EBook Publishing for Small Businesses

Expert knowledge means success

Contents

Introduction

When this publication was first issued, we said there were nearly 300,000,000 people online on the Internet. Now, by March 2011, that number is said to be over 2 billion (see: www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm) - that's a huge potential audience for any type of Internet sale. Over 20% of all Internet sales are for information products including EBooks - books that have been written in electronic format so that they can be accessed and read direct from a computer screen. Information product publishing is therefore one of the best profit-generating opportunities available on the Internet.

One of the attractions of EBooks is that they can be read on many screen-based devices including PDAs allowing them to be read "on the move" in the same way as a traditional book.

EBooks open up new marketing opportunities for small businesses. They allow a business to create a unique publication simply and cheaply with low production and promotion costs. An EBook's value will depend on how easily people can get the same information elsewhere. The more exclusive and useful the information, the greater its value. High quality professional reports, "How To" guides and reference manuals are amongst the best sellers.

For small businesses, EBook publishing presents two main business opportunities:

- The creation of an EBook as a marketing tool to promote other products and services your business offers.
- The creation of an EBook as a saleable information product in its own right.

You will probably already have a good idea of the sort of information that prospects in your industry sector require. Your initial ideas could be backed up with market research not just regarding the sort of information that prospects require but whether they are prepared to pay for it. If you have competitors already providing EBooks look at their products and prices. You may choose to compete with existing products or

provide ones in niche areas where there is limited information available.

EBooks v Printed Books

Many people like the comfort of a book, particularly fiction books. However most business readers are used to reading factual information on a screen or as a printed document rather than as a bound traditional book.

EBooks can be printed as hardcopy for those who prefer it, and offer several advantages over printed books, including:

- Libraries of printed books with significant storage requirements can be stored in an electronic format requiring very little space.
- Printed books degrade over time; EBooks do not and can be electronically archived if required.
- EBooks can be replicated if required either electronically or in hard copy format.
- Visually impaired people benefit from the option to increase or decrease the text size as required.
- EBooks are sourced easily on-line rather than through shops or libraries.
- Some publications are only available as EBooks. This is particularly true where high publishing costs would prohibit printed publication.
- EBooks are generally cheaper than printed books due to the low overheads.
- Depending on the subject, printed books can be out of date quickly. EBooks can be easily updated by the author.
- Printed books often contain bibliographies or references to other publications within the text. To access these other paper references can be time consuming. EBooks can reference other works by providing links to external web sites, providing immediate access to unlimited information.

This is an EBook
This publication is an EBook. It was created in Microsoft Word ® and compiled as an EBook using Adobe Acrobat ® in a PDF (portable document format) file.

Benefits to your Business

Every EBook that your business creates is a unique product that you can sell, or give away to your customers or prospects. Some businesses provide sample publications free in return for registration details, with a subscription cost payable for access to the complete publications library. Publishing EBooks could bring the following benefits to your business:

- Your EBook can establish your business as a credible expert in your industry.

- Your EBook can be used as a marketing tool to inform readers about your business or products and contain links to your own website.

- If you supply free information you may attract a regular audience of potential customers. You may also be able to build up a marketing database of subscribers.

- If you allow other businesses to advertise in your EBook they will be incentivised to pass on copies - helping promote your business or web site.

- EBooks provide an opportunity for you to offer a re-branding service to other businesses within your industry.

- EBooks have high profit margins: delivery costs can be minimal, and there are ususally no inventory costs.

- EBooks can be re-sold: giving your business the opportunity to sell complementary EBooks alongside its own.

Writing your EBook

Once you have determined and researched your topic area, you are ready to write your book. You can either write the book using Word Processing or Document Publishing software or invest in EBook compiler software package. The advantage of the latter option is that most packages contain significant useful built in features that you can take advantage of.

EBook Formats

Most EBooks are produced as either Windows executable files(.exe) or as Portable Document Format files (.pdf). Other formats are available for handheld readers and specific applications.

EXE files

EXE files can only be read by PCs with Windows 95 (or later) and Internet Explorer installed. Being executable, they do not require additional software to be read. They are typically HTML files and therefore present themselves as web pages. The disadvantage of this is that as with web pages their appearance may vary with screen size, resolution, and browser version.

