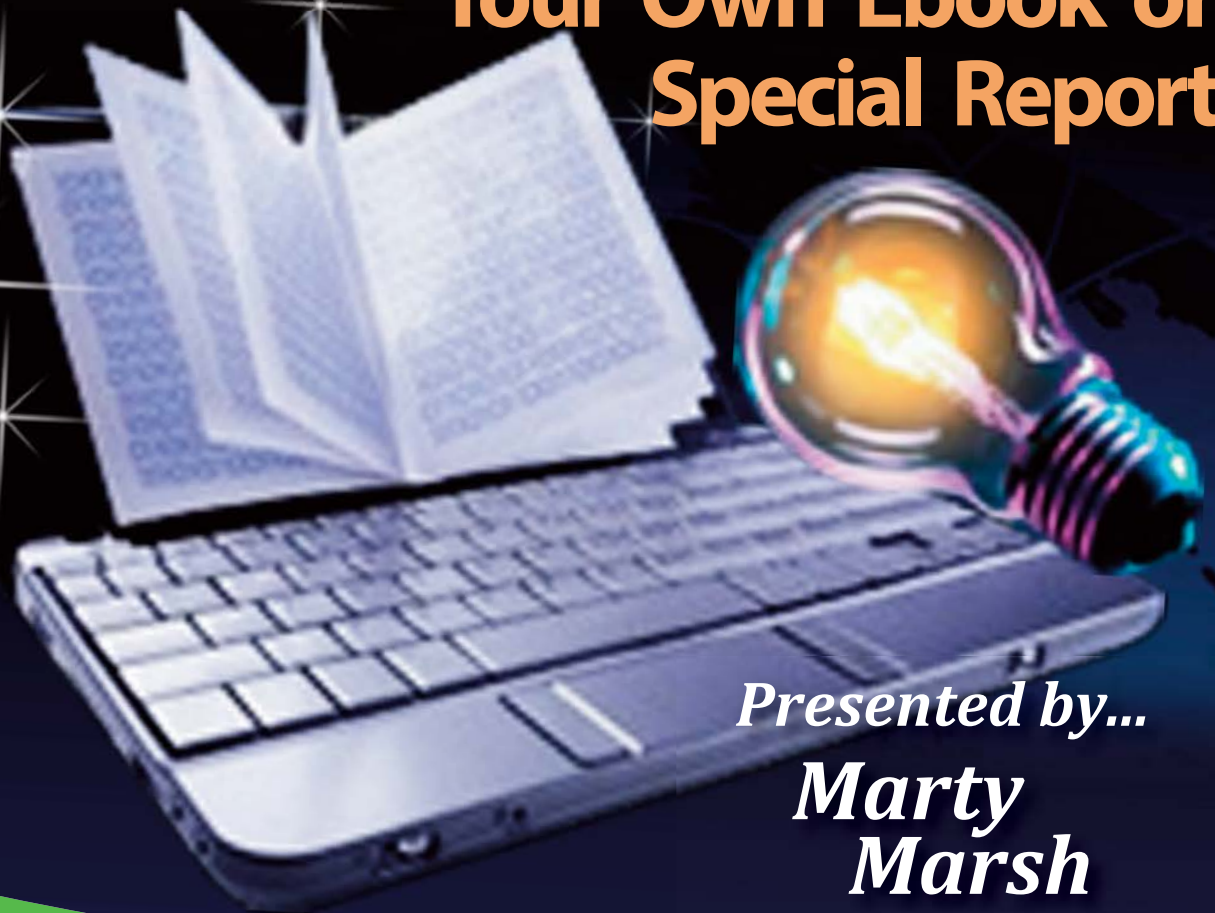


Price \$27.00

FROM IDEA TO EBOOK

**How To Easily Create
Your Own Ebook or
Special Report**



Presented by...

***Marty
Marsh***

www.MartyMarsh.com

Disclaimer

The purpose of this ebook is to educate, and not to provide or imply such provision of any legal, accounting, or other form of business advice. The author and publisher does not warrant that the information contained in this ebook is fully complete and shall not be responsible for any errors, omissions, or contradictory information in this report.

The author and publisher assumes no liability or responsibility to any person or entity with respect to any loss or damage caused or alleged to be caused directly or indirectly by this report. The reader assumes responsibility for the use of these materials and information.

Any perceived slights of specific people or organizations are unintentional.

You should assume that this ebook has an affiliate relationship with some of the providers of goods and services mentioned in this ebook and the author may be compensated when you purchase. You should always perform due diligence before buying goods or services from anyone via the Internet or offline.

Individual results may vary and there are no guarantees expressed or implied. Each individual's success depends on his/her dedication, motivation, and background. As with any business endeavor, there is an inherent risk of loss of capital and there is no guarantee that you will earn any money.

You have purchased a "personal use" license to this product. You cannot distribute it to any other individuals or share it on the Internet. It does not include any sort of resale rights or private label licensing whatsoever.

Introduction

This ebook is about how to write an ebook, plain and simple. But before I get into the HOW part of the equation, I'd like to talk about what an ebook is, why ebooks are important, who could or should write an ebook, and when it should be written.

WIKIPEDIA tells us an ebook is a “text and image-based publication in digital form produced on, published by, and readable on computers or other digital devices.” An ebook is also called a digital book, an online book, or an electronic book. Sometimes an ebook is a digital version of a print book, but not necessarily so. In this ebook you're reading right now, we will be exploring how to write a stand-alone ebook rather than converting a print book.

What's so special about an ebook? There are lots of plusses and a few minuses.

