



Why You Should Write a Book

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The word author says it all: authors are people with authority.

People who write books are admired. They have credibility. We are more likely to believe what they say. We think they must know what they are talking about – after all, they wrote a book!

This acknowledges that writing a book is a big achievement. It takes time and effort, dedication and persistence. These are rare qualities. Many people say they'd like to write a book, but very few ever do.

But nearly everyone has at least one subject that they know well. Nearly everyone has experienced interesting or exciting events. Nearly everyone has learned some hard and valuable lessons. Nearly everyone has a book inside them somewhere.

This is especially true of small business owners and service professionals. Whatever your job, you probably spend some time educating your clients, users, customers, or the general public about what you do, why you do it well, how you do it better, and how they can improve or enhance their lives by using what you provide.

It is much easier for your prospective clients to believe you if you have authored a book on the subject. Authoring a book helps you promote your business and establishes you as an authority in your field. It differentiates you from your competition -- everyone has brochures and websites, but not everyone has written a book. A book can garner new clients, improve your sales, and put you in demand as a speaker. As a marketing tool, a book is hard to beat.

One of the first questions my clients usually ask me is, "What is the potential ROI on my book?" -- business-speak for "How much money will my book make?"

Well, that depends on which dollars you count.

It is certainly possible to make money (and even become famous) through sales of your book. It is also possible to win the lottery. Your chances are about the same on both.

Directly, that is. But indirectly is another story.

Here's a typical story about an author who made no money on book sales but was so happy with the results of her book that she's thinking of writing another one.

A business marketing consultant whose specialty was radio advertising authored a small book on how to get media exposure. She self-published, and one day a few boxes of books showed up at her door. Our consultant stowed them in her garage, and sent out a press release announcing the book and touting her unique take on radio advertising. This

happened to be seen by a blogger for a local newspaper, who wrote a small business blog. He contacted our consultant for an interview, then wrote a few paragraphs in his next blog post, mentioning the title of the book and our consultant as the author – and referring to her as a “radio advertising expert.”

Wow, great publicity, right? Free and everything. Surely it would help get rid of some of those books in her garage.

She sold two books as a direct result of this blog interview, and netted less than five dollars.

But a business owner who read the blog on the paper’s website liked what he read and called her in for a consultation on how he could get more for his radio advertising dollar. Eventually he retained her as his marketing consultant, to the tune of about \$15 to \$20K a year.

How many books would she have had to sell to make \$20,000? A whole lot!

Now of course this doesn’t always happen – but you’d be surprised how often a variation of this story does occur. And that’s the reason why you should write a book.

But what if you are not a writer? What if you are lousy (or think you are lousy) at writing? What if you hate to write? And most common of all for busy business owners – what if you have no time to write a whole book?

These are not empty excuses. Writing a book is hard. It does take time. Writing talent and skill are important. That is exactly why authors are given respect.

Take heart. You don’t have to do it all by yourself. Many people are available to help you author your book – ghostwriters, editors, proofreaders, illustrators, designers, printers, publicists. They can do much of the work, including writing, while you oversee the process and ensure that your idea or story is presented in a way that is true to your own vision. Do not let lack of time or writing skill stop you from becoming an author.

I’ve saved the best reason to write a book for last.

Have you ever thought the world may *need* your book? You’re good at what you do, right? Your business or service contributes value to others. Your knowledge, or inspirational story, or revolutionary method, or labor-saving tip, may be the exact thing someone out there is waiting to learn. Maybe more than one person is waiting – maybe there are thousands who could be helped by what you have to say. Books have a long and distinguished history of teaching people new ways of thinking and doing. Many have literally changed the course of history. The written word is one of the most powerful forces known.

Go ahead – become an authority.