BOOK PLANNING GUIDE



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Did you know that eight out of ten people say they want to write a book but only one in ten actually do? It's never been more important for female executives and business owners to establish themselves as the leading authority in their area of expertise. Make this the year you take your career or business to the next level by becoming a published author! It can have an amazing impact on your business goals, with...

- Critical "social proof" in the form of testimonials
- Instant "expert status" (the kind that's only afforded to authors)
- New interview requests and speaking opportunities
- More clients and the ability to command a higher salary or higher client fees

You have the experience and you've probably broken through a glass ceiling or two. You've decided they want to share your knowledge in a book, but are unsure of how to get the specific message out of your head and onto paper. You've thought about it, maybe jotted down some notes, perhaps you've even outlined a couple of chapters.

But then, you stalled. Overwhelm set in, or you got busy, and now your book idea is stashed away on your hard drive collecting dust. Maybe you never even got that far. Maybe you found yourself so confused about the whole writing and publishing process that you didn't even start.

Here's what you need to know about becoming an author: it doesn't have to be overwhelming especially when you break it down into manageable tasks. You can do it in 90 days like I did with my book *Maximum Occupancy: How Smart Innkeepers put heads in beds in every season*, or you can extend the timeline to fit your individual schedule. By the way, my super power is building a yellow brick road and creating order out of chaos. I love creating step by process solutions for complex problems as I've done with the book writing and self-publishing problem.

This eBook will give you a list of the steps required to write and launch a non-fiction book that solves a problem for a particular target audience. Use it as a discovery tool to take the mystery out of the process. You can even get started by completing the first three steps of the process. After you finish the eBook, visit expertauthor411.com/start to see how I can assist you further.

Take Care,

Linda Griffin

STEP 1: WHAT'S YOUR BOOK-WRITING GOAL?

It's probably the single most important decision you need to make! Without a book writing goal, it will be extremely difficult for you to:

- Stay focused (you'll find your content wandering off-topic or you'll feel scattered)
- Stay motivated (you'll suddenly find lots and lots of things you'd rather do than write)
- Launch with authority

How will becoming a published author change your life? Of course, one of your goals will be to sell books. Beyond that, do you want to attract more high paying clients? Do you want peer recognition on your field of interest? Do you want to start or enhance a speaking career? Do you want to build your personal brand or company brand? All of these are great reasons and there are many others.

Write your goal on the next page.

What is the primary purpose you have for spending the time and energy it will take to complete this project? And don't be shy.		

STEP 2: WRITE THE BOOK DESCRIPTION

Exercise: Brainstorm your book-writing goal.

Now that you know why you're writing your book, it's time to decide exactly what your book will be about.

This isn't some high-level overview where you can say something like, "I want to write a book about branding." That's too general. For this step, you want to dig deep and clearly define your book's unique message.

Ask yourself:

- Who is my ideal reader? What is her life like? Why does she need this book?
- What's my area of expertise? What do I know that few others do? What unique insight can I provide?
- What's hot right now that ties into my message? How can I incorporate current happenings in my industry with my book?

I advocate writing a short book (150 pages to 200 pages) that solves a specific problem. One fantastic way to define your message and distill it down to its core elements is to write your book description. The book description should give you important insight and take into account:

- What other authors are writing about, and what their "spin" is.
- What your market finds appealing.
- Where the "holes" are in the available content.

Your book description should include who your book is for, why she needs to read it right now, and what she's going to learn. It should be no more than three or four

paragraphs, and you'll probably find that's more difficult to do than you think, so take

your time. Exercise: Write your book description.

STEP 3: EMBRACE YOUR EXPERT STATUS

Want to know the biggest self-imposed roadblock authors face? It's that small voice in your head that says, "Who are you to think you can write a book?"

Sound familiar? We all have that voice, and we should ignore it...at least when it comes to getting the words on paper.

That voice does bring up a great question: Who are you? And why should your ideal reader pay attention?

Here's the thing you must keep in mind: You have an important message that only you can share. We all do. It's your job as the author to uncover your unique story, process, or guides to success. Write your book from that point of view.

Get this right, and you'll instantly and easily attract your perfect audience—those readers who "get" you and with whom your book will resonate. They'll become raging fans who will help spread your message far and wide.

First, you have to determine what your story is and why it matters.

Some examples of author story include:

- The female corporate CEO who has figured out how to break through the glass ceiling
- The business coach who struggled for years to get her own business off the ground, and who now has a unique ability to see past the roadblocks that hold her clients back.
- The small business owner who discovered a powerful marketing method that tripled her income, and who wants to help other business owners thrive.