- Ebooks are not expensive to produce, as it's all done digitally. The costs involved in “making” one ebook are the same as when producing thousands of the same ebook.
- Ebook delivery can easily be hands-off. You don't need to manually send the download link after payment, just set it up to work with PayPal and your method of auto-delivery.
- An ebook is written once, but sold over and over again. This is called passive income, and the potential earnings are amazing.
- You don't have to be an expert or a seasoned author to write an ebook. There is no editor or publishing company sending you rejection letters. You write your ebook and put it online.
- Selling additional products or affiliate products within your ebook is a technique used successfully by many marketers to earn money.
- Writing and distributing an ebook is a quick way to build your credibility and be seen as an expert in your field. It can also lead to repeat business as well as other business opportunities.

*That's me... ↗
Marty Marsh*

- If you're a serious writer, an ebook might not be viewed by your viewership as a credible way to publish your writing. Ebook authors may not be seen in quite the same light as published print book authors (although this is changing rapidly).

As far as who should write an ebook, the answer is: anyone who has something to say!

You can be an Internet marketer with a website, a fashion jewelry maker with a blog, an expert fly fisherman, a rodeo clown looking to share your experience, a mom raising six kids, or someone who discovered the secret to happiness and wants to show others how to be happy too.

Your reasons for writing an ebook may be as varied as your topic and we'll get into that next. The important thing is, the sooner you write your ebook, the sooner you'll benefit from having done so. There is no time like the present to get started!

What's Your Purpose?

Many people start writing their first ebook before they've thought it all the way through.

But there are certain steps you should take first to get the most out of the experience. Before you begin writing, you should always know your purpose.

Why do you want to write an ebook? What is your aim, your intention? What results do you want? Take time to think this through because it's important to have a vision and a subsequent path to take to reach that vision.

Here are some examples:

To showcase my expertise in order to get paying clients.

To get my name known in the industry.

To have something to give away — to grow my subscriber list, as a nice thing to do, to make others happy, because it's good karma, will lead to something else.

To make money from selling it as my product.

To make affiliate commissions when people buy from my affiliate links in the ebook.

Because I have something important to say.

To bring traffic to my website.

Simply to help people.

The ebook may be the end of the road, or it can go further than that. It can be the start of something bigger — like your coaching program or paying clients. It might also be the first item you're selling in a given subject and you have several similar products waiting in the wings to sell to the targeted customers who bought the original ebook.

Knowing your ebook's special purpose gives you direction in how the ebook should be written and in how to lead the reader to where you want them to go. Keeping this in mind from the start means you can get down to business and get it written with the end in mind, rather than fumbling around in the dark and hoping it leads somewhere.

Picking Your Ebook Topic

You will find that picking a topic can be closely tied in to your purpose.

Obviously, if you want to showcase your expertise in a certain area, then the topic of your ebook will be something in that area.

If your purpose is to make money from selling affiliate products via links you will place in the ebook, then you'll probably start with the affiliate products in mind and build a book around them. For example, if you want to make affiliate commissions on a special tool or software, then your ebook might be about that tool or software, what it does, how you've used it yourself successfully, and the results you've had. You might include complete case studies; your own and/or others.

If writing and selling the ebook is the beginning and end of your project, then your ebook should leave no stone unturned and exhaust everything you know about the topic. This shows you really are the expert. Plus you're more likely to get rave reviews from your readers rather than comments about wishing there was more.

If your desire is to give the ebook away in order to entice future sales, then look at it as a small slice of the big pie. It should be somewhat "light" on the how-to or specific info because you want to whet their appetite for more. After all, your desire is to sell them the whole pie.

Maybe you're giving the ebook away in exchange for peoples' email addresses. Building a list of targeted potential customers or clients is an excellent plan. This list of interested parties is who you will sell products to down the line, over and over again.

Starting from scratch?

If you're starting from scratch, without a niche, and you're not sure what to write an ebook about, then it's a different story. If you're starting with a clean slate, then before you start writing your ebook, you need to do a little homework and find out **what sells**. This is important, so don't skip this step! If you don't find out what sells, writing an ebook could be a huge waste of time.

What do people most want? Not need, but *want*. It's much easier to sell based on emotional wants; people don't buy what they need, unless it's an emergency need. As an example, a lonely guy or gal will buy an ebook on how to get a guaranteed date, but pass on replacing their broken vacuum cleaner.

Your ebook should solve a problem, and if it's a desperate problem, then all the better. Getting rid of back acne before wearing a strapless dress to the prom is a desperate problem with an immediate need component. A baby who cries at night, every night would have me desperate to find a solution so I could sleep at night.

A general rule of thumb is: if you stay in the categories of health, wealth, and love, then you're good. But really, you need to dig a little deeper than that as these categories are quite broad and there are hits and misses within each category.

So to drill down further, look at what is already selling. Since people buy what they most want, lots of sales indicate a narrower market niche you might want to write in.

Some marketplaces you can look at are:

Amazon — Search the bestselling non-fiction print books and get a feel for what's popular. You can get a lot of info here — how many days a particular book has been a bestseller, if it's currently heading up or down in popularity, what else customers have bought when buying this book, etc.

You can go toe-to-toe and write on the same topic, but add your personality and a different slant to the subject, or you can create an ebook that compliments the physical book. The latter idea means you look at your ebook as the supporting cast. It might take one facet of the print book and expand on it, giving further instruction, insights, and tips, or it could be about the tools necessary to make the plan in the original book happen.

Also, investigate the book feedback on Amazon and find out where the book is lacking, and what problems people might still have after reading it.

Clickbank — Search the marketplace as a whole based on popularity, or pick a category and look at the popularity within it. Keep in mind some of these products sell a ton because they are heavily marketed, but they should be a pretty good indicator of what people are buying.

Ebay — Click on the book category. Popular products, popular categories, and popular searches are all very telling. I especially like the tag cloud in popular searches.

