

## **Boost Your Credibility—Get Published! Share Your Brilliance and Impart Your Expertise with Your Very Own Book**

*by Donna R. Thompson*

For a business owner, being recognized as an author is a powerful way to boost your credibility with your clients, prospects, and competitors—as well as with the public and the media. Authoring a book gives you the opportunity to show off your expertise and establish your authority. This leads to greater exposure for you and your company, which is followed by speaking engagements, more book sales, and in the long run—business growth.

The big question is: Do you have something to say? The bigger question is: If you write it, will they read it? Since your readers will invest time and money in your book, they expect to learn something new, take away lessons, or be inspired by fresh ideas, especially in an entertaining way. The best-case scenario for your readers would be to come away with a combination of all those things. If they do, expect to receive glowing testimonials and positive feedback.

### **Get Started**

So, where do you start? First, think about your business—the products and services you offer—and how they solve problems and make a difference in people’s lives. Do you help people save time, money, energy? Do you teach people how to live with less stress or be more organized? Next, identify your target audience. If you are a Web copywriter, for instance, one market is the people in your industry. In this case, your book could focus on improving copywriting skills: how to write eye-popping, lead-generating squeeze pages, autoresponders, and sales pages. Or, if your audience is business owners, you could focus on how to apply copywriting techniques to blogs and other marketing communications to increase sales. It’s all about offering value to your readers.

### **Collect and Organize Your Content**

Now it’s time to gather any written content you’ve created for your business: blog posts, product and service descriptions, mission statement, press releases, Web copy, e-newsletters, articles, profiles, brochure content, etc. Do you provide helpful tips or information readers value? Are your blog posts more than just news about you or your products? If so, you can rework

those pieces to form the foundation for your book. For example, you can group your blog posts by topic and create book chapters with them.

After reviewing your content and deciding on a topic for your book, segment your content into chapters by creating an outline. (Remember those outlines for high school and college papers?) Each chapter can be further organized using subheads. And, if your material lends itself to being grouped by major topic areas, you can use sections to house your chapters.

For example, if you're a doctor, your book could contain four sections: prevention, diagnostic measures, surgical options, and rehabilitation. The chapters within those sections could cover different types of preventive, diagnostic, surgical, and rehab methods (four or five chapters per section). And within a chapter, subsections could cover the descriptions and details about specific methods.

The point is to get an overview of what you will be covering in your book and break the material into easy-to-understand sections for your readers. These sections can serve as your table of contents.

## Understand Your Publishing Options

When it comes to publishing a book, you have plenty of options. You can try the traditional route or you can self-publish—which has its own list of options. But it all comes down to time and money, as well as expertise, so consider the following carefully:

**1. Traditional publishing** is tough to achieve for a first-time author, but if it does happen (although it may take years), the author has little or no control over the book's title, content, or cover design. Authors may receive an advance (which is deducted from future royalties), and those royalties represent only a small (ten to fifteen percent) share of the profit on print book sales. You'll have to market the book yourself, too.

**2. With self-publishing**, one major advantage is going from manuscript to marketplace quicker than traditional publishing—months instead of years—whether a printed book or an e-book, and another is (in some cases) retaining the all-important control of your work. To self-publish, authors can choose from the following:

- Self-publish for free or a nominal up-front cost with an online service, such as LuLu, BookBaby, Smashwords, PubIt!, or CreateSpace, or with an online self-publisher, such as Author House, where you'll pay more. Either way, know that you'll be giving up profit share and/or paying for additional editorial or graphic design services, and with online self-publishers, you may not own your production files unless you buy them.
- Handle all the work and also become the publisher. This includes doing the editing, layout, proofreading, and cover design, and hiring a ghost-

writer if you need help developing your manuscript. Then there's the matter of copyright registration and attaining International Standard Book Numbers (ISBNs) and bar codes for your book. You'll need a different ISBN for each format you publish: softcover, hardcover, iPad, Kindle, Nook, pdf, etc. And you'll have to market and distribute your book yourself, too. Here, you take on all the responsibility to reap all the rewards.

- Work with a professional publishing consultant who handles every aspect of the publishing process. You will pay more for this option, but you will retain the copyright to and should have complete control over your work, and you can also expect to earn all or most of the profits from the sale of your books.

Because your book is a reflection of you (for years to come), you want it to look, feel, and “sound” like the expert you are. For busy business owners, it makes sense to invest in working with a professional publishing consultant—but the choice is yours.

## Educate Yourself

Whatever path you decide to follow, visit the bookstore or library and look at the books in the section where your book would most likely fit. Check the competition to see how those books are formatted—how their sections and chapters are designed. Do they include any special sidebars or pull-out quotes or helpful hints? Will any of those features work for your book? There's more to publishing a book than just writing the copy.

The payoff comes when you sell your book in the back of the room at speaking engagements, give it to clients in appreciation for their business, donate it to your local and alumni libraries, and sell it on your website.

Are you ready to take your business to the next level? Then think about how you can share your brilliance, capitalize on your expertise, expand your scope, repurpose your blog content, add to your marketing collateral, and reap the benefits of authorship with a book.



**Donna R. Thompson**, a publishing professional for more than 35 years, is the owner and publishing director at Woodpecker Press, LLC, Bayville, New Jersey. The company specializes in helping authors self-publish—from idea to printed book and everything in between. Woodpecker Press is also the publisher of the Big Bold Business Book Series. For more information about self-publishing, visit [www.WoodpeckerPress.com](http://www.WoodpeckerPress.com) and also take a look at the books we recommend on our *For the Author's Bookshelf* carousel.

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