PDF files

PDF files are compatible with most computer systems and the format is therefore widely used when creating documents for Internet transfer. The file transfer size is small and the document will appear as intended on almost every computer. PDF files are viewed with Adobe Acrobat Reader which is available free on the Internet.

EBook compiler software

An EBook compiler is a program that takes the source files (the content of your EBook) and compiles them into an easy-to-distribute format. Most EBook compilers are targeted at a PC audience. If you wish to use a package to create your EBook, consider the following built in features:

- Compatibility with Microsoft Windows operating systems.

- Compatibility with Internet Explorer.

- Support for Internet Linking.

- Distributable on any media including by Internet download, by e-mail, floppy disk, CD-ROMs, ZIP disks.

- Easy to use customisable interface, preferably Windows style.

- Password protection support for both the full book and specific sections.

- HTML Protection to protect your source pages.

- Design and usage documentation.

- Testing features.

EBooks: the fastest growing section of the publishing industry

The IDPF (International Digital Publishing Foundation) says that EBook sales for August 2008 were up 83% over August of 2007.

The idea that anything is growing in this economy is novel enough. But the idea of publishing as a growth industry makes it even more impressive. The data represent United States revenues only. The data represent only trade EBook sales via wholesale channels

- Template support to facilitate multiple EBooks with a similar format.
- "ESBN" serial number support.
- Free Trial and Expiration support to allow access to your EBook to expire after elapsed time or usage.
- Built-in Search Engine.
- Auto Installation Options.
- File Compression to speed up the downloading of large EBooks.

For information on some of the EBook compiler software that is available, visit:

www.EBookgold.com
www.EBookcrossroads.com
www.EBookcompiler.com
www.ezau.com/latest/articles/055.shtml

Popular EBook Formats

Adobe Acrobat

Adobe® Reader® is free software that enables business professionals and home users to reliably share information using intelligent PDF files. With Adobe Reader, you can easily view, print, and search PDF files using a variety of platforms and devices. www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html

To create Adobe PDF documents, you will need the latest Adobe Acrobat 7.0 software - it has advanced review and commenting tools, document security controls, and the ability to combine different application files into one polished EBook document in PDF format: www.adobe.com/epaper/tips/acr5EBook/pdfs/EBook.pdf

Microsoft Reader with ClearType

Microsoft Reader is a free software application designed to deliver an on-screen reading experience that approaches the convenience and quality of paper. Microsoft Reader is the first product to include patented ClearType display technology, which improves resolution on LCD screens by up to 300 percent to deliver a print-like display.

Microsoft Reader also pays strict attention to the traditions and benefits of good typography. It offers a clean, uncluttered layout; ample margins; proper spacing, leading, and kerning; plus powerful tools for marking, highlighting, and annotating your EBooks. www.microsoft.com/reader/. Sadly, Microsoft is discontinuing Microsoft Reader from 30 August 2012, which includes download access of the Microsoft Reader application from the Microsoft Reader website. However, customers may continue to use and access the Microsoft Reader application and any .lit materials on their PCs or devices after the discontinuation on August 30, 2012.

Mobipocket

A Mobipocket EBook is an EBook in the Mobipocket format that can be read on multiple handheld PDAs and other portable devices. You will need Mobipocket Reader software - available free of charge. Mobipocket is a very versatile EBook format that can be read on virtually any PDA www.mobipocket.com/en/DownloadSoft/DownLoadReaderStep1.asp

Selling your EBook

If your EBook is a product in its own right as opposed to simply a marketing tool, you will probably want to sell it rather than give it away. You will need to determine what exactly you want to sell, based on what will give you the most revenue or exposure. You could offer:

- a complete downloadable EBook for a one-off price or
- free access to an initial chapter with a charge for subsequent chapters.

You will also need to decide what rights you will bestow on the purchaser, i.e. whether purchase allows them to download the EBook for their personal use or whether they can transfer – or even sell – the EBook to other customers. Your website must include a description of your EBook that "sells" the EBook to prospects – ideally with a 3D "virtual cover/box" image, a mechanism for purchase and contact details in case of delivery problems.

Pricing

Getting your price right is key to sucessful sales. If you under-price your product, you will be losing potential revenue. If you over-price your product, few customers will buy and their expectations of your product will be high.

