

Could Your Book Idea Be the Next Best Seller?

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**By Dawn Josephson**

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Everyone has a unique story to tell. From explaining business processes to revealing our personal history, we all have a natural desire to share our experiences with the world. As a result, bookstore shelves are packed with numerous titles that promise to entertain, enlighten, and educate readers.

Perhaps, then, the old saying that "everyone has at least one book in them" is true. If so, how do you know whether your current idea really is book worthy or if it needs some fine-tuning to have maximum marketability?

Before you put pen to paper (or fingers to keyboard), put your book idea to the test. Use the following questions as a way to hone your idea's development and create a manuscript destined for the best-seller list.

Can you state your book's purpose in 10 words or less?

Many new authors face the challenge of wanting to give too much information at once. Instead of focusing on one specific idea, they try to wrap multiple concepts into one book. This approach not only makes it difficult to organize your book, but it also overwhelms your readers.

With any good book, you can state the book's specific purpose in 10 words or less. Realize that your purpose is not the same as your theme or plot. The book's purpose is what you specifically want the reader to do or think as a result of reading your book. Now, a statement such as "to live a better life" or "to run a better business" is not specific. A purpose is not a generalization. It's a specific action that you motivate the reader to embark upon.

For example, if you're writing a business book, your purpose should be to help your readers improve one specific business function, such as its marketing efforts, its customer service, its project management, etc. Your purpose should not be "to teach business executives how to create better

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marketing materials, deliver improved customer service, establish long-term customer relations, increase employee retention, and locate the best new talent." That's simply too much for one book to cover. Keep your purpose specific so you can deliver targeted and useful information.

Does your book have a specific audience?

While you certainly want a large audience to market your book to, you also want an audience that's targeted to your topic. Simply stating that your audience is "business people" or "women" or "the general public" is not a targeted audience. Why? Not all business people have the same concerns, not all women are interested in the same topics, and not everyone in the general public will be able to identify with your ideas.

When you narrow your audience to include those with a specific tie to your theme or who fit a certain demographic, you gain a marketing edge that can position your book more effectively. So instead of

stating that your audience is "business people," perhaps you can narrow it down to "company owners," "middle management," or "entrepreneurs." Rather than target the broad category of "women," you'd have better sales by focusing on "women over age 50," "working moms," or "single women under age 35." All these categories consist of a large number of people, yet they are narrow enough so you can streamline your message.

Are you saying something new?

If you want people to invest the time and money to read your book, you have to tell them something new. Too many authors attempt to reword or rehash old ideas that others have stated over and over. While you should use other people's works to substantiate claims or add credibility to your message, make sure your central idea is fresh and unique.

How can you make sure your approach is new? Incorporate the results of a survey you personally conducted. Include case studies from your own business or life. Interview people who can contribute facts and information. Add elements of yourself to punctuate your message. This is your book, so tell your story or stance on an issue.

Many authors are afraid to state a new opinion on a topic that others have covered. They think they may turn people off or offend. Remember that people like controversy, so if your book can stir things up and make people think twice about something, you'll have a greater chance of creating a buzz about your book.

Are your writing skills up to par?

You could have the best idea in the world, but if your text is filled with errors, is poorly organized, or is difficult to understand, no one will want to read it. Before you write too much of your book, brush up on your writing skills by attending a writing class, studying a writing guide, or hiring a writing coach to help you correct your writing challenges. Also, educate yourself on what writing style appeals to your audience, and then strive to imitate that style. Gear your writing to your intended audience as much as

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possible.

If you're unsure whether your writing skills make the grade, consult with a professional editor or ghostwriter who can rework your writing and bring it up to publishing standards. Don't let poor writing skills ruin your best-selling idea.

### Start Writing Now

Writing a book is no small undertaking. When you can answer "yes" to each of the above questions, you'll be on your way to transforming your idea into a publishable piece of work. Take the time to nurture and develop your idea before you start writing so you can be sure to create the best book possible. A little pre-planning and foresight is all it takes to give your book the most market appeal.

