

# 5 ideas to bulk up your book



## Idea 1: Recycle your existing content

If you have been in business for a few years, you probably have a whole slew of marketing content up your sleeve – brochures, flyers, blog posts, articles, interviews, case studies and more. You can use this content to bulk up your word count.

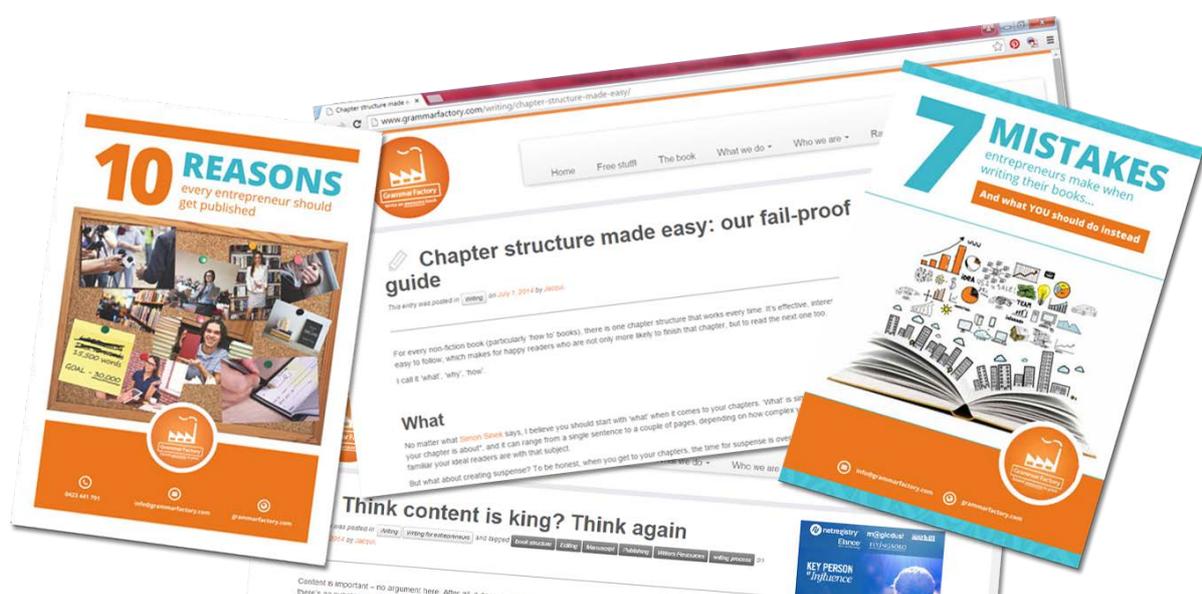
(Psst – In my book I said that I wrote my first draft in three days. The truth is that I cheated. Yes, I did write the draft in three days, but I had a 10,000-word blueprint when I started. Over half of that blueprint was existing content that I'd copied and pasted into my plan.)

To get started, list all of the content you have available, including:

- A list of your blog posts
- Articles published in industry journals or websites
- Brochures and flyers for your different products and services
- Client case studies
- Interviews you've done in the media or with other entrepreneurs in your industry (request the transcript, or have the audio file transcribed using a service like Fiverr, Upwork or Elance)
- Videos you've recorded (again, get this transcribed so you can easily work with the content)
- Recordings of keynote speeches (again, get this transcribed)
- Worksheets or templates you give your current clients

Once you have a list of all of your existing content, look through the points you've listed in your blueprint. For each point, ask yourself, 'What existing content can I use to illustrate this point?'

When you find the right content, copy and paste the relevant paragraphs under that point in your blueprint.



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## Idea 2: Interview experts

Expert interviews are a great way to establish your credibility, support your points and, you guessed it, add bulk to your book!

To get started, list the different people who might have something to say on your book idea. These may include colleagues, recognised authorities in your industry, other authors in your industry, happy clients and more.

Once you've listed your potential interviewees, revisit your book blueprint. For each of your chapter topics and subtopics, ask yourself:

- 'Who has knowledge, stories and advice that will support my point?'
- 'Who is a recognised authority who can bolster my credibility in this area?'

Add the name of the interviewee, a short biography and the questions you would like to ask them under the relevant points in your blueprint. Then it's time to call or email them for the interview!

