



HOW TO WRITE AND PLAN YOUR BOOK IN 7 EASY STEPS AN INSIDER'S GUIDE

**A COMPREHENSIVE WORKBOOK
TO HELP YOU PLAN AND
WRITE YOUR BOOK**

**BY AUTHOR & PUBLISHER
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Introduction

Writing a book may seem like a daunting challenge, I mean, it's supposed to be super hard right? Well, actually, when you approach it with a systematic plan, writing a book can be quite straightforward.

In this 'insider's guide', I'm going to share with you the techniques I use with my one-on-one clients. This is exactly the process I take them through, and we always achieve great results. When you know HOW, the doing is then relatively easy.

All I ask is that you follow my strategies - do the tasks I set out, and you'll soon be adding 'author' to your list of achievements. This guide contains *everything* you need to plan and write your book. In turn, your results will; position you as an expert, gain trust with your readers, and make you the only logical choice when it comes to a buying decision*.

Then, with the right approach to marketing, you can start using your publication as a powerful **lead generation tool** and begin growing your list of targeted prospects. (Although it's critical to include a few key ingredients within it. I'll be sending you this over the next few weeks, so watch out for it in your inbox!)

In the meantime, let's make sure your book is good to go...

Here is to being a published author in the next 12 months.



Alexa Whitten,

Your book coach

P.S **This guide is predominately for business owners who are wanting to write a book for lead generation - however I have included some additional tips if you're writing a fictional book.*



How To Plan & Write A Book In 7 Easy Steps

I have condensed the writing process down to 7 simple steps. Each one can be done independently of the other, and you can jump around and complete each step in whatever order suits you (although I do suggest you follow them sequentially).

However, you need to set yourself up for success before you start, this means don't try and attempt this if some large life event is around the corner (moving home, moving offices, getting married etc). Keeping the flow is super important, and if you stop halfway through, you might find it really difficult to get back into it.

Some people find it best to book some time off away from the office or set up a dedicated writing time - early in the morning, or as a scheduled task in their diary. Clients that have done this (booked time off) have had some great results. I really recommend you segment some time off for the first step - it's really important to get your plan right - and it will really help you with your writing. In fact, this is probably the most important part of 7 steps. Once you have your plan in place, your book will be written quickly, simply, and off to the printer within just a few weeks.

Before you start...get the right mindset.

Writing a book takes dedication and time. If you don't make writing a priority - or schedule in specific writing time into your day, then it will be much harder to finish the book. I see a lot of writers set out with great intentions, but after a few weeks - when life gets 'busy' - their writing goals seem to take a back seat.

Like starting anything new (think fitness regime, or starting a new hobby) you need to keep in mind that this is a project that needs constant, regular attention. You can do this, and with the right attitude, you'll see your book written before you know it. But there will be days when you just can't be bothered - I know, I went through the same feelings when I was writing mine, so I might suggest two strategies that will help;

- ✓ **Mindset strategy #1** - Set up a regular writing time - preferably in the morning (trying to write when you're tired, after a day at the office or home is really hard).
- ✓ **Mindset strategy #2** - Use Step 3 - and if you're on a roll, get yourself 'in credit'. In other words, work out what you need to write weekly, then if you can, write more... so that if you do have a bad week, you won't fall too far behind.

Jot down your writing schedule here:

MY WRITING SCHEDULE WILL BE:

*"There's a difference between interest and commitment.
When you're interested in doing something, you do it only when it's convenient.
When you're committed to something, you accept no excuses - only results."
Ken Blanchard*

Let's get started...

By following these 7 steps, you'll have a book written and finished in no time at all. Read through all of them first before you start, and feel free to make notes along the way. I've added in space for your answers, but you can use your own notepad or jotter to make additional notes. Just make sure you complete *all of the steps* before you start writing.

Step 1: Who are you writing to?

