

The Ultimate Business Book Guide

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*–the best sales collateral ever–*

Alan Radding  
PO Box 590340  
Newton, MA 02459  
617-332-4369  
[alan@radding.net](mailto:alan@radding.net)  
[www.technologywriter.com](http://www.technologywriter.com)  
[www.independentassessment.com](http://www.independentassessment.com)  
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## **Introduction: a book is the best sales collateral you will ever have**

If someone hands you a new hardcover book, how likely are you to throw it out? Not likely. If it is a business book and about something you are possibly interested in you're definitely not going to throw it out. More likely you will crack it open, skim the descriptions on the front and back flaps, read what's on the back cover, flip through the table of contents, and put it down on your desk.

That's why I say your book, professionally developed and authored book by you, is the best piece of sales collateral you and your organization will ever have. Glossy brochures get tossed in the trash almost immediately. Printed ads have a lifespan of a day, a week, maybe a month at best. TV and radio ads disappear in 30- or 60-seconds. But your book will sit on your prospect's desk for a long time. It will get picked up again and again. At some point he or she may sit down to read a big chunk of it or even all of it. But that is not even necessary for it to be the best sales collateral you will ever have.

Even if it doesn't get read, the very fact of it—a quality book authored by you—helps you and your organization:

- Impresses people and establishes the authority of you and your organization
- Singles you out as a thought leader, the person who wrote the book on whatever your topic is
- Lasts for a long time, years, not weeks or months

By comparison a glossy brochure, no matter how many tens of thousands of dollars you spent on producing it, will never give you that kind of lasting authority and respect. The glossy brochure or other pieces of collateral may make a brief impression and then they are gone. Your book, and by extension you and your organization, stays.

Of course, not every book makes effective sales collateral. The book needs to be conceived, developed and, most importantly, written to establish your credibility and authority in a compelling way because people do open it up, read some or all of it, recommend it to others, and pass it around. Your book can have a long and productive life working for you.

## **Anybody with something to say can have a book**

Everybody has a message they want to convey; certainly anybody in business does. Everyone has a job and expertise and competence related to what they do. You don't need fancy academic degrees to author a book. You don't need special certifications. You don't need to have others citing you as an authority. To the contrary, by authoring your book you become the authority automatically. All you have to do is be competent and informed in your field, have an interesting idea and be outspoken about it. Part of what I do is to help would-be authors identify, focus, and shape their message in a way that results in a compelling book.

You probably have plenty to say and don't realize it. To begin with, I'm not talking about authoring some mammoth tome, the kind that college professors routinely dump on their students. The readers you likely are targeting are too busy to read one of those books anyway.

Instead, think in terms of a single-message book that focuses on the main point you want to make and drives that point home with enough material and context to substantiate your idea. This results in a trim hardcover book containing text, a few graphics, and maybe some tables and charts. You don't want it to be any longer than somebody could read on a flight.

Your book will be about whatever advances your business, career, or a particular interest or issue important to you by establishing you as the authority. The key is to have a strong point of view. If your message is provocative or contrarian so much the better.

Books like these tend to fall in several distinct categories:

- How to—tutorials that advise people on how to do something
- Latest trend—books that analyze and assess the latest trends in an industry or field
- Government/regulatory—insights into a government action or a regulatory issue
- Revenue enhancement—advice on how to make money or increase profit
- Career—advice on developing and managing a career

There also are some industries or market segments that consume a lot of books: money/finance, health, real estate, government, consulting, management, and technology. These fields change constantly, ensuring an ongoing market for new books.

## The *new* book publishing process

The conventional publishing industry is widely viewed as broken. Your book, however, does not depend on the conventional publishing industry. (You may take your book to a conventional publisher, but it isn't necessary and may even be a disadvantage in terms of time-to-market.) Your book can be quite successful without a conventional publisher; your readers probably won't know and certainly won't care.

The advent of computer-based publishing technology, particularly print-on-demand (POD) and Internet/Web-based distribution channels like Amazon.com, Facebook, and Google Book Search make it possible for any author to publish a quality hardcover or paperback book, market it quickly and easily, and sell it worldwide. Today, an author has three primary options for publishing a book: a conventional publisher, a POD publisher, and a vanity press. (Ignore the vanity press—these companies make their money printing and selling books to authors, not readers.)

Let's look at the other two, conventional and POD publishers. The table below lays out the key advantages and disadvantages of each.

