

METICULOUS TITLE

# BOOK BLUEPRINT

HOW ANY ENTREPRENEUR  
CAN WRITE AN  
**AWESOME BOOK**

CATCHY LEADLINE

EXPERIENCED AND KNOWLEDGEABLE AUTHOR

**JACQUI PRETTY**

‘Jacqui Pretty has produced a superb, step-by-step how-to book for any entrepreneur who wants not only to get their thoughts down to share with the world, but to leverage off their expertise through the “authority” that having a book brings.

This is an easy-to-read, well-laid-out, logically structured book that takes you by the hand and guides you step by step; exercise by exercise to develop a detailed, “better than average” plan for your book. Once you have developed this to completion it will be – as Jacqui promises – just about as if the book will write itself.

I highly recommend this tome to anyone who wants to take their business to the next level and become recognised as an authority in their field.’

**Geoff Hetherington, JG Hetherington – The Clarity CEO**

‘*Book Blueprint* is a guide that every entrepreneur needs. It is your friend when the decisions are too hard (like “should my book be a how-to book, a thought leadership book, or a book of lists?”). It is a step-by-step pragmatic partner when you’re stuck. It is a foil to the crazy trap so many entrepreneurs fall into of too many ideas and too little action. If you want to write a book, and you keep getting waylaid by the next shiny idea, this is your moment of “done”. *Book Blueprint* helped me make choices in my writing journey that will support my business and provide the answers my audience wants. The clarity it provided is invaluable.’

**Rosemary Shapiro-Liu, Triple Win Enterprises**

‘Jacqui Pretty’s book was just the helping hand I needed. Applying her action steps allowed me to confidently take a half-finished, stagnant mess of a book and turn it into a beautifully written masterpiece that I can be proud of. Her structured approach showed me how to organise my thoughts and knowledge and has made writing quality content quick and effortless. I’m so grateful!’

**Diana Popov, Skin Deep Australia**

‘I love this book! After more than two years spent floundering, I finally feel like I have enough structure in place to actually start writing. Before I was jumping from idea to idea and didn’t have any kind of plan or flow. But after reading *Book Blueprint* and undertaking the exercises, I think I may just be able to crack this thing!’

**Alanna Quigley, Baby Babble**

‘*Book Blueprint* provides a framework that reduces the stress new authors feel at tackling such a monumental task. Jacqui chunks it down into little bite-sized bits that readers can work through one at a time.’

**Crystal Fieldhouse, Ecology Skincare**

‘This book is brilliant. Although I had all my chapters pretty clear I kept feeling there was something missing. I knew I could write the book from here, but what *Book Blueprint* has shown me is so much easier. I’m so grateful.’

**Sarah McCrum, Sarah McCrum**

‘I found this book at an opportune time. My book *Apps for Patients: A 6-step guide for health professionals* was written and had been to an editor, but I felt something was not gelling and that it did not hold together as well as it could. *Book Blueprint* gave me guidance to structure the content in a way that was logical, made sense and, most of all, was readable for my audience. By implementing even some of the ideas in *Book Blueprint*, I was able to write a better book that would be read, understood and enable health care professionals to create apps that can save lives.’

**Julie Mission, Make it APPen**

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# BOOK BLUEPRINT

*This is dedicated to all of my wonderful clients –  
thank you for allowing me to be a part of your publishing journey.*

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## FOREWORD

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Having written a lot of books and helped many entrepreneurs to write their own book, I've either made every mistake imaginable or seen others make them. Writing a book is not that complicated. Writing a great book is. This is where Jacqui Pretty leaps in.

Jacqui and I have worked together on the leading entrepreneurial programme in the world, 'Key Person of Influence', a forty-week incubator for aspiring entrepreneurs to build their profile and stand out from their competitors. One of the best ways to do this is to write and publish an excellent book.

Jacqui has been providing editing services to our aspiring authors. From the start it was pretty darn clear that she had a lot of passion directed at helping these people to not just write a book, but to write the very best book that they could.

In *Book Blueprint* Jacqui starts with this exact premise. After all, what is the point of writing a terrible book? And the harsh reality

is that a lot of self-published books are really badly written – well intentioned by all means, but poorly executed.

Jacqui dives deep into the topics that are important, gently coaching the new author through a process that will help them to avoid the most common mistakes, and helping them bit by bit to come to the realisation that they are in fact going to write their book and it is going to be a great one.

I consider Jacqui to be one of those people who is the perfect blend of technical and inspirational. When working through *Book Blueprint* the reader will get all of the technical knowledge that they need, along with practical information and encouragement. One key element that shines through consistently is that this material is delivered at exactly the right time, just as the reader is starting to think about what's next.

Bottom line: If you have always wanted to write your own book, but struggled to find the process, or the detail that you need to get those words out in a way that will reinforce your authority and expertise as an entrepreneur, *Book Blueprint* will go a long way to helping you achieve your dream.

*Andrew Griffiths*

*Australia's #1 Small Business and Entrepreneurial Author –  
with 12 books sold in over 60 countries.*

## INTRODUCTION

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# How to become the author-ity in your industry

In every industry there are two types of people.