Identifying your target audience is critical - as this will not only help you with the tone of your book, but it will give you some really good ideas on how to sell your book as well. Don't just think 'Amazon' - yes, you can of course list your book there - but there are 1,000's of books listed weekly - and you'll still need to drive sellers to buy it. (Also, Amazon might not be the best place to sell your book - if you read my article, [Traditional Publishing vs Self-Publishing](#) which I suggested when you first signed up, you might find that selling it directly is much better for your profits.)

So, who is this book aimed at? The better description of this person the better - are they male or female? What age range? Married? Do they have children? What do they do? When you have this information, you'll then know where to market the book - and that is super important.

MY TARGET AUDIENCE IS....

Step 2: Brainstorming the title

This can be done before you start, or as you're writing. However, having a working title is useful, as it keeps you on track and reminds you what your book is supposed to be about.

Jot down the top key things that your book is going to establish, and then come up with a benefit style headline that identifies how the book will help your reader.

If you're writing a fiction book, then you won't need a strap line. However, do do the research bit I suggest on the next page. Instead of the key message, come up with a one sentence summary. This then can remind you of what your story is about. Pop your one sentence summary in the box below. Then go to the Title ideas, and the title research exercise.

THE TOP KEY MESSAGES ARE:

THE TOP KEY MESSAGES ARE CONT'...

Title Ideas

Come up with four or five titles at first, the more the better, and then ask your list (if you don't have a list, you can ask your fans on Facebook, or any other social media platform you frequent, just make sure you're asking your target audience!) which title they like best, or run a split test with the two titles you think are the most relevant, and see which one wins. You may be surprised with the results.

TOP TIP Joining specific groups where your target audience 'hang out' is a really smart way to get interest in your book, but remember, you need to engage with your potential reader, and not make it all about you! Get involved in the conversation and show your interest. This is a really smart way to get a 'following'.

It's also good to have a strong strap line that goes underneath your title. This can then explain your book in more detail - but keep it succinct and clear.

Some great book titles include:

- **Getting Things Done** - The art of stress free productivity by David Allen
- **The Salon Owners Bible** - Reveals what it really takes to create a successful salon by Simon Lotinga
- **Brilliant Life** - How to live a brilliant, balanced life by Michael Heppell
- **Making Habits - Breaking Habits** - How to make changes that stick by Jeremy Dean
- **Offshore or Die!** - How to solve all of your accounting firm's staffing issues with an offshore team - Mark Cottle.

All of these titles are snappy and succinct. You can pretty much tell exactly what's in the book before you even pick it up and that is what makes a good title.

So, before you do any more... come up with three or four titles now. Don't think about it too much, just write them down. Don't worry about word count, just get into the flow - if you come up with more than four, great - keep writing. Now, once you've written them which one sticks out? Can you shorten it? Notice that the 'Brilliant life' title doesn't have a 'how to' in front of it - it just states the end result. Can you do the same?

Once you have three or four really strong titles, (or perhaps you have the one?) use that going forwards.

MY 4 TITLE IDEAS:

1.

2.

3.

4..

Once you have your title, then come up with some qualifying strap lines. Explain what the book is going to teach - and make sure you address the 'pain' your customers experience. Tell them how your book will solve it.

Research the title

Once you have some good ideas, research your shortlist, and make sure it's not already being used. Even though book titles aren't copyrightable, you don't want to have the same title as someone else... it'll be harder to stand out on selling platforms.

TOP TIP

Use Amazon.com to research your title - this is a great resource for helping you with inspiration. See what titles are best sellers. Look at your topic, and see what other titles are already in use. This can be a really valuable exercise - you don't want to come up with a great title, only to find it's already a best-seller - you'll really struggle to get traction of your book.

Once you have your title sorted and chosen, do some URL research. If you can get the title of your book as a web address, you can then create a super simple landing page and sell your book directly (rather than through Amazon, which charge a hefty commission for doing so). Thinking of routes to market at this stage is really important.

You'll notice that best selling authors are creating book specific (or character specific) websites for their fans, and it's a great way of getting a list - especially if you're thinking of writing more than one book. Don't just rely on facebook and social media (they could shut down) - get your fans to your website, get their details and build a list.

