



The Wordbuilders Checklist for Authors

If you're thinking of writing a book, on your own or with help, here are a few questions to ask and answer. Some you can answer quickly on your own and others will require more work and perhaps some outside help. The tighter you can answer these questions, the better chance you have a producing a successful book:

- What type of book are you interested in writing? (e.g., fiction, non-fiction, business, how-to, academic, autobiography, children's book, gift book ...)
- What are your personal and/or professional reasons for writing a book? (e.g., fame/fortune, enhanced credibility as a thought-leader on a topic, to share an under-delivered message with readers, as a marketing piece that promotes your overall business strategy, to force yourself to think through with precision a message or story, to record historical events for a particular audience ...)
- What's the core message? (Can you sum it up in two pages? How about in two paragraphs? How about in two sentences?)
- Who is the core audience? (Who do you expect to buy/read this book and why?)
- How many pages (or words) will it take to tell it?
- What's the outline and construct for the book? (Will it be 50 short chapters or 10 long chapters? Will it be divided into sections? Will it have photos, graphics or illustrations? What are the major themes and sub-themes? Will there be a grid to the format, e.g. quote to start the chapter, anecdote as intro, define major points, client case study, conclusion?)
- What style/tone is needed for the writing? (Will it be in first person? Will it be didactic? Will it be humorous? How much of it will hinge on research? How much will hinge on your own experiences and anecdotes?)
- What other books would it resemble (in style, tone, look, feel, content)?
- What's the book's niche? (What other bestsellers are out there on this topic? How will this book complement them and go beyond what's already been written?)
- How in-depth can you outline the introduction and a sample chapter?
- Do you need a publisher or will you self-publish?
- Do you need an agent?
- What's your budget for getting your book written and published?
- What's your marketing plan and how will you pay for it?
- How much time are you willing to commit either to the writing or to collaboration with a writer? (In hours per week)
- What type of collaboration do you want/need with a writer/editor? (e.g. Do you plan to write first drafts or verbally share your message and let the writer create the first drafts?)
- How much and what types of source materials do you have? (Is it all in your head or do you have speeches, white papers, and other existing content?)
- What's your timeline for publishing the book?