

eBook Publishing Success Checklist

So, you're ready to publish a eBook. Not so fast! There are a lot of things that go into publishing a great eBook. Miss one of these things and you risk having your book come out formatted incorrectly, not selling or even getting bad reviews.

This publishing checklist will help you make sure that you've done everything properly before launching.

Have You ... Said Something Truly Unique?

For your book to really take off, it has to have something really different about it. People can't pick up the book and think it seems like every other book they've ever read.

Becoming an eBook best-seller is only slightly easier than becoming a best-seller in paperback. Your book *must* stand out.

Give your book to a few people in your target market before launching. When they give you feedback, are they excited? Or do they simply say it's good? Keep working on your book until people you show it to absolutely *love* it.

Have You ... Proofread?

When you're self-publishing something, you forgo having an editor on your side and an experienced proofreading team at your beck and call. Instead, you have to find your own proofreader to do the job.

Don't make the mistake of thinking you don't need a proofreader. You do. There are a lot of spelling mistakes that spell checkers can't catch and a lot of grammar mistakes that machines can't catch either.

When you write your own book, there's a kind of nearsightedness that happens. You'll miss spelling mistakes that you would have caught if it were someone else's writing.

eBook Publishing Success

Hire a proofreader. Use a service like Proofreading Pal or find an experienced proofreader on eLance.

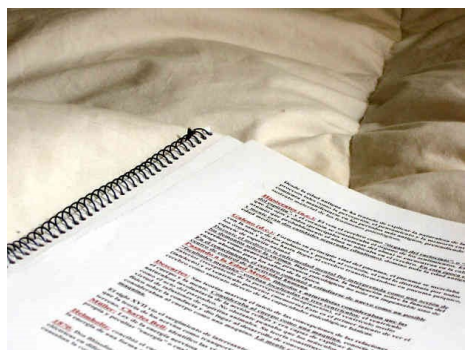
Have You ... Turned Off Track Changes?

In Microsoft Word, documents are often saved with “track changes” on. This helps keep track of what previous versions of the document looked like.

This can cause some strange things to happen when you convert it to Kindle and ePub formats. eReaders may think that the text data in previous versions of text are actually part of the book and include it in the book.

To prevent this from happening, go into the “Review” tab and accept all the past changes before uploading your file for Kindle publishing.

Have You ... Formatted Your Document?



Formatting for the Nook is different than formatting for the Kindle, iBook formatting is different than formatting for Smashwords, etc. Proper formatting includes adding page breaks after each chapter, adding a proper table of contents, adding images in a way that can be converted to Kindle format and more.

For Kindle eBooks, follow Amazon’s formatting guidelines and you should have no problems getting your book formatted. If you do have trouble, try uploading it in a different format. For example, instead of uploading using HTML, try just uploading the .doc.

Remember that for Nook books, one of the biggest differences is that you can’t use page breaks; but have to use section breaks instead. Most of Word’s basic features, such as underlining, bolding and bulleting will work on the Nook. However, other features, like symbols or image wrapping won’t come out properly.

Be sure to upload the correct file type to your publishing platform of choice.

Have You ... Read it On an eReader (or three)?

eBook Publishing Success

Just because your book looks good in Microsoft Word doesn't necessarily mean it'll look good on the Kindle or Nook devices. The best way to make sure you really have a book that'll read well on the Kindle is to buy your own Kindle and read your own book on it.

This might seem like an unnecessary step; but it's actually a critical part of creating the customer experience. You need to know how your customers are going to experience your book, on the device that they're going to experience it on.

Buy a Kindle. Read it on the Kindle, before publishing it.

Have You ... Refined Your Sample Pages?

The first few pages of your book are the most important pages of your book. Why? Because people will read samples of your book and decide whether or not they want to buy.

Your first five to ten pages should be absolutely stand out *stellar*. It should get someone who's on the fence about buying your book to actually make the leap and buy.

Have a friend or two read over the samples and the first few pages of your book. Do they like it? Would they buy? Get as much feedback as you can and put a lot of energy into nailing the first few pages.

Have You ... Researched Your Keywords & Categories Carefully?

The Kindle store used to let you put in as many keywords as you want. Today, you only get seven keywords.

Research what kinds of keywords your customers are using through using tools like the Google Keyword Tool. You can also spy on what your competitors are doing.

Picking the right keywords will help your customers find your book and get your more exposure. Don't pick them haphazardly.

The same applies to categories. Categories help you get found. Find out what categories your competitors are putting their books in and see if that's the right one for you.

Have You ... Written a Top Notch Description?

For your book to sell, you need to have a winning description. The description should arouse curiosity and get people interested in reading the book.

Why should someone buy your book? Barnes & Noble advocates this approach to writing your description: Imagine someone asked you what your book is about at a dinner party. You have to “sell” your book in 30 seconds. What would you say?

