

Kindle Publishing Checklist

Description:

Print out a copy of this checklist whenever you start a new Kindle book. Then cross off each task as it's completed.

(This is a modified version of the process that I follow for each book—with additional notes that explains the logic behind each step. Feel free to modify this checklist and create a version that works best for *you*.)

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Questions?

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Steps:

1. Think of a basic book idea or overall premise (My preferred method is to create a dedicated folder or “stack” in Evernote dedicated to Kindle books. Use this to record every idea that pops into your head.)
2. Look on Amazon for similar books. I use the “#30,000 rule” for judging the profit potential of a book idea. Search for related books, click over to the description page and find the “Amazon Best Sellers Rank” section. If the number is #30,000 or less, then that means it sells *at least* five copies per day, which a decent amount of readers for that topic.

Sidebar: Nowadays, I don't use this rule too much because I'm focused on creating unique content for the habits market. However, I did use the #30,000 rule to see if the overall “habit niche” was profitable on Amazon.

3. Spend one to two weeks brainstorming topics to include in the book. Once again, I recommend creating a Notebook for each book in Evernote and adding ideas as they pop into your head.

4. Go to the Keyword Planner tool in [Google Adwords](#) and/or [Merchant Words](#) to identify the high traffic keywords related to your book topic. These can be used for the book title and Amazon description page.
5. Choose the basic “hook” for your book. *What is the core problem you’re solving for readers? How will you solve it? Is there a catchy title that best describes it?*
6. Research facts/figures/statistics that will be included to flesh out the content and provide specific examples of the information.
7. Get out a legal pad and “brain dump” every potential topic that will be covered. Be sure to include any information from Evernote and the facts/figures/statistics from the previous step.
8. Create 8 to 12 main talking points. This will form the core chapters of your book. Write down each one on a separate index card.
9. Flesh out each talking point with two to three additional index cards. On each, add a few ideas of what you’d like to discuss in that section.
10. Sort the index cards into a logical flow. Cross out irrelevant ideas, rip up cards that don’t work for the overall theme and re-sort everything into an order that works best for the book. This stack of cards will form the backbone of your book.

Sidebar: Yes, the index card process might seem like extra work, but I found it’s a useful strategy for getting clarity of thought on what readers want.

11. Write the outline. Simply take each index card and type what’s written down. Use your favorite word processing tool to write the book. (Some people prefer Word, others use Scrivener. Honestly, there isn’t a right answer here.)
12. Write the 1st draft. I recommend something called “stream of consciousness writing.” The text from the outline acts as a “prompt,” so you never wonder what to say next. Simply look at the next section/chapter and write whatever pops into your head. Avoid the impulse to edit. Just get the words on the paper and keep going through the prompts.
13. Write the 2nd draft. For me, this is the longest step of the process. Here you’ll carefully edit the previous draft for flow, content and overall reading experience.

Sidebar: What's the right length for a Kindle book? The answer really varies. When I first started out, I aimed for 13,000 to 16,000 words. Now, I like to be around 20,000 to 25,000 words (nonfiction). The best answer is a book should as long as it takes to thoroughly cover a topic.

14. Finalize the title of the book. Typically, I'll create dozens of potential titles and get feedback from people that I trust. You can even use a service like [Mechanical Turk](#) to run an A/B survey on a few different titles.

Sidebar: Choosing the title is super important. I prefer a two or three word main title that creates curiosity and has branding potential. The subtitle is a clear description of what the book teaches (i.e. "How to..," "7 Steps to...," "A Simple Plan to...")

15. Commission a graphic designer to create your cover image. Do yourself a favor and pay decent money for this investment. Sorry, people *do* judge books by their covers. So, forget about using a \$5 cover from Fiverr because this ultimately will hurt your long-term success. I'm more than happy to share the contact info of my cover guy. Just email me: stevescottsite[at]gmail[dot]com.
16. Think about the topic for your **next book**. Print out another copy of this checklist, then start brainstorming ideas of what topics will be covered.
17. Polish the 3rd draft. Mostly this means fixing grammar mistakes, spotting word omissions and reading the book (out loud) to make sure the content flows.
18. Send 3rd draft to an editor. I mostly use [Elance](#) to hire people, but again, I can recommend a good editor.
19. Get back the cover image. Shrink it down to a 100 pixel height. Ask for a correction if you can't clearly see the main title. This is important because Amazon uses small image sizes for many of their advertisements, so you need to make sure your title stands out.
20. Review the edits and update the book. Honestly, this is the best way to improve your writing. Spend a few hours to go over the changes and identify the mistakes that you typically make.
21. Send to a second editor. (*Optional*. I feel it's important to have a second pair of eyes on the content and make sure every mistake has been corrected.)

