THE SCRIBE GUIDE TO
WRITING THE
NEARLY PERFECT
BUSINESS BOOK
IN 7 STEPS
INTRODUCTION

WHY WRITE A BOOK?

How many times have you heard this in your career?

“You really should write a book.” Or this? “Wait, you don’t have a book?”

It hurts doesn’t it?

How many times have you seen people in your space, people who don’t have your knowledge or experience, get more visibility than you?

Why does that happen? They wrote a book.

How many times have you been to conferences and watched speakers who, quite frankly, were less experienced and had less to say than you...but they were still the ones on stage, in front of the crowd.

Why were they on stage (and not you)? They wrote a book.

How many times have you lost clients to someone less qualified than you, who can’t do the job as well as you?

Why did they get the client? They wrote a book.

I’m not telling you that you have to write a book. You don’t.

You can obviously be successful without a book. You’ve gotten to where you are now without one.

You can stay where you are, if you want, and you’ll be fine. No, you won’t move up, you won’t advance, you’ll always stay behind the curve.
INTRODUCTION

IT’S HARD TO WRITE A BOOK.

You feel like you don’t have the time. You feel overwhelmed by the complexity of structuring and organizing a whole book. You’re worried that you might screw it up, and write a book that makes you look bad. And deep down, you aren’t even sure if you actually have a book in you at all.

I get it. I’ve been there. Every author has been there.

Well...what if there was a solution?

What if you had someone to guide you, step-by-step, through the entire process? Someone experienced and knowledgeable, who can help you figure out if you have a book in you, how to structure it, and how to write it so that it’s the best possible book for you and your audience—all while fitting into your schedule?

If you had that, what would happen? You’d finish your book.

And if you finished your book, what would happen?

You’d have the credibility and authority to become a big name in your niche.

You’d be the one everyone watched speak on stage.

Clients and partners would seek you out. You’d be the one people come to when they are looking for “the person who wrote the book on the subject.”

And most important, you’d become a hero to your audience.

You’d be the one who helped them overcome their suffering, find a solution to their problems, and get a better life—just through what you teach them in your book.

And isn’t that the whole point?

In fact, that reason is exactly why we wrote this guide—to help you finally write your book, and accomplish all of those goals you know a book can help you reach.
If you think it’s time to write your business book, this guide will get you there.

WHY LISTEN TO ME?

My name is Tucker Max, and I’ve personally written four New York Times Bestsellers (three of them hit #1) that have sold over 4.5 million copies worldwide. I’ve also helped authors like Tim Ferriss, Peter Thiel, Seth Godin, Robert Greene, and Dave Asprey launch their books.

That’s impressive, but it’s not the real reason to pay attention. In 2014, I co-founded a company dedicated to helping people write and publish their book (called Scribe). In the last four years, we’ve helped over 1,000+ authors write their business books (including many titles you’ve probably heard of).

We started with a good process, but over the last four years and 1000+ authors, we’ve literally spent thousands of hours and millions of dollars to improve and refine our process. We have seen every mistake an author can make, every fear that comes up, every distraction and misdirection—and we developed ways to avoid them and get back on track when you can’t.

Our process is not theory. It’s not an idea. It’s been tested in the crucible of commerce, with exacting clients who demand results—and I’m going to lay it all out for you here.

This is our exact method, step-by-step, that we use to guide our authors to success.

No more delaying or avoiding or excuses. If you follow the process outlined here, you will get your book done.

DISCLAIMER: This guide is only for writing a nonfiction business or personal development book. This process is designed for entrepreneurs, executives, coaches, consultants, business owners, or anyone similar. It only works for the types of books they write: nonfiction, informational, prescriptive, how-to books that also involve some personal storytelling and are used as a way to share their knowledge and experience with the reader.

This process does NOT work for fiction. It can sometimes work for a pure personal memoir, but it’s not optimized for that style of book.
STEP 1

PREPARE TO WRITE YOUR BUSINESS BOOK

Before you start writing your book, let’s talk about what you can expect during this journey. I am going to be brutally honest with you in this section, but don’t let it discourage you.

