

# 12 Stupid Mistakes made by Wannabe Authors.

By Robert G. Allen, author of 5-time New York Times bestsellers.

So you want to write a book. Congratulations! Join the club. It's a big club.

According to an article in the NY Times— 81% of us have “a book in us.” And yet, only a fraction of us will ever follow through on this wish. Still, those who DO succeed in writing a book are in for a rude shock when they realize that writing a book is not the end but just the very beginning of the process.

As my friend John Assaraf says, “Writing a book is like having sex. Marketing the book is like raising a child.”

In other words, writing a book is the easy part. It's the marketing that's hard.

So the following advice is meant for people who dream of being a successful non-fiction author and info-marketer. (Sorry you fiction writers, that's not my thing.)

If you've already written your book but have been disappointed with the results then, in the following list, you'll probably recognize some of stupid mistakes you already made. But don't despair. There is still hope for salvaging your dream and setting up an info-business that will set you up for life. Read on...

If you've dreamed of being an author but just haven't gotten around to writing a single word—then GOOD! I'm glad you haven't started writing yet. Because you'll avoid some of the 12 stupid mistakes that beginning authors ALWAYS make. If you'll do what I tell you to do, you might just pull it off successfully.

Consider the following as a checklist of the things NOT TO DO!

## **Stupid Mistake #1: Expecting the book to make you rich and famous.**

The average non-fiction published book sells about 5,000 copies. If the price on the cover is \$15 then your royalty will probably be around 10%. Do the math. \$15 bucks times 10% = a buck and a half a book times 5000 copies = or about \$7,500 in total royalties. Don't quit your day job.

Now, there are a few who break through to fame and riches. I'm one of the lucky ones. My 8 traditionally published books and 4 self published books have sold over 4 million copies, have spent a combined total of almost 100 weeks on the New York Times bestseller lists—with two hitting the #1 spot. My royalties on those books climbed into the millions. And yes, in my niche, my name is famous. I can't go anywhere in the world it seems, without someone spotting me and saying...

“Your book changed my life!”

Would you like to hear those words from one of your readers?

I must admit, the money can be nice. And who can't use an extra thousand or two? Or ten or twenty? Or a hundred?

The fame can be interesting. I just returned last week from speaking in Russia where people stood in long lines to obtain one of my autographs. From me! A kid from a tiny town in Alberta, Canada. Go figure. Trust me; you'll NEVER get tired of signing your own name inside your own book. NEVER.

But NOTHING can compare to the thrill of learning that your influence has improved someone's life. Because when you change ONE life, you influence a generation of lives. You only earn a royalty once for each book you sell, but the power of the information in your book can live on forever. That's heady stuff.

I don't know about you, but that's the reason I write. How sad, then, when you've got a message to share and your message gets lost because you're missing just a few numbers of the combination lock to the vault.

### **Stupid Mistake #2: Thinking that your book is just a book.**

Millions of new books will be published in the world this year. They join the millions of books that were published in previous years.

98% of these new books will sell a few hundred copies after years of suffering. Dreams will be dashed. They thought it would be the path to financial freedom.

For most, it's a path to frustration, disappointment and some extra debts they'll have to get an extra job to pay off. Not cool.

Why? Because they thought of their book as a book... not as a business. So burn this into your brain: a book is not a book. It's a business. When you're writing it, you should see the long-term relationship with your reader blossoming into lifetime streams of income. I've already told you the book won't make you rich. But if positioned properly, from word number one, as the gateway into an info-business, the simple book can open doors to a lifestyle business that many dream of but only a few achieve. Do you want to be with the masses on the outside looking in, or be with the smart ones on the inside looking out?

The info-business is vast. There are at least 12 separate ways to monetize a unique type of information. The book is just one portal into the vast fortunes of the info-world. Once you "crack the code" people flock to your brand to let you show them the answers to the solutions they seek.

Do you want to know a secret? Lean in close...because this one is a BIG one.

People are addicted to information. Once they hone in on a subject that excites them, they'll keep buying more and more information in more and more expensive variations. They're hooked.

So if you know this, before you start giving "tastes" of your subject material, you can lead your reader into deeper and more advanced layers of information.

From High School, to the Bachelors', Master's and Doctorate levels.

The book is just a taste. Of course, you write as complete as you can. But a book just gives an overview. You can gravitate (if you're so inclined) into paid speeches, seminars, webinars, coaching, consulting, licensing.

