

Introduction

Marketing content is all about developing material that can be used in marketing activities. Much of the copy you generate can be used by itself in marketing, some of it will be incorporated with other marketing content to produce additional material.

Here is a list of topics to be covered in this section.

- ◆ Book blurb
- ◆ Book Description
- ◆ Keyword analysis
- ◆ Keyword applications
- ◆ Prequel edition
- ◆ Sig files
- ◆ Sampling
- ◆ Trailer

As you can see, there is a lot of material here. Today, I'll discuss the first four topics and tomorrow the last four.

Book Blurb

The purpose of the book blurb is to grab the attention of a potential reader. Once you have her attention by means of a great pitch line as the opening sentence, you need to follow that up with a few more sentences that tell her what's different about your book and what's in it for her.

Many new authors consider a book blurb to be a short synopsis. This is a mistake. Book blurbs and a short synopsis are two different animals and they have different purposes.

Here are descriptions for each of the three elements involved in developing a book blurb. Some of the material you developed in your strategic marketing plan will be helpful here.

Pitch Line: This is the first statement and it is the hook to grab the reader's attention. Its purpose is to persuade the reader to keep reading the other two statements. It should be simple, one or two sentences at most, and it must make a clear statement about your book.

What's in it for the buyer? This is a statement that explains what the reader (i.e. a book buyer) will get in exchange for money. This must be explicit. This statement is not the place to get cute. Don't come across like the legendary used-car salesman. Tell the reader what benefit he'll get from buying the book. Think of this statement in this way; if your book is surrounded by hundreds of similar-sized books on a shelf in a bookstore, what would persuade the buyer to choose your book instead of one of the others?

What's different about this book? With all the books published every month, what makes your book stand out from the others?

The secret to creating an effective blurb is to keep rewriting and condensing it until it expresses the ideas with a minimum of words.

For example, this is the book blurb for my novel *Falstaff's Big Gamble*.

Pitch Line: *This novel is Shakespeare's Worst Nightmare.*

What's in it for the buyers? *It takes two of the Bard's most famous plays, Hamlet and Othello, and recasts them into a fantasy land called Gundarland. There, Hamlet becomes a dwarf and Othello a dark elf*

What's different about this book? *If that isn't bad enough, these two tragedies are now comedies with Falstaff, Shakespeare's most popular rogue, thrown in as a bonus.*

For my non-fiction how-to book *Planning a Novel, Script or Memoir*, I developed this blurb.

Pitch Line: Creating a long story such as a novel requires a great deal of effort and creativity. It is easy to get lost in details and to lose focus on the main issues.

What's in it for the buyers? This book describes a process to plan the work prior to writing the first draft. The purpose of the plan is to allow the author to concentrate on the important elements of the story.

What's different about the book? A major portion of the book describes a method of developing a roadmap to keep the writer on target. The plan can be used to develop any long story such as a novel, a script, a memoir or even a play.

Here is a tongue-in-cheek blurb for a memoir.

Pitch Line: I really only wanted to teach math, but I ended up ruling the world.

What's in for the buyers? I reveal my secret to manipulate the markets and gain control of a commodity and possibly the world.

What's different about the book? I tell my story of how, after getting advanced degrees in math and computer science, I dabbled in the stock market and cornered the market for Stanislite, the rare mineral that gives superheroes their unique powers, thus gaining control over the superheroes.

So what are blurbs good for other than what was discussed above? How else can they be used? You can use them anywhere they'll fit. If you can't fit the entire statement someplace (such as on *Twitter*), use the pitch line by itself. You can also use them on websites, in book trailers, in announcements and in press releases.

If you have a publisher, check its blurb. If yours is stronger send it to the publisher and ask them to replace theirs with yours. It may say no, but at least you asked.

If your self-published book is available, see if your original short description should be replaced by your new blurb.

Book Description:

I talked about social media before. I want to revisit it to make a very important point. Social media does NOT sell books. What social media does is deliver visitors to a book landing page. The landing page closes the deal and makes the sale.

Thus it is vital to create a landing page that will sell the visitor, not drive her away. Probably the best landing page available is the one on Amazon.

The book description on Amazon or Barnes & Noble or other book seller web site, is your opportunity to persuade a visitor to buy your book. Perhaps the visitor is just browsing or maybe some marketing content of yours caught their attention. No matter how the visitor arrived at your book page, this visitor has at least a cursory interest in the book. So now the job of the book description is to close the sale.