Publisher	Advantages	Disadvantages
Conventional	Pays a royalty and sometimes an advance Designs, produces, sells, and distributes the book May add some prestige	Acceptance not assured Very slow time to publication (18-24 months) Minimal or no author control
POD	Pays a larger royalty Author retains all control and all rights Fast time to publication (6-12 weeks) Acceptance generally assured (no porn, no hate books, etc.)	Author responsible for editing and design Author must drive sales*

\* Unless you are a really big name author conventional publishers also expect you to drive sales of your book

The advent of the Internet/Web makes it practical for any author to drive sales of his/her book, and the opportunities to do so are increasing by the week. I will talk about this more in the next section, driving book sales.

## Driving book sales

One of the first things a conventional publisher asks a prospective author is the author's platform. Huh, platform? By platform the publisher is checking out what resources you have to drive sales of your book. They want to hear about the many TV talk shows on which you appear as a guest, the many newspapers and magazines that interview you, the number of conferences at which you make presentations, the frequency of the seminars you give and the numbers of people who attend them. The sum of all this is your platform, which the publisher will expect you to use to drive sales of your book. The only thing more compelling than a platform like this is a commitment from your company to buy, say, 12,000 copies of your book.

Most authors have a more modest platform; maybe one or a few speaking engagements now and then, an appearance on a couple of local TV news shows, an occasional call from a trade magazine reporter, an annual appearance at an industry conference, an article published in a trade magazine. This, most likely, is not enough to get a conventional publisher excited about your book.

Yet, as an author you can drive sales of your book with a quite modest platform. Driving sales in the Internet/Web era is a question of leveraging your existing network: customer lists, email lists, employees, co-workers, colleagues, and friends, to generate viral marketing around your book. With a POD publisher putting your book on its website and on Amazon.com, you then have one or more urls that lead directly to web pages where your book can be purchased. This is powerful.

So, here is a basic strategy to start driving sales:

- Embed your book's url in email messages and your email signature block
- Make a short video book trailer and post it on YouTube and elsewhere,
- Leverage your presence on Facebook, LinkedIn, MySpace, and other social and business networking sites

In addition, you will do all the usual PR things: send press releases, talk to the media, network at trade conferences, seek out speaking opportunities and book signings, and more. Finally, do buy dozens or hundreds of copies of your book (at a deep POD author discount) and give them out to seed the market. Each book will cost, maybe, a bit more than a glossy brochure, but the bang you get is immeasurably greater.

## Book authoring process

The book authoring process is straightforward. It starts with your idea, the message you want the book to convey. It may be a better way to do something or a fresh insight into an issue, almost anything.

When I work with an author as the ghostwriter, I follow a simple process. It starts by refining the idea to make it compelling, provocative, and better targeted. I then gather as much background material as possible from the author. This includes any PowerPoints, memos, articles, press releases, letters, email messages, worksheets, speeches—anything that elaborates on the author's core idea. Usually I supplement this with author interviews.

### Book Authoring Process

- Refine the idea
- Gather background material
- Develop the chapter outline
- Develop book proposal (optional)
- Write and revise
- Copy editing
- Layout and design (optional)

From there we develop a chapter outline and refine it. If we're pitching the book idea to a conventional publisher, I'll develop the required book proposal. As ghostwriter I write the text chapter by chapter based on the approved outline and the author's background materials. Each draft chapter is sent to the author who adds his or her changes and comments, which I incorporate into the final revised chapter before moving on to the next.

Finally, the revised chapters are sent to a copy editor to catch any typos and mistakes that didn't get picked up during the revisions. If the plan is to use a POD publisher, the text will then be flowed into the publisher's template or sent to a designer for final layout and formatting. A conventional publisher takes over the copyediting, layout, and design.

## Cost of authorship

Authoring a book is never free. As soon as you sit down at the computer and start typing away the book begins costing you money in the time you are spending at the keyboard. Before that, you spent time developing and researching your idea and creating an outline. Soliciting conventional publishers and developing a book proposal takes even more time and effort. So even doing it yourself entails the cost of your time, which can be considerable.

Using a ghostwriter like me actually saves you money in several ways. First, you don't spend your time at the keyboard staring at a blank screen, agonizing over what exactly to say, hammering out each sentence, and then revising it until it is perfect. Instead, you will spend time talking through your ideas with the ghostwriter, often the most valuable part, and revising the text.

Second, a ghostwriter saves you money because you get a better book faster. As a writer who has published hundreds of pieces of business writing over more than twenty years, I am probably more facile at writing than you, able to deliver better text sooner.