22. Add the front and back matter to the book. This includes a title page, disclaimer statement, free book offer (to build your email list), request for reviews on Amazon and a “More Books by” section.
23. Send the final version to an eBook formatter. (I’m currently testing different eBook formatters, so my best advice is to post a job on Elance.)
24. Write the sales description for Amazon in a Notepad file. I prefer to do it in three sections: (1) Identify the problem. (2) Describe a possible solution to the problem. (3) Describe how your book solves that problem. Each section is divided with a subtitle using the <h2> tag that displays an “Amazon Orange” title. Finally, be sure to use the , , and <i> tags to make actionable words stand out.
25. Upload the book to [KDP](#). Cut-n-past the sales description into your listing page, include the keywords from step #4, upload the cover image and add other information related to your book. Set the price to \$0.99
26. Buy the book and download it to two different reading platforms (I prefer my iPhone and the Kindle Paperwhite.) Scroll through the pages and identify any formatting issues. Fix them and re-submit to Amazon.
27. Hire someone to proofread the book. (*Optional*. Most mistakes should be caught in the two edits, but it doesn’t hurt to have another person download the book and do a quick read over.)
28. Send your book to a print formatter for the [CreateSpace platform](#). This site can be tricky, so I prefer to outsource most of the process.
29. Submit the print version to CreateSpace.
30. Go to [Amazon Associates](#) and create different advertising links for your book. This is a great way to identify what marketing strategies generate the most sales during a launch. (Unfortunately, the Associates program isn’t available in some states and countries.)
31. Create redirects for each of these links. I prefer the [Pretty Link plugin](#).
32. Go to [Author Central](#) and add the book to your author page. It’s important to have an author page for each niche, which talks about how your books can help readers.

33. Schedule your book launch date. Currently, I like to launch my books at \$0.99 and get as many sales as possible in a short timeframe (about a week or so).

Others prefer to do a free book launch through the KDP Select program. [On my blog](#), I have a guest post by Nick Loper where he describes the specific tactics he used to get 20,000 downloads on his free launch.

34. Get 5+ reviews. Before launching or promoting your books, it's important to have a handful of reviews on your listing page. You can get these by contacting readers of previous books, authority figures in your niche and Amazon top reviewers. Ultimately you want to build up a "street team" of readers who like your content and are willing to leave reviews whenever a new book comes out.

35. Submit your book to various promo sites. (*Optional*. If you're doing a free promotion, then you want to advertise it on as many sites as possible.)

36. Contact your network and ask for help during the launch. Another great long-term strategy is to build up a network of authors and marketers in your niche where you can support one another.

37. Write guest posts and schedule podcast interviews to promote your book. (*Optional*. Honestly, I publish at such a fast pace that my time is better spent promoting my entire catalog/brand instead of one specific book.)

38. Raise your book price to \$2.99 **if** you're launching a book for free. This increases the "perceived value" when readers see the price drop on the listing page.

39. Launch your book. Market through your platform that can include: an email list, social media, blogging, podcast or YouTube. [I have a case study that's filled with blog posts about how I built a platform for my habit books.](#)

Also, my #1 strategy is email marketing. So I highly recommend applying [what Pat teaches on his blog](#).

40. Interact with readers during the launch week. Depending on your platform, you'll get a lot of questions, comments, emails and reviews. Be sure to follow-up with your readers, providing as much *helpful information* as possible and not just pitching your book.

41. Create “follow-up” campaigns. Near the end of your launch, post a follow-up message on social media and send an email to your list. Tell them they only have a few days to grab your book at its low price. (Over 30% of my sales are generated from these follow-up campaigns.)
42. After a week or so, raise the book price to \$2.99 (or higher) if you did a \$0.99 launch.
43. Evaluate your launch campaign (using the data from Amazon Associates.) *What generated the most sales? What was a waste of your time or money? What could be improved for the next book? What do the reviews say?* Use this information to improve the success of your next book.

(In my opinion, self-publishing is a catalog business—like a blog. To achieve success, you need a variety of “entry points” that potential readers can check out.)
44. After a week at \$2.99, if a book averages *at least* five sales, then do an audio version for the [ACX platform](#). (Again, I can recommend someone for this, just email me.)
45. Relax, take a deep breath and congratulate yourself for a job well done.
46. Five minutes later...start working on your next book. ☺