Your local magazine rack — Print magazines are a cutthroat business. If the magazine doesn't make enough sales, it folds quickly. When I look at the magazine rack in my local bookstore, I see at least four wedding magazines. So I know that's a popular subject. If I drill down further by looking at the articles within these magazines, I see certain themes repeated over and over. One of these themes might make a great ebook.

Survey — Simply asking what your readers want is a good way to gauge your market. There are free, as well as paid, survey programs you can use to pose your questions and get feedback. If you already get feedback from your readers or clients, and there is a recurring theme to their questions or answers, then consider these as possible ebook topics.

The Skeleton of an Ebook

You're probably itching to get started on your ebook and I don't blame you! First, here is a general layout of an ebook. They are not all done this way; it certainly will depend on the information you're giving, but it's meant as a guideline or a starting point. I would suggest you take a look at a number of different ebooks to get a feel for their structure and examples of the sections mentioned below.

Cover Page
Disclaimer
Table of Contents
Introduction
Chapter 1

Further Chapters
Conclusion
Resources

Cover Page

Since this is an ebook, it's important to give it a bit of the "look" of a real book. This page is where you put your cover graphic — the picture of your book cover or the cover itself. (You'll note in this ebook, I've included both.) Also include your author name and copyright blurb.

Disclaimer

This is very important as you want to mention:

- you are not liable for anything that may happen from reading and following your ebook
- the ebook is for educational and informational purposes only
- you don't guarantee they will make any money using your information and individual results vary
- you will stand to profit from any affiliate links listed in the ebook
- etc.

Table of Contents

You probably already know what one of these should look like. I recommend you don't bother with it until after you've written and edited your ebook because your chapter names may change and the page numbers will surely change as you go and it's extremely annoying to be forever fixing them. A Table of Contents is not necessary in a lot of eBooks. You decide.

Please do take it a step further, if you can, and make the page numbers "clickable". This is one of the advantages of an ebook over a print book; the reader can click on the page number in the table of contents and immediately be transported to that chapter. (Instructions on how to do that are provided later in this ebook.)

Introduction

This is obviously the spot where you introduce yourself. Explain your background, why you know enough to write about this topic, why you care, and how this ebook came to be. Some people drone on and on about themselves, but this is really where you should be brief. Give enough to personalize you and show your vested interest, but not so much you put them to sleep. One page in length with your picture should suffice.

To be clear, the introduction is usually more of an introduction of you with hints of the beginning of the topic. If you prefer not to add yourself to the ebook, then you can certainly make the introduction about the topic at hand.

Chapter 1

Normally you introduce the subject here. Talk about the problems, struggles, questions, and issues that arise when people don't have the information you're about to give them. Get them excited with the possibilities of what they can do or how their life will change with this info. Hint at what's to come in the following pages. In short, hook them so they want to continue reading.

Further Chapters

This is about the actual writing and will be covered in detail in the next section of this eBook.

Conclusion

Conclude by taking the high points of your ebook and wrapping them up here. This can also be a good spot for FAQs that didn't get covered in the main chapters. End everything on a positive note. Don't forget to thank them for reading and make sure you've given them a way to get in touch with you — via email, phone, contact form, or help desk.

Resources

The resource section can usually be found in list form at the very end of the ebook.

- List out your favorite resources for doing what you wrote about in the body of the ebook. For example, if your ebook was about being a pet sitter, your resources might be links to liability forms, dog walking contracts, leashes, treats, poop bags, association memberships, and pet sitting insurance contacts. These may be affiliate links where you earn commission if your ebook readers purchase after clicking through your links.

You will probably also have these links throughout the ebook, but listing them here in the resource section is a convenience for the reader, saving them from having to go back and search through the whole ebook again.

- This resource section could also be the spot where you give them further reading on the subject. Your ebook might be complimentary to a physical or digital book, or some wonderful blogs. Letting the reader know where to get more information is highly helpful.

- You can do an upsell, downsell or cross-sell here. If you have a coaching or training program or a “do it for you” program, that would be an upsell.

If you have a tool, software script, or additional pieces that would make the reader’s life easier when implementing what they’ve learned from you, those would probably be downsells.

Or you might do a cross-sell which would be like socks to go with the shoes, content to go with the blog theme, or napkins to go with the dishes. (Look at the very end of this ebook for an example of a cross-sell.)

The Chapter About Chapters

Now we come to the body of the ebook, the spot that strikes fear in the hearts of many wannabe writers, the place where they stop and don’t get any further. Yes, it can be scary and overwhelming, but the good news is you can easily take small bites and get that whole elephant eaten before you know it.

What you’re going to do is tackle one chapter at a time, after you do an outline. I can’t stress enough how important it is to do an outline first. It allows you to gather your thoughts and ideas and put them into some sort of order. An outline also helps you keep focused on what you’re doing and enables you to get your manuscript done a lot faster. Otherwise you will find yourself repeating things, going off towards dead ends, and spending a great deal of time trying to fix it and make it cohesive.

Start with a very rough outline in pencil and add to it as you go. You’re writing with pencil so you can erase what doesn’t fit and move things around until it makes sense.

There are several ways you can go here depending on what your subject is, but the important thing to get right is that the chapters should follow a logical sequence.

- 1. If it’s a How To ebook, then each chapter will be a step.** Start your first chapter with the first step and the last chapter with the last step. Step-by-step books can be the easiest to write. Remember to look at it from a beginner’s viewpoint so you don’t leave out any of the steps.
- 2. Writing an ebook can be similar to writing an article except you’re thinking chapters rather than paragraphs; like this:**

Intro - Explain the problem and tell them what you will be telling them.

Chapter - Point 1 - problem and solution.

Chapter - Point 2 - problem and solution.

Chapter - Point 3 - problem and solution.

Chapter - Etc.