Your story can be one of dramatic change, an internal mindset shift, or a very personal "why" behind your passion. Whatever it is, it's uniquely yours, and when you allow it to shine through in your book, you'll instantly set yourself apart from the competition to reach your ideal audience.

Exercise: Write your story.		

STEP 4: RESEARCH

Ask any top-selling author and they'll tell you that the biggest part of writing is actually reading. You simply cannot hope to write a book that will appeal to your market unless you know what they're already reading—and why.

During the research phase of your book project, you're going to look specifically for the top sellers in your niche, plus the books your direct competitors have written (even if they never sold a single copy). Visit Amazon or your local bookstore or library if you want a field trip.

You'll want to pay attention to:

- Book length—today's market prefers short reads, suitable for an afternoon of study
- The holes—this is the most important part...what's missing from the available books in your industry and how could you add to that store of knowledge?

STEP 5: OUTLINE AND ORGANIZE YOUR CONTENT

There are two types of writers: those who plan and outline, and those who prefer to write "from the seat of their pants."

Writing a book without an outline is a fatal mistake for a new author. Without a guide, it's easy to lose momentum and not write anything at all, or lose focus and meander through unrelated topics without a clear point.

The easiest way to avoid both of these book-killing scenarios is to outline and organize your material before you begin writing. You can do this with a number of different tools, depending on your personal preference:

- Software such as Scrivener (This is Expert Author 411's recommended tool!)
- Index cards or sticky notes
- A word or text document
- A physical notebook and pen

Whichever your choice of tools, it's important to outline your book so that it will make sense to your reader and so that it flows naturally from one subject to the next.

In the Expert Author book writing mentoring program, you will create a mind map rather than a traditional outline. It more closely mimics how we as experts think rather than trying to organize our thoughts in sequence. That comes later in the writing process.

STEP 6: WRITING, DEADLINES & TIME MANAGEMENT FOR AUTHORS

Create an overall timeline for the book which includes the time required to write, professionally edit and get the manuscript proof-read. You will also include the time required to get a cover designed and complete the administrative tasks such as securing an ISBN number.

Some writers find it helpful decide ahead of time how long the book will be, then break the overall length down into daily to-dos. For example, if you're planning to write 30,000 words and want to finish in a month, then you need to write 1,000 words per day. That may take one hour or it may take four, but you have to hit that daily word-count goal if you want to finish your book on time.

Here's a secret professional writers know: learning to write is like building a muscle. Even if it feels like a struggle at first, stick with it. Writing will get easier and faster the more you do it.

You should also schedule what I call an accountability event. Usually, this a book launch. It can be a live or virtual event. You will announce it to your friends and fans in advance. This gives you a real commitment to keep to your timeline and meet your goals.

STEP 7: DEALING WITH DISTRACTIONS, PROCRASTINATION, AND OTHER BOOK KILLERS

Along with scheduling time to write and planning out your deadlines, authors know that a plan for dealing with distractions and procrastination can really help you finish your manuscript.

The fact is life happens. Kids want your attention; the car needs a tune-up; coaching clients need emergency support; a big project at work requires your attention. All of these things and more will eat into your writing time if you're not actively working to address them.

Procrastination is even worse. When you're writing a book and feeling just a tiny bit stuck, suddenly it seems much more important that you finish your laundry, brush the dog, or redesign your website than it is to sit down and write.

When you combine the possibility of procrastination with a few of life's little distractions...well, you can see how it might take you several years to finally get that book written.

Now obviously you can't plan for the unexpected disasters that sometimes pop up, but you can (and should) plan ahead for issues you can control.

- Schedule play dates during writing time to keep the kids out of the house.
- Close your office door to prevent the dog from distracting you with her unmanageable fur.
- Turn off your phone, email and Skype during writing time.
- Use a software program such as Scrivener that allows you to use a full-screen, distraction-free writing environment.
- Turn off your internet access during your writing time.

Procrastination is a little tougher to deal with, because it's all on you. Know what's likely to trigger procrastination, and design ways to keep yourself motivated.

STEP 8: CHOOSING A PUBLISHING PLATFORM

Book publishing falls into two broad categories: self-publishing and traditional publishing.