Step 3: Planning Your Book

Planning your book is essential. Without this step, your book will take much longer to write and be much more difficult to complete. All of this can be overcome quickly and easily by using a simple technique I call the *'Blueprint Plan'*.

It may seem obvious, but you'd be surprised how few people spend any quality time planning out their book. They may have a working title, and they may have scoured the Internet for cover ideas, but when it comes to the content, they have a few lines at best, with perhaps a couple of chapter ideas, but not much more.

This amazes me! I mean, you wouldn't dream of building a house without a proper plan; a detailed blueprint of what the house will look like once it's finished; how big it will be; what each room is used for; how many floors it will have etc. Well the same should apply to a book.

There are a few ways you can do this, but my two favourites are:

- Mind-mapping software
- Notepad, or any other non-formatting text editor. Non-formatting at the planning stage is essential (I explain why below).

Of course, you can plan out your book freehand if you wish, just make sure you keep it in a safe place. There will be nothing worse if you spend weeks perfecting your handcrafted document, only to go and spill coffee on it, rendering it unreadable and useless, or worse still, you could lose it altogether. (I go into much more detail about how to plan your book in a specially written article which I'll be sending to you later in an email, so watch out for it - it'll really help with your planning.)



Here is an example of mind-mapping a book.

If you're writing fiction then plan your book as well. Have it mapped out, so that you know where your story is going to go. Don't just think you can do this 'on the fly'. Your plan might not work so well as a mind-map, but you need to find a way that works for you.

Using the sentence you came up with on page 4, now expand that into 4 or 5 sentences. A popular way of structuring a fiction book, is to use the 3 act structure. The first act to lead the reader into the story, the second act to develop the theme and characters (but make sure you have some drama, or story here... otherwise it will drag) and the third act to ramp up the tension and reach a climax, with most loose ends resolved. (You can still have a few unanswered questions at the end, but not too many as this could leave the reader frustrated.)

You'll also need to work on your characters - so write a one page summary for each them, and what part they play in your story. You'll need to know what their aim is within the book, what they add, teach, tell and if they have any conflicts.

What drives them to do what they do is also critical. You will also need to include things like physical characteristics, age, height, likes and dislikes. Get under their skin and write a synopsis from THEIR viewpoint. This will really help with understanding if they are really needed in the book.

Now go and expand on the five sentences you did above, into a paragraph each. This will then serve as a summary of your book, and you should see if this works or not. Get this bit right first, before you start writing for earnest.

Having the entire book planned out - which includes any subplots or flashbacks - will really help you when you're in the thick of writing. Knowing what each character is going to do, and why is integral in continuity. Especially if the book takes a while to write (you won't forget who is doing what!)

Why using non-formatting software (for planning) is important

When you're at the planning stage, it's really important to stay focused and get your plan into enough detail so that when it comes to writing, you can do so without effort. If you're using non-formatting software, (like notepad) it helps to reduce all the distracting elements that programs like Microsoft Word offer. At this stage, it's the content that's King, not how pretty it looks. If you're anything like me, then being able to play around with typefaces and styles only distracts, rather than getting on with the task at hand.

By using something similar to Notepad, the distraction is taken away and it's then easier to concentrate. Try not to be tempted to use any other software at the planning stage!

Once you have your Blueprint Plan finished, then you can start your writing. In fact, if you've planned your book out as I've suggested then the writing part will happen quicker and easier, so make sure you do it.

TOP TIP

There is no right or wrong way to plan your book. Use whatever medium suits you. Sometimes a pen and paper is the best tool. Just make sure you DO IT! 90% of my clients that plan their book, go on to finish it.