Conclusion - Sum up the problem again and the solutions you've proposed. Offer further reading or helpful resources.

- 3. Write each chapter as if it was its own article.** Just make sure it follows a logical order and the end of one chapter will lead into the beginning of the next. Example: 2nd chapter is about three different types of dog training, which can lead nicely into chapter 3, which is on the first easy commands to teach your dog.
- 4. If your subject doesn't lend itself to step-by-step, consider formatting it via the 5 Ws and 1 H (what, who, when, where, why and how).** The first chapter or two are about what xyz is. The next chapter is about who benefits from xyz, and so on, including several chapters on how towards the end.
- 5. Use a question and answer format.** Your topic might lend itself to this format with each chapter addressing one question and the detailed answer(s). You can really position yourself as an expert with this one.
- 6. Another type of ebook might be a collection of similar micro-topics within a larger subject.** This might be Internet marketing success stories, various dog training methods or the best of _____ (whatever it is you do).

If you can't figure out what your chapters should be, try brainstorming with the help of a keyword tool, Yahoo suggestions, or Amazon.

Keyword tool — Put your topic in the Google Adwords keyword tool and look for broad matches. These might give you ideas for chapter topics.

Yahoo Suggestions — Pull up Yahoo and type in your topic. It will give you 10 suggestions at a time, and you can branch off from any of the ones that look like they might be a good fit, giving you 10 more suggestions.

Amazon — Find books on a similar topic and use the "look inside" feature to look at their table of contents. This will immediately show you how they listed their chapters.

These ideas should get you started. When you've finished your outline, you're ready for the next chapter.

The Actual Writing Part

Yes, you actually need to sit down and start writing now that you've done your outline and figured out what your chapters are going to be about.

Again, just take it a chapter at a time. I prefer to start with the introduction to give me total direction, but some people would rather do the intro when they're finished with the body. Don't look at the whole big picture if you find it overwhelming. It's better to just concentrate on the chapter in front of you and remember it's no more than a longish article.

Write in a conversational tone and let your personality show. Remember, you are an original and only you can give the information you're sharing your unique slant. Don't be afraid, just dig in and educate your reader in a friendly manner, covering exactly what you wanted to cover.

I suggest you set up a schedule and give yourself deadlines so you will actually see this project through to completion. Maybe you want to have it finished in two weeks — Day one will be picking your topic, working up an outline and deciding on your chapters. Day two will be the intro. Day three will be a chapter (including the research for that chapter), etc.

Notice I didn't tell you to do all the research for the ebook at once? That's because it becomes A) too much, and B) a reason to procrastinate. But if you do the research as needed, it becomes a much more manageable chunk and you don't have any excuses. :-)

I also suggest you finish a chapter the same day you start it, if at all possible. Otherwise you lose your train of thought, forget what you've already written or where you want to go with it, and then you start repeating yourself. (I speak from experience here!)

You can really do an ebook in two weeks or less when you set deadlines for yourself. These deadlines help you hold yourself accountable. Public accountability can work wonders as well; put an announcement in an email or on your site about the release date of your upcoming ebook, or tell your coach or find an accountability partner to help see you through.

Clear off your desk, even though you have other items wanting your attention, and do your writing in blocks. Turn off email notifications, Skype, instant messaging, TV and the family. It's

really true that one minute of interruption costs you at least fifteen minutes to get back on track with what you were doing before the interruption.

Do not edit as you write because that's just another form of interruption. Instead, just write, write, write, and save the editing for later. If you can't think of a word, leave a string of dots like this in it's place. The word will come to you easily when you go to edit it. Really!

I'm amazed at the number of ebooks I've ready where I'm quite certain the writer never bothered to go back and read a word they wrote before publishing. Re-read your material, especially after you've had a chance to sleep on it. You'll be surprised at how much you can fix and how much clarity you can add (plus find spelling mistakes, extraneous words, etc.) if you just take the time to re-read your work.

You may also find that it helps if you read it to yourself out loud. It's surprising what you discover when the words are actually spoken. I can't tell you how much awkwardness I've been able to remove from an ebook simply because I read it out loud.

But, don't get yourself so bogged down with perfection that you never get around to publishing your ebook, because...

Timing is everything. The faster you can put out quality products, the more money you can make as a result. Get excited, push yourself, minimize excuses, and just get it done. Ebooks are your real estate!

Get Your Graphics

When you have the rough draft done, you've got a good idea of what your ebook is about and it's time to name it and get the graphics done.

Graphics are important because they offer a visual for both the squeeze page or sales page and the ebook cover page. Studies have been done that show people will more likely buy if they have a book cover to look at on the sales page. These studies also show that a 3D partially open ecover works better than a front view 2D closed cover.

The reason to order the graphics now is because it could take the graphic designer several days to get them done, depending on his/her work load. You don't want to have to wait for them, so place your order and start working on the editing phase of your manuscript.

Before you can order the graphics though, you have to come up with a title for your ebook. So let's go over titles next.

Titles

There is a lot of advice floating around about how to name an ebook, and I encourage you to research it further, but the gist is this:

- 1. Don't make the name too long.** It's hard to get a long name and a subtitle all on an ecover. Plus you're just asking for people to forget the name of your book. When people tell their friends (or online marketers tell other online marketers) about your ebook, you want them to remember the name of it. You can always explain it further in the subtitle.
- 2. Use powerful words and make it exciting, if possible.** It does depend on the subject though. Come up with a handful of your best possibilities and run them by a few of your savvy marketing friends to get their input.
- 3. Use keywords.** Do a keyword search using Google's AdWords Keyword tool and try to pick appropriate keywords that people are searching for. It's not going to matter with your actual ebook because it will be a PDF and you don't want people finding it for free anyway if you're selling it, but it matters for the squeeze or sales pages. You want them to find your sales page for your ebook when they search using those keywords.

