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Status: Live

Write Your Book and Publish on Amazon KDP (Amazon's 'Print on Demand' Service)

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Purpose: How to prepare and format your book for Amazon's KDP service (print on demand).

Guidance: More time spent up front will save you hours of book editing heartache later on. Please take your time on the planning. You can also get help with this at <https://storycopywriters.com/>

1. Planning

- Who specifically is the audience for the book? Describe a single person, not a group of people. Describe this person in detail.
- What core problem will your book solve? What emotions are attached to that problem? (E.g. shame, guilt, fear)
- How will the reader have changed by the time they finish the book? (E.g. skills, confidence, perspective)
- Ask: why are you the right person to write this book? Why now? (Are there any wider trends?) Answering this question now will help you sell the book later on.
- Set a working title and subtitle for the book. (This is a **working** title only, and is likely to change. If in doubt, set a *topic* rather than a title).

The book title itself should be short and memorable (typically one or two words), with a longer subhead describing the book in more detail.

E.g. Title: Simple Story Selling

Subhead: How To Eliminate Writer's Block, and Write Stories That Sell

It is common to develop a number of possible titles and subtitles as you work through the book production process. Once you settle on a great title, the writing process becomes a

lot easier.

- Carry out initial competitive research on Amazon by searching for your topic or title. Browse the book descriptions that come up (it can help to store notes in a Word or Excel file). Download Kindle samples where you can. You don't need to read everything, but you should be aware of what other books are out there, and what promise they are making.
- (Optional) Create a Google Ads Display network campaign to test different title and subhead ideas, to see what gets the highest click through rates.

Warning: please ONLY test ideas you genuinely feel excited about, and would be happy to put your name behind. If you don't LOVE a potential book title, your book will fail. You should love talking about your books, and therefore you have to love the title.

- Outline your book structure and sections

At its core, your book should be structured around a framework or system. My *Magnetic Expertise* book for example is structured around my customer nurture model. My *Simple Story Selling* book contains two systems, my 7-step email production process, and the 5 phases of the plot archetype. Knowing what I know now, I suggest you stick to one.

Many good books are based around a framework, often summarised by an acronym (e.g. SMART goals). This is one viable way to structure the book (but not essential - I often think it's a bit gimmicky).

If you're a visual person, draw out a map with your key idea or central framework in the middle of the map. Then start mapping off related ideas. Each branch could become a section in your book, or even a spin off book.

Next, circle and number the ideas that will form your book sections. Each section you may then split into one or more chapters.

The key idea is that each section in your book should address **only one thing**. Each section should have a narrow focus.

The outline sets the scope of the book, and defines what is included, and what is not. You can write more books later on, so keep your book focused on a particular audience and problem. If in doubt, narrow the scope. Books have a habit of expanding in scope when left alone for too long.

- Note down the bare bones of what you want to say in each section using bullet points. The bullet points are then your starting point each time you sit down to write.

Warning: do **not** get carried away and start writing yet! This is still a planning exercise, not a writing exercise. Bullet points only at this point please.

2. Story

When a book is infused with great stories, it becomes a door into another world of possibilities. A good story expands the horizons of what is possible in the reader's mind. Stories are also essential to gain and keep attention. Most books are dull because stories are insufficient or absent.

A story serves to humanise you and your message, making you real and relatable, not dry and abstract.

You're writing a book, not publishing a manual. You have to keep your readers awake!

- Pick ONE core story to sit at the heart of your book. This is often a key turning point in your life.
- Decide which other parts of your story you will use to illustrate your message. See also [R#003 - Story Map Interview](#). I strongly recommend you take some time to work through this. It is helpful to gather together all the stories you might want to use before you start writing. These stories will be helpful in other areas of your marketing too, like your own personal fount of inspiration.

3. Outcome

Decide what action you want people to take when reading the book. This call to action could be at any point in the book, and in multiple places, so you should decide what it is before you start writing. Do you want people to complete a form? Buy something? Call you? Email you?

I suggest just including one call to action in the book. Your offer should be clear, of high perceived value, and of direct application to the message of the book.

If you're asking people to enter their email address for additional resources, I suggest positioning these as 'Book Bonuses'. Offer the book bonuses at the start and at the end of the book. The value of the bonuses should be roughly ten times the value of the book. Consider including templates, frameworks, or anything that may go out of date in the bonuses. When people register for the bonuses you want to make a secondary offer, for instance a free consultation.

When people register for the bonuses you might also consider preparing a 7-14 part email series to continue nurturing them. People who register for your book bonuses are your best prospects, so give them VIP treatment! I've also found that book readers will generally leave their print mailing address if you ask for it. Sending the bonuses as a mail pack adds perceived value. Digital PDFs tend to get ignored. You could also offer your readers a free 3 month trial of a print newsletter.

