creative forward thinking.

## **SURVEYING OTHER PEOPLE'S PRODUCE**

While you are in the process of conducting the required tests on your chosen topic, there is no better way of dipping your toe into the waters of essential research than to survey the produce of fellow writers in the how-to genre.

This will give you an initial feel for:

- ✚ The various categories covered by published authors.
- ✚ The miscellaneous topics occurring in each category.
- ✚ Comparison of writing styles.
- ✚ Which titles have progressed to a second edition.
- ✚ How many and which have been successful in attaining multiple editions.
- ✚ The impact of all of this on the prospects for your chosen topic.

### **How to undertake your survey**

Start by sending off for a copy of the current catalogue of each of the mainstream publishers specialising in the how-to market (see Chapter 10 for a simple access route). Spend some time studying these promotional pieces so that you become acquainted with the genre from the viewpoint of:

- ✚ The publishers
- ✚ The authors
- ✚ The booksellers
- ✚ The book buyers

Zero in on those categories that are even remotely connected to your area of special interest and endeavour to gauge their impact on the market. How many titles have reached the

second edition stage? Are any on their 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> or even 6<sup>th</sup> edition? If you can spot a few results, the omens are looking good. And while to have your category represented would be advantageous, it might prove equally advantageous if it is not. It could just be that no author has yet come up with a proposal on an acceptable approach.

Should you be successful in so doing you may well persuade a publisher to introduce a new category to match your chosen topic.

### **Next item on the agenda**

Purchase one or two titles (or borrow them from your local lending library) and read the books through from cover to cover, noting style, content, execution, and the appeal of front and back covers.

This exercise will serve you well before you start writing your own book.

### **To give you a flavour of what to expect**

Here are some categories and selected titles from the produce of the one of my own publishers.

#### **Small business & Self-employment**

Book-keeping & Accounting (6<sup>th</sup> ed)

Going for Self-Employment

Starting a Business From Home (4<sup>th</sup> ed)

Starting Your Own Business (3<sup>rd</sup> ed revised)

Buying a Franchise

Master Your Own Destiny

Raising Start-Up Finance

Buying & Running a Small Hotel (3<sup>rd</sup> ed)

Starting and Running an Antiques Business

Becoming an

Aromatherapist (2<sup>nd</sup> ed)

#### **Business & Management**

Resolving Conflict

Grow Your Own Achievers

You're in Charge Now (3<sup>rd</sup> ed)

Managing Difficult People (2<sup>nd</sup> ed)  
Writing a Report (6<sup>th</sup> ed)  
Preparing a Winning Business Plan (3<sup>rd</sup> ed)  
Writing Business Letters (3<sup>rd</sup> ed)  
Mastering Business English (4<sup>th</sup> ed)  
Managing Performance Reviews (4<sup>th</sup> ed)  
Deliver Outstanding Customer Service

### **Career Development**

Planning a Career Change (4<sup>th</sup> ed)  
Writing a CV that Works (2<sup>nd</sup> ed)  
The Job Application Handbook (5<sup>th</sup> ed)  
Love Your Work  
Passing That Interview (5<sup>th</sup> ed)  
Working in Television  
Working with Animals  
Working in the Voluntary Sector (2<sup>nd</sup> ed)  
Thrive on Redundancy (2<sup>nd</sup> ed)  
Returning to Work (2<sup>nd</sup> ed)

### **Living & Working Abroad**

Buying a Property in France (2<sup>nd</sup> ed)  
Buying a property in Spain

Getting a Job in America (6<sup>th</sup> ed)  
Getting a Job in Canada (3<sup>rd</sup> ed)  
Getting a Job in Australia (4<sup>th</sup> ed)  
Getting a Job Abroad (6<sup>th</sup> ed)  
Getting a Job in Europe (4<sup>th</sup> ed)  
Getting a Job in New Zealand (2<sup>nd</sup> ed)  
Living and Working in Paris  
Retire Abroad (2<sup>nd</sup> ed)

### **Home & Family Reference**

Making a Wedding Speech (6<sup>th</sup> ed)  
Making the Best Man's Speech (2<sup>nd</sup> ed)  
After Dinner Speaking (2<sup>nd</sup> ed)  
Quick Fixes for Kid's Parties  
Quick Fixes for Bored Kids  
Buying a House  
How to make Money from Property  
A Simple Guide to Pensions  
Making a Will  
Managing Your Personal Finances (4<sup>th</sup> ed)

### **Personal Development**

Trusting Your Intuition (2<sup>nd</sup> ed)  
Asserting Your Self  
Overcoming Depression  
365 Steps to Self-Confidence

Learning to Counsel  
Feeling Good  
Thrive on Stress  
Living the Life You Want  
Write Yourself a New Life  
Exploring Spirituality

### **Study Skills & Student Guides**

Read Faster, Recall More  
Write Successful Essays (2<sup>nd</sup>  
ed)  
Writing an Essay (4<sup>th</sup> ed)

Writing Your Dissertation  
Writing an Assignment (5<sup>th</sup>  
ed)  
Practical Research Methods  
Passing Exams Without  
Anxiety (5<sup>th</sup> ed)  
Critical Thinking for Students  
(3<sup>rd</sup> ed)  
Worldwide Volunteering for  
Young People (3<sup>rd</sup> ed)  
Student Survival Guide

Note the proliferation of multiple editions among most of the categories.

Does your topic fit in here somewhere?

If not, study the complete catalogue.

## **WHY NOT TO BE DISMAYED IF YOUR TOPIC IS ALREADY COVERED**

- ✚ What if your topic is already listed and not just once but twice or even three times?
- ✚ What if some of these titles have already knocked up multiple editions?

Rejoice. There is documented evidence of consumer demand for your topic. Self-help publishers are always on the lookout for acceptable alternatives to top selling products. It's a case of market forces and the in-house competition factor coming into play; like several leading brands of detergent powder emanating from the same manufacturing source.

## **CONVERTING YOUR EXPERT KNOWLEDGE INTO A TEACHING MODULE**

This is the core purpose of the tutorial you are reading and by the time you have finished it, you will have learned how to dissect your expertise and convert it into a seamless how-to teaching module of your own creation. You will also have learned how to prepare a professional proposal for publication, how to assist in promoting your work after it has been published, how to increment your income in various directions - and where to look for your next project.

## Writers Ink

The mission statement for Wallace D Wattles' 1910 classic self-help book is brief, succinct, and prophetic. It reads, "To inspire, encourage, and exemplify abundance thinking and a strong sense of self-worth for people of goodwill everywhere."

Wallace chose his topic from what he was witnessing all around him: poverty and despair brought about by a vicious spiralling downturn in the economy. The title for his first and only book (he died shortly after publication) is *The Science of Getting Rich*.

It strikes a **timeless niche** because everyone everywhere wants to learn how to get rich. Nowadays there is a web site entirely dedicated to the book [www.scienceofgettingrich.net](http://www.scienceofgettingrich.net) where visitors can download the hard copy version for free or purchase it in audiotape format.

## 5

# Researching your first project

This is a core objective and it's where your work begins in earnest.

Without efficient research you are blowing in the wind and your proposal for publication is unlikely to touch the vital nerve that captures the attention of commissioning editors. For many established authors researching is often the most fulfilling aspect of preparing a given topic for publication.

As you research you will find yourself uncovering diverse strands of critical new information that will tempt you veer off in other rewarding directions or even on occasion, change direction completely.

## CHARTING THE ROUTE BEFORE YOU RESEARCH

Let's imagine you are intent on producing a resource manual notionally entitled *How to Become an Expert on Light Bulbs* (you wouldn't, but let's just hypothecate for illustration purposes). Make out a list of the pivotal aspects of the subject. It might pan out like this.

- ✚ Light bulb sizes
- ✚ Shapes
- ✚ Power requirements
- ✚ Manufacturers
- ✚ Types of fitting
- ✚ Novelty bulbs
- ✚ Industrial bulbs
- ✚ Lighting for sports stadia
- ✚ Christmas lighting
- ✚ Stage lighting
- ✚ Street lighting
- ✚ High intensity
- ✚ Low intensity

...and so on

Now compare this listing with your list of what you know, what you don't know, and annotate each item on the list accordingly; tick for 'yes', cross for 'no'.

- ✚ **Connect to the Internet and open your browser** - choose a search engine and type in 'light bulbs'.
- ✚ **Start collecting links** for everything you come across.
- ✚ **Divide the links** into categories and sub-categories.

Finding out what you need to know online shouldn't prove too difficult but you will cut down considerably on research time if you follow the directions outlined in the next section.

## HOW TO CONDUCT INTENSIVE RESEARCH ONLINE

For best results the bulk of your research ought to be conducted online, but unless you know the shortcuts to effective cyberspace fact-finding, you could spend hours on end in fruitless searches. It's very easy to stray when you are using the search engines because loads of similar looking topics and dissertations abound on the Internet. But with your goals properly defined before you go out searching, you will be able to focus on exactly what it is you are setting out to uncover.

Comprehensive briefings are available in three authoritative reports you can read online or download for free.

### **How to Conduct Research on the Internet**

<http://www.tbchad.com/resrch.html>

### **How to Conduct a Search Online**

<http://www-rohan.sdsu.edu/dept/ivc/library/how1.htm>

### **Internet Research - Finding Hard Data**

<http://www.bugsoft.com/research/index.html>

Having absorbed the valuable information contained in these reports, I recommend you restrict your searching to

<http://www.google.com>. Use the 'advanced search' facility and you'll reduce your workload by several hours. For some of the items on the list where you thought you knew it all, you'll

learn more; for those you marked with a cross, you will locate answers to further enhance your grasp on the topic.

## NICHE RESEARCHING

An excellent method for conducting online *niche* research is to use the keyword suggestion tool provided by <http://inventory.overture.com/d/searchinventory/suggestion/>

At that page, enter a keyword relating to the potential niche feature you have in mind, and the tool will present you with the number of times that keyword was searched on via the network. It will also show the number of times related keywords were searched on. This will give you an indication of what your possible niche bears for interest. If you find a decent amount of interest, say a few thousand or more combined monthly searches on keywords directly related to what you want to write about then you may be in a solid niche. **Keep a file of the results of your keyword research.** Next, go to your favorite search engine and search on some of those same keywords. Keep a file of these results too. The information you uncover will be invaluable.

As you can readily appreciate, developing your concept requires some legwork and even after you have completed the research, you still have to write your book. But as with all good things, you get out of it only what you put in.

*These online models for effective research can yield excellent results when done properly.*

## CENTRALISING THE ACCUMULATED DATA

From your files of keyword search results and as you travel from link to link, from category to sub-category, copy everything of interest to **one master research file** on your computer. That way you will have all of the accumulated data readily to hand

whenever you need it for reference - and you will be referring back and forth frequently as you string together the elements for the construction of your book.

## **POSITIONING YOUR FINDINGS IN SEQUENTIAL ORDER**

Now sift through the data, moving all items of prime significance to the top of the list and those of secondary and tertiary significance to middle and bottom respectively. This is how to position your findings in sequential order and it will be of immense assistance when you come to sketch out an initial outline of the content for your book.

## **PUTTING YOUR SUBCONSCIOUS TO WORK**

When you have completed your research, do not indulge in any rash decision-making. Put all your findings to the back of your mind. Allow osmosis and catharsis to take over the work for a while - and just watch the ideas for execution spill out from your subconscious.

## **SKETCHING THE INITIAL OUTLINE**

Now you can have a stab at producing the first outline of the list of contents: chapter headings and sub-heads. At the outset you will find yourself jumping all over the place, moving items from one section to another and perhaps even toying with the idea of starting the book from a direction entirely different to that initially envisaged. Do not be fazed or irritated by any of this; you are in exploratory mode and a long way away from setting anything in stone. In Chapter 7 we will focus on the elements appertaining to professional construction of your defined list of contents.