Now, if you are giving your ebook away for the purpose of collecting email addresses, and you want it to go viral, then you do want to put your very best keywords in the title. In this case you want people to find your ebook through an organic search.

When you think you've got a great idea for a name, run it through the search engines to see if that name is already being used. If it is, and that's quite possible, determine if it matters. If it's a popular, current book, then you probably want to choose something else.

If it turns out to be the name of an article or something totally unrelated, or really old and obscure, you might decide to keep it. You can also vary it slightly and make sure your subtitle is totally different.

Tied in with naming your ebook is deciding whether you want to buy a domain name to go with it.

You may opt to give access to your ebook directly from a page on your existing blog or website:

<http://mysite.com/myebookname>

or you may opt to give your ebook its own domain:

<http://myebookname.com>

It depends on you and what your plans are for the ebook. For example, if you have an established blog with lots of readers and this ebook is something you're going to give away to your readers, a separate domain name probably isn't necessary.

On the other hand, if this is going to be a major earner for you and you're going to do a product launch and play it up big, then its own domain name is a must.

Graphics

I would encourage you to get your graphics done by a professional (and not just because I'm a professional who can do your graphics for you). Why?

- Because designing graphics, unless that's your specialty, will take up a lot of your time — time better spent elsewhere in your business. Again, I encourage you to make this ebook creation process as quick and as painless as possible.
- Because the chances are, it will look amateurish. This reflects badly on your ebook. Potential customers will shy away thinking the content might be as questionable as the cover. You and I might know your content is top quality, but they'll never know because they can't get past your ugly graphics.
- Because it's relatively inexpensive to get graphics done. You can get the ecover and a mini site done and it's paid for with the first few sales of your ebook – or in client fees.

Isn't it worth it to invest a little in order to earn a lot more, save time, and look like the professional you want to be or already are?

What graphics do you need?

Of course you want the ecover, first and foremost. Then you will ask yourself what your plans

are for the ebook and whether you need a sales page, a squeeze page, a mini-site, and perhaps the contents (the inside pages).

I vote for getting at least both the ecover and a squeeze page, sales page, or minisite done for you whether you're going to put it on an existing domain or buy a new domain. It's a no-brainer to go for both when you're going to sell it on its own stand-alone site. But even if you're going to sell it as a part of your current site, you might want to link people to the sales page. Also, if you want affiliates to sell it too, they'll definitely want you to have a sales page.

As far as who will do your graphics, you can go with the known or unknown. You can sometimes look at the bottom of sales pages that you like the look of and see who the graphics were done by. Or you can ask around and find out who your friends or acquaintances happily use. A third option is to hire me to create your graphics for you. You'll find a link to learn more about what I offer at the end of this ebook.

Check out the package deals. Usually designers — including me — have several packages to choose from and the more the package includes, the higher the price.

Edit Your Masterpiece

Editing is perhaps the least appealing part of writing an ebook for many. It tends to take all the fun out of the endeavor and can become quite tedious. Then there's the fact that you've finally finished writing the darn thing and you just want to be done with it. You start getting anxious because it's taken longer than you thought it would and you want to start making money with it or get it out there so it can start getting you email addresses.

It's hard to swallow this, but slow down! Editing is a very important part of the whole process of writing an ebook and can make the difference between it being a big fat waste of your time and a success.

It could be that you don't feel real confident about editing. Spellcheck can only take you so far; you need to have proper grammar, right? Yes and no. Spelling is important and you do need to make sure you have that part correct, but correct grammar is a different story.

These days, conversational writing in an ebook is perfectly acceptable and in fact, desirable. There are always exceptions — technical tomes or, of course, ebooks about grammar.

I almost bought an ebook recently that was of a highly technical nature until I read comments online that said the ebook was full of technical errors and that many of the examples given for doing certain routines would not work. It appeared that the editor did not check to make sure that what was written would indeed yield the desired result. So if what you are writing includes instructions for doing something, make sure the instructions are accurate. Good advice: Have someone ELSE follow your instructions and see if they have any problems.

Try to put yourself in your proposed reader's shoes and ask yourself these questions as you re-read your ebook:

- Does it all make sense?
- Will the reader learn new things from reading this?
- Does it follow a logical order — beginning, middle, conclusion?
- Are there any loose ends? Did I go off on a thread that either wasn't necessary or one that I didn't finish up with?
- Is my ebook tight? Or do I go on and on and on about a particular point without saying anything new? Did I write 40 pages with a lot of fluff and it really should be 25 pages?

Most likely you won't feel comfortable with your answers and that's perfectly normal. Sometimes you'll have to do major rearranging of the whole house and other times you only need to move a chair, or get a more colorful lamp.

Take the time to do what you need to do to make sure your ebook is highly readable and informative, and then proceed to part two of the editing process.

Editing – Part Two

Leave your manuscript alone for a few days or a week. Don't look at it at all! There are several reasons for this.

One reason is that you'll have ideas, phrases, and additional tips pop into your head when you're not even thinking about it. This is your subconscious working behind the scenes coming up with ways to make the manuscript better. I call this "ebook percolation."

The second reason is, because after a few days, you will then read it out loud to find the grammatical errors you might have missed previously. When you're too close to it, reading the same sentences over and over, you can slip in words that are supposed to be there but aren't, without even realizing it. Giving yourself a break from it helps you to forget the words and read exactly what you wrote.

Reading it out loud helps you hear your sentence structure. Wait... did you pause right there? Put a comma in! Did that sentence go on and on and on and you had to take a breath before you finished it? If that's the case, use periods at natural breaks to create two or three sentences out of it.

