

GINNY CARTER



*Your*  
**Business**  
*Your*  
**Book**

How to plan, write, and promote the book  
that puts you in the spotlight

# **Your Business Your Book**

How to plan, write, and  
promote the book that puts  
you in the spotlight

**Ginny Carter**

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Practical Inspiration  
PUBLISHING

For Greg, Alex, and Leila – who are even better  
than books



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# The first page

## Why write a business book?

*Writing a book is an adventure.*

Winston Churchill

You have an ambition – no, let's call it a vision – and it insists on hanging around. On some days it makes you grin with excitement and on others it fills you with a heavy feeling of apprehension. One week you're raring to make it a reality and the next you feel incapable of starting, let alone finishing it.

This ambition is writing a book for your business, and it's calling you.

Let's say that one day, while this fantasy of becoming a published author is still a dream, you attend a conference. Sitting in the audience, you watch as a speaker on your area of expertise takes to the stage. As you listen to his talk it becomes apparent he knows no more than you do about your mutual knowledge, in fact less. Why was he invited to speak and not you? It doesn't seem fair. Even worse, the

audience is lapping up his words as if they were spoken by a guru. As you leave the hall you pass a table piled high with copies of a professional-looking book – his book. Ah, so that’s the reason he was on stage: he wrote it.

The following week you have coffee with a business friend who tells you she’s expanding her coaching business to take on three new associates. What’s more, she has the kind of client waiting list that most coaches would give an arm for, and to keep her workload manageable she’s doubling her prices. ‘That’s amazing’, you say enviously. ‘How did that happen?’ She replies that since her book came out she’s been approached by people from all over the world who are interested in working with her. The marketing she did to promote it also brought her into contact with several podcast hosts and other well-known thinkers in her field, so she credits some of her success to the relationships she’s built with them.

By now this book idea might be more than a dream for you; in fact, as far as you can see, it’s becoming a necessity for being respected as an expert or thought-leader. And you’d be right. Think of reading this book as the first page of your new professional life. Because writing a book to showcase your expertise is a bit like creating a fresh business: one that has more authority, credibility, and viability than its predecessor. Whether you’re a coach, consultant, speaker, or specialist, becoming the author of an inspiring and motivating book will give you the ability to charge more, work with who you want, and take to the stage more often. If you do any speaking at all, you know the value of standing in front of a roomful of people, but think how

many more rooms your book will be in when everyone can read it at home.

There's also the satisfaction of your book having an influence over the way your readers think and behave, which means you've had a key input into their successes. It could mean the difference between someone struggling in their life or business, and them finding it easy and joyful. It could be the missing link between hope and despair. And it could light the spark that inspires someone to make a difference in the world, because brilliant books are transformational.

*I never realised that until I read this book.  
Who would have thought it?*

*You have to read this, you'll never think about  
it the same way again.*

*Until I read that book I did it all wrong. Now  
it's so much easier.*

There's also a special kind of magic about writing a book, even before you've published it. The thinking that goes into structuring and writing it allows your work to thrive in all sorts of ways; you'll find the words you've written coming to life with your clients and customers, and flourishing in the form of enhanced results. You'll know your stuff so much better than before, which means that the next time you need to give a spontaneous talk you'll have the words already formed. Of course, you don't have to write a book to do *okay* in your work. But honestly, why wouldn't you want to be more than that?

So far so good, but there's a problem. Writing a book isn't the simplest of processes, is it? I always think a book is like a sausage roll: the end result is tempting, but you don't want to know what goes into it.

First there's the planning – the bit some people miss but that makes a world of difference. Get that right and you'll create a book that touches the most relevant people and supports your business. Skip this step and you can waste months of your life writing the wrong book. Then there's the small matter of crafting that tome so it engages, inspires, and educates your readers. Actually let's face it, there's the small matter of writing it at *all*. And finally, how do you market and promote your book so it sells like hotcakes? How do you get as many copies as possible into the hands of a willing audience, so you build a reputation as the go-to expert in your field?

It's not easy and it never was, but there's the complicated way and there's the straightforward way. This book makes it straightforward. You'll learn the secrets of writing the book your readers want, and that speaks to the question they seek an answer to. You'll also discover how to keep your readers turning the pages – no mean feat with today's short attention spans. And you'll find out what simple hooks to use in your writing and marketing so your book does the job it needs to do to boost your authority: put it in the spotlight.