The first are the industry authorities. These people are widely recognised and respected. They are able to pick and choose their work. They get paid more for their services. They book out well in advance. They are the first ones journalists contact for commentary. They are sought-after keynote speakers, and charge premium rates for engagements.

Ultimately, they are the most well-known and well-connected players in their industry. Because of this they are highly valued and they do business on their own terms. While business still has its challenges, it's never a struggle.

The second group are the wannabes. The wannabes *want* to get paid more. They *want* speaking gigs and media appearances. They *want* to turn down undesirable projects so they can focus on doing the work they love for the clients they love.

Unfortunately, the wannabes rarely get what they want. Their days are consumed by client work, enquiries, quotes and prospecting. If they have a team, they also run meetings, coach, answer questions and review their work, hoping that one day – *someday* – their team will grow up and be independent.

They still hold the dream of being an industry authority, so if they get a spare moment they turn to marketing – they update their Facebook status, upload a photo to Instagram, tweak their website or write a blog post... but none of it seems to make a difference. In the end, every attempt they make to establish themselves as an authority just adds to their to-do list, and suddenly it's 2am, and they realise they haven't eaten. And the only thing left in the fridge is a wedge of cheese turning a suspicious shade of green.

So, how do you make the transition from being a wannabe to being an authority?

## **From wannabe to author-ity**

As an editor who has helped close to 100 entrepreneurs turn their knowledge and experience into published books, I've seen entrepreneurs become Amazon bestselling authors, land highly paid speaking gigs, get featured on national TV and double their rates, all because they published a book.

Why does this happen?

Because being a published author makes you stand out from the crowd. With the number of small business owners around the globe

expected to hit one billion by 2020<sup>1</sup>, there are probably thousands, if not millions, of entrepreneurs offering similar services to you and marketing them in similar ways to you. In a world where there are more competitors in the market than ever before, what better way to stand out than becoming a published author?

A published book earns you instant credibility and establishes you as a leader in your industry. While anyone can bluff their way through a blog post, the media, potential clients and potential partners all recognise that you need knowledge and real-world experience to write a book, and will consider you an expert once you're published.

And once you achieve this status, you can expect the opportunities and advantages that come with being an expert...

- 34% of published entrepreneurs double their rates, regardless of whether they have start-ups or mature businesses when they publish.
- 81% of them are featured in the media, including 10% who appear on national TV!
- 72% of published entrepreneurs get paid speaking engagements, even if they have never been paid to speak before.
- 74% of them find new referral partners.
- 26% of them forge partnerships with the big brands in their industries.

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1 Anna Vital, 'The Next Billion – Women Entrepreneurs', *Funders and Founders*, January 7, 2013, <http://fundersandfounders.com/the-next-billion-women-entrepreneurs>.

While all of this sounds impressive, did these opportunities make a tangible difference to their businesses? When I reached out to my network of published entrepreneurs, the answer was a resounding ‘yes!’ Eighty-six per cent of entrepreneurs-turned-authors reported that their businesses had grown since launching their book.

## **But I couldn’t write a book...**

While all of this sounds great in theory, you’re not a writer. You don’t have the time. You’re not even sure you know enough to fill a book. Could *you* really write a book?

Absolutely.

You don’t need to be a professional writer. Of the many entrepreneurs I’ve worked with, only three of them had a writing background. (And those three books needed just as much reorganising and cutting as the non-writer books I’ve edited!)

My clients have come from a wide range of industries, including financial planning, accounting, travel, real estate, marketing, law, life coaching, human resources, natural health, personal training, business coaching, architecture, fashion and more. Writing experience is *not* a prerequisite to writing a great book. Planning and motivation are. If you have these, then you can write one too.

You also don’t need a lot of time. We entrepreneurs are busy people. Between client work, quotes, enquiries, marketing and managing a team, it’s not unusual to get to the end of the month and realise we haven’t had a day off.<sup>2</sup>

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2 To Andrew (my significant other) – I’m working on it!

Fortunately, writing a book doesn't have to take as long as you think. You don't need to spend months or years penning your masterpiece. Instead, if you have the right system in place, it will guide you through every step of the writing process so you never have to worry about running out of time, having writer's block or drawing a blank. With a system at your fingertips, you will have all the information you need to draft your book in weeks, not months.

## **But what if I fail?**

So you're warming up to the idea of writing a book... at the very least, you can see some of the benefits it might have for your business. But what if you invest hundreds of hours, thousands of dollars and buckets of energy into writing a book, and it isn't any good? This is a concern I hear all the time.

If you've seen some of the books being self-published by entrepreneurs today, you might have noticed something. It's a thinly veiled fact that nobody dares mention...

Many books self-published by entrepreneurs aren't very good.<sup>3</sup>

Sure, the cover might look pretty swish and it feels satisfyingly heavy in your hands, but just wait until you get to the first page. Then Chapter 2. By Chapter 3, if you're like most people, you've probably given up.

Why?

Because the content wasn't credible, wasn't compelling or wasn't even coherent.

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3 I wanted to say 'suck', but my editor wasn't a fan of that.

This isn't to say that the physical packaging of your book isn't important. It is. In fact, design is your first impression. But your content is the relationship, and if you want your book to lead to ongoing relationships with clients and partners it needs to be good.