Why does having the right expectations matter so much? Because writing a book is hard, and if you’re not prepared for that fact, you’re far more likely to quit.

But if you know the difficulty of what’s coming, you will prepare to get past those obstacles when they come—and they will come—and then they won’t stop you.

These are the major obstacles to prepare for:

EXPECT WRITING A BOOK TO BE HARD

Anyone who tells you that writing a book is easy is either trying to sell you something, has never written a book, or writes bad books.

Books are hard to write. And writing a good book is even harder.

To overcome this, you’ll need to work hard. Yes, this should be obvious, but there are many people who think there is some “trick” to make writing your book easier.

There’s not. There is no hack or trick or workaround.

If you want to write a good book, then expect that it will require hard work from you.

Probably the #1 thing that separates those who finish their books from those who do not is having the proper expectations going in.
**EXPECT TO BE CONFUSED (AT TIMES).**

Writing a book can be confusing, especially the first time you do it. It is not easy to properly position and structure a book. And the writing will frustrate you at times. You will probably feel lost at moments.

All of this is natural, and a normal part of the writing process.

This is why we wrote this book, to help you stay on track. The exercises in here are designed to build your book efficiently from the ground up, the first time—as long as you have the discipline to go through them and do them right, it’ll work.

Expect to be emotionally uncomfortable (at times)

Writing a book will make most authors face some of their fears. That is never easy and never fun, but if you want to write a book, it’s almost certainly going to be a necessity (don’t worry, we have a whole chapter about what fears are coming and how to deal with them).

**A QUICK EXAMPLE:** we worked with a UFC fighter. This is a man who hits people in the face—for a living.

The book was about anxiety. He came into the process knowing he’d have to be vulnerable in order to really explore his subject matter, but being vulnerable was not something he was used to. In fact, any conversation that touched on him revealing anything personal or “weak” was, at first, totally outside his comfort zone. Quite frankly, he was afraid.

We helped him work through his fears and have those uncomfortable conversations, and he finally opened up about a mental breakdown he’d had in a way that truly benefited his readers. And, in the end, it benefited him personally, too.

That’s the point though: working through his discomfort was a natural part of the process, not something to be avoided.
STEP 1

EXPECT THAT, IF YOU WRITE AND PUBLISH YOUR BOOK, YOU’LL LEVEL UP.

Not all the expectations are bad. Even though the process of writing a book will challenge and stretch you, the actual product that you are left with—your book—will be an amazing addition to your life and career.

• When you write your book, so much changes.
• Once it’s done, it’s done, and it’s with you forever.
• It shows you can commit to a difficult goal and then follow through to get it done.
• It will raise your authority and credibility.
• It will get you visibility and prominence in your field.
• And last, it will enable you to leave a legacy behind that helps other people. It is proof of your work and proof of your knowledge—one that will help and empower other people in their journeys.

This is no joke. Your life—and the lives of your readers—will be much better off when you write and publish your book.

And as long as you know it’ll be hard work, then it will be that much more rewarding when you finish.
STEP 2

POSITION YOUR BUSINESS BOOK.

Positioning is the most crucial part of writing (and marketing) your book. If you put in the work to properly position your book now, you will reap the benefits for years.

Simply stated, book positioning is the place your book occupies in the mind of your reader, and how that reader sees your book as fulfilling their needs.

Positioning acts as the business plan for your book. It makes both the writing and marketing of the book easy, and ensures you get what you want from your book. There are three parts to positioning:

1. **BOOK OBJECTIVES:** What result must the book produce for you to be a success?
2. **BOOK AUDIENCE:** Who is the audience that must be reached for your goal to be achieved?
3. **BOOK IDEA:** What is your book about, and why will your audience care?
STEP 2

ESTABLISH YOUR OBJECTIVES.

There are a lot of ways to establish your objectives, but we like to use one question that really sharpens everything:

Imagine it’s a year or two after your book has been published. What have you accomplished because of the book?