A screenshot of a Notepad window with a menu bar (File, Edit, Format, View, Help) and a title bar. The text inside is a handwritten-style plan for a book. It starts with a motivational note, followed by 'why write a book?', 'chapter 1: Part 1' with sub-points on subject, message, and call to action, 'Part 2' with sub-points on writing style and audience, and 'chapter 2: Planning the book' with sub-points on outlining and writing tools.

```
File Edit Format View Help
how to get that book out of your head and into print.
set the damn thing written!
write that book!

why write a book?

chapter 1:
Part 1
what to write about.
your chosen subject
    you know more than you think
    what's your back end?
why it's important to know this information
    what is the one message you want your readers to learn
    what is the call to action.
keep it simple
    one clear and simple message, and one clear call to action
use words, not jargon
    if your industry is full of jargon, then break it down
    don't assume your readers will understand what you mean unless you are speaking
with a very specific group of people

Part 2
who to write too.
    deciding which person to write in. in the first person is easiest
    stick with that format all the way through
    consistency is important
    who is your target audience?
    why knowing that is critical
    keep them in mind ALL the way through
    if you ever get stuck, remember what the message is, and the call to action

chapter 2:
Planning the book
    get an outline done first
    write all the chapter headings
    then write all the subheadings
    once that is done - start padding out each heading and subheading
hints and tips
    using mindmap software
    using notepad
    or even pen and paper
    (see ref section)
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Here is an example of planning a book in notepad.

Plan, Plan, Plan

Using the strategies outlined above, you should spend a good amount of time planning your book (at least a day - if not two or three). Once you have this part completed, you'll find the writing process so much easier, and your book will almost flow without effort.

If you're finding this bit really hard - ask yourself why? Is your book still muddled in your head? If so, you need to go back to the beginning, really understand the questions I asked in Step 1 and 2. If you're confused about what your book is about and unclear on your key message, then no amount of planning will help.

Remember these points:

- ✓ Who is the book for?
- ✓ What is the key message?
- ✓ Why is important they (the reader) knows this?
- ✓ What is the end result (What do you want them to do once they've read it)?

Clarity is key. Break it down, but don't try and write anything until you've done the plan. I've tried to untangle a few books which started with no blueprint, and it was tricky. Get in touch if you're stuck - I can help.

Use the next page to bring everything we've spoken about together. Write out your chapters, then transfer those to whatever tool you find the most useful so that you can add bullet points and subheadings to each chapter title. Take a look at my chapter one example above, so you can see what I mean by adding bullet points or subheadings. You'll need this later in step 5.

Target reader is:

Key message(s) is/are:

Working title:

Strap lines:

Titles for my Chapters;

Introduction

Chapter 1

Chapter 2

Chapter 3

Chapter 4

Chapter 5

Chapter 6

Chapter 7

Conclusion

About the Author

Url research:

Step 4: Set a date and then work backwards

It's always a good idea to have a date set for when you want to have the book written by. If you don't then this project will never seem to have an 'end' and it could go on for months or even years.

One great tactic I employ and encourage my clients to adopt is to calculate how many pages you need to write a day. This makes sure you're on track, and helps you gauge how much time you need to spend on each section.

If you find yourself falling behind schedule, then either you have set too short a time period and you need to re-adjust, or you're not setting enough time each day to get your writing done. Either way, calculate what you need to change, and then commit to that new schedule.

Accountability

It's proven that if you have accountability then you're much more likely to succeed in your goal. Having someone who you can check in with each week, can really help you stay focused and achieve your project.

Is there someone on your team that can hold you accountable for writing your book? If so, then get them on board - you will find it much harder to come up with excuses if you know someone is 'watching over your shoulder'.

Also, hiring a book coach is another smart tactic. They can help you with your writing goals and keep you on track. If you feel that this might be of benefit then I can help you with your writing journey, just jot me an email and we can discuss further if you think you could do with my help.

Another clever tactic is to book something in - a promise to your list, or an announcement about the launch. There is nothing quite like a set in stone deadline to make you accountable*

Make Time

It's important to schedule time in your diary to achieve the above. Perhaps you can block out time and turn off your phone, email alerts, and any other distracting messages that take us away from our goals. Perhaps you can get into work a little earlier, or stay a little later? Setting regular 'writing sessions' is the quickest way to get your book written and it's amazing how much you can accomplish if you write for an hour a day. Also, don't edit at this stage - just get your thinking down on paper - step 7 is where we look at the editing process.

Not sure where to start? Don't panic, read the next step to see how you use your blueprint plan to your advantage.

*However, there is one important caveat here - don't go booking a book launch event before you've written the book! Making yourself accountable to a person is one thing, paying out and putting money down on an event like this is something else. Working under great stress is ill-advised - editing and getting your book printed takes time, and rushing these steps is a mistake. So be realistic with your deadline.

Step 5: Flesh out each section.

So, you've got your plan, and you've worked out a date you want to have this book finished by. You've scheduled time in your diary, and you're now staring at a blank word document. What's next? Take your plan, and copy each chapter title and subheading into a Word document and flesh out each part. You may need to go back to your blueprint and go into each section in more detail if you're finding this difficult.

*The more detail you can put into your plan,
the easier it is to flesh out when you write your book.*

Write like you talk, and don't worry about editing yourself at this point. You're just getting your facts down on paper.

TOP TIP

Using Microsoft's Word Style sheets at this point can be really useful. I have a step by step tutorial - mentioned below - that guides you through how to use them. It really can make a difference in your writing, (there is also a YouTube tutorial as well, at the end of the article).

Get typing or recording

Use any word-formatting programme to do this, BUT limit your use of page formatting. Simply use the formatting features to define the levels of subheadings as explained in my article mentioned below. For instance, the chapter title of your book will be Level 1, then the subheading of that will be Level 2, and any other sub/subheading of those, will be Level 3.

I don't recommend going any further than three levels. If you need to have a fourth level, then simply use the Bold feature of your Microsoft Word programme. But remember try not to use too much formatting at this stage. Once your book is finished you will be giving this to a typesetter who probably won't be able to copy over any formatting that you've done anyway, and if you spend time trying to make your document look like a book (by using headers and footers for example) it will be a waste of your time.

Of course, using **Bold** and *Italics* is a good idea, as it will emphasise different aspects of your book, but don't get distracted with things like centring the page numbers and creating margins, as this is the job of your typesetter and should be discussed at that stage of the process. Also, don't use headers and footers, just leave your document as simple as possible - all these extra formatting bits just complicates the editing stage - and is unnecessary.

I've written an in-depth article on how to use style sheets - and it's a super useful tool to keep track of your progress. I'll be sending it to you in an email - so watch out for it in a few weeks.

If you are verbally recording your book, then you can use your blueprint plan as your 'prompter' - have it on screen - then start your recording. Just make sure your Blueprint Plan has enough detail for you to just walk (or rather talk) through each point. If you get stuck, or you keep stumbling for words, then take another look at your plan, as this is an indication that it needs more detail.

Also, as you are talking through your plan, use your mouse to highlight each section you are talking about, this way you won't get lost, or forget which part you're on. If you make a mistake, don't panic. Either hit stop on the recording, or just keep going, giving clear instructions to the transcriber (at that point) to edit the transcription.

Step 6: Review and refine

Always review and refine your project as you go. I usually encourage my authors to write a chapter, leave it for 24 hours, then come back to it. By then you'll see what needs fixing, and if it makes sense. If you feel that your Blueprint Plan is not quite right, or your writing is always going off track, then stop; tweak if necessary then carry on.

Just remember; who is your book for, and what is the 'call to action'? I always find that having this typed up and in clear sight is really useful. It also keeps your mind focused on the end result, and what you want the reader to do once they have read the book.

There is nothing wrong with editing your Blueprint Plan. If after a few days, or few thousand words you realise that it's just not flowing, or not right, then address the problem sooner rather than later. Your Blueprint Plan should be the backbone of your book, if it's not right, **fix it before you continue.**

