

Big-Picture Blueprint for Planning Your Nonfiction Book

from Barbara McNichol Editorial

Benefits of Completing This Blueprint: Your responses help you focus on precisely what *you* want from your book. It reinforces your strategic thinking and gets you to ask “what’s missing with this picture.”

It’s a way to articulate your values, state your vision, set realistic goals, and better understand the editing process. It also provides information to give you a Manuscript Review and/or Copy/Content Edit—whatever your book needs.

Consider this a way to share your big-picture vision. Answer all the questions you can but don’t stress!

Your Target Audience

1. Who is your book being written for? (demographics, age group, position, industry, region, etc.) List all the appropriate characteristics that come to mind.
2. Why would your targeted readers be compelled to buy your book? What *primary* problem does your book solve or pain it addresses?

Your Niche or Category

3. What is the working title and subtitle for your book?
4. Are you open to changing your title and/or subtitle? If not, why not?
5. Into which market niche does your nonfiction book fall? (e.g., where it be found in a bookstore or categorized in an online search)
6. What angle in your category is not being covered? What new perspective does your book add to the body of information available in your topic area?

7. When searching for this topic/category online, what keywords would people use? List up to 20 keywords here.

8. What comparative books are being studied in your book's category? This kind of research is especially helpful if you're writing a formal Book Proposal.

Your Business Goals

9. What are your long-term goals for this book? Please rank the following goals according to the priorities you have in mind.

- Become a local bestseller in your niche _____
 - Become a national/international bestseller in your niche _____
 - Serve as a high-class business card, a door opener _____
 - Connect with people who can hire you _____
 - Build a reputation among those who don't know you _____
 - Reinforce your reputation among those who do know you _____
 - Provide a product profit center in your business _____
 - Help you launch a new business _____
 - Serve people in these ways: _____
 - Other goals for your book: _____
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10. After people in your target audience have read this book, what do you want them to say about it? How would you like a testimonial to read?

11. What do you want them to know about your business and services?

12. In an ideal world, what actions do you want readers to take as a result of reading your book—both for their own benefit and for yours?

13. How will you know when you've met your goals? Specifically, what measures will you use and within what timeframe? e.g., sold 10,000 books in 2 years; got 5,000 new subscribers to my newsletter; attracted two dozen new clients to my business within a year of publication

Your Book's Ongoing Value to You and Your Business

14. What value would having a strong, successful book bring to you/your business?
15. What dollar amount will you invest in editing so you can realize this value?
(Consider this as you develop your overall budget for producing your book.)

Your Desired Editorial Results

16. Which results do you seek most in working with an editor? Check all that apply.
- Preserve your voice.
 - Improve expression of the writing in clear, succinct ways.
 - Correct grammar, spelling, syntax, and minor sentence structure problems.
 - Ensure continuity, logic, and consistency of the writing.
 - Eliminate jargon, wordiness, redundancies, etc.
 - Add/change chapter titles and subheads to strengthen their impact.
 - Adjust format so it's consistent with standard production requirements.
 - Ask questions to clarify points and embed suggestions for additional content.
 - Bring artistry and persuasion, clarity and consistency to your writing—
and add power to your pen!

Supporting Content for Your Book

17. Have you written back cover copy for your book? If not, it's recommended you write this copy early in the process in support of your marketing. It's a concise summary that sells your concepts and gets people to explore your Table of Contents . . . and more. Would you appreciate expert assistance in this area?
18. Have you written your bio for the back cover and/or About the Author? This key element also sells your credibility for being the right person to write this book. Would you appreciate assistance in this area?
19. If you include a foreword, who will you ask to write it? Has this person already been asked?
20. Will you include testimonials (highly recommended) in your book? If so, here's a place to list names of people you will ask. Consider asking for help to select, interview, and fine-tune those testimonials so they clearly meet your purpose.

Current Status

21. a. What length is your manuscript currently?
_____ pages or _____ words
 - b. What is the ideal length of your finished book?
_____ pages or _____ words
 - c. What percentage is completed at this time? _____%
22. What is your desired timeline for editing your book?
- Please consider these steps in setting your timelines:
- review of overall manuscript for structure and completeness, if needed
 - first round of content/copy editing
 - feedback from peers and author's changes/additions
 - second round of content/copy editing
 - final proofreading as last stage of the 3-step editing process.
- Ideal start date: _____ Desired finish date: _____

If you are working toward a specific date (e.g., meet a publisher's/printer's deadline or a conference date), please state that date here.

Going Forward

23. What concerns do you have about the manuscript editing process?
24. What other factors should your editing team know about your book or your business to do an outstanding job for you?
25. How has this Big-Picture Blueprint been helpful to you?

Email this to editor@BarbaraMcNichol.com and we'll get started!

About Barbara McNichol



Barbara McNichol works with speakers and authors to provide expert editing of books in the categories of business, spirituality, self-help, how-to, health, relationships, and more. Over the past 22 years, she has placed more than 320 books (and counting) on her editing "trophy shelf."

*Barbara also helps authors, speakers, and entrepreneurs improve their writing through her monthly ezine *Add Power to Your Pen* and her *WordShop: STRENGTHEN Everything You Write*. Her comprehensive word choice guide is titled *Word Trippers: Your Ultimate Source for Choosing the Perfect Word When It Really Matters*.*

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