Remember, the MOST IMPORTANT THING you can do with this question is focus on what is achievable. Here are several popular (and usually reasonable) objectives that Scribe authors mention:

1. RAISE VISIBILITY/PROFILE:
   Increase visibility to make it easier to gain media or other forms of exposure.

2. INCREASE AUTHORITY/CREDSIBILITY:
   Help establish authority and credibility within their field.

3. GET NEW CLIENTS/OPPORTUNITIES:
   Generate new business and other opportunities across a variety of platforms in multiple ways.

4. SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS:
   A book is almost a necessity for becoming a paid speaker, or even getting booked for any speaking at all.

5. LEAVE A LEGACY:
   Establish a legacy and pass your story on to others.

6. IMPACT OTHERS:
   Books are one of the very best ways to help other people solve their problems and make their lives better.
KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE.

Once you understand your objectives, the next step is to understand your audience. Why? It’s simple: for your book to reach your objectives, it must appeal to an audience. Books must have readers to be effective.

- We help our authors hone in on their audience by asking these questions:
  - Who most needs to read your book?
  - What pain is this person experiencing because they have not read your book?
  - What benefit will this person get from reading your book?

CHOOSE YOUR IDEA

Now it’s time for the fun part: nailing down your book idea.

Book ideas often shift once the objectives and audience become clear, so we leave this task for the end of the process (minus the writing itself). It’s much easier now to get your idea right, because you know exactly what you want to accomplish and what audience you must attract with your book to reach your goals.

The final question: What is your book about, and why will your audience care?

Before you answer, be sure to avoid the biggest mistake that authors make. They write the book they want their audience to read, instead of writing the book their audience wants to read.

This is a subtle yet very important distinction. To be well positioned, the book has to be what your audience wants to read, not what you want them to read.

If you’re unsure which book you are writing, answering the next two questions should ensure it’s positioned properly.
CHECK YOUR BOOK POSITIONING.

To make sure you have your positioning right, plug in the positioning items into this sentence. If the sentence makes sense, the book has a good positioning:

“My book will attract [audience], by teaching them [insert reader benefits gained/problems solved], which will lead to my ultimate goal of more [objectives].”

For example:

“I will use my book to target startup founders, by shifting their mindset from chasing VC money to building a revenue-focused business, which will lead to my ultimate goal of expanding my startup coaching programs across Canada and the US.”

Don’t write the book you want your audience to read; instead, write the book your audience wants to read.
STEP 3

OUTLINE YOUR BUSINESS BOOK.

Your outline is the structure of your book (and thus incredibly important). If you start writing without a structure, the process will take forever and the product will be haphazard and incomplete. Worse, having no outline often leads to not finishing your book at all.

BRAINSTORM THE CHAPTERS.

The first step in brainstorming is to figure out the major points you want to discuss or teach in your book. Then, turn those points into chapters.

If brainstorming is hard, use the “teach your book” framework to help. Begin with your ideal reader—someone in the audience that you described in your positioning.

Now, imagine teaching them everything in your book. What are the major lessons? What is step one? Step two? How would you explain your process to them? What would they get confused about? What points do they struggle with? What lessons have you conveyed to them? What did they find particularly helpful? What questions do they ask you? Write it all down.

The beauty of “teaching your book” is that it’s an excellent framework to articulate the knowledge you have that you may take for granted.

If brainstorming is hard, use the “teach your book” framework to help. Begin with your ideal reader—someone who in the audience that you described in your positioning.
CREATE AN OUTLINE.

Using the chapters you created, now create an outline. Do not go crazy with this and try to create a massively complex outline. That won’t help you. It only slows things down. Here is the simple structure that we use. It lays out the various elements you’ll need for each chapter. Just fill in the information, which you will use as your guide to write each chapter.

CHAPTER X:

Setup
- This should be a personal story, historical anecdote, question to reader, shocking statement, or anything that draws in the attention of the reader and sets up what is about to come in the chapter.

Thesis of chapter
- Once you have a set-up, then you plainly state what will be taught/discussed in this chapter. Essentially, you tell them what you’re going to tell them.

Supporting content
- This section should list all the key points/evidence for the argument/factual content.
- This is the bulk of the section. You can do this quickly and succinctly, but the outline of the chapter should be laid out fairly well.
- Make sure you look at this section from the vantage point of your reader, rather than than your own. Your reader is not the expert, you are, so this section needs to be tailored to them.

Stories
- Effective stories are crucial to the success of a book. They’re a great way to make the a book and its and specific takeaway points more memorable.
- This does NOT mean that in your book, you write your supporting evidence and THEN your stories. Of course you will integrate stories and supporting content. We recommend separating them in the outline, simply because it’s not always clear which stories you want to use and where.

Reader’s key takeaway
- This should be the summary at the end of the chapter. It clearly lays out what the reader needs to know.
CREATE YOUR WRITING PLAN.

It took me about three years being a professional writer before I understood that I needed a writing plan for every book I wrote. Writing without a plan is like going on a cross-country trip without a map. Yeah, you might get there, but it’ll take you at least twice as long as if you’d just taken a map with you.

SCHEDULE A WRITING TIME AND PLACE.

Start by picking the exact time and place you will write each day.

For example, you could write every day from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m., in your home office. Or 3 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., at Compass Coffee.

We recommend writing for at least one hour per day. If you only have 30 minutes per day to write, then do that.
STEP 4

SET WRITING GOALS.

In addition to scheduling the time and place of each writing session, we recommend giving yourself a specific writing goal for each session. We recommend giving yourself a goal of 250 words per hour of writing.

Why 250 words? Because 250 is approximately the number of words per page in a printed book.

The best part is that it adds up quickly:

Only writing 250 words a day, you can get a 120 page book done (30k words) in about 4 months.

That is VERY fast, and you’ll do it by only asking yourself to write one page a day, with what feels like very little effort.

BUILD DEADLINES.

A big part of getting something done is a deadline. Deadlines force action and demand accountability.

If you want to move very fast, give yourself a deadline of about a chapter a week. If you want to go a reasonable speed, give yourself two weeks per chapter. If you want to go slower, three weeks. And if you have a hectic life, do a month per chapter.

Now go put those deadlines in your calendar. Right now.
WRITE YOUR BUSINESS BOOK.

This might be the most important advice here, so pay attention:

Write your first draft as quickly as possible. Don’t stop to edit. Just keep moving forward until your first draft is done.

I cannot be more serious or literal about this. If you stop and edit as you write the first draft, you will never finish it.

Writing is very much about momentum, and if you have a schedule and follow it, and just keep going, then I guarantee you will finish your first draft.

DO NOT STOP.

DO NOT EDIT.

KEEP MOVING FORWARD UNTIL YOUR FIRST DRAFT IS DONE.
EDIT YOUR BUSINESS BOOK.

Getting to a first draft is great, but it takes editing to get the book ready to publish. There are two goals for editing. We recommend a three-step editing process to help you accomplish both goals of editing:

1. **MAKE IT RIGHT:** Make sure the book is ready to edit
2. **PIECE-BY-PIECE EDIT:** Make changes directly in the document.
3. **READ ALOUD:** Read the manuscript aloud—preferably to a person or recording device.

I’ll explain these processes.

**STEP 1: MAKE IT RIGHT**

There are three goals to the “make it right” edit. You want to ensure that:

1. All content is in the book
2. In the right order
3. The structure and positioning all make sense

This is basically just making sure the book has everything in it so you can actually begin the deep editing.
STEP 2: PIECE-BY-PIECE EDIT

This is the framework we use for piece-by-piece editing. It’s simple to understand, but powerful if you do it right:

As you read every chapter, ask yourself these six questions:

- What point am I making?
- Is it necessary?
- Is it clear?
- Is it as simple as possible?
- Is it as short as possible?
- Did I leave anything necessary out?

We mean this literally—ask yourself these questions, each time.