Meet the bestselling author-entrepreneur who failed high-school English

This entry was posted in [Interviews with authors](#), [Self-publishing](#), [Writing for entrepreneurs](#) and tagged [Australia](#), [Boat](#), [Book](#), [book marketing](#), [Entrepreneur](#), [Marketing](#), [Publishing](#), [self-publishing](#), [write a book](#) on [March 24, 2015](#) by [Jacqui](#).

So often we get fixated on trying to do it all – the flash website, hitting 1,000 likes, running the networking circuit... it can be a struggle to find the one thing that could make a tangible difference.

Enter Darren Finkelstein, who found something that did.

Darren has been messing about in boats for most of his life. His father introduced him to fishing and his first boating experience was learning to water ski in Melbourne. He bought his first boat at age 18 in partnership with a friend and eventually followed his father-in-law's advice and bought a small half-cabin to go fishing and cruising with his young family.

In fact he felt so strongly about boating that decided never to return to a 'real job' with corporate Australia and made boating his profession. Today he is the co-owner of the industry accredited boat dealer/broker St Kilda Boat Sales and Service Centre. Located right on the water's edge at St Kilda Marina they buy, sell, service, repair, fuel and wash boats for their discerning owners and have sold hundreds of new and used power boats of all shapes and sizes.

In 2012 Darren took to a computer keyboard with the aim of demystifying the process of buying and owning a boat. The result is *Honey, let's buy a BOAT!* a straightforward guide through the maze of power boat purchasing.

In the interview below, Darren, who candidly admits to not being a writer, shares his experience of writing and self-publishing his book, and how becoming a bestselling author transformed his business.

- Listen to the interview – [Interview with Darren Finkelstein](#)
- Buy a boat – [St Kilda Boat Sales, Melbourne](#)
- Not ready to buy a boat yet? Read the book – [Honey, let's buy a BOAT!](#)

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## **Warning about interviews!**

There is a right way and a wrong way to incorporate interviews into your book and, if you get it wrong, you will:

- Waste the tens of hours spent questioning your contacts and transcribing their responses;
- Lose the thousands of words those interviews contributed to your book; and
- Potentially have to rewrite some new chapters from scratch.

The right way is to think about interviews *after* you've mapped out your book and chapter structure.

The mistake many of my clients make is getting excited about a general idea for a book – 'it's going to be about coping with change,' 'it's about recruitment,' or 'it's going to be about small business' – and then reaching out to their network for interviews.

What then happens is that they'll prepare a number of general questions based on the general topic and end up with thousands of words in responses.

When it comes to actually writing and structuring their book, however, these interviews don't fit anywhere. How could they? If you've asked them about change in general, how can you fit their interview under any of your five steps to cope with change? If you've asked them about recruitment in general, their interview isn't going to be specific to resumes or interviews. If you've asked them about small business in general, their interview isn't going to fit in the marketing section or the staff management section.

What most people do at this point is randomly sprinkle the interviews throughout the book, or create a brand new chapter where they dump all of the interviews.

This creates a lot of frustration for your reader because (if you take the random sprinkling method) they read the interview and can't figure out why it's relevant, or (if you take the brand new chapter method) they need to search through a lengthy piece of content for the useful information.

Your job as an author is to pick out the most relevant information for your reader and present it in a way that's easy to digest. The best way to do that is to create your high-level blueprint first, and *then* interview based on this.

## But what if I've already done 'general' interviews?

If you've already done general interviews, don't stress – you can work with this. Simply go back through your interviews and look for comments that relate to the specific points in your book blueprint. Then copy and paste those comments under the bullet points in the relevant points in your plan. When you flesh out that chapter, you can either include direct quotes from the interview or paraphrase.

The benefits of this method are that you still get the added credibility of including an expert's knowledge, and it's also reader-friendly, as you give your readers the information they need in the relevant part of the book.



## Idea 3: Create case studies

One of the ideas for recycling existing content is to put client case studies in your book. But what if you don't have any client case studies?

Then it's time to create some! Client case studies are a powerful way to make a point by sharing real-world experiences. They are also a powerful way to boost your credibility by demonstrating that your method has gotten proven results.

