

How to Get a Book Out of Your Head and onto Amazon

Introduction

Thanks for downloading this PDF! It was originally created in 2016 to accompany the Jo Casey and Holly Worton podcast episode of the same title, which you can find here: <http://hollyworton.com/155>, and it was updated in 2019 for the episode **What it Takes to Publish Your Book (Both Inner & Outer Work)**.

It is a very simplified introduction to self publishing a book. However, it's enough to give you an idea of the basic steps involved. If you want more information, Joanna Penn's blog, [The Creative Penn](#), is one of the best resources for writing, self publishing, and marketing a book. She also runs [The Creative Penn podcast](#). And, of course, the fabulous Siobhan Costello can help guide you on your journey to becoming a published author.

Set The Foundation

Start out by asking yourself some questions that will help you to understand exactly what you want to get out of writing this book. These are three questions that will help you identify your goals for writing a book. Knowing the answers to these questions in advance will help you craft your book with these goals and intentions in mind, because you'll be able to seed little details about these things within the book as you write.

- What do you want to achieve by writing a book? Do you want to get more people signing up to your email list? Do you want to get more signups to your online program? Do you want more one to one clients?
- Who are you writing it for, and what action do you want them to take after reading your book? If you're writing a business book, your target audience of readers will probably coincide with your ideal client profile. Do you want them to subscribe to your list? Sign up for your online program or coaching package? Invite you to speak on their podcast or at their networking group?
- How do you want this book to benefit your business? Do you want more money, more clients, a bigger list? More speaking engagements? A traditional book publishing contract? Something else?

Decide On The Topic

What is your book going to be about? For the purpose of this document, let's assume you want to write a book that's related to your business (rather than a work of fiction). You can create a book that leads into your signature program or into your one to one coaching programs.

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Think: what do your ideal clients need to know before they work with you? Is there any preliminary work you can help them with, or is there anything they need to get clarity on first? A book can be a good lead-in to working with you.

Decide On The Format

Which of these formats do you want to create? These are the three main formats you'll want to consider, but you could also create a hardcover or spiral-bound book.

1. E-book (there are two formats: .mobi for Kindle and .epub for all other e-readers)
2. Paperback
3. Audiobook (audiobooks require more work, but this is the fastest growing area of publishing right now)

Purchase ISBN Numbers

ISBN numbers are purchased from different organizations, depending on where you live. Think about how many books you may want to write in the next three years or so, and multiply that number by the different formats you'll produce. You need one ISBN number for each book format (for example: .mobi, .epub, and paperback), and they're significantly cheaper per number the more you buy. Once your local agency has assigned you a set of ISBN numbers, you'll receive a spreadsheet that to use so you can assign the ISBN numbers to each format and title of your books.

- USA: [Bowker](#)
- UK: [Nielsen](#)
- Canada: [Library and Archives Canada](#)
- Australia: [Thorpe-Bowker](#)
- New Zealand: [National Library of New Zealand](#)

Write Your Book

This can be done in various ways:

1. The traditional way: sitting down at the computer and writing.
2. Dictating it to audio and having written transcripts created, then edited.

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3. Using existing audio files and having them transcribed, then edited.
4. Employing a ghostwriter to write the book for you, using information that you provide them.

Edit & Proofread Your Book

If you've used audio recordings as the original source of material for your book, you'll definitely want to hire an editor to make it look more like the written word. If you've written your book from scratch, you may still want to have it edited so that the style is as flowing and coherent as possible. You'll also want to have your book go through at least one or more rounds of proofreading.

One of my clients has books go through six rounds of editing: three before typesetting and three after typesetting, with different people for each of the six rounds of proofing. You'll need to determine how many round of proofreading you want to have done, and when, as that will affect your typesetting and e-book formatting (steps to come later). However, be sure that you don't let perfectionism get in the way of getting the book out there. Even traditionally published books have errors in them.

Get the Book Cover Designed

You absolutely want to have your book cover designed by a professional graphic designer who specializes in book cover design. I repeat: do not work with a general graphic designer. It is absolutely of vital importance that your book cover look just as good as a traditionally published book. People *do* judge books by their cover, and you need professional cover design done by an expert.

Do not try to do this yourself, and don't outsource this to a general graphic designer, no matter how much they may tell you they can do it. Yes, they can do it. But it won't be the best cover for your book.

Here's the important thing: you need to provide your designer with a very clear design brief. Find at least 4-5 book covers on Amazon for books in your genre and send your designer the links so they know exactly what you're looking for. You can also create a Pinterest board and send the link to your designer. One book cover designer that I recommend is [Kim Killion](#), and I did my recent book cover design through [99Designs](#), where I got to choose from over 150 different designs by about 40-50 different designers.

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If you're only producing an e-book, then you just need the front cover. If you're producing a paperback, you'll need the spine and the back cover designed in addition to the front cover. You'll also need to get a bar code for the back cover (you can generate one for free online).

If you're producing a paperback, you will probably need to wait until you have the typeset book file before you can produce the final version of the book cover design because you won't know how wide to make the spine until you know exactly how many pages will be in the book. All publishing services (more on this below) will have a spine calculator for you to use.