Yes, this is tedious. But if you do this exercise consistently, it becomes second nature. Once that happens, you’ll find that you can not only cut the fluff out of your book, you can also make your book sharper and more refined, and you’ll be able to hone in on what you are trying to say, and nail it.

Do it for each chapter. And then, if you want to really edit it well, read the book again, and do it for each paragraph, then do it for each sentence. If you do this, you’ll have an excellent book.

[By the way, I adapted these instructions from George Orwell’s essay Politics and the English Language, which contains editing instructions from arguably the greatest writer of the twentieth century.]
STEP 3: READ ALOUD EDIT

This is an editing process that’s not commonly taught, but is a secret trick of numerous bestselling authors. Brené Brown, Neil Strauss, myself—we all do this.

I learned this when writing my first book. I probably edited it at least 50 times. At least. I thought that there was no possible way I could change anything or make anything better.

And then when I went to record my audiobook two months later, as I read it out loud, I found at least 100 tiny little mistakes and changes I would have made.

The reason that reading your manuscript out loud works so well is because you will catch dozens of things you would have otherwise missed. Hearing yourself speak forces you to notice bad or strange phrasings—even if you don’t know why it’s off, you know it’s off.

Basically, if it’s something you would say out loud, then it usually reads clearly on the page. If it’s something you would never say to another person, it tends to not read as clearly.
PUBLISH.

This guide is about writing your book, not publishing, but I wanted to put this in here to be clear: writing the book is only about 75% of the journey. Publishing is a big part of it, and without publishing, writing it is not worth it (for business books, at least).

The main question we get is about traditional versus self-publishing for business books. This is answered fully in our guide to choosing the right publishing option.
IT’S TIME TO WRITE YOUR BOOK.

PICTURE YOUR “CHAMPAGNE MOMENT.”

You’re sitting in a chair. But not just any chair.

This chair is on stage. The stage is your industry’s major yearly conference.

That’s when the moderator says, “Well, for the answer to that question, let’s turn to the person who wrote the book on the subject…”

And everyone in the audience looks at you…and waits to hear what you have to say.

This is a fantasy for many people. But it’s what happens for people who write books.

Now is the time for you to stop reading, and start writing.

It’s time for you to stop procrastinating, and start writing.

Yes, you know all the benefits you will get. Those are obvious.

It’s time for you to step up and write the book you know you have in you…and level yourself up, and become a hero to everyone who is waiting to hear your message and get your help. But don’t just take our word for it. Here is what the authors who came before you have to say about doing a book:
AUTHOR SUCCESS STORIES.

READ THEIR STORIES

We have helped over 1,000 authors write their business books, and here are a few of their stories:

How Jesse Cole Used a Book to Build His Brand and Become an In-Demand Speaker

How Melissa Gonzalez Used a Book to Raise Her Visibility, Create Authority and Double Her Business

Lorenzo Gomez’s Journey from Grocery Store Bagger to Geekdom CEO and Published Author

How Robert Glazer Used a Book to Raise the Profile of His Industry (and get on Dr. Oz)

Cliff Lerner Turned His Business Failures into the Entrepreneurship Playbook

How a Branding Expert Became Her Own Brand (Hint: She Used a Book)
ABOUT SCRIBE MEDIA.

Scribe Media (formerly Book in a Box) started nearly five years ago with a simple question from a frustrated entrepreneur, Melissa Gonzalez, founder of the Lion’esque Group—a firm of pop-up retail consultants. She asked co-founder, Tucker Max,

“I want a book, but I don’t have the time to write it, and the normal publishing process is too frustrating. Is there another way?“

Tucker worked with Melissa to find a better way to write a book. A few months later, Melissa’s book The Pop Up Paradigm was published and in the first two months of business the company hit over $200k in revenue.

Fast forward four years from that first book we’ve published—we’ve helped 1000+ entrepreneurs turn their idea into a book, and entirely in their words and their voice. We’ve published several WSJ and NYT best sellers and our authors’ books regularly hold the best seller spot in their category on Amazon.

We can do the same for you. It’s time to write your book, and we can help.