I know how to do all this because I've written multiple books as a business book ghostwriter (which means I write books for my clients in their voices). I've also coached

countless business owners through the process of writing and promoting their own books. These people are now the proud owners of shiny new books and equally shiny reputations. I've seen with my own eyes how exciting it is to become a published author, and my aim is to help you to achieve the same result. Because I've experienced what it takes to put 50,000 words onto the page, and I understand from my coaching clients how easy it can be to let self-doubt, sagging motivation, and sheer lack of time rob you of the dream of becoming an author. Also, I don't mind admitting that I've had to overcome these barriers myself in the course of writing this book! There are other books about how to write a business book, and many of them are excellent. But few are written by a professional book writer who also has a background in business herself.

In Part I, 'Plan', we'll take a tour through the book planning process. You'll become clear on why you're writing your book (a deceptively simple question), the tools you'll need to create it, and just as importantly, what else you require but don't yet realise – the 'unknown unknowns' that can derail your project before you start. Then we'll move onto creating your content outline so it both makes sense to your readers and covers everything you need to say (and no more).

In Part II, 'Write', we'll dive into the writing itself. This is where many authors begin, which is why they become stuck later on. You'll learn how to make writing more straightforward than you thought, as well as the crucial techniques for putting across your information clearly and persuasively. I'll take you through the editing process and

give you ways to keep motivated during the hard times. I'll also give you the low-down on your publishing options, because much has changed over the last few years.

Finally Part III, 'Promote', shows you how to market and promote your book so it supports and builds your business. You'll have learned how to do some of this right at the beginning, because I'm a fan of marketing from the start. I'll also help you to avoid some of the time-wasting traps that are so easy to fall into with marketing, especially if it's not an area you feel comfortable with. I know what I'm doing here, because I worked for 21 years in marketing including three years as a freelance social media manager, tweeting and posting for multiple businesses and building their audiences online. Both the off and online marketing worlds are familiar territory to me.

By the end of this book you'll know what to write about, who to write it for, how to write it, and the best ways to tell everyone you've written it. As far as your expertise is concerned, you'll be the person who 'wrote the book on it' – the one who's asked to give the keynote, chair the panel discussion, contribute to your industry, and help more people. But there's no time to lose. If you're keen to see how a book can promote your business and give you the lasting satisfaction of becoming a published author, you need to start straightaway. Let's get going.

# I PLAN



# Chapter 1

## Your head space

Why you can write a book, even if you think it's beyond you

*Risk comes from not knowing what you're doing.*

Warren Buffet, one of the world's most successful investors

As the then US Secretary of State for Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, famously once said, 'There are things we know that we know. There are known unknowns. That is to say there are things that we now know we don't know. But there are also unknown unknowns. There are things we don't know we don't know.'<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> NATO press conference, June 2002.

Although he was lampooned for it at the time, if you read his words carefully you'll find they make sense because we don't always realise what we don't know. In your case this can take the form of a set of unrecognised, and therefore unchallenged, assumptions about what it means to write a book. If you've been putting off making a start for some time, or if you've completed your first few chapters only to grind to a halt, you can be pretty sure that one or more of these beliefs is what's stopping you.

In this chapter you'll learn how to reveal the invisible barriers to you proceeding with your book, a bit like a radiologist exposes your hidden parts in an x-ray. Then you'll be able to deal with them.

## **Why haven't you written a book already?**

There's a gremlin who loves to sit on the shoulders of all budding authors whispering, 'What'cha gonna do about me? I'm your book. I've been here a while, haven't I? In fact, it's been a couple of years. Strange how you've never done anything about me so far, apart from buy a book about writing a book (although it's a brilliant one). Maybe you're not cut out for it. Better give up now before you waste even more time.'

If that gremlin sounds familiar, you're not alone. I once asked a number of respected business experts why it was they'd not yet written a book. They gave me a whole bunch of reasons, which boil down to nine main obstacles. The good news is, none of them is real.

Warning: my thoughts on this may get you started on your book!

## **I don't have enough time to write a book**

Which is really the same as...

### **My book isn't a priority**

*It would take so long, I feel like giving up before I start.*

*I've got too much client work to carve out the time.*

Or my favourite:

*I need three months on a desert island to write a book.*

There's no getting around it: writing a quality business book is a sizeable undertaking *because it's supposed to be*. That's why authors have a special status – they know enough about their subject to write something that has the potential to transform their readers' businesses and lives. It was never going to be an assignment they could knock out in a couple of weeks, and that's fine because it's not always the easy achievements that make the difference.