The info-business is exciting and lucrative. It's a low cost high value proposition. In other words, the profit margins are HUGE. The overhead can be extremely low. And the best part is that it can be done from anywhere in the world.

And the market is VAST. With online translation for free, you can speak to audiences all over the world with the click of a mouse. New customers for your information are coming into your market constantly. And endless supply of customers. You can get them to try out your information relatively easily with Facebook and Google advertising. ,

What took months in the past can be tested in minutes.

It's an exciting world. A single book might not make you rich...but the info-business can set you up for life.

IF you strategize your book carefully before you launch it.

However, If you've already written your book, sorry—you'll need to go back to square one and rethink it. There are ways to plant hints (I call them seeds) throughout your book that will build a desire to learn more –that will lead them into your funnel. Let's talk about that next.

### **Stupid Mistake #3: Not strategizing your funnel before you write a single word.**

What's a funnel? You learned about 'the funnel' in my hugely successful book *Multiple Streams of Income: How to Generate a Lifetime of Unlimited Wealth*.

Here is what you learned about funnels. There are multiple ways to bring customers to your website besides writing a book. And there are multiple ways to earn income from those who are hungrily seeking solutions. That's why the info-business is the perfect vehicle to provide multiple streams of income.

I've said for years, that publishers are idiots. They only capitalize on one or two minor streams from the flood of information riches that flow from one good book idea. So, you need to see the big picture from the info-business.

Want to know why the book business is declining? If you don't learn this stuff, you'll make the mistake that tens of thousands of authors and publishers make.

### **Stupid Mistake # 4: Not enticing your reader to share their contact info with you.**

This is a biggie. If you don't know who your readers are, how will you let them know about your NEXT book? If your reader is a true fan, they'll want to buy ALL of your books. In fact, they'll eventually be the reason why you'll be a #1 bestselling. Think of that! You a #1 bestselling author at the #1 bookstore in the world. If you can do it there, you can do it anywhere. I'll show you exactly how to hit #1 in your niche. But not if you make the HUGE mistake of not building a list of your fans.

How many names do you need on your growing database to earn you consistent streams of income with just the click of your mouse? Here's my answer...

Drum roll, please.

10,000. Yup, TEN THOUSAND names on your carefully planned database can be enough so you can quit your day job and do this full time.

But not if you make the next stupid mistake...

**Stupid Mistake #5: Getting discouraged when you discover that someone has already cornered the market on YOUR information.**

Going to a bookstore or wandering through amazon.com can be a discouraging experience. You roam the area where your wannabe book would be found and you notice that there are dozens of books on your topic...some with the same name you were hoping to use for you own book. You assume it's too late. Someone has already filled your niche. Darn! I guess its back to your boring job.

Not so fast!

Most of those other books will never sell but a handful of copies a month. You can leapfrog over ALL of them, and land in the top spot. You can turn your future book—and the info-business that grows out of it—into a cash cow. They might have a head start, but your audience is still out there...waiting for you to get your act together and get your message to them.

So you shake off your disappointment and move forward relentlessly. You try to find a traditional Publisher but no-one seems to be interested. You receive

rejection after rejection. (If you DO find a publisher, don't count your lucky stars just yet. There are at least 10 disastrous pitfalls that new published authors always seem to blunder into. But I'll save that for another time.)

Odds are, after all this rejection, you'll still be one of the tens of thousands of unpublished authors looking for a home.

Is there a better way?

So, you look up one of those new fangled hybrid publishing houses that charge you an arm and a leg to help you get your book published. Frankly, some of them can be helpful—but at a price tag of \$5,000 and up. And still, you end up with just a published book and no info-business to bring you the streams of income you need to market it. Is there a better way?

So maybe you take matters into your own hands--you just go ahead and self-publish your book. How hard can it be? At least, when you're done, you can say you're an author, right? But I hope you don't make this next classic mistake...

### **Stupid Mistake #6: Having a cheap, self-published looking cover.**

They say you can't judge a book by its cover. What a crock!

Of course you can judge a book by its cover. All books are judged by their covers! Bookstore owners say that 75% of the success of a book is attributable to the cover. From across the room, I can tell if a book is a DUD without even opening it.

Do you want a DUD? Or a diamond?

You don't want to slave late nights and early mornings for months on the INSIDE of your book, to have the OUTSIDE shut the door to your future without them reading a single word, do you?

Would you really be proud to leave a cheap-looking book as your legacy?

If 75% of your future success can be linked to your cover, then you'd better take it seriously. Your cover is prime real estate. Don't make it look cheap! That's just plain stupid.

### **Stupid Mistake #7: A Broad, Boring, Clichéd title/subtitle.**

You can't have a bad title. I know first hand how disastrous this mistake can be. Three of my books sold over a MILLION books. 5 of my titles sold less than 50,000.

Do you think the titles had anything to do with that? Absolutely! There is a process you go through to determine which of the dozens of titles that you might like to use—you should use.

Your title can become the brand that launches your brand into a dozen other information engines. That's what happened to me when I wrote my first book, *Nothing Down: A Proven Program that Shows you how to buy real estate with little or no money down*. That launched an information empire that with various partners has marketed a BILLION DOLLARS worth of valuable information through multiple channels. I know what I'm talking about.

With millions of titles to compete with, your book (and its budding info-business) needs all the help it can get.

Remember Zipfs law.

A great title is twice as good as a good title.

### **Stupid Mistake #8: Having the “look” of a self published book on the inside.**

I'm not railing against self-published books. Some of the biggest titles were first launched as self-published books:

The One Minute Manager by Kenneth Blanchard and Spencer Johnson. 15 million copies.

Your Erroneous Zones by Wayne Dyer. 35 million copies

The Celestine Prophecy by James Redfield. 23 million copies.

My first 8 books were published by traditional publishers. There are advantages to having a publisher to all the heavy lifting. Lately, however, they look to do the author's platform to do most of the marketing of the book anyway. So my latest book, ***The Four Maps of Happy, Successful People***, co-written with my son Aaron, was first self-published on Amazon. There are new, MAJOR advantages to self-publishing your book. Now, I chose a

major Japanese publisher to publish this book in the Japanese market. You need to know the difference and how to profit whichever way you choose.

Just remember, there is FLOOD of bad self-published books pouring into the world. You don't want to LOOK like a self-published crap! Neither on the outside nor on the inside.

### **Stupid mistake #9: Having a clichéd message with clichéd languaging.**

Speaking of the inside of the book, I can tell, with one look of the Table of Contents whether or not I want to waste my time or my money on a book that I'll never open.

Can I tell you a secret?

There is nothing new under the sun. It's all the same basic old stuff repackaged over and over again to look like new stuff. Doubt me? Look in your personal library. If you're like me, you'll find the books you collect are clumped into 4 or 5 broad categories of books. I have 50 books on marketing—a favorite interest of mine. 50 books on home-based business. Also another favorite. A whole bunch on personal growth. A bunch on biography. About 500 on spiritual stuff. That really resonates with me.

I'm always buying the same book...over and over again...with just a few tidbits of difference between the various titles. They all start with the basics...the foundational stuff and they all use the same boring ways of describing it. It's rare to find a total rethinking of an old subject in new, refreshing ways.

You gotta make your content fresh! Make it look new. That's why newspapers and news programs have addicted followers. They are addicted to NEW STUFF. So if you want to stand out, don't look like OLD STUFF.

If you've already written your book I'll bet I can read a page or two and show you where you could refresh your words to make the reader hungry to read the next page.

The last think you want the reader to think is...."Been there. Read that!"

You want them to think...."Now, this is different. This has something to teach me."

### **Stupid Mistake #10: Writing to the broadest possible audience.**



I feel sorry for someone who says, “I want to change the world.” I know they’ll never even make a scratch let alone a dent.

No, you want to change one narrow niche of the world.

Amazon.com is one of the largest retailers of EVERYTHING you can think of. But they started out capturing the narrow niche of books.

What is your niche?

Do you want to be a little frog in a big pond? Or the big frog in a little pond?

Change the little pond, and then you can grow to cross the oceans.

Writing to everyone means you’ll reach no one. Pick an avatar and write for them.

But, of course, that is easier said than done.

### **Stupid mistake #11: Not drawing the visual map for the reader’s journey.**

Maybe calling this a stupid mistake is not very kind. I guess I’m trying to save you a ton of time in writing your book. If you know the end from the beginning, then writing is a piece of cake. If you layout the reader’s journey in your mind, then the book almost writes itself... almost.

### **Stupid mistake #12: Having a lukewarm promise.**

Your information is competing with info-preneurs all over the world. It had better stand out, or it will be overlooked. As the Bible says, *“Since you are neither hot nor cold, I will spew you out of my mouth.”*

Don’t be lukewarm!

Welcome to the world of being an author. It’s an exciting world.