Once again, go through your book blueprint and look at the key points you make in each chapter, particularly your 'why' content. Then think about which of your clients has a great story relating to that point. Ideally you want to find someone who has a good before-and-after story – that way you can use the case study to illustrate both the risks or consequences that someone might experience if they don't follow your advice (this will be the 'before' part of your clients' stories), and the benefits they will experience once they do follow your advice (this will be the 'after' part of the stories).

Based on your experience with that client, answer the following questions:

- The person's original situation – where were they before they followed your advice, and what were the negative aspects of this situation?
- What prompted them to change – this is optional, but can work quite well. Essentially you want to think about what prompted them to make a change.
- What they did – how did they implement your advice? Or, if you helped them with something, what did you do?
- Their experience – again, this is optional. However, going through their experience of the change can sometimes be helpful when it comes to difficult or unusual circumstances.
- The results – what benefits have they experienced as a result of taking these actions?

Once you've written the case study, then send it to them so they can make any changes and give you their approval to send their story to print.

The screenshot shows a web browser displaying a client case study on the Grammar Factory website. The URL is [www.grammarfactory.com/client-case-studies/navigating-career-crossroads-jane-jackson/](http://www.grammarfactory.com/client-case-studies/navigating-career-crossroads-jane-jackson/). The page features the Grammar Factory logo, a navigation menu with links for Home, Free stuff!, The book, What we do, Who we are, Rave reviews, and Get in touch. The main content area is titled "Client case study: Author of Navigating Career Crossroads, Jane Jackson" and includes a sub-header "This entry was posted in Client case studies and tagged Jane Jackson, navigating career crossroads on April 14, 2015 by Jacqui." The text describes Jane Jackson's journey as a first-time author in mid-2014, highlighting her book "Navigating Career Crossroads" and its goal of providing accessible and affordable career guidance. A portrait of Jane Jackson is shown, along with a quote from "The World's Leading Personal Brand Accelerator" by The Huffington Post. The page also features a sidebar with social media links and a "Why write a book?" section.

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## Idea 4: Ask your readers what they want

When you have a clear outline of your book, go to your readers and ask what would make your book more valuable for them – their feedback might surprise you!

Before *Book Blueprint* went to print, I sent the Word document to ten people in my target market. While the feedback was positive, I also got some suggestions on how I could make the book even clearer and more valuable, ranging from adding summaries to the end of each chapter to sharing examples of mind maps for different book types (which became one of my bonus resources).

You can get feedback from your readers at two stages of the process:

1. The idea stage. Speak to your reader when you have an idea for your book – both the broad subject and your preferred book type. Explain the main lesson or message you want to communicate, and ask your target readers what their biggest questions are in that area, what their biggest challenges are, and what would help them make the biggest breakthroughs.
2. The content stage. Once you have your high-level blueprint, share your plans for your book with some of your target readers, including the broad chapter topics and the different subtopics within each chapter. After explaining what you'll be covering in each area, ask your readers about their questions and challenges relating to each subtopic, and what would help them make a breakthrough in that specific area.



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## Idea 5: Share your mistakes

*On November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2014, I sent the first draft of my book to my editor. Four days later, I received an email:*

*'Your book needs quite a bit of work, more than I expected... Is there a good time to call you today?'*

*I took a deep breath, picked up the phone, and asked her to hit me with her worst.*

*'Some of your content's very dry and dull, you're overly verbose and there's quite a bit of repetition. All in all, I don't think you follow your own advice.'*

As entrepreneurs, it's important to present ourselves to the outside world in a credible light. However, I find that many of us are so concerned with preserving our authority that we don't share the vulnerabilities, obstacles and mishaps that happen during our journey. The issue with this is that it makes it very hard for readers to connect with us.

By contrast, when we do share our challenges and mistakes, these often become the most memorable and most shareable stories in our books!

In my case, I got some rather sobering feedback during my first round of edits, which led me to let my book sit for a few months before revisiting it. When I did, I ended up cutting 9,000 words from my original draft (which included two full chapters), and then added another 7,000 words of brand new content.

The result? I finished with a much better book. I also had a story I could share to help other authors and entrepreneurs prepare for the editing process, to reveal a bit of my personality and connect with my audience, and to reveal that even editors aren't perfect!

