

# How and why you should niche publish your book!



The rationale and process are explained in the **21 free blogs** listed below. All are found at this site.

The first six blogs explain what “niche publishing” is and why every publisher (and every expert of any stripe) should be running to get in line before the others catch on!

So you can quickly pick the information that you most want to know about “niche publishing,” here is a concise **summary of its benefits.**

**If you “niche publish” rather than publish “the regular way” you could...**

- \* **earn far more money, much faster**, with nary a nick of risk!
- \* you'll **never have to compete with big-house publishers**,
- \* you'll **never have to sell through bookstores**, and
- \* from the topic you select **you could create your own very profitable, life-long empire—with YOU the empress or emperor.** By expanding your sphere of buyers, the benefits of your book and message will continue to multiply your appeal, which will continue to bring you more money even faster—

**“Niche publishing” (and “niche marketing”) aren’t magic. But they bring two huge benefits that standard publishers can’t provide.**

**The first is pre-testability.** That means that before you write or print a page of your book, you can pre-test it to see (1) if that book will sell enough copies (that is, the rough number of copies that will be bought and by whom), (2) if the title works, and (3) if you chose the right problem to solve or needs to be met, the right benefit(s) to promise, a persuasive table of contents, and the right author. If the test results yell “GO!”—go. If not, retest until you get the right pre-test response. Or write another book, then build your empire around that book. (The cost of the test? \$500-600? