

If This Year Is the Year You Are Going to Write Your Book, Don't Make This Common Mistake

Many industry experts will have made the commitment to **finally** write a book this year. They have been talking and thinking about it for years, but this year is **IT**. This is the year that it is finally going to happen.

Congratulations on making the decision to write your book.

And the great news is, that once you have finished writing and have lined up your editor, typesetter, registered your title, arranged your cover design and printer (or outsourced those tasks), you can be launching your hard copy book within 3-5 weeks - as long as you don't change your mind every 5 minutes.

So, what is the biggest mistake first time authors make with their first book? They try to put their lifetime of knowledge into the one book. Let's say they have been working in their profession/industry for 15-20 years or they have worked in multiple industries for a much shorter time and identified many problem areas of major misunderstanding. This confusion can be resolved by reading your soon to be written book.

The problem facing the first-time author is that they want to include absolutely everything that they know on this one area - even the not so important points. Thousands of words here, thousands of words there and before they know it, their book file is groaning under the weight of 150,000+ words and they contact an editor who says, *That is way too long for a book today, I will have to chop that back to around 70,000 words. That is going to cost you \$XX (trust me a lot of money).*

This week I was networked to a first-time author, who told me about their book and then disclosed that they had received the above advice from an editor and were attempting to reduce the words themselves and finding it was a painstaking task. Someone had mentioned my name and thought I might solve their problem. And I believe I did, without charging them a dollar.

Once I established what the book was about and an idea of chapter overview and word count, my comments were - *It sounds to me like you have written more than one book. Rather than reduce the word count, why not re-read your book with the focus on - What if this document included 4 or even 5 books of approximately 25,000+ words each? How would you divide the writing into 4 or more sections and think of them as*

actually being stand alone smaller books rather than this huge document?

I believe that the biggest mistake that first time authors make is that they try to include **absolutely everything they know** in their first book, covering a very broad topic. e.g. they write a leadership book and try to cover absolutely everything they know about leadership. They can't possibly throw anything out because all this information is critical, and it may well be. BUT what if they just focus on one area of leadership e.g. decision making for busy leaders, or 10 keys to high productivity for leaders or 3 ways to negotiate for leaders?

What if they write absolutely everything, they know about decision making for leaders, research as much as they can from other experts and refer to those as well? What if they include several selected leaders' opinions, tips and experiences?

What if they tell one aspect of leadership well, rather than write the equivalent of a leadership degree with hundreds of thousands of words that may never be published? It's obvious they know their topic, they just don't have to put everything into that first book, or the second book for that matter.

There have never been lower barriers to entry for first time authors who don't have to wait to be discovered and can use online marketing to promote their book globally once it is written and created into a hard copy book, eBooks or audio book for starters.

Yes, this is the year to write your book!

May I suggest though that you consider writing about one specific area, one niche, one solution to a common problem. Aim for 25,000-30,000 words which is described as an 'airport read' - it takes around 2-3 hours to read flying from one city to another. Personally, I have found this estimation of reading time to be inaccurate as many people read only 3,000-3,500 words per hour - but you get the general idea. Aim for an average size book (approximately 150 pages) and after reading the book, the reader will definitely know one or more possible solutions to their problem.

Then start your second book or series of eBooks or audio books. Your knowledge is valuable and needs to be shared. But please don't make the mistakes that I did with my first few books, 25+ years ago. Yes, that's

right, I made this mistake, and I am sharing this with you today, so you don't make the same one. Enjoy being an author - it's lots of fun.

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