However, on the reverse side of things, don't keep changing your plan. Your plan should be in enough detail that writing is fairly straightforward. If it isn't, then you need to really take a good look at it and make sure it's clear or clearer. It should be like colouring in by numbers - all the shapes are there... it's just a case of colouring in the blanks.

If you feel unsure that your Blueprint Plan has enough detail, then why not get in touch. I offer a comprehensive Blueprint plan session which takes you through the process one-on-one. We will get your plan written and ready for you to just start typing. [Click here for more details.](#)

You will need to carry on writing until you have enough pages to produce a (min) 64 page book. (Roughly 40 or so pages of A4.) Of course you can write as many pages as you like, I recommend anything from 64 pages to 128. Some book printers produce softback books in page groups of 4, and with a minimum of 32 pages so keep this in mind when you are getting close to finishing. If you're using services like Createspace or Ingram, then it needs to be in pages divisible by 2.

Step 7: Get your writing checked by a proofreader/copy editor

Once you've written your book and you've read it through enough times that you feel it's ready to go to a professional, then get it read by a proofreader or copy editor. Don't skimp on this. There is nothing worse than reading a book with lots of grammatical errors, or spelling mistakes. It just looks unprofessional and makes it harder to read.

Plus, you might know what you're trying to say but your reader might not. This is why it's critical to get it read independently and why I highly recommend it goes to a professional proofreader. They will then be able to tell you if it needs any further editing and it's worth spending the extra money.

Becoming an author does wonders for your positioning, but if your book is badly written, makes no sense, is full of errors and hard to read, then your audience will not see you as the 'expert,' and in fact, it could damage your reputation. Not to mention the waste of your investment. It's a false economy to think you should save money at this stage. In fact, I would recommend you postponing your project if your budget is tight, and take it up again when you can afford this step of the process.

If you need to have your book proofread and/or copy edited then you can either look on-line (there are numerous services out there) or you can head over to the Book Refinery's copy editing service where we offer competitive proofreading and copy editing services, just visit www.thebookrefinery.com/editing-proofreading/ for more details.

*The world needs dreamers, and the world needs doers.
But above all, the world need dreamers that do.
- Sarah Ban Breathnach*

I hope you've found this 7-step insider's guide useful. Do the steps I've outlined, and you'll have a book written quickly and easily.

Sometimes - even with a solid plan in place (and all the good intentions you have to write it) it can still feel a bit daunting. I offer services that can take your book at any stage (even a seed of an idea) to a fully written publication. So if you're not sure, or need some expert help in getting that book out of your head and into print - let's get on the phone for a no obligation chat about your project. Just email me at alexa@thebookrefinery.com with 'I want to be an author' in the subject line and I'll arrange a call. We can discuss your project and see how I can help you on your journey.

I'm passionate about people becoming authors and I would love to help you become one!

I look forward to hearing from you,



If you haven't already - follow me on social media for more tips and advice:

Instagram - [@Book_coachUK](#)

Facebook - [@Gettingyourbookpublished](#)

Twitter - [@Yourbookcoach](#)

LinkedIn- [@AlexaWhitten](#)

Still not sure? Perhaps these testimonials will help...

“With Alexa’s help and gentle guidance my book was written in just 17 weeks and edited, proofed, published and printed a few weeks later.

*When we first started together she helped me complete my book plan, a kind of framework of the chapters and what each chapter will be about. Once we did this, it made the whole process of writing the book so much easier.” - **Mo Yusuff - Author of Promo Power Supremacy***

“Alexa is simply amazing!

*Having worked in marketing and advertising for some of the world’s largest brands (brands like PepsiCo, Gatorade, Unilever and Nike), my standards are incredibly high and Alexa surpassed them time and time again! She delivered my project on time, within budget and to a really high standard.” - **Josh Black - Author of Personal Best***

“Alexa brought experience, technical knowledge, and advice to bear on my book, and worked with me hand in hand to get it from my Word layout to a beautifully laid out publication. She was supportive, patient and encouraging throughout, and it made all the difference.

*The book is absolutely what I wanted and I’m really proud of it. Her expertise was invaluable and I can’t recommend her enough. I’m so glad I found her, and it simply wouldn’t be the book it is if she hadn’t have stepped in.” - **Ben Cijfers - Author of A Lion in The Allotment***

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