## **WHY YOU SHOULD NEVER DISPOSE OF RESEARCH MATERIAL**

Why? Quite simply because you never know when it might come in handy. The questions to which you found answers for your first project will return again and again in different guises when you set about researching on new book concepts. Never dispose of any research material; store it away for future reference. You may have to do some updating but even so, the task won't be nearly so difficult with a benchmark to start from.

## Writers Ink

Effective researching fuels your enthusiasm, so stick at it until you have collected everything you need for the work ahead. If you run into snags in your early Internet searches try creating your own 'pathway' e.g. 'light bulbs - sizes', etc.

# 6

## Planning ahead for fulfilment

As you set out to create your first niche non-fiction book, you will be supported by a strong motivation to keep focused on the essential business at hand i.e. to complete the project and achieve publication.

Before that can happen though, you'll need a plan to get you underway.

### **MANAGING YOUR TIME TO SPEED THE PROCESS**

The only time constraints are those of your own making. This is not a race and you are not competing with anyone else, so don't rush.

- ✚ Make out an action list for every day of your new adventure but don't overload it.
- ✚ Never start on tomorrow's work today. Tomorrow will be time enough.
- ✚ Take a break when hit a snag. Rest, go for a walk, watch a movie – and come back refreshed.
- ✚ You will work best during your most creative time of the day or week. We have already established that for some people, that is very early in the morning; for others, late at night or over the weekend. Try to discover when your creative moments occur and capitalise on them.
- ✚ Don't work when you're tired or jaded. You run the risk of turning out garbage and opening the door to disillusion
- ✚ When you're surfing the Net for information, always be on the lookout for items of relevance to your project. These could be in the form of articles and reports. They are in the public domain, so incorporate extracts if you feel they would enhance your content. If you need author consent, ask for it; permission will not be unreasonably withheld.

## **OPENING SEPARATE FILES FOR EVERY ASPECT OF THE PROJECT**

You will have many matters to attend to (often simultaneously) in the process of writing up your material, converting it into book format, and preparing your output for publication. Make the job easier and cut down dramatically on your workload by creating separate computer files of every aspect of the project; files you can refer to instantly.

- ✚ Research findings
- ✚ Working notes
- ✚ Draft copy

- ✚ Structuring the list of contents
- ✚ Authoring resources
- ✚ Preface
- ✚ Back cover blurb
- ✚ Glossary
- ✚ Index
- ✚ Publishing options
- ✚ Proposal for publication

Coordinate your activities this way right from the start and the production of current and future produce will look after itself. It will flow off the assembly line like honey dripping from a spoon.

### **WHY THOSE WORKING NOTES ARE YOUR STOCK-IN-TRADE**

Your various researches will have provided you with an ever-growing batch of working notes (stuff you have copied to a computer file or pulled down from web sites and printed out); notes that you should always have readily to hand when working on every aspect of the overall project. These notes are the stock-in-trade you will refer to frequently in the fulfillment of your sundry assignments.

### **WHY GOOD AUTHORIZING RESOURCES ARE ESSENTIAL**

If you are to produce information products worthy of publication, products that people will want and be willing to pay for, you need access to as many efficient authoring resources as you can locate. You'll want to be able to visit a comprehensive cyberspace library for additional information—and perhaps even acquire some help with your creative writing.

Here are some other online places you can visit.

### **LITERARY LEAPS**

Thousands of publishers, bookstores, literary locales.

<http://www.literaryleaps.com>

## **BOOK MARKET**

'If you are new to book marketing, you've come to the right site' – John Kremer, editor, *Book Marketing Update* newsletter.

<http://www.bookmarket.com>

## **PUBLISHING RESOURCES**

Valuable tools and resources for the worldwide publishing community.

<http://www.bookzonepro.com>

## **HOW MANY WORDS? - HOW MANY CHAPTERS?**

It's never that easy to estimate the eventual length of your first work but (as a rough guide) if you are planning on turning out 10/12 chapters your word count should be somewhere between 20,000 to 25,000; for 12/15 chapters allow for 25,000 to 35,000 words. Do not set firm targets at the outset though because as your list of contents develops so too will the potential number of chapters in the final draft. Some material will merge with other data, some will expand, and some will disappear altogether.

## **HOW DRAFTY COPY HELPS TO SHAPE THE FINAL PRODUCT**

Even with a fully structured outline to work from (which we'll discuss in the next chapter) committing the first paragraph to your word processor can often prove problematic. When you've accomplished the opening salvo and it is to your liking, press on with the composition but stop now and again to review what you have written. Doing it this way, your output operates much in the same way as a fountain; ideas spill out presenting you with new angles and twists in direction. This will continue to happen every time you return to work on your draft copy – and all to the betterment of the final product.

## DEVELOPING A DISTINCTIVE TITLE FOR YOUR BOOK

The title of your book depicts the very first words that anyone reads; it is the catalyst that determines whether anything else is read. As such it is an instrument of ultimate consequence. When the title is plumb centre, it hits the bull's eye; when it's off centre, it's off the wall. Treat the development of a distinctive title as essential work that you cannot start on too soon, but never settle for the first suggestion that springs to mind, no matter how brilliant it strikes you at the time. Keep working on it, polishing it, developing the power words that will transform it into a masterful catch phrase that compels the prospect to turn the pages. Even when you have done all this to your satisfaction, you may find that a publisher alters it. Don't balk or consider the change as interference. Publishers know better than authors do what constitutes a winning title.

Remember too that a powerful sub-title that sells the title itself is of equal necessity. In Chapter 14 we will discuss how to wrap both into a commanding double-edged designation.

### Writers Ink

Your ability to plan for fulfilment will hinge largely on how effectively you manage your time. If this is a problem for you, read *Managing Your Time* by Julie-Ann Amos (How-To-Books).

## 7

### Structuring the list of contents

Compare the writing of your book to that of the task facing an artist painting a landscape.

The artist envisages in advance the composition of the picture (**your list of contents**), makes rough sketches of essential features (**your draft copy**) and arrives at a balanced decision on execution. The artist has choices on technique for implementation and so do you.

## **WHY YOU SHOULD COMPLETE THIS BEFORE YOU WRITE ANYTHING**

When you work away conscientiously on compiling the list of contents in advance, you open the door to these choices on how you will tackle the actual writing of your book.

### **Authors exercise preferences on execution**

Some start at the beginning and continue right to the end without diversion; others tend to cherry pick, darting back and forth from one chapter or section to another. A few authors manage to combine both techniques successfully in that while maintaining a regular course, they make the occasional detour as and when inspiration strikes.

Whichever route you decide to travel you'll need a reliable road map and that is why you should always compile your list of contents before you write a single word.

## **MATCHING THE SEQUENCE TO YOUR RESEARCH FINDINGS**

As with any list of things-to-do, you begin compilation of the list of contents at the origin of your dissertation, progress through the middle by highlighting all of the essential elements and end up at the tail; the climax; the promise of fulfilment. To do this effectively, you must match what you know with what you have discovered and merge your accumulated findings into a logical sequence of factual information. Sounds easy, but you won't get it right first time. You just keep at it until everything clicks into perfect place.

Here is how it's done. This contents list comes from Linda Seger's bestseller *Making a Good Script Great* (great title). She kicks off by gathering ideas, progressing through structure and development to a real life case study on how a good script evolved into a great one.

### **Part One:** *Story Structure*

<i>Chapter One:</i>	Gathering Ideas
<i>Chapter Two:</i>	The Three-Act Structure: Why You Need It and What to Do with It.
<i>Chapter Three:</i>	What Do Subplots Do?
<i>Chapter Four:</i>	Act Two-How to Keep It Moving
<i>Chapter Five:</i>	Creating the Scene
<i>Chapter Six:</i>	Creating a Cohesive Script

### **Part Two:** *Idea Development*

Chapter Seven:	Making It Commercial
Chapter Eight:	Creating the Myth

### **Part Three:** *Character Development*

<i>Chapter Nine:</i>	From Motivation to Goal: Finding the Character Spine
<i>Chapter Ten:</i>	Finding the Conflict
<i>Chapter Eleven:</i>	Creating Dimensional Characters
<i>Chapter Twelve:</i>	Character Functions

### **Part Four:** *A Case Study*

<i>Chapter Thirteen:</i>	On the Road to the Academy Award: A Case Study of the Rewrite of Witness
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- ✚ Note the number of times Linda uses the word 'creating' (**linking to the title**); her effective manipulation of action verbs (**creating drama**) and how most chapter headings open with a 'doing' word (**encouraging reader involvement**).

## **CREATING CHAPTER HEADINGS, SUBHEADS AND SUB-SUBHEADS**

The creation of chapter headings, subheads and sub-subheads constitutes the first vital contribution to the writing up of your project. When you get this right, the strain is off and fulfilment begins to take over. Get it wrong and you will struggle. There is no easy way and no quick formula fixes; you must develop these essential 'bandings' until they meet with your ultimate satisfaction. You will know instinctively when you've got them right, and when you do, your creativity will flow freely and the manuscript will take shape faster than you ever thought possible. It will take shape in your subconscious as you sleep, as you walk, as you travel to work, collect the kids from school or pick up the weekly shop.

Now you can start to think about writing your book.

### **Chapter headings**

These are the major signposts to the delineation of the core elements in your teaching module. Make them vibrant and follow the rules on creating action to stimulate reader involvement.

### **Subheads**

These are secondary directional tags that lead the reader into strands of vital information under each chapter heading. Keep up the action and interest in their formulation.

### **The 'hidden persuader' influence of sub-subheads**

If you turn back for a moment to the contents list for this book you will observe that only the chapter headings and main subheads are featured. Now look at this list relating to Chapter 4 (extracted from the working notes) where the sub-subheads appear italicised in parenthesis for the purpose of illustration.

#### **4 Choosing a topic to start you off**

What attracts people to works of non-fiction?

Passive v active participation

*(People read fiction to be entertained)*

*(People read non-fiction to...)*

Why guides, manuals, how-to books are always in demand

*(Qualified, targeted prospects)*

Establishing the depth of your knowledge

Confirming its validity and expanding on the information

Testing the potential for longevity in your chosen topic

*(Check if your topic possesses a 'timeless' niche-carving aspect)*

Surveying other people's produce

*(How to undertake your survey)*

*(Next item on the agenda)*

*(To give you a flavour of what to expect)*

Why not to be dismayed if your topic is already covered

Converting your expert knowledge into a teaching module

The exclusion of sub-subheads from the contents list in no way detracts from their influence on the text. Not only do they break up forbidding chunks of typesetting; they also lead the reader gently into sub-strands of vital data.

These hidden persuaders should be used sparingly for best effect but always treat their composition with the same diligence you apply to the construction of chapter headings and main subheads.

## VISUALISING ENERGY WITH ACTION VERBS

Follow Linda Seger's practice of opening headings and sub-heads with an action verb.

Action verbs tempt the reader to visualise the energy implied in active participation and so stimulate interest in learning more about the topic under discussion.

### Here are examples of some popular action verbs in common usage

Accessing	Duplicating	Overcoming
Acquainting	Entering	Planning
Acquiring	Evaluating	Preparing
Acting	Exploring	Presenting
Appreciating	Exporting	Projecting
Approaching	Feeling	Promoting
Assessing	Finding	Prospecting
Building	Getting	Relating
Checking	Identifying	Replicating
Choosing	Introducing	Scrutinising
Clinching	Knowing	Selling
Constructing	Learning	Serving
Continuing	Locating	Starting
Controlling	Making	Succeeding
Creating	Managing	Understanding
Debunking	Marketing	Using
Deciding	Mastering	Visiting
Developing	Measuring	Watching
Devising	Moving	Working
Discovering	Negotiating	
Doing	Observing	

## LETTING EVERY LINE INTRODUCE ITS OWN STORY

Look upon the chapter heading as the trunk; subheads as the branches; and sub-subheads as the leaves. They all have a role to play in your list of contents and they should all be treated with equal significance. Energise them with action words and allow each line in the list to introduce its own story.