The following table identifies the cost components of authorship.

Authorship component	Cost
Ghostwriting	Negotiated
Additional research (if required)	\$100-\$150 per hour
Copy editing*	\$50-\$100 per hour
Book layout and design* (optional)	\$50-\$100 per hour
Cover design*	\$150 and up

\*usually provided by a conventional publisher

The cost of a ghostwritten book turns out to be less than the cost of many glossy corporate brochures and considerably less than an annual report. But a book's impact on sales can be far greater and much longer lasting. Your book is not only the best sales collateral you can have but an excellent bargain too.

## Sample chapter outline

Here is a generic chapter outline for a 10-chapter business book, plus a Forward and Appendices, which are critical for marketing the book and delivering value to readers.

- Table of Contents
- Forward—preferably by a recognizable name (You write the Forward; the person just needs to review it and agree.)
- 1. Introduction (explains what this book is about, who it is for, and why they want to read it)
- 2. The big picture (introduce your main points here as dramatically as possible, details to follow)
- 3. Background (explain what the reader needs to know to understand the material coming up)
- 4. First main point (include material to support your point)
- 5. Second main point (include the supporting material)
- 6. Third main point (and the supporting material, of course)
- 7. Counter arguments (acknowledge and refute objections readers, critics, or competitors might have)
- 8. Additional supporting material (reference research, documentation, third parties that support your positions, and such)
- 9. Other issues (introduce related issues of interest to the reader)
- 10. Conclusion (recap your main points but add something new, a kicker)
  - Appendices (additional materials, support details, resources, worksheets that will assist readers)

The target is a 150-200 page hardcover book, including graphics.

## **Capturing the payback from your book**

Few authors make money from the sale of their books. In fact, book authors routinely are advised not to give up their day jobs. For the kind of non-fiction book described here, you will make money from the sale of copies, but that isn't the purpose. The purpose is to leverage your book to advance your business, professional, and career goals.

If the book has been effectively conceived and written, the very fact of the book, whether it gets read or not, will advance those goals, both directly and indirectly. To do so, you must use the fact of the book to:

- Attract speaking invitations
- Get yourself interviewed for print, broadcast, and online media
- Establish your leadership and authority on your subject
- Give you an impressive credential
- Generate inquiries about your availability and services
- Make a long-lasting impression

The book becomes a powerful calling, one that you flash at every opportunity. The more you spread the word about your book, the more opportunities it will open for you and, by extension, the greater your payback. Any royalties from the sale of the book, and there will be some, will pale in comparison to the opportunities it can open. The key comes down to how well you market yourself and your book.

## Choosing a ghostwriter

You want a ghostwriter for the same reason you hire a plumber:

- Save time
- Reduce your cost
- Produce better results, faster

You could write the book yourself, but you don't have the time to sit at the keyboard fussing with every word to get it just right. Like the plumber, the ghostwriter will do it better and faster. Yet, it is still your book, 100%, because it encapsulates your ideas and expertise.

Not every writer makes good ghostwriter or understands what it takes to write a book that will open opportunities for you. As a result, they write something that reads like a brochure or, worse, a stiff academic treatise. That's absolutely NOT what you want.

You need a ghostwriter who writes a compelling book that opens opportunities but also can guide you through the intricacies of book publishing, distribution, and marketing. Remember: no matter how your book is published, conventional or POD publisher, you will be driving the sales of your book. No publisher will do it for you.

As a fulltime independent writer/ghostwriter, I know how to write and publish compelling material in a variety of forms. I have ghostwritten pieces for leading companies, including IBM, HP, and Nokia, and top consulting and research firms, such as Ernst & Young, Gartner, and IDC. You probably have been reading my writing for years in major publications including Business Week, New York Times, Computerworld, Information Week, American Banker, CFO, and more.

- Check out my latest ghostwritten, non-fiction book  
<http://www.authorhouse.com/BookStore/ItemDetail.aspx?bookid=51219>
- Or books published under my own name on Amazon.com:  
[http://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb\\_ss\\_gw?url=search-alias%3Daps&field-keywords=alan+radding&x=0&y=0](http://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb_ss_gw?url=search-alias%3Daps&field-keywords=alan+radding&x=0&y=0)

You are welcome to visit my website, <http://www.technologywriter.com>, to see samples of my work. While you are there, you may also want to check out my popular **Ultimate Guides**: <http://www.technologywriter.com/guides.htm>

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[www.independentassessment.com](http://www.independentassessment.com)  
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