Market research could help determine what your prospects are prepared to pay. Alternatively, look at competitive offerings and use their prices as guidance for setting your own prices. You could test the market by starting with a high price and gradually discounting until the price attracts the required sales.

Accepting Payment

Most prospects will expect to be able to pay by credit card. There are independent Internet credit card payment serveices available, for example Paypal and ClickBank but it is best to talk to your own bank first to see what service they can offer.

For more information on accepting payments over the Internet, please ask us for our publications: *IP 199: E-Commerce;* and *IP293: Electronic Commerce.*

Product delivery

The obvious choice is to offer your EBook as an Internet downlaod but there may be customers who would prefer the EBook to be delivered on other media such as a CD-ROM or DVD.

The Sony Reader is the perfect way to store and read digital books. With enough space for up to 1200 EBooks, it has a long battery life and amazing paper-like screen. It's smaller than the average paper back and easy to use.

Then, there's the ubiquitous Kindle offering room for up to 1400 EBooks at a very cost-effective price and with a slick download store at Amazon.

Marketing your EBook

How you market your EBook will depend on whether your EBook is a saleable product in its own right or simply a marketing tool to attract traffic to your website and other products and services. Internet marketing may require different approaches and techniques to work well. Track the response to any approach you take to determine its success. Businesses that are prepared to pay for website placement will always have greater exposure.

As well as your own website – possibly with a domain name per EBook - you will also need to get good quality hosting. The amount of free bandwidth available to you is crucial as this will determine how many prospects can simultaneously download your EBook before you are charged additional fees by your host. For more information on choosing a website hosting company see our publication: *IP687: Choosing a Hosting Company.*

The following marketing strategies should be considered:

- Write free articles for E-zine publishers in return for advertising your business on their site.

- Set up joint ventures with other related (but non-competitive) businesses to promote each **other's products.**

- Use a pay-per-click search engine to attract visitors to your site cheaply. For more information visit: www.SearchEngineRocket.com

- Use a web-site optimisation program to improve the ranking of your site in search engines.

- Collect contact information when customers and prospects subscribe to your book so that you can market other **products and services to a "warm"** audience.

- If you allow your EBook to be copied you are increasing the Internet marketing of your business for very little effort.

- Ensure your EBook has frequent links to relevant sections of your website and that there are compelling reasons for readers to follow the links.

- List your EBook with EBook libraries and Shareware/Freeware libraries.

EBook sellers

You could try to sell your EBook through a company that specialises in selling EBooks in addition to or instead of selling it through your own website. A search on any of the popular search engines will display a number of EBook suppliers including:

www.EBooks.com
www.fictionwise.com
www.ereader.com
www.palgrave.com/EBooks/vendors.asp

However, many of the EBook sellers do not accept EBooks directly from authors, but work through traditional publishers. Some traditional publishers e.g. Penguin sell EBooks themselves.
www.penguin.co.uk/epenguin

Some suppliers specialise in free EBooks, e.g. www.free-EBooks.net

Recommended Reading

- EBook Publishing Success: How Anyone Can Write, Compile and Sell EBooks on the Internet, by Kingsley Oghjojafor, ISBN: 1843340992

- Epublishing for Dummies by Victoria Rosenborg, ISBN: 0764507818

- Your Guide to EBook Publishing Success: How to Create and Profitably Sell Your Writing on the Internet, by James Dillehay, ISBN: 0962992372

- Get That Book Out! A Self-Publisher's Guide to Publishing Your Own Book, Booklet, or EBook, by LaDonna D. Vick, ISBN: 0970027133

- Publish on Amazon Kindle with Kindle Direct Publishing, free guide by Amazon.com, ASIN: B004LX069M

- The E-Book Handbook - A Thoroughly Practical Guide to Formatting, Publishing, Marketing, and Selling Your E-Book [Kindle Edition], by Douglas Klostermann, ASIN: B005DHMOQI

- How to Market and Sell Your EBook - Everything You Need to Know to Make Money with ePublishing, by Sarah Mae, ASIN: B0058J480Q

Further Information

This guide is for general interest - it is always essential to take advice on specific issues. We believe that the facts are correct as at the date of publication, but there may be certain errors and omissions for which we cannot be responsible.