## Writers Ink

To master the art of compiling the list of contents for your book, study how other successful niche non-fiction authors do it. Compare the contents list with chapter headings, subheadings and subheads in the text and you will see how everything clicks neatly into place in logical progression.

# 8

## Capitalising on the amazing power of words as you write your book

Twenty six funny looking little characters come together to provide 1984 pages of The Chambers Dictionary with 300,000 word definitions and 215,000 references; they are the fodder for countless millions of letters, books, poems, plays inter alia down the ages and in perpetuity; they are the colours in your virtual paint box that you can mix and match to produce hundreds of thousands of words to communicate and illuminate your dissertation.

**abcdefghijklmnopqrstu****vwxyz**

No one can steal a march on you when you use these characters; no one can cheat by adding to or subtracting from the list. And no one can staunch their creativity when you capitalise on the amazing power of words to write your book.

But first some questions...

## 20 QUESTIONS BEFORE YOU START THE CREATIVE PROCESS

1. Have you finished researching?
2. Have you completed your list of contents?
3. Are you fully aware of the significance of chapter headings?
4. Do you understand the prime purpose of subheads?
5. Do you know how to use sub-subheads to best effect?
6. Do you have an attention-grabbing title?
7. Have you thought about a supporting subtitle?
8. How many pages, how many chapters, how many words?
9. How will you ensure that the content relates **specifically** to your target market?
10. What will you include in the preface?
11. How will you construct the back cover blurb?
12. Are you the only author?
13. Are there any contributors who require recognition?
14. What type of graphics will you use, if any?
15. Will you include a bibliography, appendix or index?
16. Will you tell readers why you wrote the book?
17. Can you prove that your work is authentic?
18. What kind of information will you reveal about yourself?
19. Could you include a testimonial or endorsement?
20. Will your book have **bestselling** potential?

## WRITING NICHE NON-FICTION THAT ATTRACTS HOW-TO PUBLISHERS

Your task now is to graduate from competent wordsmith to commercial wordsmith and so create outstanding niche non-fiction that attracts the attention of commissioning editors of how-to publishing houses.

Read on and find out how...

## WHY BULLETING KEY WORDS AND PHRASES STIMULATES INTEREST

Just as headings and subheads introduce the reader to strands of information, bullet points serve another useful purpose by highlighting and crystallizing core elements in the text. You can bullet key words or phrases and by so doing, you will stimulate the reader's interest. Compare this paragraph with the bulleted list immediately following.

"You can create unlimited profits from one-page web sites when you discover the real secret behind FFA link pages. Then as you unleash the power of your email list building, you will leave the competition standing. Finally, turn your fax machine into a cash machine and explode your web site hits"

- ✚ **Create** unlimited profits from one-page web sites.
- ✚ **Discover** the real secret behind FFA link pages.
- ✚ **Unleash** the power of email list building.
- ✚ **Drop** your competition like a hot brick.
- ✚ **Turn** your fax machine into a cash machine.
- ✚ **Explode** your web site hits with this simple trick.

See the difference in impact when you bullet the benefits?

## USING MAGNETIC VERBS TO CREATE ACTION

Are you ready to crack open subconscious minds and persuade your readers to see exactly what you want them to see? Feel what you want them to feel? You can do it by using **verbs** throughout your copy. Just as they power up titles, bullet point lists, headings and subheads, verbs make what you say in the text come to life with action, force and magnetism.

**Create** - Open - **Turn** - Discover - **Keep** - Build - **Find** - Unleash - **Explode** - Uncover - **Access** - Measure - **Enter** - Move - **Observe** - Overcome - **Relate** - Project - **Sell** - Buy - **Choose** - Identify - **Go** - Do - **Manage** - Deploy - **Negotiate** - Learn...

Magnetic verbs that denote physical movement are the only words that give power, life and action to what you write. Stay away from abstract and passive verbs such as: finalize, disseminate, consummate, etc; these are passive and weaken your statement.

**Finalise the deal** is weak - **Close the deal** is direct and strong.  
**Realise greater profits** is OK - **Make More Money Now** is better.

*Short, simple words and sentences interlaced with magnetic verbs create persuasive writing.*

## COMMANDING THE SUBCONSCIOUS

Verbs also have the uncanny knack of causing subconscious minds of to start bubbling.

The subconscious is the seat of reaction and emotion and when the reader absorbs benefits that are created with verbs these benefits literally turn into **commands** for the subconscious. For example, the phrase **Create Unlimited Profits** is a stimulus to act. It stirs the emotions of the reader; seeing, creating, being, doing, turning and building whatever you claim can be achieved.

The subconscious acts on commands. It is compelled to comply - because that's what it does. If you can be effortlessly drifted into a trance, any hypnotist will rapidly prove that the subconscious acts on commands. You will not be hypnotising anyone with your text but you will be causing emotional reactions in people as they read.

Words, both written and spoken, do cause reactions in people, and the reactions you evoke will determine how successful your book becomes. One thing is for sure; if your text does not evoke emotional responses from your readers, you will not make money from your creative output.

## USING SUBHEADS TO CATCH QUICK READERS

Apart from their prime function of leading the reader gently into vital strands of information, subheads double up in another useful way: they catch quick readers and entice them into the body of your message. Some people skim over pages rapidly but with powerful subheads throughout your text you will capture these skimmers, slow them down and persuade them to focus on the specific content, piece by piece.

Sub-subheads work in exactly the same way.

Always create your text breakers with the same care to apply to chapter headings.

## CREATING MENTAL MOVIES IN THE READER'S MIND

Writing filled with descriptive words that convey action is the secret to making your reader see, feel and act on what you say.

Use illustrative verbs and nouns to produce pictures in the mind. Specific ideas and descriptions create mental movies that the reader can soak up instantly.

Abstract ideas create no such images and are therefore inept at arousing interest. They are weak and make reading boring.

Which claim below has more impact for you?

***Increase your profits substantially and quickly with this formula***

Or

***Make 100 per cent more money in less than 6 weeks***

You can easily see that the second claim carries much more impact. Strive to make every sentence in your text clear, direct

and specific. Money is a definite thing; you can touch it, feel it and see it in your mind's eye.

100 per cent is specific while 'substantially' is weak and tells you nothing.

Never write with vague language that the reader cannot instantly grasp

## **EDUCATE, INFORM AND MOTIVATE THE READER**

Your purpose is to educate, inform and motivate your readers.

Provide them with a continuous stream of knowledge and inside information they didn't know before and you are a hundred times more likely to win their confidence. When the reader learns something new from you on almost every page, it adds tremendous credibility to your book.

It gives a very powerful sense of realness about you and your teaching.

Trust is established and the beginnings of a positive relationship.

## **THE WIIFM QUESTION AND WHY YOU MUST ADDRESS IT**

What's in it for me?

That's the only question on the reader's mind.

Give your most powerful answer to that question in the title; sustain the momentum in your chapter headings/subheads/sub-subheads, and develop the logic of your reasoning in the text. Neglect to address the WIIFM question at the outset and you will lose the reader before you even get started.

People who read niche how-to books are looking for what they can get, have, be or do. They need to know **immediately** what's in it for them or you will lose them to some other book that succeeds in telling them what's in it for them.

Talk to the reader as though you were engaging in one-to-one dialogue and always remember that the word **'you'** should be used in the text 100 times more **'I'**.

Readers have their own priorities and are only concerned with how they will profit by reading what you have to say and so the text must progressively reveal **what they will get** from studying the content of your book.

## **BECOMING THE PERSON YOU WANT TO INFLUENCE**

Don't fall into the trap of assuming that you see your writing through the reader's eyes. You have to work at removing **you** from the picture entirely to become the person you want to influence.

**This is a serious issue that makes or breaks any proposal for publication.**

People won't buy your book just to learn what a clever clogs you are; they want to discover how they can become all they can be within the confines of the topic under discussion. As you write you must be continually reviewing your output to establish its real power.

- ✚ Is it a dialogue or a monologue?
- ✚ Is it addressing the WIIFM question on every page?
- ✚ Is it getting its message across in ways that consistently benefit the reader?

Can you do it? Can you become the person you want to influence?

I hope you can.

When you do, you will know that your reasoning is sound, that your text is on target, that you are answering the WIIFM question with authority, and that your book has the potential to aspire to bestselling status.

### **WHY SIMPLE WORDS AND SHORT SENTENCES WORK BEST**

Break up your text with short sentences, short paragraphs and lots of subheads to create white space. Make it very easy to read. Congested typesetting irritates readers, makes their heads hurt and causes them to lose interest.

If they don't read - you don't succeed.

Be direct, clear, focused, and keep the words simple.

### **THE POWER OF SPEAKING WITH AUTHORITY**

It's a strange thing about human nature but if you just **assume** the position of authority you will invariably find that people give it over to you without resistance. Always write with authority and never back up a statement with a qualifier. Be certain you know everything there is to know about your topic and then write with conviction.

Keep these words out of your text as much as possible...

**If - Maybe - Possibly - Might - May - Perhaps**

These are words with no power; they clog up copy and weaken statements.

Never say **they say**. It gives the reader the impression *they* know more than you do. And if *they* know more than you do, why would I want to buy *your* book?

Omit needless words. Use the active voice. It creates cogent writing.

Short statements stick out with impact and understanding. Long statements fade away in confusion. Verbs are the only words that give life, power and action to what you say. In every famous piece of writing there has been to date from the Bible on down, you will find effective use of the active voice; the voice of power and authority.

### **DON'T BORE THE READER - BE BOLD, DRAMATIC, EXCITING**

You must be excited about your topic. If you can't get excited do you really expect your readers will? In point of fact, everyone responds to fire, passion and excitement.

Excitement is catching - it rushes like wild fire - inspires action.

Don't bore your readers. Be bold, dramatic, exciting.

### **AVOID OVER-EGGING THE CLICHES**

We are all fond of using clichés and we tend to use them without realizing we're doing so. And why not? They automatically summarize situations where it would be difficult to achieve the same result in our own words. Try though not to use them too often and never over-egg the mix. It irritates the reader.

### **WRITER'S BLOCK AND HOW TO COPE WITH IT**

Sometimes the mind gets tired, bored or restless, and simply refuses to cooperate.

Writer's block may not hit you on your first project but it will on another, and when that happens, take a break and only resume your writing when you feel fully refreshed. Don't attempt to force creativity. It cannot be done.

## Writers Ink

Apply yourself diligently to mastering the techniques that allow you to take full advantage of the amazing power of words and as you write your book, endeavor to answer the WIFM question on **every** page.

# 9

## How to top and tail your book and why

To top and tail your niche non-fiction book is to equip it with a preface (or introduction) and a persuasive sales 'blurb' for the back cover. Neither of these tasks is to be undertaken lightly and you would do well to delay execution until after you have completed the text. Do not be tempted to take the easy way out by padding them with extracts from the book. That simply does not work and in any case no publisher would allow it. The preface and the back cover blurb each have a distinctive function to perform and their respective contributions are germane to the success of your work.

### WHAT THE PROSPECT READS FIRST AFTER THE TITLE

Book browsers have a choice when a title arouses initial interest: they might opt to read the preface, check out the

contents list or go straight to the back cover. My bet is that most of them head for the latter (I know I always do) but wherever they go don't risk disappointing them when they get there. You spent some time polishing the contents to your satisfaction; spend an equal amount of time on both preface and blurb.