So why do most entrepreneurs' words fail to live up to their covers?

I believe it comes down to a failure to plan.

## **A blueprint so detailed your book will write itself**

Having worked as a professional writer and editor for the last eight years, and having worked with many entrepreneurs on their books since I launched my editing company, Grammar Factory, I've found that not having a detailed plan is the biggest mistake entrepreneurs make when writing their books.

Most people assume that an editor only looks at spelling, grammar and punctuation, but correcting language is actually the smallest part of the job. The real work is in developing the idea, the structure and the content of the book. I've moved chapters from the middle of books to the beginning. I've turned three-part processes into six sequential steps. I've split one book into two, added brand new content, and told clients to start again.

Then what happens? The author receives a document marked up with a few thousand insertions, deletions, corrections, and suggestions to add new case studies, exercises and even chapters. And back to their keyboard they go.

Much of this could have been avoided if they'd started with a clear plan.

Now I know that planning isn't 'sexy'. As entrepreneurs we appreciate impulse, spontaneity, inspiration and leaps of faith. We don't have time for *planning*.

However, more often than not it's the books written on impulse with spontaneity as their muse that end up unfinished or forgotten in a file on a computer, or published but languishing in boxes in a garage, being eaten by cockroaches because no one wants to buy them.

These are the books that should have had a quarter of their content cut in the editing process because it's repetitive or irrelevant. They are the ones where the author's jumble of ideas should have been reworked into a logical, engaging structure.

In the worst-case scenario, they are the books where the author has to go back to the drawing board. Not very sexy, when you think about it.

So what *is* sexy?

Sexy is getting a box of 100 of your printed books and feeling confident, excited and proud about sending them out into the world. Sexy is when a reader calls or emails you to tell you how much they loved your book, and the difference it made to their life. Sexy is when a journalist runs a story on your industry and contacts you as an author to comment.

And sexy starts with planning.

## **What to expect from this book**

This book is going to teach you how to write a book that will boost your business. The goal is that by the time you finish all of the

exercises you will have a blueprint that's so detailed your book will write itself.

How do I know this?

This is the same formula I teach in book planning workshops. The strategies are the same ones I use to reorganise manuscripts and figure out what's missing. It's also the same process I used to write the book you have in your hands. And using this process, I finished my first draft in three days.

I'm not sharing this with you to brag.<sup>4</sup> I'm sharing this because what I've learnt after working with so many entrepreneurs on their books is that you don't need to be an experienced writer to write a great book. You don't need to be inspired to find the right idea. You don't need to set aside months of your hard-earned time. All you need is the right formula, and to put your fingers to the keyboard.

So how do you do it? By addressing four key areas...

## The right idea

What is the difference between entrepreneurs who push through the hurdles of writing and self-publishing and those who don't? How can some books from a particular industry be filled with practical, relevant and engaging content, while others from the same industry are filled with fluff, tangents and repetition? And why will readers pick up one book while ignoring another on the same topic?

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<sup>4</sup> Well, maybe a little.

It all comes down to choosing the right idea. In this section you'll figure out how to find an idea that hits the sweet spot, along with the right book type for that idea, which is the foundation for everything that follows.

### The right structure

While most of my clients are genuinely experts in their fields and have the experience and qualifications to prove it, their books often need a lot of reworking to bring them to a publishable standard.

Why? Because the right idea won't stick if it isn't presented in a way that's clear, coherent and compelling. Likewise, the right content will fall flat (or will be missed entirely) if it isn't supported by a strong structure. Here you'll learn how to organise your knowledge, including the key questions that need to be answered in every chapter of your book.

### The right content

While you might have a lot of great ideas, simply listing them in bullet-point form isn't enough to fill a book. To write a substantial piece of work, you need content.

By including explanations, evidence and exercises throughout your writing, you'll publish a book that is not only a credible representation of your business but one that will persuade your readers of your ideas and convince them to implement your advice.

## The right language

A lot of entrepreneurs worry that there are already thousands of books out there on their area of expertise. I always counter with, 'You're the only *you* in your area of expertise.' And by being the only you, you can make your book stand out from all the others.

How do you do this? With your language. Your language is what will take your book from being a rambling diatribe written in dreary corporate speak to being a text that engages your readers and invites them to learn more about your business.

After addressing these four areas, you will have drafted a 3,000- to 5,000-word blueprint for your book.<sup>5</sup>

With this blueprint, you won't have to worry about writer's block, rambling, or forgetting key information. In fact, then the only thing you'll have to do is expand your bullet points into sentences, add a paragraph here and there, and drop in relevant blog posts and articles to flesh out your points.

In a matter of weeks, you can easily write a great book that will make you the authority you want to be.

Don't believe me?

Then keep reading.

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<sup>5</sup> This only counts if you do the worksheets and other actions throughout this book. If you don't do the worksheets, I can't guarantee anything. If you do all of the exercises and can't put a detailed plan together, I will happily refund your \$24.95.

PART 1

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# THE RIGHT IDEA



## Hit the sweet spot

You might have been told that you have a book in you. I'm going to argue that you probably have seven or eight in you. As one of my clients once said, 'I've wanted to write books about managing change and building resilience and confidence, a book about careers, a book about life, a book about personal branding and professional image, and a book about dogs.'