Have Your Paperback Book Typeset

If you're creating a paperback, this is the part where you hire a book designer to layout the interior of the book. Again, this is something you want to hire an expert for, rather than doing it yourself. Do you know what orphans and widows are, in the world of publishing? Trust me, you don't want to deal with this kind of stuff. Hire an expert. You send them a Word doc, they take care of all the design details, and then deliver a pdf of exactly what the book pages will look like.

(Note: when you start on the typesetting process, you'll also want to start the e-book formatting process, so both get done simultaneously. See below for e-book formatting.)

Upload Files & Order Proofs

If you're creating a paperback, this is the point where you upload the files to whichever POD (print on demand) service you'll be using to print your paperbacks. You'll need to upload two files: the book cover (front, spine, and back) and the interior.

The top 2 POD services are:

1. [KDP Print](#), which is an Amazon company
2. [IngramSpark](#)

For my first eight books, I published exclusively with KDP Print (formerly CreateSpace) and I used their extended distribution service, but for this book I'll be using KDP Print for Amazon distribution, and IngramSpark for extended distribution. I'll also be going back through my backlist and uploading all of my previous books to IngramSpark.

No matter what you choose for your POD service, you'll need to sign up to whatever their global distribution program is called, so you can have your book available to a variety of online bookstores.

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Have Your E-book Formatted

If you're creating an e-book, this is the point where you send your completed Word doc to a professional e-book formatter. As I mentioned earlier, if you're producing both an e-book and a paperback, you'll want to initiate the e-book formatting process at the same time you start working with your typesetter because it can take 2-3 weeks for you to receive the final files and at least another week for the e-book to go live online.

I've worked with a number of e-book formatters for both clients and for my own books, and if I've learned one thing, it's that you need to invest in a good formatter. I used to work with [eBookPartnership](#), who also have a fantastic e-book distribution program which, for a small annual fee, allows you to make your book available to hundreds of retailers, more than 65,000 libraries, and several subscription services around the world.

Starting in 2018, I began formatting my own ebooks using [Vellum](#), which is affordable software that allows you to format your own ebooks AND paperbacks. For this book I'll be distributing on Amazon using KDP and I'll be using [Draft2Digital](#) for extended ebook distribution.

Produce Your Audiobook

If you want to create an audiobook version of your book, [ACX](#) (yes, another Amazon company) is the way to go for distribution on Amazon/Audible, which is the biggest audiobook distributor in the US and UK. You can either upload your own audiobook recordings (do note that they have very specific technical requirements and you may need to get help with editing), or you can work with professional voice talent and either pay them up front or share the profits of your book with them.

For extended distribution, I recommend [Findaway Voices](#), which has been focusing on getting into the global markets that Audible has not been reaching. I will be creating my first audiobook for *If Trees Could Talk*, and I'll be distributing through both ACX and Findaway Voices.

If you're going to use both services for distribution, as I am, be sure to sign a contract for non-exclusive distribution with ACX. This will give you a lower royalty payment (25% rather than 40%), but it will allow you to use Findaway Voices for extended distribution.

Enter Launch Mode: PR & Marketing

This is where you go into launch mode and get as much media coverage, guest blog posts, interviews on podcasts and other outlets, and do everything you can to market your book.

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You'll actually want to have a marketing and PR plan from the start (meaning, when you start writing your book), so you can get everything in place once the book is ready. You might want to start reaching out to media outlets when you're still in the writing or editing stages of your book, so that you can be ready for interviews and articles to come out once the book is available for purchase.

You may want to send out review copies to book bloggers, or you could hire a publicist (such as one of the ones I recommend below) to handle this for you.

If you've created a paperback you can run a giveaway on Goodreads to get your book in front of more eyes. The Goodreads giveaway program used to be open to international readers and authors, but it's not limited to only US- and Canada-based users, though they say they are working on expanding their program (back to what it used to be).

You'll also want to create an author profile on Goodreads, a popular social network for book lovers, and an Amazon Author Central profile, which allows you to create an author profile that links to your books.

I'm working with the fantastic Michelle Kulp for launching my upcoming book. You can learn more about what she does by reading her book [Backwards Book Launch: Reverse Engineer Your Book and Unlock Its Hidden 6-Figure Potential, Go From Being a Broke Author to a Rich Author](#), but if it all sounds too complicated to deal with (as it did to me) you can hire her to do it for you.

If you want to work with a publicist, you'll need a PR person in your country who *specialises in book PR*. In the US, I recommend [Smith Publicity](#), and in the UK I recommend [Bookcollective](#).

You'll also want to look into [Amazon Advertising](#) to help people to discover your book more easily when shopping online.

Reviews

You'll want to get as many reviews as you can for your book, because this will help new readers who aren't familiar with your work to decide whether or not to purchase the book. Plan to get reviews on Amazon, Goodreads, and book blogs.

Relax

At some point, you'll want to relax from the project. It's a lot of work to write a book, and many people say that writing is only 10% of the project – the rest is in marketing and

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selling the book. I think that's a bit extreme, but it gives you an idea of the importance of marketing your book once it's published. Know that if you want ongoing sales, you're going to have to continue to market your book long after it's been published. But be sure to give yourself a breather after the launch before you go into the second phase of your book marketing, which is your ongoing efforts to share about your book.

Good luck!