## **CAPTURING THE READER'S IMMEDIATE ATTENTION**

Catch the browser's immediate attention and you are on the way to capturing a buyer. The route map you worked so hard on to construct the contents list might just do it for you but the preface must be an equally effective mission statement and the blurb a killer sales tool.

## **COMPOSING A SPELLBINDING PREFACE**

You cannot include it all in your mission statement so what you do is pick out core elements, start the dialogue rolling, tease and tempt the prospect by posing pertinent questions and promising to answer them in the book. All the more reason then to leave composition of your spellbinding preface until the text is complete.

Here's an example and it comes from my own bestseller ***Starting an Internet Business at Home***

"The growth of the Internet is phenomenal and its propensity to create moneymaking home based business operations is equally staggering. How does one go about launching such a business? Where do you start? How do you research the market? Where do you find the opportunities? What about start up costs? Is it better to stick with one opportunity or hedge your bets with several? What are the available options for promotion? How do you create an Internet marketing strategy? Do you need to be an experienced Webmaster to succeed or can anyone

participate? Which levels of Internet expertise are required? Are there any age constraints?

This book provides the answers. But it does more, much more, in a comprehensive review of 50 opportunities encompassing all levels of Internet expertise; skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled. Chapter 3 looks at 15 of the leading cyberspace reseller opportunities and in Chapter 4 you will be introduced to 35 ideas for a home based Internet business, ideas that are already being successfully worked by other Networkers.

Can you really make money from a home based Internet business?

Yes, you can, but how much will be governed by how well you apply yourself to preparation and how seriously you take your enterprise once you are up and running. Starting an Internet business at home is a whole new way of life that can be as exciting as it is rewarding."

Do you see what I set out to do here?

- ✚ Open the dialogue with a quantifiable statement of fact.
- ✚ Anticipate questions from the reader.
- ✚ Pose a dozen or so such queries linked to core aspects of the proposition.
- ✚ Promise answers in the text.
- ✚ Stimulate interest by hinting at proven opportunities.
- ✚ Indicate fulfilment.

## **CRYSTALLIZING THE ESSENCE OF YOUR TEXT ON THE BACK COVER**

This is an even tougher nut to crack but you must keep working at it until the words link together to form an irresistible sales pitch. What you are in effect doing is crystallizing the essence of the text into 150 words maximum.

It's even tougher with the first book because you have no reviews or testimonials to help solidify your claims. Here is how

the blurb appeared on the back cover of the original edition of my book ***How to Start Your Own Business***

"This dynamic guide examines all the vital steps that need to be taken before starting a business. You will learn how to create, set up, and operate any small business successfully, from preparing a business plan and launching the venture, to developing marketing strategies and selling techniques. The author draws on his own experience of setting up a business without capital or discretionary resources to show you how to write a winning plan, how to approach potential funders and how to present a case for public sector assistance. You will increase your potential for success by learning to recognise and avoid the mistakes that most often contribute to business failure. No matter what your age or personal circumstances, you can strike out on your own, create an enterprise and change your life for the better."

And now how the back cover looks on the re-issued 3<sup>rd</sup> edition with its revamped title ***Starting Your Own Business*** and with the benefit of accrued reviews.

"Recommended as one of the Top Ten Business Books. His techniques obviously work because, aside from his work as a business lecturer, he is still an active entrepreneur. The book is also full of practical hints about handling tax, approaching potential funders and finding suitable premises." - THE INDEPENDENT

This book concentrates on the creative heart of business, on how to develop an exciting enterprise from the original germ of an idea.

-  Finding a good idea
-  Getting started
-  Creating a winning business plan
-  Funding your enterprise
-  Marketing your business
-  Maintaining progress

*"Encouraging and practical, Green's book covers all the basics. An entrepreneur himself Green knows the questions to ask."* -  
MANAGEMENT TODAY

*"Practical advice presented in a clear and concise style."* - MONEYWISE

*"An easy-to-read and motivating book."* - MAKING MONEY

You can see what's happening - the reviews are taking over - solidifying the claims in the original blurb. Work painstakingly on the first back cover blurb and in time your book will attract good reviews to transform it into a bestseller.

Never underestimate the power of reviews for your produce but never be afraid of them either. When they're good, they work to your advantage - when they're not so good, take note and learn.

## **HOW TESTIMONIALS POWER UP INTEREST**

Testimonials also power up interest, especially if they are high calibre such as those on the back cover of Linda Seger's book.

*"A must-read for every writer, beginner or professional. I don't know how we got along without it."* BARBARA CORDAY, PRESIDENT, COLUMBIA PICTURES TELEVISION, CO-CREATOR OF 'CAGNEY & LACEY'

*"An invaluable tool for the working writer, replete with useful examples from actual scripts"* - RICHARD WALKER, SCREENWRITING FACULTY CHAIRMAN, UCLA DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE, FILM AND TELEVISION

*"Linda Seger has written quite simply the most brilliant and useful book on screenwriting I have ever seen."* - WILLIAM KELLEY, ACADEMY AWARD-WINNING WRITER, *Witness*

Small wonder *Making a Good Script Great* is required reading for all aspiring screenwriters...

## WHY YOU SHOULD ONLY USE HIGHLY QUALIFIED ENDORSEMENTS

As part of the process of topping and tailing your first book, you might be tempted to secure an endorsement to include as a separate page just before the preface. Be advised though, this only works when the person rendering the endorsement is more than adequately qualified to sanction your work. The most effective examples I know of this technique are (1) David Putnam's foreword in Robert Angell's *Getting into Films & Television* (How-To-Books) and (2) P D James's eulogy extolling the virtues of Michael Legat's *Writing for Pleasure and Profit* (Robert Hale).

## Writers Ink

To experience success in having a book accepted for publication is just the beginning of the marketing process. Competition to get it into the hands of the book trade, onto the shelves, and into the reader's shopping basket is awesome in its implications. Topping and tailing is part of the process and while the preface is primarily designed to whet the consumer's appetite, the blurb requires to be fashioned as a dual-edged tool to **make the sale before the sale** i.e. persuade book trade buyers to purchase the book in bulk.

Bear this in mind as you compose the blurb; it is a key element in the sales representative's sales pitch to the trade.

# 10

## Locating an appropriate publisher

As highlighted in an earlier chapter, you have many matters to attend to (often simultaneously) in the execution of your project. Locating an appropriate publishing house is just one of these - but clearly a crucial undertaking. Start the quest as soon as your outline is established and your list of contents is firmly in position.

- ✚ Where will you start?
- ✚ How will you investigate the market?
- ✚ How will you develop a proposal for publication?
- ✚ When will you submit the proposal?
- ✚ Would you send the complete manuscript?
- ✚ Would you submit to a number of publishers?

### MATCHING YOUR OUTPUT TO PUBLISHING PROFILES

Start by matching your creative output to the produce profiles of the main niche non-fiction publishing houses. Check out the catalogues for topics that are identical or similar to yours. Now attempt to rank the publishers in a league table of suitability by jotting down against each player the number of times your chosen subject matter crops up. Take this a stage further by doing a similar exercise on multiple editions; 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, etc.

When you have completed the assignment, you will have a list of candidates for your proposal and in order of precedence.

### RESEARCHING THE MARKETPLACE

Now it's back to the Internet but this time you won't need the standard search engines. All mainstream non-fiction publishers have their own composite web sites and it is to these that you should go to obtain **current** information on how to get

published. While hard copy research resources such as *Writers and Artists Yearbook* and *The Writers' Handbook* provide much valuable data of a general nature, they cannot update at the touch of a button - and publishing guidelines do vary between publishers, and are subject to change.

## WHERE TO 1000s OF PUBLISHERS ONLINE

To make your researching ultra simple, here is a **secret** vertical portal (or vortal) where you will be able to access **thousands** of publishers and their respective web sites.

<http://acqweb.library.vanderbilt.edu/acqweb/pubr.html#subj>

Click on a subject hyperlink, then on to a publisher hyperlink where you can read a resume of the categories in which they specialize. When you come across something that matches your topic, click on another link to go straight to the web site. Couldn't be simpler. If you are really keen, you can access tens of thousands of similar web sites spanning over 200 countries.

What you will be looking for are web pages devoted to authoring, hyperlinks that announce 'authors', 'getting published' or even 'about us'. Copy to file, or print out everything you come across and study the material carefully.

## RESEARCHING SUBMISSION PREREQUISITES

Among your searches you will find tips or guidelines relating to the correct procedure for submitting a proposal and these can take the shape of comprehensive instruction or be as bland as a single paragraph. Such is the importance of submission prerequisites that you can never learn too much. Here then for your information is an extensive example covering the essentials.

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### Typical Author Guidelines for Submitting a Proposal

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When you follow the guidelines provided it allows you to focus on what to include in your proposal and also enables the publisher to make a more accurate and speedy assessment of its viability. These are the key factors to bear in mind as you set about construction.

- ✚ **Who you are writing for** (the target market)
- ✚ **The structure of the content**
- ✚ **How you can offer something different from competitive titles**

You would normally be requested to submit the following:

**300/500 word description of the aims and scope of your book**

- Features and benefits for the reader
- Intended style
- Subject matter covered
- Why there is a need for such a book
- Does it cover a gap in currently available literature?
- Does it present new findings?
- Is it topical?

**Detailed list of contents** - Chapter headings and subheads for each chapter.

**Target market readership** - Outline in 1/2 paragraphs.

- Who are you writing this book for?
- What is the approximate numerical size of the market?
- At what level are you writing (for beginners, experienced practitioners)?
- Would the material be suitable for international markets?
- Would it be more usefully directed to regional readership?
- Would local editions be necessary?

**Comparative/competitive books on the market**

- List titles
- State why yours is different.

### **Mechanical data**

- Word count
- How you would present the text (mss only; mss and disk)
- How illustrations would be provided (digital or hard copy)
- Word processing package normally used

**Timescale** - Indicate when final manuscript would be ready

### **Biographical details**

- Author(s)
- Editors or contributors
- Professional capacity
- Experience relevant to topic covered; previous publications.

## **HOW TO PREPARE A PROPOSAL FOR ACCEPTANCE**

Now you know what to include, how will you format your proposal?

### **You have choices.**

- ✚ You could include everything in a single communication.
- ✚ You could sectionalize it (covering letter + separate lists for the elements).
- ✚ You could present it in the form of a bound report.

However you do it, do it professionally. This is your one shot at making a lasting impression and you can't do it face-to-face (not even experienced practitioners get that opportunity). Put as much concentration into the preparation of your proposal as you afford every other aspect of the project. It's that important.

Some authors make use of all three techniques, but for what it's worth (and especially for first time out of the trap) I favor the bound report accompanied by a brief but succinct covering note.

## **WHEN TO SUBMIT YOUR PROPOSAL**

The guidelines tell you how but not when. What they do tell you though is that you don't have to wait until you've finished writing the book. Publishers know that you won't submit a proposal until you have done your homework: crafted the outline, composed the list of contents, and produced a few chapters.

This is the time to submit the proposal - and if you are really up for it - enclose 2 or 3 sample chapters.

They won't turn you down for showing initiative.

## **WHY YOU SHOULD NEVER SUBMIT THE ENTIRE MANUSCRIPT**

The core reason for the proposal is to enable the publisher to judge the validity of the project, so resist at all costs the temptation to submit the entire manuscript. It is unlikely to be read and much more likely to be binned unless you have included return postage.

