



THE VALUE OF A BOOK as a Marketing Tool for Business Owners

By Carolyn Parsons

A book is a powerful marketing tool that is often overlooked. Yes, a high-quality, easy-to-read book can be a powerful marketing tool. The key is to create a professional-looking product that represents your brand and use it effectively so that it helps build that brand. Done properly, it can help you reach customers in an exciting new way.

✓ Can my business benefit?

Nearly any kind of business can benefit from this type of marketing tool, including consultants, service businesses such as insurance companies, therapists, accounting firms, law firms, and more. Life coaches and motivational speakers often include a book as part of their service, and they are particularly helpful for non-profit organization leaders. If you're a business owner, there is somebody wanting to learn from your expertise, and a book may add value to the service you provide and help attract new clients.

✓ What if I'm not a writer?

While you may not be a professional writer—it's not what you're paid to do—you can probably write. Nearly every business person has the skill set required to draft a book, even if that first draft isn't perfect. Plus, who knows better how to tell the story of your business than you? You're the expert, you have a computer, and all you need to do is make a list of a dozen chapter topics you would like to cover and start that draft. It doesn't have to be perfect; it just needs to be on paper. And nearly anybody can do that.

Think about it. One essay a week, and in ten weeks you have ten chapters. Then, create an introduction about how you started your business and why, create a conclusion to sum up your chapters, and voilà, you have the bones of a book. A writing professional can then turn it into a professional product by organizing the structure, providing feedback on the writing and content, and correcting grammatical, style, and spelling errors. A designer/typesetter can format the book and incorporate your business's branding on the cover and interior.

✓ Who is your target audience/reader?

Before starting, you will have to decide who your readership is. Is it your potential or current customers, small businesses, start-ups, or large corporations? Determining who you're writing for guarantees that the finished publication benefits your business. Keep in mind that you can create more than one book, each geared to a different audience. If that's your intention, then you just need to prioritize which book you draft first.

✓ What content do I include?

What will you include? That will depend on the type of business you have and the audience you've chosen. If you're targeting customers, you might want to focus on success stories around the products you sell. A photographer may want to talk about a family photo shoot with a customer who reunited with a long-lost relative. Or, better yet, it may include first-hand testimonials from them. There are many options, and a brainstorming session to figure out the content is usually helpful. You may decide to write several books, each focusing on different content.

✓ How is it a marketing tool?

Your company's book tells customers what your business does. It also can be used to introduce you and your team to the potential client, giving them a more in-depth look at your business ethics, model, and culture. Often business owners who compile their knowledge, expertise, and experiences as entrepreneurs can grow their networks, add a new element to their résumé, and most importantly, increase their credibility. A publishing credit establishes a person as an expert in their field.

✓ Once the book is written and edited, what next?

Publishing options are now available for anyone and are very cost effective. For as little as \$1000, people have produced professional books themselves with the aid of a few professionals like editors, proofreaders, book cover designers, and formatters/typesetters.

Gone are the days of large publishing companies that gatekeep who can publish. Instead, most business owners create their own books through the options available in today's digital world.

✓ How do I use the book?

Having it available for sale on the company website, Amazon, or other retailers is a good start. Many companies opt to have the book priced at the break-even point so that it becomes cost effective to send it to customers inexpensively or allow customers to purchase it themselves.

Others hand it out at events or take it to presentations and pitches. Still others market it independently at book events.

Ensure that as many people as possible know about the book by hosting a launch event, sending out press releases, and ensuring that you mention it on all communications to clients and potential clients.

When a businessperson becomes an author and executes a marketing campaign for their book, they may attract media attention. Potential placements range from expert commentary in major news outlets to interviews on podcasts, radio, and television, to becoming a regular contributor for industry-specific publications, and more.

As a result, when a prospective customer visits a company website and sees that the executives have been featured across various media channels, it shows that they are trusted.

The most important thing is to write a professional-looking book and put it in front of people. Its existence will elevate credibility, and its content will inform the reader about who you are as a company and what your values, goals, and services are.

Ultimately, you need to place your book—and therefore you and your business—in front of those who matter most: your customers.

Novelist Carolyn R. Parsons is owner of Cabochon Manuscript Services, helping nonfiction and fiction writers through business plan writing/consultation, document formatting, coaching, classes, developmental editing, and eventually, retreats. In 2021, she was one of 125 authors selected to have her entire body of work sent to the moon on the Peregrine Mission via Astrobotic and NASA as part of their lunar time capsule payload, with the launch scheduled for October 2022, and the Lunar Codex project, launching in 2023. Her novels, Desolate and The Forbidden Dreams of Betsy Elliott, are highlighted on the project's website. The mission has been called a message in a bottle to the future. Representing artists from over 120 countries, she is the only one from Newfoundland and Labrador to be selected. She is from Change Islands and lives in Lewisporte.

www.cabochon.ca. Email: carolyn@cabochon.ca