With Amazon, all the visitor will see is a few lines of copy of your book description. Those few lines must convince the visitor to click on the "Read more" link. If your book description is blah, the visitor will move on instead of clicking on the "Read more" link. I can't think of a more blah book description than one that uses the synopsis. Let's face facts, every synopsis ever written is boring to read. Your book description has to be more creative than using the synopsis.

Writing a book description for a fiction book is quite different from a non-fiction book.

For fiction, the description should attempt to get the visitor interested in the main character and that character's problem. You want the visitor to think, "Oh, how will the character ever get out the mess she's in?" Then close with a cliffhanger.

With a non-fiction book, the goal is to convince the visitor that your book will solve a problem the visitor has. After all, if a visitor landed on your book

page, that visitor must have at least a passing interest in the book's topic. So now the visitor sees your description. It consist of four lines of text (on Amazon). Those four lines must convince the visitor to click on "Read more." If your description doesn't do that, the visitor will leave the page.

Writing those four lines of text (and what follows) must persuade the visitor to buy the book.

That ain't easy! Fortunately, there is an excellent tutorial on writing a description for a non-fiction book. Here is a link to it: <http://authorjourneyto100k.com/6-steps-to-a-perfect-book-description-that-sells-tons-of-books/>

Using the tutorial I wrote this description for my book, *Creating Stories*. I kept the bold lines in this example.

You have a story to tell. Let it out!

Imagine developing a story and telling it in a way that will keep the readers turning the pages.

Hank Quense, the author of more than a dozen highly-regarded novels, shows you how to do it.

In the book, you'll learn how to:

- * Develop imagery the reader can use
- * Build well-rounded characters the readers will relate to
- * Create a path through the plot cloud
- * Develop an emotional arc to keep readers on the edge of their seats
- * Write dramatic and effective scenes
- * Employ story-telling techniques to hold the readers' interest
- * and much more

Buy this book now and start telling your story.

Pick up your copy today by clicking on the *buy now* button on the top of the page.

One last word of advise about the book description: always end with a call to action .

Keyword Analysis

Keywords are frequently referred to as tags.

Readers will often search for a book using the name of a best-selling author but readers can't enter your title or name if you and your book have achieved little recognition. So far!

Another way readers will search for a book is by using a short descriptive phrase such as 'fantasy quest' or 'regency romance'. This is the situation where you want your book to appear in the search results. To accomplish this, it is vital that you develop a set of keywords that will ensure your book title will show up in the reader's search results.

The keywords you want to use are ones that readers in your genre will use when browsing for a book. These keywords are not necessarily what your book is about: they are the terms a reader will type into a search engine. Let's say your book is a fantasy novel filled with elves and dwarfs. You may think 'dwarfs' and 'elves' would be great keywords. They are not. A reader looking for a fantasy novel won't use them, but instead will search on keywords like 'fantasy adventure' or 'fantasy quest.' Consequently, it is important for your marketing efforts that you develop a relevant set of keywords.

Google has a free keyword planner you can use to help generate your keywords. You can access it using this link: <https://ads.google.com/home/tools/keyword-planner/>

Another free keyword tool can be found here: <https://keywordtool.io/>

If you have a publisher, it will generate your keywords. If you self-published your book, check if the keywords should be updated.

Keyword Applications

Keywords are powerful marketing tools. Besides the uses mentioned in the Keyword Analysis, there are other applications.

By now, you probably have written both a long and short synopsis, a book description and a blurb. Well, now that you have a set of keywords, it's time to update rewrite all of them to incorporate the keywords. Why? Because search engines love this usage.

As an example of how this works, here is the blurb for my novel *The King Who Disappeared* before I generated the keywords: *'A long time ago, Bohan was a king. But that was before the sleep spell. Now that he's awake again, it's time for revenge.'*

The keywords I used are: fantasy adventure, fantasy quest, fantasy humor, fantasy comedy .

Using these keywords, I modified the book blurb to: *'A long time ago, at the beginning of this fantasy adventure, Bohan was a king. But that was before the sleep spell. Now that he's awake again, it's time for a quest to get revenge. Fantasy humor doesn't get better than this.'*

Do you get the idea? Now spend some time and modify your synopses, blurb and description. Pepper them with your keywords. Don't force it, however. Insert them only when it feels natural.