## **WHY MULTIPLE SUBMISSIONS ARE A NO-NO**

Sending your proposal to a string of publishers simultaneously or sequentially is a pointless exercise and will do you no favors. Better by far to await a reaction to the first submission. Should it prove inconclusive, take note of the comments because additional guidelines may be provided enabling you to re-submit; should it prove unsuccessful, move on to the next candidate on your list.

## WHAT TO ENSURE BEFORE YOU SIGN A CONTRACT

Should your proposal prove successful you will receive a contract (memorandum of agreement) detailing the terms and conditions, warranties and indemnities governing the agreement. It is your responsibility to protect your intellectual property, so check out everything with a fine toothcomb. Note in particular those sections relating to potential avenues of income for your published work. These would normally appear under headings such as those listed below and would include royalty percentages:

- ✚ Home hardback sales
- ✚ Export and special discount hard back sales
- ✚ Home trade paperback sales
- ✚ Export and special discount trade paperback sales
- ✚ Publisher's cheap editions
- ✚ Editions licensed for manufacture to another publisher
- ✚ Royalty-inclusive sales
- ✚ Mail order sales
- ✚ Premium sales
- ✚ Book clubs

## RETAINING THE COPYRIGHT AND OTHER VALUABLE RIGHTS

It is to your advantage to retain the copyright of your work and to protect your earning capacity with regard to reprographic production rights, which for a niche non-fiction would normally comprise:

- ✚ Single issue or one-shot periodical rights
- ✚ Translation rights
- ✚ Sound broadcasting rights
- ✚ Merchandizing rights
- ✚ Educational reprint rights

## ADDRESSING THE AUTHOR QUESTIONNAIRE

Following a successful submission, the author is often requested to complete a pre-publication questionnaire. This is to your advantage and the information required adheres to a pattern such as that outlined below.

## **AUTHOR QUESTIONNAIRE**

The information you will provide will form the basis of all marketing and publicity activities.

---

Your name as you wish it to appear on the title page

---

*Title of book*

---

*Sub-title*

---

*Author's full name*

---

*Author's VAT registration number, if applicable*

---

*Nationality (required for copyright purposes)*

---

*Country of domicile*

---

*Domicile on date of publication*

---

*Home address*

---

*College, school or business address*

---

*Telephone and fax number(s)*

---

*Email address*

---

*Degrees and other professional qualifications*

---

*Present appointment*

---

*The manuscript*

Brief description of your book. This should indicate the importance or topicality of the subject and aims of the book. Add a summary of its contents, emphasizing salient features. This copy will be used in advance publicity and may appear in the publisher's catalogue.

 **Do not be over-modest about yourself or your work. Effective promotion and sales result only from full and accurate information.**

## **Writers Ink**

Carry out your researches to locate a suitable publisher, prepare the proposal, and make your submission using the guidelines provided. Then exercise patience; it can take up to three months before you receive a reply. On the other hand, if your topic is really 'hot', you may get a telephone call straight back from the publishing house.

# 11

## Setting up your own dedicated web site

Until the incidence and rapid growth of the Internet, authors found it virtually impossible to **create** let alone maintain contact with their readers. Now they are able to do this easily and automatically. In my own writing activities (and in common with an ever-increasing number of authors) I operate several multi-page information web sites where I provide my readers with a variety of channels for news and contact:

- ✚ **Home Page** - with the focus on my latest work
- ✚ **Bibliography** - listing all published titles
- ✚ **Services** - information on my availability for lecturing, book reviewing, etc.
- ✚ **Guest Page** - where readers can log in and record comments
- ✚ **Contact** - providing my personal email address
- ✚ **Ezine** - where they can subscribe to my free newsletter

But you can do more than communicate with your readers with a dedicated web site; you can assist the publisher with the marketing of your book - and you can do this in various ways. Your contribution to the overall plan in the highly competitive industry of book publishing will be small but nonetheless valuable.

### WHY YOU SHOULD DO THIS FOLLOWING PUBLICATION

The sooner you set up a site, the sooner you will start a dialogue flowing with readers and potential readers; the sooner you will start contributing to the promotional thrust; and all the sooner you will start selling the odd copy or two yourself.

How do you do that? Easy - follow this simple 4-point plan.

1. Buy direct from the publisher's distributor at trade discounts of up to 35%.
2. Gear up to accept payments by credit card from anywhere in the world. You can do this for free at <http://www.clickbank.com>
3. Place an order button on your home page.
4. Sell at the cover price and pocket the difference.

## HOW TO MAKE THE INTERNET WORK FOR YOU

Use it for the purpose for which it was invented. Use it as a channel of information.

- ✚ A channel for **receivable** information
- ✚ A channel for **deliverable** information.

Doing it this way provides you with two valuable operational devices. The facility to receive information opens the door to **ongoing market research** while the facility to deliver information electronically presents you with **a cyberspace marketing application**.

Using the Internet search facilities, you can keep tabs on the niche non-fiction marketplace, trends, and what other writers are up to. You can source valuable applications and software – and all for free. You can be on constant lookout for new book ideas.

Using the Net as a marketing application, you can create a powerful web site.

- ✚ To promote your produce
- ✚ To foster reader loyalty
- ✚ To answer their questions
- ✚ To provide them with additional information
- ✚ To attract new readers

- ✚ To capture email addresses which build up into lists of potential future customers

You can do all of this - and if you go about matters in the right way, **you can achieve your objective on a limited budget.**

## THE VALUE OF A GOOD WEB SITE FOR THE AUTHOR

These are the benefits you should be looking to accrue from your web site, a fusion of incoming and outgoing information, intelligence that you should embrace to service existing readers and attract new ones. And unlike printed matter, you need never be nervous about imparting sensitive information (titles, prices, reviews, testimonials, etc) because you have the facility to update variable data instantly.

As for direct selling, you'll get an odd sale or two from your site, but not a lot. Not yet anyway. Stick with it though, and you'll do more direct selling in time, as the retail ethos of the web begins to bite - and your own name gets around.

## WHAT TO INCLUDE IN YOUR SITE PAGES

- ✚ Your mission statement (what your book is about, why anyone should buy it) and complementary graphics on the home page - where you would also position an '**order button**.'
- ✚ Appropriate content for the pages devoted to your personal bio, list of contents, reviews, testimonials etc.
- ✚ Something of value for your web site visitors – useful tips on your specialist topic; tips that should be updated on a regular basis.
- ✚ Links from one page to another within your site - **but not beyond** - or you'll lose your precious visitors.

- ✚ Virtual guest book where visitors can clock in and record comments.
- ✚ Dedicated search engine to help them find their way around your site.
- ✚ An email address where they can contact you – and finally...
- ✚ A facility to which you should give serious consideration, an invitation to subscribe to your **free ezine** (electronic c newsletter).

Okay, there's some work involved in servicing the final item listed – but it will be worth it – because ezines are the best way to capture email addresses, build up a prospects list, and create potential customers.

## **CREATING YOUR OWN SITE IS A BREEZE WITH 'SITE BUILD IT!'**

When you are up and running you ought to **seriously consider launching a web site to promote your produce** and you couldn't do better than to invest in **Site Build It!** - the complete **all-in-one solution** that was used to construct the web pages of the site where you first learned about this tutorial. You'll be downloading in just 60 seconds if you order from this link.

<http://buildit.sitesell.com/interactive1.html>

Here is what you will get for your investment of CAD \$427 (which will be transcribed into your own currency on the Order form):

- |                            |                              |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| ✚ Domain name registration | ✚ Point &Click page building |
| ✚ Hosting                  | ✚ Blogging facility          |
| ✚ Graphic tools            | ✚ Data transfer              |

- ✚ Email
- ✚ Newsletter publishing facility
- ✚ Brainstorming & researching
- ✚ Spam check
- ✚ Open rate
- ✚ Traffic stats & click analysis
- ✚ Search engine optimization
- ✚ Automatic search engine submission
- ✚ Automatic search engine tracking
- ✚ Automatic search engine ranking
- ✚ Pay-per-click research & mass-bidding
- ✚ 4 traffic headquarters
- ✚ Action guide & fast track guide
- ✚ Integrated online help
- ✚ SBI express ezine
- ✚ Tips & techniques
- ✚ Customer support
- ✚ Choice of page templates
- ✚ FTP
- ✚ Form builder/Autoresponder
- ✚ Value Exchange
- ✚ Facility for selling e-goods
- ✚ 2-tier affiliate program
- ✚ Charge for services facility

## LEARNING TO PROMOTE YOUR SITE

You need to promote to build up a steadily increasing stream of targeted traffic to your site - and you need to spend some time learning how to do this effectively. Here are some cyberspace places you can visit for **free** instruction and applications.

- ✚ [www.scrubtheweb.com](http://www.scrubtheweb.com) – provides the know-how on how to beat the search engines at their own game
- ✚ [www.simplesubmit.com](http://www.simplesubmit.com) – promote your site every day with the Top 10 search engines
- ✚ [www.51steps.com](http://www.51steps.com) – 51 ultra efficient ways to market electronically
- ✚ **email** promotion
- ✚ **ezine** promotion

- ✚ **offline promotion** - letterhead, transport, business cards, invoices etc

## OTHER WAYS TO PROMOTE YOUR WORK ON THE INTERNET

- ✚ Join several **appropriate** writers discussion circles from the hundreds that abound on the Internet and engage in active dialogue with fellow members.
- ✚ Contribute articles relating to your topic to electronic **writing oriented** newsletters.

### **What happens when you travel the information superhighway?**

You are in business 24 hours a day every day; your book is available to an international audience. Don't leave it all to the publisher; get aboard and do everything you can yourself to promote its success.

### **Writers Ink**

Don't feel nervous about setting up a dedicated web site to promote your book. Use Site Build It! as suggested and they'll give you not only the tools but also a 300 page novice-proof guide for construction.

## 12

### **Selling through online outlets**

The Internet has emerged as a significant (albeit virtual) channel of distribution for the sale of books. All the major players are represented. In tandem with dominant retailers such as Amazon, BOL, Barnes & Noble, every mainstream

publisher has its own multi-function web site. All this is good news for writers because not only does the Internet provide a powerful marketing tool for the publishing industry as a whole, it also presents authors with a unique opportunity to participate in the sale of their own produce.

In the previous chapter we discussed how you could use the Internet to assist promotion of your book after publication - but there are options available to you to become involved even while you are still actively seeking to procure a contract with a traditional publishing house.

### **USING ONLINE AS AN ALTERNATIVE**

There are a number of online publishing concerns that will accept your manuscript, transcribe it electronically, promote and sell it online as a download. In return for signing up (usually for free) you receive commission ranging from 20% to 50% per copy sold. Sounds good on the face of it, but as with all remote control operations, there are potential pitfalls you should be aware of (these we will cover shortly). Moreover, do not look for massive volume because sales on these online ventures are invariably low.

There is though one participant I can recommend should you wish to try online as an alternative while you wait for placement with a traditional publisher.

<http://www.firstprint.com>

First print is a reliable operation. I know; I've used the service.

- ✚ First Print welcome manuscripts on how-to topics.
- ✚ You may submit up to six titles.
- ✚ The web site features your biographical details + picture.
- ✚ Provision is made for the inclusion of an extract from your book(s).
- ✚ The site records the number of hits to your pages.

- ✚ Commission on sales is currently running at 50 per cent.
- ✚ The service is totally free.
- ✚ Authors retain all rights.
- ✚ You may cancel the contract anytime without penalty.
- ✚ They pay on time every time.

## USING ONLINE AS BOTH ALTERNATIVE AND ADJUNCT

You can have it both ways if you wish (alternative and adjunct) by combining print-on-demand with online selling. There are numerous major Internet companies providing a comprehensive service that combines hard copy publishing with online promotion. You pay for the service though and for an investment of several hundred dollars, here is what you get.