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying a blog post on the Grammar Factory website. The URL is [www.grammarfactory.com/editing/my-editing-journey/](http://www.grammarfactory.com/editing/my-editing-journey/). The page features the Grammar Factory logo, a navigation menu with links like 'Home', 'Free stuff', 'The book', 'What we do', 'Who we are', 'Rave reviews', and 'Get in touch'. The main content area has a title 'Dry, dull and verbose: Behind the scenes of my editing journey' with a sub-headline 'This entry was posted in [Editing](#) on August 5, 2015 by [Jillqui](#) [@jillqui](#)'. The text of the post begins with 'After quickly pumping out my book, I was feeling pretty confident. I let it sit for a week, gave it a quick read and thought, "This is decent." Then I sent it to my editor, Carolyn. Four days later, I received an email: "Your book needs quite a bit of work, more than I expected... Is there a good time to call you today?" I took a deep breath, picked up the phone, and asked her to hit me with her worst. "Some of your content's very dry and dull, you're a bit verbose and there's quite a bit of repetition. All in all, I don't think you follow your own advice." In a book written to teach entrepreneurs how to write an awesome book, this was not the feedback I wanted. I had a decision to make - should I ignore her feedback and push for my original print deadline, or should I take it on board and push my print date by a few months? Here are the things I kept in mind.' The post concludes with 'The end goal' and a paragraph: 'While I didn't want to hear that my book needed more work, my goal was to use this book as a tool to establish myself as an industry authority. While some entrepreneurs believe that having something in print is better than not having a book at all, as a professional writer and editor, I knew my book had to be good. If I had just wanted to publish a book, rather than a great one, I could have ignored the feedback and published my original draft. However, my goal was to write a great book, and this meant I could focus on how to achieve that goal, rather than simply focusing on how to go to print faster.' To the right of the text is an image of a woman sitting at a desk with books, talking on a phone. Further right is a promotional graphic for 'Entrepreneur Brand Accelerator' with text: 'KEY PERSON "Influence"', '"THE WORLD'S LEADING PERSONAL BRAND ACCELERATOR" - THE HUFFINGTON POST', 'ENTREPRENEUR BRAND ACCELERATOR AUSTRALIA | UK | USA | SINGAPORE', and 'FIND DATES IN YOUR CITY'. Below the graphic are social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and RSS, and a 'Categories' section listing 'Client case studies', 'Designing your book', 'Editing', 'Entrepreneurship', and 'Grammar academies'.

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## Bonus: 2 questions to evaluate your content

While using all of these ideas are a great way to add depth to your work and to add , and existing content can be a valuable resource when you want to get everything written and published quickly, think carefully about what you choose to put in your book.

When editing client books, I often find that a lot of the case studies, anecdotes and repurposed blog posts simply don't fit.

This is for one of two reasons. Either the content isn't directly related to the main message of their book, or it isn't actually relevant for their ideal readers.

When trying to figure out how to choose the content to include in your book, keep the following two questions in mind:

### 1. Is the content directly related to the main message of your book?

If your content doesn't directly relate to your main message, it won't fit into your book, no matter how hard you try to justify it or blend it in. I don't care how great it makes your business sound, or how persuasively it campaigns for an issue close to your heart, or even if you won an award for it. If it isn't directly related to your main message, it's going to confuse and frustrate your readers as they try to figure out your point, or lose their place once you circle back from your tangent.

However, if you have a piece of content you love but which doesn't fit into your book, don't despair – it could always be used for a blog post, an article, or for your next book.

### 2. Does my reader really *need* to know this?

If your content *does* relate to your main message, the next question to ask is whether it is relevant to your reader. There are some things you might think are wildly interesting. But, if they aren't relevant to your reader, they shouldn't be in your book.

I personally love the mechanics of the English language, am interested in learning about its evolution, and am passionate about defending its correct use (if you follow Grammar Factory on Facebook, you'll see we put up a grammar glitch every Friday bemoaning the decline of the English language. Apostrophes feature frequently).

However, when it comes to writing a bestselling business book, you don't need to know this. In fact, you don't actually need correct spelling and grammar to write a great book because you can easily outsource spelling and grammar to a proofreader. This is why I don't talk about spelling and grammar at all in *Book Blueprint*.

So, consider whether your readers *really* need to know what you're writing about. This will help you find the right content and write an awesome book.