The question isn't whether or not there's a book in you, it's whether it's the right book for right now. And writing the right book starts with choosing the right idea.

Not every idea is a great one. Not every idea will become a runaway success. In fact, very few book ideas make it to print. What you want to do is find the right idea at the beginning of the process, so you don't waste time, money and energy on any of the wrong ones.

So what makes a great book idea? Great book ideas reside at the intersection of these three elements:

- Your passion
- Your readers' needs
- Your knowledge

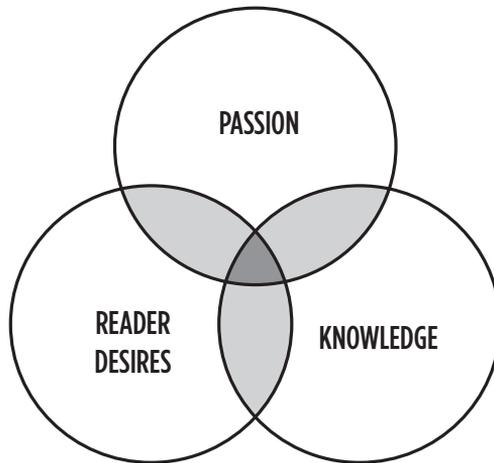
The mistake most entrepreneurs make is choosing an idea that only addresses *one* of these factors. This is a recipe for disaster. Your cake won't rise if you just put flour in it. It needs eggs, sugar and baking powder to make it fat, generous and delicious. The same goes for your book.

If you aren't passionate about your idea, you'll quickly run out of steam. Most entrepreneurs who fail the passion test give up partway through the writing process. Meanwhile, those who do manage to push out 30,000 to 50,000 words often have nothing left to fuel them through the book production and marketing processes.

That said, it doesn't matter how passionate you are if you aren't addressing your readers' needs. For your book to build your business, boost your reputation and attract the opportunities that are only available to industry leaders, it needs to answer the wants and needs of your market. If it doesn't, no one will want to buy your book and you'll be left with a very expensive paperweight.

The final piece is knowledge. Many entrepreneurs are passionate. Many have a product or service or idea that their target clients desperately desire. However, not all of these products, services and ideas can be turned into a worthwhile book. There needs to be knowledge and content to back it up. If you don't have this knowledge, or access to it, you'll find yourself drawing a blank.

The right book at the right time is a book that hits the sweet spot – the intersection where these three factors meet.



To find your sweet spot, you need to conduct three highly unscientific tests.

## The passion test

I believe testing your passion for your idea comes down to answering one simple question:

*Will you still want to talk about this in three years?*

Why three years? Because it will probably take three years for your book to start bringing in real dividends, and your energy and commitment will be required to steer your book through those years. Surprised? Let me explain.

Let's say it takes you one month to write your book, squeezing in an hour or two a day around your existing commitments. Then you let your book sit for a couple of weeks before going back through it to see if there are any obvious gaps in your content, repetition or other issues.

Once you've completed your review, you send the manuscript to your editor. The first round of edits takes two weeks, after which you take the book back for a month to go through the recommended changes and add new content. You then send it back to your editor so she can go through everything a second time and ensure the new content works with the rest of your book. This second edit takes another week or two.

While your book is being edited, you spend a month going back and forth with your cover designer to create a cover that stands out from the other books in your industry.

Next, a second designer or typesetter takes your edited content and creates the internal layout of your book. This may take another few weeks, depending on how much you love or hate their early ideas.

Once the layout is confirmed you organise printing. A printer will usually need a week or so to send you a proof copy, and after you approve it (or they make any requested changes) they will proceed with the full print run, which is another week or two.

Finally, you'll also need to organise online (Amazon, Book Depository, Booktopia and so on) and possibly offline (bookstores) distribution for your book.

All of this takes time, money and motivation. Even if you produce your book very quickly and cheaply, you're looking at a minimum of three months and probably \$4,000 to \$5,000. If you're like most people, you'll spend six to twelve months getting it right, and spend \$5,000 to \$10,000 on the production process.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> These prices and timeframes are based on the Australian self-publishing industry. Self-publishing in the US, the UK and other countries may vary.

And this is only the production process – you aren't going to see a return on your investment unless you *market* your book, and you can expect to be marketing it for two to three years after it is printed.

Finding a topic you are passionate about is crucial – if you're already sick of your idea by the time your book goes to print, you aren't going to be interested in leveraging it, which can turn this 'writing a book thing' into a very expensive exercise.

### **Action time – What would you love to write about?**

Take five minutes to reflect on what you would love to write a book about. Which topics excite you? What can you talk about for hours?

Think about why you originally started your business (or why you're thinking about starting a business). What is the purpose or message behind it? What do you love about what you do?

Make a list of your different book ideas. Then, for each of them, ask yourself, 'Will I still want to talk about this in three years?'

If not, cross it off. The remaining ideas are your shortlist.

## **The reader test**

Your passion will fuel you through the writing, production and marketing processes. But what use is that fuel if no one wants to read the end result?