Take frequent breaks with reading it out loud so you stay fresh and on top of it. Reading aloud is one of your best editing tools!

Common mistakes your spellchecker may not catch:

they're - contraction: they are

their - possessive; belonging to someone

there - a place or to a place. stand there. Let's go there again.

your - possessive; not mine but yours

you're - contraction; you are

its - possessive. The table was on its last leg.

it's - contraction; it is

If you're still not comfortable with your ability to edit, you can enlist the help of a friend who has those skills. You might need to buy them dinner as a thank you, but it will be more than worth it.

Another way you can get editing help is to barter. If they help you with the editing, you can offer something in exchange, such as tech help.

A third way is to pay for an editor. There are people online who specialize in this service and can set your manuscript straight in no time.

If you're enlisting the aid of an editor, just be sure that they keep the writing in your voice. I

had an editor I used once who was very good technically when it came to grammar and sentence structure, but by the time he was finished with my stuff, it didn't sound like me anymore. So I found a new editor.

One last thing... any time you start changing things or editing content, you'll want to run the spellchecker again.

Do not, however, rely solely on your spellchecker to catch mistakes. Many words may be spelled correctly, but are the wrong word. Some examples: their when you meant there, stationary when you meant stationery, were when you meant where, to when you meant too or two. Good advice: If you're a lousy speller, get someone else to edit for you.

By now you should have the impression that there are no good excuses here. If you hit a stumbling block, know that others have hit it too and successfully found a way around it.

Bring On The Bling

It's hard to stop yourself from editing your writing or adding bits and pieces of graphics when you're in the process of writing, but pausing to add or edit really does interrupt your flow. In fact, it's a much better use of your time to wait and add graphics at the end. Better use of your time = getting your ebook done faster.

So when it's finally time to add the bling, bring it with style and watch your ebook transform from a manuscript into a masterpiece.

Start with your headers and/or footers. What you do here is a matter of opinion. You can have a big header graphic running across the top of each page, but that might be a little much for your needs. Now is when you check out other ebooks that look pleasing to you and decide what you want.

The elements of the header and footer can be:

- ebook name and perhaps *your* name
- website link
- copyright reserved blurb

- page number
- short promotional blurb with link

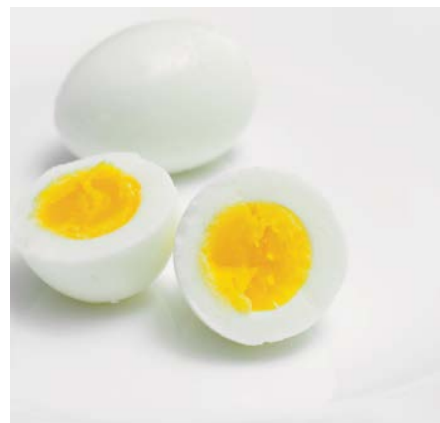
Next, add the ecover graphic to your first page. While you're there, consider adding page borders in a matching color. 1/2 point, 3/4 point, or 1 point is sufficient. A border that's too large will detract from what you've written. You don't even have to add a border, but I believe it makes it look more like an ebook and less like an article.

After that you can go back and scan the manuscript for sentences or short paragraphs that look like tips. Create tip boxes – or sidebars — for these, using the same box style throughout. Tip boxes make information stand out. They're also a good place to display info that doesn't quite fit or flow with the rest of the chapter.

Quotes can also go in boxes or you can simply indent the quotes and change the font. I recommend being consistent with your colors using only one or two colors throughout. That also applies to fonts. Use the same font throughout and let bold, italics and font size do the work for you. The only time I would change a font style is for a quote if I'm not encasing it in a box.

Now it's time to find the spots where you can add screenshots if they will enhance your material or further explain a point. How-To instructions are perfect for including screenshots. There's no rule of thumb, but if you carefully look over what you've written – keeping in mind the knowledge of your reader or their status as a beginner or more experienced individual — you'll see where best to put a screenshot.

Besides screenshots, you'll want to add pictures or images. It really depends on the subject of your book and your delivery method of information, but you can include photos showing the steps to go with step-by-step instructions. An example of a type of ebook that would benefit greatly from including photographs would be an ebook on how to do a floral arrangement, or an ebook on cooking.



Otherwise, you can include stock photos purchased online inexpensively from places like www.istockphoto.com that compliment what you've penned. The images need to “go” with your text. If you've written about a serious subject such as inexpensive funerals, you definitely won't want funny pictures!

1. Go to www.istockphoto.com and register. It's free.
2. The images are now all priced the same, but you'll still need to buy some credits to be able to download the images. Each image is given to you in the largest size. If you aren't sure if you want to use a certain photo, download a COMP image first. It costs you nothing and allows you to place and resize the image to see how it will work with your text and layout. Just be sure that if you DO use the image, you go back and buy it and replace the image with the "real thing." Otherwise, you'll see an ugly watermark that will tell all the world that you are using it without paying for it.
3. Enter your keywords in the search box. You can specify what medium — photos, illustrations, etc. — you want.
4. Browse the images to find what you like.
5. Download the image to your computer.
6. Insert the images into your working document and adjust it to the size you like.

Adding these elements really makes your ebook look professional. Plus they add relief for the eye and help people get through the document. Pictures, screenshots, other graphics, and white space make it much easier to read.

White space is that bit between paragraphs. Your paragraphs should actually be shorter than you've been taught to write in school. Again, that makes them easier to read, which is important in this age of information overload. The shorter paragraphs naturally lead to more whitespace, which leads to the easier read.

Bringing the bling to your product is the fun part and the chance to let the artist in you stand out, but don't get too carried away. Too many graphics are distracting and cause the reader to think you're trying to inflate your page count. Less is a better option, plus it will help you not to spend too much of your time on this step.