Now take that pitch and turn it into your book’s description. It should catch attention, tell people what the book is about, hook their curiosity and get them to buy.



Perhaps the best way to write a description is to write a few different descriptions that have vastly different styles. For example, one might be descriptive, another might be mysterious, another might be mirthful and another might make promises. Then put them down for a couple days, come back and pick the most compelling one.

Have You ... Tested Your Cover Image?

Your cover will have a bigger impact on your sales than just about anything else in your description. Have you tested it to make sure it’s the best cover you can possibly have?

The best way to test your cover is to have 5-6 different covers done, then have your friends look over them. Get different opinions from 10 to 20 people and choose the one that people consistently say is the best.

Have You ... Got an Inspiring and Credible Bio?

Before someone buys your book, one of the first things they’re going to look at is who you are. Do you seem like a credible person? Do you have the credentials to write the book you wrote? Why should they trust you?

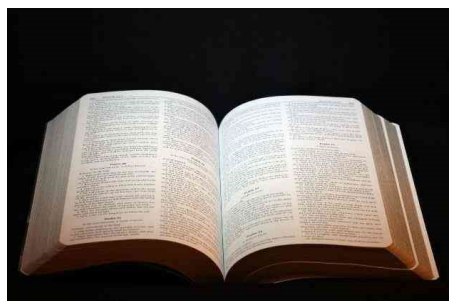
When you’re writing your bio, focus on the credibility building aspects. For example, if you’re writing a business book, people will care a lot less about where you grew up or what you’re passionate about than what your business track record is. Even if you’re writing a fiction book, you should still focus on your track record as an author.

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Make your bio “snap” and fun to read, but make sure it also adds credibility.

Have You ... Collected Blurbs and Testimonials?

Blurbs and testimonials (or endorsements) should go in the beginning of your book, as well as at the bottom of your description. They can help convey other people’s excitement and get your readers excited as well.



Getting testimonials is easy. Just send the book to a few of your friends or colleagues, have them email you their thoughts and put those thoughts in your book.

The editorial reviews have a section of their own on most eBook retailers. That means there’s a huge opportunity to build credibility by adding a few editorial reviews.

An editorial review is a review by someone who’s respected in your industry. For example, a journalist, a well-known author, an editor of a well-known publication or a CEO of a prominent company.

Have You ... Leveraged Bloggers, Reviewers and Reading Groups?

One of the best ways to sell an eBook is to get a ton of reviews, both on the web and on eBook retail sites (such as Amazon and Barnes & Noble).

To get reviews on the web, contact bloggers and review sites that write about your industry or genre. Offer to send them a free copy of your book to review.

To get a lot of reviews in the Nook store, look for reading groups. These are groups of people who read Nook books. They often focus around specific categories of books. Find one of these groups and offer your book for free to the entire group, in exchange for reviews.

You can learn more about getting honest reviews for your book in [this book](#) by Dana, or [this eCourse](#) from Shelley and Heather.

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Have You ... Got a Solid Marketing Plan?

eBooks don't sell themselves. Getting yourself listed in the Kindle store or on Barnes and Noble doesn't mean you'll sell books. You have to promote!

Come up with a multi-pronged approach to selling your eBook. For example, you might use your own network, a combination of forums and blog posts and a couple of paid tactics.

Get a free training on building your book marketing plan [here](#).

Have You ... Learned to Use the Reports?

Learn how to use the Kindle's reporting system. This system will tell you exactly how many sales you're making and when.

This system can make it a lot easier to figure out what's working and what's not.

For example, if you notice a sudden surge in sales after buying ads on a specific site, you might be able to conclude that advertising is working.

By contrast, if you've been promoting heavily on Facebook but haven't gotten any sales, you can probably conclude that Facebook isn't working.

Follow this checklist to help ensure that your Kindle book is a winner. Publishing on the Kindle requires getting a lot of things right. That said, once you do get it right, you'll be exposed to a very wide audience. More and more people today are reading books on their smartphones rather than in physical book form.

Get Our Complete eBook Publishing Success Training at:

www.trainingauthors.com/ebooknow

About the Experts



Shelley Hitz, Dana Lynn Smith, & Heather Hart

TrainingAuthors

Shelley Hitz and Heather Hart work together to help authors write, publish, and market their books from their website, TrainingAuthors.com. They have over a dozen books available for authors. Find out more at: www.TrainingAuthors.com/books

Savvy Book Marketer

Dana Lynn Smith helps authors and indie publishers learn how to sell more books through her how-to guides, blog, and newsletter. Get her free *Top Book Marketing Tips* eBooks at www.BookMarketingNewsletter.com, learn more about book promotion on her blog at www.TheSavvyBookMarketer.com, and see her step-by-step book marketing guides at www.SavvyBookMarketer.com.