Your book will only be an effective marketing tool if people want to read it. And making people want to read your book usually means you have to do one of two things: solve a thorny problem, or meet a burning desire.

If you get this bit right, this will be the pull factor that not only gets you readers but leads to new clients, media attention and speaking opportunities.

So what is the reader test? This time there are three questions:

1. Who are your target readers?
2. What are their greatest problems and desires?
3. What are you *really* writing about?

Let's take a look at each of these questions.

### 1. Who are your target readers?

As an entrepreneur, your target readers will probably be drawn from one of three groups: potential clients, potential partners or the media.

In some cases, you might find that these groups can be broken down further. If we consider potential clients, for example, a dance teacher might be able to target parents who want their children to start ballet as well as dance teachers who want to become accredited in her teaching methodology. A risk management software provider could target the end users as well as the companies he wants to install the software. A road safety school could target students, as well as those tasked with enforcing road rules.

Regardless of your situation and your business, you can only choose *one* audience for your book. The dance teacher might choose parents who want their children to be more active, the software developer might target companies, and the road safety trainer might focus on potential students. By choosing these audiences, they have chosen *not* to write for their other potential audiences.

Now, I can hear you saying, ‘But I want *all* of those people to read my book.’

Of course there’s no reason why you can’t *leverage* your book for all of these audiences, but when it comes to *writing* your book, you need to have one primary audience. Committing to this one audience gives your writing direction. If you know what that audience cares about, you will know which topics to include, and which topics to cut. You’ll know which examples will most resonate, and which would be better discussed in another format, like a blog post or brochure. You’ll also know which action steps and exercises are most relevant.

On the other hand, if you try to write for everyone your book will lack focus. Some content will be relevant to everyone, while other content will only be relevant to a single audience. You might even find that you write your book predominantly for one audience, only to throw in an extra chapter or two for the secondary audience you wanted to target. The risk is that when your readers come across content that doesn’t relate to them, they will put your book down, never to open it again.

So who do you choose? The answer is, the audience that is most likely to have the biggest, fastest impact on your business.

Let's repeat that: You want to write for the audience that is *most likely to have the biggest, fastest* impact on your business.

In most cases, that is not the media. Yes, the media could have a big impact on your business. And, if your story catches on, it could spiral very quickly. But the first thing to consider is whether this is likely. Given the number of other books out there, and the fact that most news stories go out of date within a couple of days (or within a few hours, in today's twenty-four-hour news cycle), it probably isn't.

Additionally, while media attention could lead to more eyes on your business, it's unlikely that the reporters themselves will actually become paying clients. As a result, there's no guarantee that a book targeted at the media will lead to increased revenue.

Instead, the readers most likely to have a significant impact on your business are your potential clients. If you write a book that addresses their greatest problems and most burning desires, they will probably keep reading. They will probably go to your website to learn more about you. They will probably refer you to other people they know with the same problems and desires. And they will be more likely to choose to work with you than the media ever will.

This doesn't mean you will miss out on partnerships or media opportunities. Instead, when it comes to approaching potential partners and journalists, you can use your book as a credibility tool by highlighting the fact that you're a published author, rather than trying to repurpose your content for a new audience. This means the people who are most likely to read the book get bespoke content, while those who are not in your primary market can still confidently work with you knowing that you are an established expert.

So who are your target readers?

**Action time – Who are your target readers?**

Is your book for potential clients, potential partners, or the media?

Once you know which category your target readers fall into, the next step is adding more detail.

Think about:

- Their age and gender
- Their marital status and children
- Where they live
- Their occupation/business and their income
- What they do in their free time
- What they value/believe
- What they read, watch and listen to (books, magazines, online, TV, radio)

An area where a lot of my clients get stuck is trying to define clear boundaries for each of these questions. For example, if you're a psychologist who has been practising for twenty years, you might know that people come to see you because they've become disillusioned with life and don't know what to do about it. However, those people might be aged anywhere between twenty-five and sixty-five, they might be single or married, they might be male or female, and they might work in a range of industries. In this case it's easy to wonder how to define your target readers when they come from all walks of life.

To define your target readers, it's important to get as specific as possible in the areas that are relevant to your business. Depending on your target reader and your business, some of the areas listed in the previous exercise might not be relevant. For example, my team and I have worked with entrepreneurs who have written books on financial planning, entrepreneurship, property investing, health and wellness, immigration, personal development, and even one on travelling with your pet! As these clients aren't restricted to a single industry, I didn't target this book at any one industry.

The key is to focus on the attributes your target readers share. In our case, even though our clients come from a range of industries, they share the traits of entrepreneurship, a focus on delivering high-quality work and the desire to become industry leaders.

In short, when defining your target readers, don't be put off by broad differences between them. Instead, look for patterns and commonalities. You'd be surprised at how people from different walks of life can have a similar problem or ambition. Which brings us to the second question...

## 2. What are their problems and desires?

Once you know your target readers, the next step is to figure out their thorniest problems and most burning desires. These problems and desires should be the foundation of your book idea and, if you use these well, you'll write a book that they'll be dying to read.

As an entrepreneur, you know that the purpose of your business is to solve people's problems. As an entrepreneur writing a book, your book has the same purpose.