Some other stock photo resources that I really like and are less expensive even than iStock-Photo.com, include:

www.123RF.com

www.DollarPhotoClub.com

Next Steps...

Now that the main body of your piece is written and edited, it's time to add the other parts as mentioned previously in the *Skeleton of an Ebook* chapter.

Cover Page

Do your cover page and add your ecover graphic if you haven't already. Don't spend too much time on this; this page is usually pretty simple with the cover, author's name, URL, and copyright information. The cover page with its ecover picture does build some anticipation of what's to come.

Disclaimer

I can't give you legal advice on what this should say, but I will tell you that you need one. Again, look at other disclaimer/privacy pages to get ideas, and consult an attorney if you really want the final word.

Table of Contents

Now that you've got the chapters fleshed out and actual names for the titles, you can do the table of contents page. This assumes you are using MSWord for your working file.

Here's how to make the page numbers clickable links:

1. **[Create a bookmark]** Go to the chapter, let's call it "What's My Outcome?", and highlight one of the words (like "outcome"). Click on the hyperlink button and then the bookmark button. Give the bookmark a name (outcome).
2. **[Link to the bookmark]** Now go up to your Table of Contents, highlight the page number and hyperlink it to the bookmark you've named (outcome).

NOTE: You may need to consult the HELP section of MSWord, depending on which version of the program you are working in, and on which platform (Mac or PC) you are working on, to be able to find the buttons and/or the pulldown menus in order to create bookmarks within a document.

Introduction

You may have already done this in the course of writing, but many people leave it until after the body of the ebook is written.

There are two schools of thought on this:

For those who like to write it before anything else, they feel that it helps them know what the manuscript is going to be about and helps keep them focused.

For others, they'd rather do the outline, then write the ebook, and when that's done they know what their intro should say.

Conclusion

You've probably already written your conclusion, but take another look at it. Have you given them your contact info? Have you ended with a call to action? The ebook may be over, but you have a definite desire to have them do something next. Invite them to visit your blog and leave a comment, send you questions to be incorporated into your next ebook, buy further training materials, learn about your paid mentoring program or subscription-based newsletter, etc. Remember your initial purpose in writing the ebook.

Resources

Look back through your ebook and make sure you've added live links where you want them. They can be affiliate links and/or straight links to products. Now take these and line them up in list form here in the resource section. Add more that you think might be helpful for your readers. Non-affiliate links in the mix shows you're not just there to make a buck but you genuinely want to help.

Now... take a last look at your manuscript and make sure the whitespaces are consistent throughout, not looking like the paragraphs are a mile apart on one page and cramped on the next. Double check that the page breaks aren't awkward-looking and all the images look right and aren't on top of any words.

A note about the last look-over: Give it your critical eye but temper that eye with the need for speed. You want to get this thing out the door and working for you — it doesn't have to be absolute perfection!

Turn the document into a PDF

This is easy to do if you're using Word. Just click the "Save As" button and then select "PDF" as the file type and save it.

If you don't have the option to just save as a PDF, then you can use Open Office which is free, or another PDF converter program.

The PDF will look amazing and professional. Well done! While looking at the PDF, click on all your links to make sure they work right. You might be surprised to see you have a few links

to correct. Do the corrections in your original doc and then turn it into a PDF again. This will override the first PDF.

It probably seems like a lot of steps to remember, with most of them coming fast and furious at the end of the process so here's a quick checklist for you:

Ebook Checklist

- Decide on purpose of ebook.
- Choose your topic.
- Outline.
- Write each chapter.
- Order graphics.
- Proofread and edit.
- Add bling – headers/footers, images, screenshots, page borders, etc.
- Add intro and conclusion.
- Add ecover, disclaimer, and Table of Contents pages.
- Add resources and links to the ebook.
- Check whitespace, page breaks, and overall look.
- Turn into a PDF.
- Test all the links. (Ask someone else to test the links for you, too.)

Other Ways To Write An Ebook

Now that we've gone over in detail how to write an ebook, you're either ready to get started... or still a little scared. Really though, if you take it chapter by chapter, thinking of each chapter as merely a longish article, you'll have it written before you know it.

"But what if I just can't write?" you ask. Well, there are other ways to get around doing the actual writing and those ways will be explored here.

Do audio interviews with people and have them transcribed.

If you're much more comfortable with talking to people than writing, then interviews can be the way to go. Find the experts in your field, ask them questions, and record the whole thing. Query seven experts this way and you've got a great product. You can have these interviews transcribed fairly inexpensively through Odesk or Elance and all you would need to do is gather them into one document and add a cover page, introduction, conclusion and resources. You can offer the audios as well as the ebook for a more expensive product, or you can sell the audios separately on the backend.

The number of experts you want depends on how many questions you ask them. Usually the more questions, the fewer interviewees you need.

While this is a fast way to create a product, the work you put into it will be in trying to get hold of the interviewees and scheduling times for the interviews that will work for them.

Give experts 3 written questions to answer and combine them.

This method is similar to the above, although you're asking them questions in writing and they're responding in writing, rather than doing a recorded interview.

This is sometimes easier for the expert as they can answer the questions when they're able to, rather than trying to make time for a scheduled interview.

Be mindful of their time and don't give them a whole bunch of questions! Three might work nicely, five might be okay but pushing it. Note that the questions you give them may be different or the same as the other experts. It's up to you how you want to structure it.

Use PLR. (Private Label Rights)

Using a PLR ebook means you're more than halfway there! The PLR creator has already done the research for you and it's all laid out in logical fashion in the PLR ebook. You might also get the sales page to go with it.

Consider PLR to be unfinished business. You may need to get new graphics (even if it comes with graphics), rename it, and add your personality. As with the chapter about adding bling, you'll want to add value in the form of graphic images, screenshots, header and footer, tip boxes or quote boxes, and a page border.

