



WRITING AS A RETAIL BUSINESS

A Business Plan Guide

Business Plan for: _____ Year: _____

At this point, you should have a name for your business and would insert it here and the year.

Note: You can begin at any month if you have just made the decision and want to get started. Most business start their year, fiscal or otherwise, in either January or June.

Yearly Plan Overview: _____

Your yearly plan can be as detailed or as loose as you want. I prefer to do a yearly overview and then plan month by month. You can list your monthly plans (loosely) here. Again, I use 3 x 5 cards for each month, usually setting the details for each month detailed book by book. Here is where you can get into particulars. I prefer to write the cards usually at the beginning of the month, to include what I didn't finish last month and bring that forward. The cards stay right on my computer desk where I can see them daily as a reminder. It is also a good idea to list your goals for each month on this sheet as you will probably file it away somewhere to be viewed again at the end of the year.

(Make sure each card and each monthly plan begins with MY INTENT IS TO ACCOMPLISH THE FOLLOWING THIS MONTH: or however you wish to word it.)

Yearly Plan by the month:

January: _____

February: _____

March: _____

April: _____

May: _____

June: _____

July: _____

August: _____

September: _____

October: _____

November: _____

December: _____

Now that you have LOOSLY written those goals, you can move on to the next step:

FINANCIAL

Financial goals can be anything. Let your imagination soar or be realistic, but never limiting yourself!

Remember, you are responsible for your success! Again, those \$\$\$ goals can be listed on the back of your 3 x 5 cards for each month. That way, you can track your progress. . . . No room here to list this unless you prefer to do that. Use the monthly goals above to pencil those in.

Next step:

PRODUCTION

Production goals can be anything from one manuscript to 12. That is your choice. If you are self-publishing digitally, then one book a year is not uncommon. To write, draft, edit, re-write, re-write again, process through your beta readers, final edit, then a year is not unusual. If you plan to create audio books from the manuscript, that may take 3 to 6 months. Having them translated into another language is also realistically within that 6 months to a year framework. Finishing a book-in-progress can be listed here. Again, these can be listed on your month-by-month cards. I am currently using a calendar for this, as I can see the overall picture better.

INVENTORY

This is the perfect time to take a good long look at your current inventory to determine what is selling, what isn't, and what should be done about it. Digitally, just to change categories may work better. Offering it free for 2 or 3 days is another option. A new updated cover or a name change is another option. I have done both and found this to be effective.

PRICING STRATEGIES

Many times, just changing the prices on a book helps boost sales. If a digital book isn't selling at \$4.99, do some marketing research to check where your pricing is off and make the changes accordingly. Example: your book, *The Haunted House* is priced at \$4.99 and other books in this category (mystery, suspense,) are priced free or \$2.99. What would you do? Unless you have a series of books, I feel that it is not a good strategy to offer your books for free. You are running a business. Readers will download free books because they feel they are getting a bargain. Stores rarely offer merchandise for free unless they have a specific strategy planned; which brings us to the next segment.

MARKETING STRATEGIES

These are not the same as pricing strategies. Marketing strategies are the how-to you will use to present your books (inventory) in your store front.

Store Front is your personal or business website – your blog or your podcast. If you do not have any of these, then you might want to add one or all of them to your business plan over the next year.

1. Website – This is a priority. It is your store front.
2. Blog – This is also a priority for your store front. Consider it one of your advertising mediums.
3. Podcasts – Another advertising medium.
4. Facebook – Social media is a great way to put yourself out there. You can do your own personal face book authors page.
5. Twitter – Another social media.
6. Google + - Social media. I have a page but have not explored the full potential here.

PROMOTIONAL PLANS

These are the plans that you will use to promote your individual book. These plans can be any time length from 2 day free campaign to a 6 month strategy plan.

Again, I use 3 x 5 cards for this and write it on my wall calendar. Personally, one book at a time works better unless you have a series, then you can work your strategies and promotions from them.

I have a book that is currently in print. It is sitting dead in the water. This book sits with my publisher and is not moving. I am writing the sequel and will release that one probably in June (mid-cycle). Before I do that I will drop the book from my publisher and bring it over into my store front to begin the pre-publication campaign for the sequel.

TARGET AUDIENCE

Has your target audience changed? Are there new ones where you feel your book may do better, reach more customers? Final question: do you know who your target audience is? These are your readers. Readers today are very eclectic and will read from a wide variety of genres; whatever suits their fancy at the present time. Are your books in the correct genre? Here is another way to analyze where your books are selling.

CUSTOMER CONTACT

This is your e-mail list. These are the readers who like you and want to hear more from you about your books and what you are writing. This is referred to as GREAT CONTENT. If you don't stay in touch with these readers, and offer them GREAT CONTENT, then they will find another source. Here is where you offer free information and engage your e-mail customers. This list is your gold mine. Treat it accordingly. Offer GREAT CONTENT and you will have loyal readers anticipating your next offering. Remember that it must be something they can put into use for themselves, or inspire them. Write to EDUCATE, ENTERTAIN AND INSPIRE!

NEXT REVIEW OF THIS PLAN: _____