By targeting your readers' biggest problems and desires, your book will bring a flood of highly targeted opportunities to your business. Whether you're pitching to a new client, a partner or a journalist, the sale will be easier as the person you're speaking to will be pre-sold. And easier sales means more money, which means you can further expand your business.

Keep in mind that the problems and desires you address in your book will change based on your target reader. If your target reader is a potential client, you would base your book on the most common problems and desires you see in your existing clients. So if you are a real estate agent and your book is about property investment, your readers' biggest problems or fears might include buying the wrong property, choosing the wrong tenant and hiring the wrong property manager, all of which could turn their investment into a headache that might lose them money. Your readers' most burning desire might be to generate stress-free passive income. In this case, your book would teach them how to achieve that goal while avoiding the problems that prevent most would-be property investors from doing so.

If your book was targeted at potential partners, however, the focus would be completely different. To use the real estate agent example again, you might want to establish a community collective between a real estate agent and a group of trades to act as a one-stop-shop for your tenants and landlords should an issue arise. As your readers are now the group of trades, and any other potential partners, the main problems might be struggling to stand out in a crowded marketplace, customers shopping around for the best rate,

and not knowing how to extend their reach. Their ultimate desire might be to have regular, reliable business coming in without having to worry about marketing. In this case, your book might be about the power of partnerships to boost small businesses.

If you wanted to target the media, you would need to revisit the problems and desires of journalists and media personalities. As a general rule, the main problem any journalist faces is coming up with a great story, and their greatest desire is to find one. The challenge for you is providing that story. As a real estate agent, it might be something about the property price bubble, such as touching on some sort of conspiracy behind it or warning about an eventual pop.

### **Action time – Pain points and burning desires**

What are your target readers' biggest problems?  
What would they pay anything to solve?

Think about:

- What do they fear?
- What frustrates them?
- What causes them the most stress?

Then, think about their greatest desires:

- What do they want?
- What are they really trying to get done?

Revisit your book ideas. Which of these subjects address the questions above? Or, based on these questions, are there new ideas you can add to the list?

What do you do if you have a book idea, and you know it's an important problem for your readers to solve, but you don't think they realise that it's a problem?

Here you have two options: you can either go back to the drawing board to find a new idea, or you can stick with your existing one. The challenge with sticking with the existing idea is that you will need to work much harder to sell it to your readers.

In early 2014 I worked with a photographer who had written a book about helping people organise and store their digital photos. Now this book answers the real problem of potentially losing all of your precious photos because you haven't stored them properly. The issue with this idea is that it is a preventative solution – a solution to prevent a problem from occurring – rather than a solution to a problem the readers are already facing. The issue with preventative solutions is that there's no sense of urgency. The problem is abstract. And this means solving it isn't compelling. It's only *after* the problem has occurred – *after* someone has lost all of their photos – that they see the importance of creating a system to organise and back up their images.

So what did we do? We focused on selling his readers on the importance of solving this problem upfront by starting the book with a story about a friend who embarked on a long-awaited trip to Cambodia. She visited temples, rice terraces and landscapes, and at the end of each day she sat back with a glass of wine and sifted through the day's photos. When she returned home, she narrowed her collection of several thousand snaps down to the 300 best images, which she painstakingly tweaked and refined before saving

them to an external hard drive. A few days later she reconnected the hard drive to view her holiday snaps ... but the photos were gone.

By telling this story at the beginning, we were able to make readers imagine what would happen if *they* lost everything, which made the rest of the book more compelling.

If you're writing about a real problem, but not one that your ideal clients recognise, think about how you can convince them of the importance of this problem before you teach them how to solve it.

### 3. What are you really writing about?

In 1960, Theodore Levitt published an article in the *Harvard Business Review* titled 'Marketing Myopia', where he argued that one of the reasons businesses fall into decline is that they don't understand the business they are really in.

'The railroads did not stop growing because the need for passenger and freight transportation declined. That grew. The railroads are in trouble today not because that need was filled by others (cars, trucks, airplanes, and even telephones) but because it was *not* filled by the railroads themselves. They let others take customers away from them because they assumed themselves to be in the railroad business rather than in the transportation business. The reason they defined their industry incorrectly was that they were railroad oriented instead of transportation oriented; they were product oriented instead of customer oriented.'<sup>7</sup>

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7 Theodore Levitt, 'Marketing Myopia', *Harvard Business Review*, August 2004, Accessed November 23, 2014. <https://hbr.org/2004/07/marketing-myopi>

Finding the right answer to the question, ‘What business are you really in?’ gives your business the ability to evolve with the industry landscape and to continue serving your clients what they desire. This makes it the key to your business’s long-term survival.

I could make the same argument about your book.

Most books by entrepreneurs aren’t just about money management or weight loss or property acquisition. They are about being able to sleep at night, confidence and vitality, and financial freedom. Angela Counsel, author of *Secret Mums’ Business*, didn’t write a book about how her readers could eat better, exercise more or improve their mindset; she wrote about how mums could find more balance and fulfilment in their lives. Warren Otter, author of *Crank it UP*, didn’t write a book about mergers and acquisitions; he wrote about how entrepreneurs could leave a legacy through their businesses.