It's also a good idea to add more to the text. If there are 7 chapters, you might want to add an 8th and 9th if you feel the existing information is not complete or as valuable as you would like it to be. If there are 7 bullet points, you could add another 3. Or you could expand on the existing bullet points and make them several paragraphs or even pages long.

Record yourself talking with voice-recording software.

Software such as *Dragon Naturally Speaking* can turn your spoken words into text. If you're better at vocalizing your thoughts rather than writing them down, this might be a great choice.

Of course, you will still want to start with an outline that includes your chapter topics to help guide you through voicing your ebook rather than penning it.

Clean up the text yourself or hire someone to edit and clean it up for you. Add the bling and turn your ebook into a PDF.

Hire a ghostwriter to write your ebook.

That's what online ghostwriters do... they write ebooks, reports and articles for customers. They do all the work and you get to put your name on it. This is definitely not a cheap way to go, but if you know you have the buyers waiting in the wings, it can be a quick and painless way to get your ebook out there.

As a cheaper alternative, you can hire the ghostwriter to write articles for you. Each article will eventually be a chapter in your ebook. You will need to do some work to make sure each "chapter" flows to the next. If you go this route, make sure to use the same ghostwriter for each chapter so the quality and style are consistent.

Keep in mind that ghostwriters are not mind-readers. Be clear on your instructions and let them know exactly what you're looking for. Don't assume anything, give them the tone, who the audience will be, what you want the ebook to accomplish, what call to action you want at the end, etc.

Using a ghostwriter is a lot like using PLR for your content. You may want to add some things or change the wording used to better suit your "voice."

Use other people's work.

Look for blog posts on your topic and when you find the good ones, ask the blog owner if you could include their post in your ebook with a link back to their blog. This works best if you pick blogs that don't see a lot of traffic but have excellent, informative posts. The blog owners might be eager to get any traffic your ebook could send their way. It's really a win-win situation, but if the blogger doesn't see it that way, be prepared to move on to other blog post choices.

There is a wealth of information on blogs that doesn't get the attention and credit it deserves. You can really put together a valuable ebook this way.

A similar route is to combine articles from article directories. In the same manner, scout out what you want, contact the articles' authors and ask if they would like their article to be published in your ebook with their bios attached. No's are possible, but you'll probably get mostly yes's.

A caution if you are creating an ebook to give away or as a way to demonstrate your expertise: don't use other people's stuff. You want to show your expertise, not theirs. And if the purpose of your ebook is to get people to hire you, you want to make sure that you are promoting you and your expertise and not somebody else's.

Conclusion And Beyond

Hopefully this ebook has taken some of the mystique and scariness out of writing your own ebook. It really boils down to a relatively easy process and if you follow the steps you will find yourself at the end with a completed manuscript that you'll be proud of.

Indeed, it is a leap of faith to spend a lot of time creating something when you're not positive it will make you money. That's why you should spend time in the planning stages and figure out what is selling... what people are buying in your niche market. This is too important a step to miss.

You may wonder what you have to say on a subject you can see is selling well for others, but is something that you know nothing about. Well, some research on your part will help you understand the topic and give you enough knowledge to write about it. Remember, you have

a point of view and style that is unique. Sometimes immersing yourself in a new topic means you're coming at it from a different angle and perspective, and what you end up with is fresh and interesting rather than stale and boring.

You should be able to see now that there are many positive reasons to write an ebook, like furthering your brand, making money, growing your list of customers to sell further products to, and pre-selling a larger product.

Don't stop with just one ebook under your belt! It's a learning process. You learn how to write better as well as faster by creating systems and templates. Each one will get progressively easier. Expect to make a few mistakes with the first one and improve with each subsequent ebook.

And don't think you're done with your ebook once you've written it! Unless you have a big list of potential customers waiting in the wings with baited breath for your ebook, or you have JV partners with those big lists, you will need to do a fair amount of marketing of said book.

It's a little like a new physical book publication where the author hits the talk show circuit to talk about the book and goes on to do lots of bookstore signings. They're marketing and so should you, although in slightly different ways.

- Allow others in your field to do audio and/or written interviews with you.
- Do guest posts on blogs where the post you write is on the subject of your ebook. You'll have your bio attached that points to the sales page of your digital book.
- Put the link in your email and forum signature lines.
- Be a blog commenter and forum commenter, leaving insightful and helpful tips on the topic.
- Set up an affiliate program and ask others to promote you for a 50% or higher affiliate commission you pay for each sale.

Your first ebook is only the beginning as it's probably near the front end of your sales funnel and will lead to much more. Writing your first ebook can give you the confidence you need to take other steps to further your success. ■



Your Words Are Perfect, They Should **Look** Perfect, Too!



The eBook or Special Report that you create to attract prospects to your mailing list is one of the most important marketing tools you will ever use. It will likely be the first contact you have with future clients and you want to make a stellar first impression. And, just as important as the words you choose to convey your message, so is the way your eBook looks. Our great design, coupled with your perfect words, makes a marketing match that will have you tickled pink as you watch your client list grow and your profits soar.

Visit **martymarsh.com/ebooks** to discover the creative, exciting, and affordable ways we can help you dress up your eBook — or your next marketing promotion.

Recently, I helped **Charlotte Denny Henley** create an ebook to accompany the launch of her new book, *Whole Weigh...*

“Wonderful work, Marty, on such short notice. So creative and such good energy. Blessings.”

— Charlotte Denny Henley
www.WholeWeigh.com

“We have worked with Marty Marsh for many years. Marty has a way of turning basic copy into MAGIC! He has helped us to create marketing materials that elicit tremendous response from the consumer.”

— Timothy J. Feuling, California