- ✚ Complete origination
- ✚ Full colour front cover design
- ✚ Proofs for approval prior to publication
- ✚ Print-on-demand facility for sales
- ✚ ISBN identification
- ✚ Title listing with major book chains
- ✚ Online promotion
- ✚ Sales handling
- ✚ Author's commission on sales
- ✚ Small quantity of copies for personal use

This smacks some people as vanity publishing but **it is not**. You pay for the service but you have a bona fide publisher's name on the cover, ISBN identification, online promotion, and a completely professional marketing package.

On the downside:

- ✚ Although your title is listed with leading booksellers, your book won't appear on their shelves.
- ✚ Aggregated sales volume is invariably lower than that emanating from traditional publishing houses.

For a complete specification on services provided and overall costs involved, refer to the web sites of these reliable operators.

<http://www.1stbooks.com>

<http://www.iuniverse.com>

## **HOW ONE PART TIME AUTHOR PRODUCED AN ONLINE BESTSELLER**

Here is how one enterprising part time author uses online as **both alternative and adjunct** to traditional publishing. Mark Joyner's mainstream business is developing information products, which he very successfully markets online in e-book format. He decided to invest his some of own money in issuing and distributing one of these books *Mind Control Marketing* in print-on-demand hard copy. Within 48 hours of release it became the number one bestseller on Amazon.com.

But Mark didn't hang about basking in reflected glory. He immediately set about producing a comprehensive report on how any part time author could do what he did: become an international bestselling author online. He set up a spartan one-page web site laid out in vintage classified ad format to sell his report for which incredibly he receives \$79 per download. Illustrated below are the introductory paragraphs.

Note the effective use of qualified testimonials and his statement that every step in the process of creating a bestseller is **deliberate** and **calculated**.

**Low Price Pre-Order (delivery on 10 October 2002):**

**"How My Book Became an Amazon #1 Best-Seller in 48 Hours"**

by Mark Joyner

# 1 International Bestselling Author of "Mind Control Marketing"

**100% Risk Free Trial Request Form - 3x Your Money Back  
Guarantee**

*"I've been in the book industry for years as an author and a*

*distributor. Hands-down, Mark Joyner's new book is **the most dramatic skyrocket to best-selling success I've ever seen.** If you want to call yourself 'International Bestselling Author' **this report should become your BIBLE.**"*

**Mark Levy, author, Accidental Genius**

This report details the blow-by-blow account of how I became an Amazon # 1 Best-Seller within 48 hours of my books official launch. Do you think best-selling books occur by accident? **What the big authors aren't telling you is that every step of the process is deliberate and calculated.** Would you like to call yourself "# 1 International Bestselling Author?" What would that mean for your business? Of course this added credibility would increase the sales for any product or service you recommend. The question is: will you follow these steps yourself?

## **HOW TO GRADE ONLINE PUBLISHING OPTIONS**

There are good and bad guys operating in online publishing. Take care by exercising due diligence before you decide, lest you hand over your precious manuscript to a charlatan.

### **When reviewing options for online download**

*Deal only with operations where...*

- ✚ Business is conducted through a professionally created, multi-faceted web site.
- ✚ There is a FAQ (frequently asked questions) section on the site
- ✚ Testimonials are provided
- ✚ Examples of current produce are available for inspection
- ✚ You are not tied to a long term contract
- ✚ The service is free of charge

### **When reviewing options for print-on-demand/online purchase**

*All of the above (save the last) but including...*

- ✚ Production times quoted are guaranteed
- ✚ There are no hidden extras
- ✚ You consider the package to be value for money

## **MARKETING YOUR PRODUCE AS AN EBOOK**

This is the final online option available to you and although it won't suit everyone, it is worthy nonetheless of a mention. Market your produce as an e-book - or even a series of e-books if the topic can be broken down into meaningful stand-alone dissertations.

### **Creating your own e-books is easier than you think**

It couldn't simpler. Just select a compiler, read the instructions, hit the first button – and you're on your way to becoming an instant electronic publisher.

### **Choosing the software**

I recommend that you examine the individual features of several compiler options before you decide to buy (prices range from \$20) or even download on a free trial basis. You can accomplish this by visiting the undernoted web sites. Read the FAQ on each site and compare the differentials between alternative compiler software options.

<http://www.e-editor.com>

<http://www.ebookcompiler.com>

<http://www.Webcompiler.com>

<http://www.ebookcreator.com>

<http://www.bersoft.com>

<http://www.e-editorial.com>

<http://www.neossoftware.com>

### **Organization is the key**

Many would-be cyberspace publishers topple at the first hurdle because of disorganized file formatting. Follow the instructions provided with the compiler of your choice and you won't fall into that category; your formatting will be pristine and your e-produce ultra professional in execution.

### **Test before you start**

Before starting on the manufacturing process, you may if you wish test out the compiler and the best way to do this is to feed in a few pages and then compile them. Testing the system will give you an appreciation of how easily and quickly the pages go through.

### **Working with cover templates**

Your e-book will need a front cover for promotional purposes and (unless you are an experienced graphic artist) it could prove problematic if you attempt to create one by yourself. Happily, there is no requirement because here is a source that will provide you with a selection of free quality templates for your front cover. <http://www.ebookcovermakers.com>

### **HOW TO SELL EBOOK PRODUCE**

You could use the source featured in the previous chapter to build a professional web site dedicated to the promotion of your e-produce. Creation and hosting is inclusive of the price you pay. Alternatively, if the marketing aspect doesn't appeal to you, you could sell your e-book outright at <http://www.freetosell.com> always assuming of course that it complies with their criteria. If it does (and they specialize in how-to topics) they will pay you hard cash for the reprint rights.

### **Writers Ink**

Test marketing your produce online as you await placement with a traditional publisher is a useful exercise. It gets your name around on the Internet and is a helpful indicator for potential consumer interest in your work.

# Reviewing your overall earning potential

Once your book is published and you have (hopefully) secured an advance, your main source of emolument will be from royalty payments. But there are additional streams of incremental revenue you can tap into if you are so minded. Let's now review each of these avenues of potential earning in turn.

## NEGOTIATING AN ADVANCE

Your initial yearly/half yearly accounting statement will make reference to an advance payment but whether you receive one or not will depend on either of two factors.

- ✚ Whether you have been offered an advance.
- ✚ Whether you successfully negotiated one.

You may be automatically offered such a payment if your work is of such outstanding merit that the publisher is anxious to have the title on its list and doesn't want to risk the book slipping away to another house. In that event you would normally receive your advance in three phases.

1. 35 per cent on signing the contract
2. 35 percent on delivery of acceptable text
3. 30 per cent on publication

If on the other hand the memorandum of agreement makes no mention of an advance, you could endeavor to obtain one through negotiation. There's no harm in asking - they can only say no.

## HOW THE ROYALTY SYSTEM PRODUCES INCREMENTAL INCOME

The norm for royalty payments on a niche non-fiction book is **7.5 per cent** of the net amounts received by the publisher. Doesn't sound a lot at first glance, but consider this: if your book has bestseller potential it will be around for a considerable period of time attracting drip feed incremental income and if it aspires to multiple editions that could be for as long as twenty years or more.

Consider also the range of mainstream outlets:

- ✚ Bookstore shelves (*worldwide if the title has an international application*)
- ✚ The Internet
- ✚ Export sales
- ✚ Translations
- ✚ Book clubs
- ✚ Mail order

This is how the royalty system can work to your advantage, producing regular income year on year. Support the original work with additional published tomes and the incremental process continues to expand.

## **INCREASING YOUR EARNINGS FROM RIGHTS AND TRANSLATIONS**

On top of your royalties from home and export sales you could also receive (as, when, or if you qualify) additional remuneration from rights and translations as indicated below.

- 1. Editions licensed for manufacture to another publisher**
- 2. Single issue or one-shot periodical rights**
- 3. Translation rights**
- 4. Sound broadcasting rights**
- 5. Merchandising rights**
- 6. Educational reprint rights**

✚ On (1) to (6) you could earn up to **50 per cent** of the net amounts received by the publisher.

## 7. Royalty-inclusive sales

## 8. Mail order sales

✚ On (7) and (8) **7.5 per cent** of the net amounts received by the publisher.

## 9. Book clubs

**7.5 per cent** of the net where the publisher manufactures the book at a price inclusive of royalty.

Or

Up to **50 per cent** of the royalties received by the publisher where the transaction with the book club is on a royalty basis.

## PLR AND HOW TO ENSURE YOU PROFIT BY IT

Wherever you live in the world, The Public Lending Right (PLR) is another useful revenue earner available to published authors. PLR relates to estimated national loans for a book in circulation on the shelves of regional and local public lending libraries. Practical instruction books are particular favorites among devotees of lending libraries, so when your work is published (and you have established that it is on order at central library sources) make sure that the title and ISBN are registered with the appropriate authority.

### PLR

This is the contact point for PLR in the United Kingdom:

**Richard House, Sorbonne Close, Stockton-On-Tees, TS17 6DA**

You can easily find out the source for your own PLR.

At the time of going to press the amount earned per title is calculated on the basis of (GBP) **2.67 pence per loan**. Again, it

doesn't seem like much, but it soon mounts up and as payment is made annually it is incremental. Register not only the original title but also all subsequent reprints and new editions because each of these is considered by PLR as a separate book and therefore a separate revenue earner.

If the following classic authors were still alive this is what they would have received in PLR earnings in the payout for the fiscal year ending February 2002.

AA Milne	£6000 (the maximum)
Beatrix Potter	£4122
William Shakespeare	£3279
Jane Austen	£3031

## **ATTRACTING ADDITIONAL STREAMS OF INCREMENTAL INCOME**

Apart from the direct income accrued from book sales and library loans, you will now be in a position to attract additional streams of indirect incremental income - and into the bargain, increase your visibility as a published author. Examples include:

- ✚ Public speaking
- ✚ Writing articles
- ✚ Book reviewing

## **PUTTING YOURSELF AROUND AS A PLATFORM SPEAKER**

New published works often pull in offers to engage in public speaking assignments linked to the topic. The majority of these will command a fee together with the opportunity to set up a stall and sell copies of your book to attendees. But even if no fee is involved you can still put yourself around and sell a few copies. Exhibitions and conferences are good sources for this type of opportunity.

## **CONTRIBUTING ARTICLES TO MAGAZINES AND PERIODICALS**

Likewise you could be asked to contribute articles to general interest magazines and periodicals. If this should happen to you, grab the offer without delay. It's an excellent way of increasing awareness and adds to your reputation as an established author - and it pays well (up to \$500 for 1000 words).

A few years back I was invited to contribute a five-page article to an in-flight magazine. The subject of the commission was 'setting up in business on your own' and it coincided with the release of the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of my book *Starting Your Own Business*. Not only did the article attract direct sales; it also increased awareness of the title, which did no harm to world wide bookstore and online disposals.

## **ATTRACTING ASSIGNMENTS AS A BOOK REVIEWER**

The majority of book reviewers nowadays are authors in their own right and in time you might well be asked to become one yourself (as I was). You will receive a token fee, a credit, and a reference to your own title. All of this is grist to the mill.

## **ARE YOU READY TO BITE THE BULLET?**

We are nearing the end of this tutorial and in Chapter 14 we'll be looking at a detailed analysis of what constitutes the perfect structure for your work. Meanwhile, here is a candid quiz to help you discover whether you've got what it **really** takes to become a bestselling niche non-fiction author.

## **Self-assessment questionnaire**

1. Have you eliminated the mental blocks?
2. Have you implanted the essential disciplines?
3. Are you ready to dig deep to ascertain what you don't know about your topic?
4. Will you consistently strive to improve your personal word power?
5. Does your chosen topic possess inherent longevity?
6. Are you planning ahead for fulfilment?
7. Have you structured your list of contents for ultimate achievement?
8. Will your topping and tailing meet the criteria?
9. Are you confident in your ability to produce a winning proposal?
10. Will you engage in online and offline promotion of your work?