The photographer I mentioned earlier didn’t write a book about organising digital photos. He wrote a book about protecting digital memories.

### **Action time – What are you really writing about?**

What is the result you want your readers to achieve through reading your book? If you could summarise that in twenty words or less, what would it be?

This is what you’re *really* writing about. Once you nail this phrase, it will become how you pitch your book once it’s published, and it may even become part of your title or subtitle.

Once again, revisit your list of book ideas. Which ones focus on the business you’re *really* in?

## Take it to your target readers

So far this has all been academic – you’ve been thinking about what you *think* your readers want. The real test is taking it to your target readers to learn about what they *actually* want.

### Action time – Test your idea

Test your idea on your target readers. If you already know people who fit your target reader profile, try the following:

- Call them up or take them out to coffee to pitch your idea.
- Write some blog posts about your idea to see how they respond.
- Tweak your products and services to incorporate your book idea and observe the difference it makes.

## The knowledge test

Have you ever read a book that promised great things – to teach you a new skill, to solve a niggling issue, or to help you reach your dreams – that failed to deliver? It’s almost like getting a massage where the masseuse misses all of the right spots: frustrating, unfulfilling and likely to leave you more wound up than you were at the beginning of the massage. You’re also unlikely to go back a second time.

If you promise to solve your readers’ burning issues or help them achieve their desires and your book doesn’t deliver, your readers

are also likely to finish your book feeling frustrated and unfulfilled – if they finish it at all. They probably aren't going to subscribe to your newsletter, follow you on social media or engage your services either.<sup>8</sup>

So, the final test to find the right book idea is the knowledge test. Maybe you are just starting out in a new field and you're writing a book in an effort to establish yourself, or maybe you've been in your industry for years but you're still not *quite* sure you know enough to fill a book. In either case, it doesn't matter how passionate you are about a topic or how much your target readers want to learn about it if you don't have the knowledge to back it up.

A question that often comes up at this point is, 'Can't I just research my subject?' If you're passionate about your idea, it's easy to believe that you'll do the research required to fill your knowledge gaps. You'll Google, read, enrol in a course and more. While this is an option, there are two issues with taking this approach.

The first is that you need a certain level of knowledge to guide your research. Let's consider my gardening abilities for a moment. I have none. In fact, I don't even have a garden – my partner and I have a deck that features some potted herbs. Unfortunately, none of these herbs lasts long. Our thyme was cannibalised by our oregano. The oregano then shrivelled up (I assume it was starved of nutrients). Our basil plant shed all its leaves. And our mint spends weeks looking like it's dead, only to spring back to life the week before we were planning to rip it out.<sup>9</sup> Now if I decided to write a book about raising healthy avocado trees, I wouldn't know where to

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8 This is known as negative marketing.

9 Yet somehow our weeds thrive...

start. I might turn to Google with a generic search about growing avocado trees, but this search would only return generic advice. Why? Because I don't know the right questions to ask.

By contrast, an avocado farmer already has a system he uses for his trees. This means he knows what works and what doesn't, he knows how to filter the useless advice from the helpful advice, and he probably knows the common issues and questions that come up for new gardeners raising their first avocado tree. Consequently, he can ask specific questions to guide his research. He also has access to much more qualified resources, such as his fellow avocado farmers, whom he can contact for targeted advice.

While your passion is the fuel that keeps you going, your knowledge is your road map. If you don't have knowledge to guide you, your journey to writing a book will be a directionless ramble.

The second issue with using research to build your knowledge is that, while it's very rewarding to immerse yourself in a new topic, it does take time to reach expert status. The more time you spend researching, the longer you put off actually writing and leveraging your book for your business. And if you're like most of my authors, you want to get your book done as efficiently as possible so you can start leveraging it sooner rather than later.

So how do you know if you have enough knowledge about your book idea? Simply follow the exercises in this book. As you map out your structure in Part 2 and choose the content to fill that structure in Part 3, you will find yourself describing your idea in increasing levels of detail. Starting with an overarching idea for your book, you will break that idea into smaller topics, and break

each of those topics into smaller subtopics. For every single one of these topics, you'll need to answer various questions to cover them in depth and collect evidence to illustrate your points.

Whether or not you can answer these questions and can find this evidence will be the true test of your knowledge.

For now, though, here's one technique you can use to get started...

### Map it out

One of the best techniques for getting your ideas on paper, especially if you're not a writer, is mind mapping.

A mind map is a diagram you can use to record and organise your ideas, and they have been used by some of the greatest minds of the last five hundred years, including Leonardo da Vinci, Charles Darwin, Albert Einstein, Thomas Edison, Winston Churchill, Pablo Picasso and more. And, over the past thirty years, dozens of studies have found that mind maps are an excellent tool for improving memory, generating ideas and organising those ideas, which makes them extremely useful for new authors.

A 2009 paper on how using mind mapping software might improve freshman students' writing skills found that mind mapping software improved students' ability to both generate ideas and organise them more effectively, as the spatial layout helped students gain a better overview of a subject and made connections between topics more visible. This then triggered more thoughts, ideas and associations.<sup>10</sup>

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10 Reima Al-Jarf, 'Enhancing Freshman students' Writing Skills with a Mind Mapping software', Paper presented at the 5th International Scientific Conference, eLearning and Software for Education, Bucharest, April 2009.