As bestselling author and business thinker Seth Godin succinctly put it: 'The book that will most change your life, is the book you write.' If you feel strongly about writing one, find a way to make time. How do you prioritise your most important work right now? Do you plan it in your

calendar, incentivise yourself to finish it, or just assume it will be done and magically it happens? There's no reason why your book should receive a different treatment.

If that doesn't work, try this. How would you feel if you discovered in six months' time that your arch-competitor had just published the book that's currently sitting in your head?

### **I'm worried my book will have flaws**

I sympathise with this. As a recovering perfectionist, I understand how easy it is to stop myself before I start because I'm worried I might produce something that contains mistakes or oversights.

*What if there are spelling errors?*

*What if I realise after it's published that I left out something important?*

*What if I get something wrong?*

These are common fears, but that's all they are. As Elizabeth Gilbert phrased it in her wonderful book about creativity and writing, *Big Magic*: 'I think perfectionism is just fear in fancy shoes and a mink coat, pretending to be elegant when actually it's just terrified.'<sup>2</sup> Of course your book doesn't have to be perfect. What is?

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<sup>2</sup> Elizabeth Gilbert, *Big Magic: Creative Living Beyond Fear*, Bloomsbury, 2016.

### **I don't know where to start**

That old chestnut. When we're faced with substantial tasks it's normal to feel daunted. What should the book be about? Who would want to read it? How to outline it so it makes sense for our readers? We ask ourselves so many questions that we can run out of steam and give up. There are various ways to approach your book outline and none of them is rocket science; you just need some simple ground rules to get you going. I'll give you a clue as to where you'll find those guidelines: in the book you're holding right now.

### **I hate writing and I'm no good at it**

There's no getting away from the fact that some people find writing easier and more enjoyable than others, but let's unpack this. Disliking an activity is not the same as being bad at it, and yet we think that if it doesn't 'feel right' someone on high (who?) has decreed we shouldn't be doing it. This is a story we've made up for ourselves, and it can be handy when we're looking for an excuse to throw in the towel.

Another way to look at this is as a matter of unfamiliarity. When you were at school you weren't taught how to write a book, so it's natural to feel daunted by the idea. But if you think of it as writing a short story that happens to get longer, or as a series of related blog posts, you'll realise you've accomplished something like it many times before.

On a more practical note, if you really don't think you're any good at writing it's likely this is a problem a good editor or even a ghostwriter can sort out. And don't worry

too much about grammar and spelling; that's what copy editors and proof readers are for.

### **I don't know enough to write a book**

Let's consider this for a moment. Do you help people through your work? Do you have happy clients? Have you been working in your field for a while and gained a heap of knowledge along the way? Set your stopwatch for 20 minutes and scribble down the things you know about your specialist area. And I mean all of them. It's so easy to take for granted what we do every day and I'd be amazed if you weren't able to fill a fair few pages with what you know, believe, have experienced, and learned during the course of doing your work.

### **No one would read it**

How do you know? Have you asked *everyone*? Seriously though, this is a good time to do some research on your topic because it's true, some people do write books that few want to read. That's not necessarily because they don't have anything worth writing, it's because there wasn't a demand for what they had to say in the first place (more on how to avoid that later). Ask your past and present clients if they would value a book about your field, or survey your email list. It's worth proving to yourself that your book is in a readable niche, both for your own confidence and because it makes business sense.

### **There's too much competition**

How many cookery books are on your kitchen shelf? If you're into a hobby, how many do you own on that? Try

searching Amazon for books on photography, for example – there are thousands, many of which have decent sales to their name. In fact, if you see competition in your field it proves it's a fertile area because when people want to know about a topic they often buy more than one book on it.

I have over 50 books on my Kindle on the craft of writing, and more on my bookshelf. Yet I'm still writing a book about writing a business book because I trust I have something valuable to contribute. Plus, you have your own unique take on your subject, which means that your book can never be a copy of someone else's. Nobody has the final word on any subject.

### **People might not like it**

I remember coaching a speaker who was writing her book with me. She'd been an academic in her previous career and was now a well-respected consultant to finance professionals (not an academic in sight). She was concerned that her erstwhile co-workers would look down on her newly non-academic writing style and privately criticise her for it; she could almost see their eyebrows arch and lips purse as they read. This was blocking her from progressing. When I reminded her that she wasn't writing for them, and that they'd be unlikely to spend their spare time reading a book that had little to do with their interests in any case, she relaxed and her book flowed once more. Ironically, after it was published she discovered it had been placed on student reading lists due to its helpful content and accessible style.

If you're feeling self-conscious as you write, turn around. Who's there? While I'm writing I can find myself

accompanied by a crowd of frowning onlookers, but I try not to let them stop me. I love this comment from one of my all-time favourite business and self-help book authors, Robert Cialdini, who said that prior to writing his first mainstream book *Influence* he'd been in the habit of writing with an academic audience 'on his shoulder'. Once he realised this, he swapped it for a mental image of one of his neighbours who symbolised his new target reader.<sup>3</sup>

## Who am I to write a book?

What all these reasons lead to is the ultimate question: 'Who am I to write a book? I'm not wise/special/famous/clever enough to do that' (delete as appropriate). Even if you don't feel like this now – and I hope you don't – there may come a point in your journey when self-doubt creeps in. Everyone has this, so don't let the outer confidence of other authors fool you.

International bestselling author Neil Gaiman had this to say about it in his keynote address to the University of the Arts class of 2012:

The first problem of any kind of even limited success is the unshakeable conviction that you are getting away with something, and that any moment now they will discover you... In my case, I was convinced that

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<sup>3</sup> Listen to the full story in 'Episode 102 – Pre-suasion with Robert Cialdini', *The Extraordinary Business Book Podcast*: [www.extraordinarybusinessbooks.com/episode-102-pre-suasion-with-robert-cialdini/](http://www.extraordinarybusinessbooks.com/episode-102-pre-suasion-with-robert-cialdini/)

there would be a knock on the door, and a man with a clipboard (I don't know why he carried a clipboard, in my head, but he did) would be there, to tell me it was all over and they had caught up with me.<sup>4</sup>

If publishing phenomena like Gaiman are visited by imposter syndrome, it should be obvious this feeling of fraudsterism doesn't make sense. We have hundreds of thoughts every day, most of which come and go without us realising, and every now and then we grab onto one and believe it for all it's worth. We could think of them as taxis. They drive by in single file and most of them we let go by, but for some reason there's one we decide to hop into and listen while the driver regales us with reasons to give up our book.

'I've had hundreds of failures in the back of this cab, Guv'nor', he says, 'they all spent months writing a book and no-one read it. One woman was so mortified after she spotted a mistake in hers, she never left the house again. Another had a bad review on Amazon and it ended his career. I even had a guy in the back who went into hiding after he found someone else had written a book on the same subject. It's a bad business, I can tell you.'

It's no wonder we get derailed when we have this nonsense in our heads. I'm not a psychologist, but I do know one thing: thoughts are just thoughts, nothing more. When we

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<sup>4</sup> 'Neil Gaiman: Keynote Address 2012', University of the Arts, [www.uarts.edu/neil-gaiman-keynote-address-2012](http://www.uarts.edu/neil-gaiman-keynote-address-2012)

realise this, we can take them less seriously. However, if this is a bit esoteric for you there's a more practical way of getting out of the taxi of doom and into the carriage of light...

## **The single best reason to write a book**

I want to share with you the one concept which, when I realised it, changed everything for me. It was one of those ideas I'd already grasped intellectually, but for some reason hearing it from someone else's lips helped me to understand it. I was listening to *The Extraordinary Business Book Club* podcast, in which host Alison Jones was interviewing bestselling author and business expert Daniel Priestley. In it he said:

In the process of writing a book, you're mining deep for your ideas in your intellectual property, so even if you never sold any books, or published the book, it would still be a worthwhile activity because in the process of writing you get very clear on your case studies, your stories, your methodologies [...] It's a process that allows you to reflect upon what you know, and formalise what you know into a

document, and then that content becomes blogs, articles, workshop materials.<sup>5</sup>

What he means is this: writing a book is an unparalleled way of deepening your understanding of what you do. It clarifies your thinking, encourages you to find a way of explaining it so everyone can understand it, and is a brilliant stimulator of ideas and insights. If you approach your book with a spirit of curiosity you can *enjoy writing it*. Once I got my head around the idea that creating my book would be a worthwhile task in its own right, I was hooked.