Give yourself 10 marks each time you answer 'yes' - but anything less than 100 per cent just won't do. Mastery of all 10 elements that comprise the quiz is vital to:

-  Creating your own bestselling how-to book
-  Attracting incremental income
-  Achieving fulfilment
-  Getting lots of fun out of it all in the process

## **Analysing your score**

### ***Have you eliminated the mental blocks?***

Even the slightest doubt hanging over you will stultify progress. You must be totally committed if you wish to be successful as a part time how-to author.

### ***Have you implanted the essential disciplines?***

You will be ploughing a lonely furrow and to make headway you must keep a straight line by adhering to the essential disciplines of part time authoring.

### ***Are you ready to dig deep to ascertain what you don't know about your topic?***

Regardless of the extent of your expertise you won't progress unless you take time out on research to confirm what you do know and locate what you don't know.

### ***Will you consistently strive to improve your personal word power?***

Authors become masters of the craft by assiduously adding to their vocabulary and in turn extending the range of choices in the creative writing process.

### ***Does your chosen topic possess inherent longevity?***

Durability in the subject matter is the essential pathway to achieving bestselling status.

### ***Are you planning ahead for fulfilment?***

Attention to detail as you are writing your book is to plan ahead for fulfilment.

### ***Have you structured your list of contents for ultimate achievement?***

Many otherwise sound projects fail to materialise due to lack of substance in the list of contents. Don't allow this to happen to you.

### ***Will your topping and tailing meet the criteria?***

The preface and back cover blurb are vital marketing tools. Make sure yours are on target.

### ***Are you confident in your ability to produce a winning proposal?***

Your proposal is the catalyst that determines whether or not the entire manuscript is read for validation. It is one of the most important documents you will ever write.

### ***Will you engage in online promotion of your work?***

Publishers respect authors who take the time and trouble to assist in promoting their own work.

## **Writers Ink**

Now you have all the options for attracting incremental income, but always keep in mind that you will only get out of your produce what you put into milking its potential.

## **14**

# **Anatomy of a bestselling niche book**

You are now privy to all of the factors that go into the creation of a successful niche non-fiction, how to inject it with bestselling potential, how to construct the manuscript, how to prepare a winning proposal for publication, how to get it published, and how to attract incremental income for your efforts.

Finally and in order to encapsulate these essentials, let's dissect the anatomy of a bestselling how-to book in this, the penultimate chapter.

## 20 POINT PLAN FOR THE PERFECT STRUCTURE

1. Inherent longevity
2. Powerful title
3. Factual information
4. Thoroughly researched
5. Quantifiable
6. Structured formatting
7. Progressive sequencing
8. Informative and interesting
9. Easy to read text
10. Clear and concise
11. Motivating
12. Practical
13. Propensity for updating
14. Illustrations
15. Preface
16. Glossary
17. Appendices
18. Index
19. Front cover impact
20. Back cover sales pitch

## THE POWER OF INHERENT LONGEVITY

When you discover the incidence of durability in a project, you uncover the hidden door that opens the vault to opportunity. And yet so often this door is so obvious, so transparent that you fail to see it even though it's right under your nose.

For over forty years Claude Atkins was the acknowledged doyen among Madison Avenue copywriters and when he retired in 1940 he set about creating what turned out to be the most concise manual ever published on the subject of do-it-yourself copywriting. Now over sixty years later *The Scientific Approach to Advertising* is a standard textbook for MBA

students at Harvard University and one of the top 100 Internet downloads. Yet when Claude wrote the book his modest goal was nothing more than to provide from his extensive knowledge simple guidelines for aspiring young creative people already working in the business he had just left. The original print run of 1000 proves the point.

In more recent times Ken Parker drew heavily on his own experience when he wrote *Buying & Running a Small Hotel* (How-To Books). His aim was to provide a complete reference manual for benefit of anyone contemplating what he had already undertaken with distinction. Ken's book is now in its 3<sup>rd</sup> edition and is recommended by the National Council of Hotel Associations.

Both of these part time authors uncovered the secret of longevity in the evolution of their produce: they used as a catalyst to **what they had seen, done and achieved** in industries where the demand for practical information is invariably high. Some people will always want to learn how to become brilliant copywriters; others will want to learn from someone else's wisdom how to avoid the pitfalls and become successful in buying and running a small hotel or guest house. Yet others will want to profit from **what you know** about your topic.

- ✓ **You know your own subject and now that you have completed your researches, you know it better than ever. Dig deep and discover the elusive ingredient of durability that will lead to long life for your written work.**

## **EMPOWERING THE TITLE TO SELL THE PRODUCT**

Your title must say it all because if it fails to grab instant attention, you won't get past first base in the potential bestseller stakes. It must tease prospects into **wanting** your book

even before they have an opportunity to read the list of contents. Keep your masthead crisp and meaningful, coupling it with an explanatory strap-line or sub-title.

Here are some action words and phrases that pop up frequently in niche how-to book titles.

- |                |                    |                      |
|----------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| ✚ Accessing    | ✚ New              | ✚ Starting           |
| ✚ Amazing      | ✚ Nitty gritty     | ✚ Succeeding         |
| ✚ Building     | ✚ Planning         | ✚ Sure fire          |
| ✚ Exclusive    | ✚ Powerful         | ✚ The truth about... |
| ✚ Explosive    | ✚ Practical        | ✚ Turbo charged      |
| ✚ How to...    | ✚ guide to...      | ✚ Unique             |
| ✚ Managing     | ✚ Revealed at last |                      |
| ✚ Money-making | ✚ Secrets          |                      |

### **How authors incorporate power words into the title to create drama and a promise of fulfillment.**

How to Get Other People to Brag about Your Cooking  
Starting an Internet Business at Home  
Unique System Drives Traffic in Hordes to Your Web site  
Galvanise Your Marketing with This Amazing Formula  
100 Ways to Power Up Your Small Business  
Sure Fire Tips to Cutting Car Costs  
Buying & Running a Small Hotel  
A Practical Guide to Mastering HTML  
Discover the Secrets to Making Money on the Web  
What You Should Know about the Science of Selling  
The Nitty Gritty on Multi-Level Marketing  
Triple your Direct Marketing Response Rates

***And now the same titles with crisp cutting-edge sub-titles appended.***

**How to Get Other People to Brag about Your Cooking**  
500 recipes your neighbors would kill to have

**Starting an Internet Business at Home**  
Earn easy money on the web

**Unique System Drives Traffic in Hordes to Your Web site**  
Attract 10,000 hits a day every day

**Galvanise Your Marketing with this Amazing Formula**  
How to spearhead your campaigns  
at little or no cost

**100 Ways to Power Up Your Small Business**  
Using supermarket techniques  
to jack up your profits

**Sure Fire Tips to Cutting Car Costs**  
Bringing down the expense of family motoring

**Buying & Running a Small Hotel**  
The complete guide to setting up and managing  
your own hotel, guest house or B&B

**A Practical Guide to Mastering HTML**  
Become a webmaster in under three weeks

**Discover the Secrets to Making Money on the Web**  
Hidden truths the gurus don't want you to know

**What You should Know about the Science of Selling**  
Learn from the masters the coveted secrets to  
converting prospects

**The Nitty Gritty on Multi-Level Marketing**  
How to beat them at their own game

## Triple Your Direct Marketing Response Rates

50 exclusive ways to stimulate replies  
from every mail shot you send out

- ✓ **You know your own market. Aim for the heart of it with a title that intrigues and empowers the sale of your creative produce.**

## MAKING SURE YOUR INFORMATION IS FACTUAL

There is no place for fiction in non-fiction. Whatever you state as fact **must** be accurate and if you have even a smidgen of a doubt about a line of text, go back over your research material until you can confirm or otherwise the veracity of the statement. If the doubt remains, remove its evidence from the text.

- ✓ **Unconfirmed information is misinformation and could wreak havoc on your aspirations to convey mastery of the topic.**

## RESEARCH THOROUGHLY OR RISK READER REJECTION

When people hand over \$15, \$20 or \$25 for a niche non-fiction book they have a right to expect that **every aspect** of the material has been thoroughly researched; not just the author's own statements of fact but equally important, those of external sources to which the reader may be directed for additional information. These might include other books, articles or web sites. Read the books, the articles, and visit the web sites to confirm that what you say **they say** is correct. Sending readers on ahead without checking first is jeopardising your own credibility.

- ✚ Define your goals before you research.
- ✚ Focus on exactly what it is you are setting out to uncover.
- ✚ Be systematic in your online searches.

- ✚ Use the special tool described in Chapter 4 for niche researching.
- ✚ Centralise your findings for easy access.
- ✚ Check out the claims of other sources before recommending them to your readers.

✓ **Research thoroughly, check out your sources, or risk reader rejection.**

## **WHY WHAT YOU CLAIM MUST BE QUANTIFIABLE**

Never make a claim without backing it up with quantitative analysis. Your text may be brilliant, your proposal exemplary, your book accepted for publication - but it still won't be enough to save you if your claim is put to the test and you are found wanting. The courts are awash with litigation on inaccuracies in printed matter. It is unlikely you will find yourself in this predicament but you might end up never being able to have another book published.

Back up every claim you make with quantitative analysis by providing actual examples that prove the claim.

✓ **Never make claims that you fail to substantiate or they will rebound on you.**

## **WHY STRUCTURED FORMATTING IS ESSENTIAL**

As you are writing your book you will be tempted on occasion to race ahead for fear of omitting vital strands of information. Resist the temptation or you may be in danger of confusing, or worse still, losing the reader. Adhere to the structure of your list of contents but stop every now and then and review what you've written. If adjustments are required, make them. Where you see chunks of text running out of control, break these up with additional subheadings and sub-subheads to ease the flow. Always ensure though that you amend the contents list as

you go. Don't leave it to the end or you may forget and knock the correlation out of sync.

- ✓ **Structuring the format of the text puts the reader at ease.**

## **PROGRESSIVE SEQUENCING ADDS CREDENCE TO YOUR REASONING**

Similarly, never deviate from the progressive sequencing of the structure. Begin at the beginning of your analysis, progress through the middle, and close at the point of realization. When you provide the reader with a logical path to follow your line of thought, you add credence to your reasoning.

- ✚ Match what you already know with what you have uncovered in your researches.
- ✚ Merge your accumulated findings into a logical sequence.
- ✚ Keep at it until everything clicks into perfect place.

- ✓ **Don't have your readers tracking back and forth to follow the 'plot'.**

## **INFORMATIVE AND INTERESTING DIALOGUE WORKS BEST**

Your subject matter may be bland in substance but that is no excuse for inflicting dull dialogue on your readers. They are investing time and money in absorbing what you have to say, so go easy on them by making your writing informative but interesting; a pleasure to read.

- ✓ **Transform the mundane into the extraordinary with dynamic discourse.**

## **EASY TO READ TEXT DRAWS THE READER CLOSER**

'Text' - meaning the structure of your manuscript and not the typesetting which is in the publisher's domain. But they are co-related. Always follow the prescribed strictures for formatting your manuscript and the typesetting for your book will be easy to read. And when it's easy to read, the reader is automatically drawn closer to the heart of your dissertation.

- ✓ **Magnetic text heightens interest and draws the reader closer.**

## **CLEAR AND CONCISE WINS THE PRIZE**

Don't fall into the insidious trap of trying to impress your readers with 'big' words and obscure phraseology. Talk to them as you would if you were meeting face to face. The clearer and more concise you are, the more they will appreciate your teaching, the more readily will they recommend your work to other like minded enthusiasts, and the more likely they will be to purchase your next book.