In traditional publishing, you will typically need to acquire an agent. That agent will act on your behalf to sell your book idea to a publishing house. The publisher will then give you a book contract, determine the publishing schedule, design your cover art, format, print, and distribute your book. In return, you will deliver the manuscript on time and will be paid royalties after and advance has been covered.

These days, going the traditional publishing route is extremely competitive. The large publishing houses require you to already have a demonstrated following and they require you to develop a book marketing plan.

I advocate self-publishing for one simple reason: Control. You control when your book is published, determine the cover price, decide how many copies to print and when to publish an e-book version. You don't get a publisher's advance, but you will keep a larger percentage of the book's cover price. We're fortunate to live in a time period where a self-published author can produce a high quality book that rivals those of the Big Five New York publishing houses as long as you leverage the tools and resources correctly.

As mentioned earlier, you want to have your manuscript professionally edited and proof-read, get a professionally designed cover, and incorporate copy-writing techniques in your choice of book title, sub-title, and back cover.

While we recommend creating a physical paperback book, you should also create an eBook version.

STEP 9: THEY WILL JUDGE YOUR BOOK BY ITS COVER

Here's an instant sales killer for books: poorly designed covers.

Your cover has to:

- Grab a reader's attention the instant they see it
- Pique the interest of a casual browser
- Quickly explain what your book is about

That's a big job for a few words and images, isn't it?

Some additional considerations include:

- Branding—be sure to use consistent colors and fonts in your cover, so you can benefit from the added exposure.
- Images—choose graphics that evoke the emotions and feelings you want your book to convey.
- Readability—when it comes to online sales, your book will likely first be seen as a tiny thumbnail, so make sure it's readable even at a small size.

STEP 10: LAUNCH PLANNING

Depending on your goal from step one, your book launch will range from an announcement on your website and social media pages to a full-blown, multi-city book tour—or anywhere in between.

No matter what your goal is, you have to get the word out about your new book, and that's what any launch is ultimately about. You can create buzz about your book in a number of ways:

- Get booked as a guest on podcasts
- Write a guest post for blogs in your niche
- Get an interview in newspapers or magazines
- Pay for advertisements on social media
- Offer your book for Free during the launch period
- Give away a free chapter prior to launch
- Start a YouTube channel or a podcast
- Blog about it
- Share your book-writing progress on social media
- Send free review copies to colleagues/list members
- Recruit your subscribers to share about your book

Your book launch will have two distinct goals:

- 1. Pre-release—to let everyone know about your upcoming book and to get them excited about it.
- 2. Post-release—to make sales.

THE NINETY-DAY BOOK WRITING TIMELINE

This timeline mirrors the process used in my Fast Track to Author Program.

Planning the book (Days 1 to 7)

In the planning phase you'll decide on a topic, complete market research, determine who your ideal reader is, and define the problem you plan to help them solve. You'll create a mind map that will get your ideas out of your head and create a framework for your writing.

Writing the first draft (Days 8 to 42)

In this stage, you'll set yourself up for success and start writing using a daily word count goal. Your goal will be to write between 600 and 900 words each day. As you write the first draft, you'll build your writing muscles and learn ways to increase your productivity, stay motivated, break through stumbling blocks, and re-energize if you

hit the writing wall. As you complete the first draft you'll work on organizing the book into chapters and sections, choose the fonts you want to use in the finished book, finalize the title and subtitle, and create your author page.

Writing the second draft (Days 43 to 56)

As you write the second draft, you will engage beta readers, check the flow of your book to ensure that it matches your vision, and do some self-editing with online tools.

Cover design, formatting, editing, and proofreading (Days 57 to 75)

At this stage, you will have fun working with a graphics designer to create your cover, send your manuscript to a professional editor and proofreader for polishing, and to a book designer to have it formatted for print.

Print, publish, and launch (Days 76 to 90)

You're at the finish line! You'll create your final print ready document and send it off to the printer. You will set up your sales page on Amazon and/or your book web site, and announce your launch.

Throughout the five stages you'll complete marketing tasks to build buzz around your book leading to the launch date.

NEXT STEPS:

I'll let you in on a little secret. The ten steps you just read in this ebook are the exact ten steps I mentor clients through in the Fast Track to Author Programs. If you had trouble filling in the blanks in steps one through three above, rest assured that I can help you reduce the pain, get clarity, and feel confident about moving forward with your book project. The mentoring programs are designed for people who want support and hand holding but want to complete the entire process themselves. For those who would like even more assistance we can take over the whole project for you, with our Book Writing Concierge Services. Visit expertauthor411.com/start to learn more.