Let's take a look at what you gain from writing a business book before you even hit 'publish'. You might:

- work out what makes you special in your business space;
- clarify your ideas;
- create ordered thoughts out of chaos;
- learn how to convey your thinking clearly and persuasively in writing;
- come up with new ways of helping people;
- develop fresh frameworks and methodologies;
- evolve content for other content platforms such as your blog, online programmes, and talks;

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<sup>5</sup> 'Episode 72 – Book as Business Development with Daniel Priestley', *The Extraordinary Business Book Club*, [www.extraordinarybusinessbooks.com/episode-72-book-as-business-development-with-daniel-priestly/](http://www.extraordinarybusinessbooks.com/episode-72-book-as-business-development-with-daniel-priestly/)

- develop relationships with influencers who have contributed to your book;
- chase up case studies and testimonials; and
- record stories to illustrate your points, which you can use in your speaking and other areas.

Writing a book is a fascinating journey. You'll learn more about yourself and your business by doing it than through virtually any other activity, and if you can approach it with a sense of purpose and, yes, a little humility, there's no end to the satisfaction you can revel in. The value is not only in the end result but in the process. Not that having a published book isn't amazing too, of course. The feeling of achievement, the reflected glow from your family and friends, and the leads you'll generate for your business – these also make writing a book worthwhile. But they're not the whole story.

## **Why you *shouldn't* write a book**

On the other hand, if your business is not yet well established, you might find writing a book based on it can hurt your chances of success. Here's why.

For a start, you've yet to generate the experience and case studies that will enrich it. Every book needs examples and stories to help it along; they make it memorable and personal. Recently I chatted with a woman who was launching a coaching business and she said one of the items to cross off her list in her first year was a book. When I asked why, she replied it was because she loved writing and it would give her credibility. Both excellent reasons, apart from the fact that it would be a massive distraction for her

at that point. I could see it was easier for her to think about her book than to tackle all the start-up tasks that were mounting up on her desk. So I advised her to wait, which I'm glad to say she did, and I'm excited to see how it will pan out when it's finally done.

Which brings me to the other reason for delaying your book until you have more experience. Is your coaching or training solution robust? Have you road tested it on enough clients to know it's as good as it can be? We all learn over time, so it's worth giving yourself the chance to grow as a professional before you commit the time and energy to writing a book. If you're a start-up you're probably better off building your email list, generating word of mouth via social media, and networking.

This is what you could do instead: write a regular blog. That way you'll corral your thoughts and write the basis for your book at the same time. Spend a while considering your audience niche, clarifying the goals you have for your book, and keeping a note of any case studies and stories that will be perfect for it. Then, when the time is right, your book will be half prepped already.

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## What we've covered

- ❖ What goes on in your head is as much a part of your book's success as what comes out of your fingers.
- ❖ There are nine main reasons why people put off starting, or finishing, their books, and they're all made up in their minds.

- ❖ If you approach the process of writing your book with curiosity and use it to improve your business, you can overcome many of these mental barriers.
- ❖ There's one legitimate reason not to write a book, which is when your business is not yet well enough established.

# The author

Ginny Carter is a nonfiction book ghostwriter and writing coach. She has ghosted books on a wide variety of topics, from HR to phobias, some of which have been taken on by major publishing houses. They all have one thing in common: they're bringing their authors visibility, credibility, and bookability. She's also the author of the award-winning e-book *The Business Book Outline Builder*, which lays out the five key steps for creating the perfect outline.

Communication has always been Ginny's thing – she worked in marketing for 21 years, including three years as a freelance social media manager. By posting and tweeting on behalf of her clients she learned how gifted she was at capturing their voices. So she decided to put her natural writing ability to more substantial use and help them write their books instead.

When she can be dragged away from her keyboard, she puts her communication skills to the ultimate test with her husband and two children in their canalside home in Macclesfield, UK. Either that, or she has her nose in a brilliant book.

If you have a book waiting to emerge but aren't sure where to begin, or whether you have the time to devote to it, please start a conversation by dropping her a line using one of the links below:

Website: [www.marketingtwentyone.co.uk](http://www.marketingtwentyone.co.uk)

LinkedIn: [www.linkedin.com/in/ginnycarter](http://www.linkedin.com/in/ginnycarter)

Twitter: [@\\_GinnyCarter](https://twitter.com/_GinnyCarter)

Here's to your book!

**You've reached the end of the preview.**

To buy the whole book, please visit:

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**Contact Ginny:**

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