Meanwhile, a 2002 study that measured the effectiveness of student nurses using mind maps to plan patient care found that student nurses who used mind maps had a greater ability to focus on the patient, make connections between symptoms, see the big picture, and be more creative when providing treatments. If you apply these findings to your book, you could argue that mind mapping will give you a greater ability to stay focused on your target reader, make connections between various topics, keep everything connected to the major problem or desire you're addressing, and come up with more creative solutions and recommendations.<sup>11</sup>

Finally, if you don't consider yourself to be a natural writer, you'll be pleased to discover that mind maps are also a powerful tool for improving your writing. The study I mentioned earlier on freshman writing skills and mind mapping software found that the work produced by students using mind maps included more relevant detail, and that their ideas were both better organised and more clearly connected than the ideas of those who didn't use mind maps.<sup>12</sup>

In short, by quickly getting your key ideas on paper, seeing the relationships between them and being able to organise them in meaningful ways, the writing process becomes easier and quicker. And mind maps are a key way to achieve this.

So why are they so effective?

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- 11 Mueller, A, Johnston, M and Bligh, D, 'Joining Mind Mapping and Care Planning to Enhance Student Critical Thinking and Achieve Holistic Nursing Care', *Nursing Diagnosis* (2002), 24.
  - 12 Reima Al-Jarf, 'Enhancing Freshman students' Writing Skills with a Mind Mapping software', Paper presented at the 5th International Scientific Conference, eLearning and Software for Education, Bucharest, April 2009.

A mind map is structured with a central idea in the middle of the page, smaller ideas surrounding it, and subtopics of those smaller ideas surrounding them. This is known as a radiant structure. Unlike the linear structure of lists and tables, the radiant structure of mind maps mimics the natural function of our brains.<sup>13</sup> This allows you to see connections and relationships that wouldn't be as obvious in linear lists, which then triggers more related ideas and enables you to organise these ideas more easily.

By combining this radiant structure with the use of symbols, images and colour as well as words, you access your right brain as well as your left brain, which further enhances your ability to process information, make connections and generate ideas.

As a result, the most effective way to test your knowledge is to map out your book idea.

### **Action time – Map out your idea**

Review your book idea shortlist – these are the ideas that pass both the passion test and the reader test. Choose one and map it out, following the steps below.

1. Get a large piece of butcher's paper or poster paper and turn it sideways.
2. Write down a couple of key words that represent your idea in the middle of the page.
3. Write down any related ideas you can think of, drawing curved branches from your central idea to each of the related ideas.

13 Petr Anokhin, 'The forming of natural and artificial intelligence', *Impact of Science in Society* (1973), Vol. XXIII 3.

4. Look at each of the second-level ideas. Can you think of any ideas that relate to those second-level ideas? Write them down, connecting them to the second-level ideas with more branches.
5. Once you run out of steam, review your second- and third-level ideas. For each idea, think about any existing content you have, research you've been doing, or clients you've worked with. Also consider any research you'd like to do for that idea. Make a note of each of these next to the relevant idea, connecting them with more branches.

Things to keep in mind as you do this exercise:

- Try to incorporate colours and images to help your brain make more associations.
- Use curved branches rather than straight ones – according to Tony Buzan, the father of modern mind mapping, curved lines are more likely to engage your brain.<sup>14</sup>
- Focus on high-level ideas for now – you will go into more detail in Part 2.
- Don't worry too much about grouping or organising any of your scribbles – we'll start doing that in Part 2. This is just a brain dump so you can start to assess whether you could actually write a book on your topic.

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14 Buzan, T and Buzan, B (1994), *The Mind Map Book: How to use radiant thinking to maximize your brain's untapped potential*. Dutton.

## Choosing your book idea

If you have a number of ideas on your shortlist, map out each of them to figure out which one generates the most related ideas. You can then use that idea for the rest of the exercises in this book. Don't worry about whether or not you're committing to the right idea – the purpose of this chapter is to find an idea that hits the idea sweet spot, which you can then use to work through the rest of this book. Even if you change your mind later, you'll still have the framework to write an awesome book on another idea.

If you only have one idea on your shortlist, how do you know if you've passed the knowledge test? As a guide, if you struggle to think of related subtopics for your idea, if you can't think of anything new after five minutes, or if you struggle to fill the page, you might not have enough to write about. However, if you find yourself running out of room on the page, or every note you write sparks a new idea about something to look up or someone to call, then you've passed the knowledge test and hit the sweet spot.

The next step is choosing the right book type.

# Thanks for reading!

I hope you enjoyed the first two chapters of *Book Blueprint*.

If you liked this sample, had an 'ah ha' moment, or felt like it set you on the path to writing your awesome book, you can purchase *Book Blueprint* at <http://www.grammarfactory.com/bookblueprint/>

If you know any other entrepreneurs who are ready to become industry authorities, you can also help spread the word on:

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Best of luck with your book - I hope I have the opportunity to read it one day!

- Jacqui