All of these 'outcomes' should be considered at the outset of writing your book. Your book sits at the heart of your marketing nurture and marketing follow-up efforts. So you need to be clear what those efforts actually are.

4. Production (takes 50% of remaining time)

Two activities should now start simultaneously:

1. Book copy
2. Cover design

Guidance for writing:

- Write as you speak - don't agonise about wording or grammar yet.
- Write quickly. If you get stuck for more than a few minutes, take a break.
- Set time limits (35 to 90 minutes). Spend 10 minutes at the start of each session planning what you will write. It can help to focus your mind by setting a countdown timer on your phone.
- Set a public deadline for completing your draft. Tell people when the draft will be done. Offer to send people chapters as you go.
- Understand your writing personality. Some people require a rigid un-moveable schedule, where you block off certain hours each day. Others (including me) prefer to write more spontaneously. Sometimes a hybrid approach can work.

Ask: are you a talker or a writer? Do you prefer to write your thoughts? Or do you prefer to dictate and transcribe? Assembling your book from a set of transcripts is a perfectly valid approach.

- Include stories, anecdotes and dialogue.

- In telling a story, describe **specific** details, people and events. The specifics help bring the reader into the story. Don't edit as you go - include anything that occurs to you.
- Write using words a novice reader will understand.
- Find an accountability partner and schedule a weekly call. Nothing kills a book as well as isolation, and the doubts in your head. With the right support in place, writing a book should feel exciting and communal.
- Focus on helping, sharing and guiding your audience. Write to serve your reader, first and foremost. Writing your book as an act of service makes the writing easier and more enjoyable.

Guidance for cover design:

- Use strong colours that will stand out in the Amazon listings.
- Have one dominant colour.
- Have a big headline, and a dominant image. Either the headline or the image could be the focal point - the thing a person holding the book looks at first.
- The image should illustrate the key idea of the book.
- People DO judge a book by the cover, so put some effort into this, or get help.

5. Editing and review (takes 50% of remaining time)

Macro edits:

- Get the book reviewed by peers and non-peers. Non-peers can still feedback on your stories, even if the specifics of your content passes over their heads. Your book **MUST** be readable.
- Check that your core story pulls your reader into the book. If a reader loves the first chapter, they'll probably read the whole book.
- Does the structure of the book still hold up? Do you need to make any additions, movements or subtractions? Don't be afraid to cut sections out - you can always save them for another book or repurpose into blog posts.

- Does your book deliver the transformation you promised at the planning stage? (Be honest!)
- Does your manuscript contain sufficient story, or are sections of the book a slog to read?

Micro edits:

- Check you've written in active voice as much as possible. Words ending in 'ing' often indicate passive voice. 'Improve your results' is more active than 'improving your results'.
- Check to see if you can use more descriptive verbs. Maybe you 'cracked' the ball out of the park, rather than 'hit' it.
- Pull the reader into the story by showing them character traits. Don't just tell them things. E.g.

Telling: 'Ben was really sporty.'

Showing: 'Ben dreamed of curling a volley into the top corner of the net.'

- Describe events in detail. Think about the five senses (sight, sound, smell, touch, taste)
- Words like 'which', 'there' etc often not required
- Avoid empty adjectives that seek to exaggerate (very, really, huge). They add no meaning and detract from your writing.

Note: if your budget allows, I suggest getting help with the line editing, typesetting and technical setup of your book. The look and professionalism of your book is important if your book is to generate leads for your business. I've written this guide in a way that will allow you to do it yourself, if you want. But you might want to consider additional support.

6. Technical setup

See [S#012 - Book Template](#). This is the same dimensions as my Magnetic Expertise book. Amazon can also provide a MS Word template for your chosen book size - see https://kdp.amazon.com/en_US/cover-templates.

If setting up yourself:

- Set up a 'mirrored' page layout in your word processing program.

- Set a larger left margin. My books (5.5" by 8.5") use a 2.5cm left, and 1.5cm top right and bottom margins.
- Set your page size to the size selected in Amazon.
- Use a consistent serif font for both headings and body copy (I suggest using just one font, in black, large enough to be easily readable).
- Add an inside cover page, a contents page. Optionally add acknowledgements, and initial feedback (you can also do this later in a revision).
- Book cover artwork needs to be the right spine width depending on your paper choices and page count (Amazon can provide this).
- Leave space in the bottom right of your back cover for the barcode (Amazon add this automatically when you upload your cover).
- Make sure you have copy prepared for the back of the book. This should also be used in the Amazon book description.

Get Clear On Your Book...

Need help planning or writing your book? Book a free planning call [with Rob here](#).