- ✓ **Keep it simple, keep it clear, and keep it concise.**

## **MOTIVATING THE READER TO PARTICIPATE BY INSPIRING ACTION**

Strive to motivate your readers to take part in the evolution of your sequenced action plan by getting them involved in all aspects of the process. This you can do in various ways and in every chapter:

- ✚ Include checklists to allow them to test out their growing knowledge.
- ✚ Give them exercises related to the substance of each chapter.
- ✚ Send them on exploratory visits to external sources connected with the topic.

Every time you encourage readers to participate, you are inspiring them to act under their own steam to reach fulfilment.

- ✓ **Motivate your audience to take an active part in determining their own destiny.**

## **PRACTICAL INSTRUCTION OUTSTRIPS THEORY**

Theories are admissible but only when accompanied by practical instruction - on their own they are pointless - but drawing on your own experience works even better. Try wherever possible to demonstrate from personal knowledge of the topic because it eliminates the requirement for external substantiation. And when you do so, do it openly. Tell of your successes: how you faced up to obstacles and resolved them. But tell also of your failures: where you screwed up and how you learned from your mistakes.

- ✓ **Focus on practical instruction from personal experience. It outstrips theory every time.**

## **PROPENSITY FOR UPDATING AND MULTIPLE EDITIONS**

There are very few how-to topics that do not have a propensity for updating - and that is to the advantage of published authors. It increases the prospects of **multiple editions**. Don't wait though until you are asked; update your text regularly because you may be called upon at short notice to provide amendments for a reprint of your original work. When you are asked, keep your changes to a minimum by including only genuine updates.

- ✓ **Update the text on a regular basis to avoid having to it under duress.**

## **ILLUSTRATIONS**

Illustrations are popular adjuncts that serve four useful purposes in the make up of any niche book.

1. They enliven the dialogue.
2. They enable the reader to visualise elements where words alone won't suffice.
3. They add to overall reader interest.
4. They help to break up the text.

You can employ the illustrative technique for your book in various formats.

- ✚ Flowcharts
- ✚ Diagrams
- ✚ Pictures
- ✚ Drawings
- ✚ Web site screen shots, etc.

✓ **Scattering a few judiciously chosen illustrations throughout the text creates animation.**

## **PREFACING YOUR WORK**

The preface is the all-important mission statement for your work and calls for careful consideration. Don't just whack it out in a few spare moments. Work on it in draft form, polish it, review it several times, and rewrite it until it meets with your satisfaction.

- ✚ Pick out core elements
- ✚ Pose pertinent questions
- ✚ Promise answers in the book

✓ **Delay composition of the preface until you have completed the text in its entirety.**

## **GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

There will be key words and phrases that require definition. They may be obvious to you but not necessarily so to your readers. Compile your definitions in alphabetical order in a compact Glossary of Terms.

Here's a simple way to do it.

- ✚ Highlight the affected words/phrases on your computer screen.
- ✚ Record in a separate file the relevant page numbers in the text.
- ✚ Correlate these later to the page proof numbering.

✓ **Carefully constructed glossaries are of value to readers.**

## APPENDICES

Don't use the Appendix as a place to house odd bits of data that you found difficult to place in the text. Use it as a compendium of extraneous beneficial information for the reader.

- ✚ Sources for additional facts on your topic
- ✚ Useful reading: other books and publications
- ✚ Useful web sites for reference purposes.

✓ **Pack the Appendix with interesting material that enhances your text.**

## INDEXING

The basic function of the Index is to enable the reader to quickly track down key elements in the text. You might want to include chapter headings, certain subheadings, and many of the terms already recorded as definitions in the Appendix. You

can comfortably do all this for yourself or alternatively pay for the services of a professional indexer provided by the publisher.

- ✓ **Put yourself in the reader's shoes when compiling the Index. Make cross-referencing quick and easy.**

## **SELLING FROM THE FRONT COVER**

An outstanding front cover design can sometimes sell a book all on its own, but don't be tempted to do it yourself, regardless of how competent a designer you may be. Book cover layout is an art form in its own right and the ultimate responsibility for its application lies with the publisher.

- ✓ **Offer suggestions by all means but do not try to influence the outcome.**

## **SELLING OFF THE BACK**

Here is where you can and should contribute. The blurb on the back cover is an encapsulation of your work and as such, an essential selling tool. Study the construction of the blurb on dozens of other successful niche non-fiction books before you compose your own.

- ✓ **Crystallise the essence of your text in 150 words maximum.**

# **15 Signing off**

One day you will be signing off the text for your first how-to book.

Meanwhile I will sign off with a quick review of the qualities that distinguish the bestselling author plus a tip on how to handle the fear of rejection slips, and where to look for your next project...

## **20 QUALITIES THAT DISTINGUISH THE BESTSELLING AUTHOR**

### **Ambition**

Aspires to prominence - but not from a pedestal

### **Confidence**

Exudes self-assurance in the deployment of innate abilities

### **Decisiveness**

Arrives at conclusions, makes decisions, sticks to them

### **Discipline**

Always in control of the creative scenario

### **Empathy**

Responds to the reader's longing for practical instruction

### **Endurance**

Hangs in there until the project is complete

### **Equanimity**

Treats acceptance and rejection with equal serenity

### **Ingenuity**

Possesses multi-faceted skills

### **Inspiration**

Sparks off streams of new ideas

### **Introspection**

Contemplates cautiously before acting on problematic situations

### **Intuition**

Backs hunches emanating from the silent mind

### **Obduracy**

Sticks stubbornly to the task in hand

### **Patience**

Refuses to be fazed by obstacles

### **Perception**

Employs cognitive skills to develop creative outlines

**Persistence**

Keeps on trying until successful

**Persuasion**

Influences outcomes

**Service**

Helps the reader on the road to fulfilment

**Style**

Adds glitter to the commonplace

**Resilience**

Bounces back from rebuttal and straight on to the next project

**Technique**

Facilitates excellence in delineating topics

## HOW TO HANDLE FEAR OF REJECTION

Experienced authors frequently suffer rejection and they've got slips to prove it (I've got a pile a mile high!). The best way to handle this is to maintain a middle course on book proposals: don't get overexcited on acceptance and never become unduly depressed over rejection. You reckon your text is brilliant, you've hit the target dead centre, you've answered the WIIFM question and you are certain of its bestseller potential. But the publisher doesn't agree. Accept it. Publishing houses invariably know whether or not a book will sell in **given market conditions** - and if it goes pear shape, they and not you incur financial loss.

So what to do?

Hold on to your manuscript (you'll find out why in a minute) pick yourself up and start immediately on the next project.

## WHERE TO LOOK FOR YOUR NEXT PROJECT

The renowned self-help author Vernon Howard only ever wrote on **one subject**: mind control. His first work *Physco-Pictography* was published at the outset of the 1960s and from that one

book he contrived to produce another thirty. How did he manage to do that? The original work was so fulsome and all embracing that he was able to extrapolate twenty-nine powerful individual principles, which over the next twenty years he expanded into full-blown stand-alone volumes.

All of his books incidentally were bestsellers in their time **except the original**, which was rejected several times before being released on a small print run. This same original edition is now sold on private subscription for £100 per copy.

How's that for niche marketing?

Where Vernon Howard looked for his next project you ought also to look after publication **or rejection** of your first project. It won't contain as many stand-alone ideas but it might contain one, two, or maybe more.

In my own small way and from my bestseller *Starting an Internet Business Home* (published in 2001 by Kogan Page) I have successfully produced two more published works on the same subject together with three online instruction courses. Unlike Vernon though, I've also had several other ideas from the book turned down flat.

Do as Vernon Howard did and see if you can identify more gems buried deep in the wisdom of your initial project.

Good luck...and may the wind be always at your back in all of your creative endeavors.

## **Glossary**

**Authoring resources.** Any application or source of information that is of assistance to authors in the course of their writing activities.

**Back cover blurb.** The all-important sales copy on the back cover of a self-help book.

**Bestselling potential.** The elusive ingredient that lifts a book out of the norm and into the status of a likely bestseller.

**Bullet points.** The practice of using solid dots to highlight key points in list form.

**Commissioning editor.** The publishing official responsible for authorising book contracts.

**Draft copy.** The raw material which an author uses to compile the final text of a book.

**E-book.** The transcription of a book in electronic format.

**Endorsement.** The seal of approval on an author's work provided by someone in authority.

**Formatting techniques.** Variety of methods employed in laying out contents or text.

**Genre.** Literary type or style.

**Glossary.** Collection or list of explanations of words and terms appearing in a self-help book.

**Incremental income.** Progressive earnings stemming from a single original source.

**Index.** Alphabetical register of words and phrases located at the end of a book with page references.

**Inherent longevity.** The intrinsic durability of the subject matter of a self-help book.

**Intellectual property.** An idea that represents the product of a creative work.

**Magnetic verb.** Any verb indicating action or movement.

**Memorandum of agreement.** Another term for a book contract.

**Mission statement.** The preface or introduction to a self-help book.

**Multiple editions.** Successive updated impressions of a book.

**Niche.** A place in the market not subject to the normal pressures of competition.

**Online promotion.** Using the Internet to promote a product.

**Online publishing options.** Avenues of opportunity to publish on the Internet.

**Online research.** Using the Internet as a source for research.

**Preface.** In this context, the mission statement for a self-help book.

**Print-on-demand.** Facility for printing books rapidly and in small quantities.

**Progressive sequencing.** The orderly formation of the elements in a self-help book.

**Propensity for updating.** Text in a book that allows for regular updates.

**Proposal for publication.** Documentation submitted to a publisher requesting publication of a book.

**Rights.** Benefits accruing to the published author; such as sound broadcasting, merchandising and educational reprint rights

**Target market readership.** The prescribed audience for a book.

**The WIIFM question.** The question on the reader's mind: 'What's in it for me?'

**Topping and tailing.** Adding the preface and back cover blurb to the text of a self-help book.

**Translations.** Benefits accruing to the published author on the sale of translation rights to a book.

**Vortal.** Vertical portal restricted to housing links to web sites within a single area of interest.

### Useful web sites

How to Conduct Research on the Internet

<http://www.tbchad.com/resrch.html>

How to Conduct a Search Online

<http://www-rohan.sdsu.edu/dept/ivc/library/how1.htm>

Internet Research - Finding Hard Data

<http://www.bugsoft.com/research/index.html>

Best search engine for self-help researching

<http://www.google.com>

Dedicated electronic tool for niche research

<http://inventory.overture.com/d/searchinventory/suggestion/>

Electronic resource tools for authors

<http://www.literaryleaps.com>  
<http://www.bookmarket.com>  
<http://www.bookzonepro.com>

Access 1000s of publisher web sites

<http://acqweb.library.vanderbilt.edu/acqweb/pubr.html#subj>

Free facility for accepting credit card payments online

<http://www.clickbank.com>

Web site creation and hosting

<http://buildit.sitesell.com/interactive1.html>

Help with search engine submission

[www.scrubtheweb.com](http://www.scrubtheweb.com)

[www.simplesubmit.com](http://www.simplesubmit.com)

[www.51steps.com](http://www.51steps.com)

Online publishers

<http://www.firstprint.com>

<http://www.1stbooks.com>

<http://www.iuniverse.com>

E-book creation tools

<http://www.e-editor.com>

<http://www.ebookcompiler.com>

<http://www.Webcompiler.com>

<http://www.ebookcreator.com>

<http://www.bersoft.com>

<http://www.e-editorial.com>

<http://www.neosoftware.com>

Free e-book covers

<http://www.ebookcovermakers.com>

Facility for selling e-book produce

<http://www.freetosell.com>