Dawn Josephson is president and founder of Cameo Publications, an editorial and publishing services firm based in Hilton Head Island, SC. She is also the author of *Putting It On Paper: The Ground Rules*

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## **Can an E-Book Become a #1 Amazon Best-seller?**

**By Joe Vitale**

### **Can an E-Book Become a #1 Amazon Best-seller? by Joe Vitale**

Ever since Jim Edwards and I completed our now famous e-book, "How to Write and Publish Your Own E-Book... in as little as 7 Days," people have been cranking out their own e-books at, well, a weekly rate. Lately I've been getting a reoccurring question concerning all these e-books. Namely, "Can an E-book become a #1 Amazon best-seller?"

That question keeps coming to me because I made my latest book, "Spiritual Marketing," a #1 Amazon best-seller last June. I also helped several other authors make their books Amazon top sellers, from Kevin Hogan and Mark Joyner to Mike Litman and Randy Gilbert. Obviously there is a formula here that works.

But can it make an E-book an Amazon best-seller?

The answer, of course, is yes. In fact, anything you sell can be driven to a top selling spot at Amazon. That's right, anything. That includes music CD's, appliances, videos, audios, DVD's, and yes, even E-books.

Here's the secret:

You have to create what I fondly call an "ethical bribe." In other words, say you have an e-book on

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child rearing. What? Does that sound too easy to sell? Okay, let's pretend the e-book is a work of fiction. Better yet, let's make it an e-book with nothing but poetry in it. Now THAT would be tough to sell, let alone drive up the Amazon ladder to best-seller status, right?

Wrong. Again, the key to making this proven formula work for any e-book you may write is to offer enough incentive for people to go buy it \*when\* you want them to buy it. In short, you have to give people added value. You offer them freebies—usually other e-books—which they can have if they buy your main e-book at Amazon on a certain day.

Are you with me here?

Oh. Well, okay. Let me explain this formula in more detail.

Step One: You need an e-book. If you haven't written one yet, go to [www.7dayebook.com](http://www.7dayebook.com) right now. Get that book and you'll write your own book in less than a week. Guaranteed.

Step Two: Get your e-book listed at Amazon. That's easy. Amazon prides itself on listing everything. They'll list your e-book, too. Just ask by clicking on their Help button and sending them e-mail.

Step Three: Now create a series of bonuses that you can give to people who buy your e-book. Don't throw up your hands and say you don't have anything. Just as you wrote an e-book, you can write smaller Special Reports. Just think of what your key audience might want to read about. If you truly are

selling a book of poems, maybe you can write something on how to write poetry. Get the idea?

Step Four: Here's a tip: You can also find public domain e-books which you can offer to people who buy your e-book. Search online for them. There are thousands of e-books available, for free. You can find something relevant to your own e-book, and add it as part of the package of freebies that you'll give people who buy your e-book at Amazon.

Step Five: Now find people who have email lists. This is a step where less imaginative people give up, saying, "I don't know anyone with any lists!" Wake up, people. There are nearly a million email lists online. Search for them. Again, if you're selling poetry, look for the email lists that cater to poets or maybe to writers. There are a staggering amount of those.

Step Six: After you find the email lists, write the list owners and ask for their help in promoting your event. Believe me, all you have to do is ask. They are usually glad to help because you are making a great offer to the people on their list and they will look like a hero when they help you sell your e-book. Again, just write and say something like, "I plan to make my e-book a #1 best-seller at Amazon. Will you help? Just tell your email list that if they buy one copy of my book at Amazon on (pick the day), I'll give them all of the following for free."

Step Seven: Finally, set up all your freebies so they are downloadable e-products. In other words, when someone buys your e-book, you want them to send their Amazon e-receipt to you by e-mail.

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When you receive it, you want to send them the download page for your bonuses. You could also just send the bonuses by email to each person who writes to you, but that would be time-consuming. Still, it's an option if, say, you don't have a website. That's right. You don't even need a website to make this process work for you.

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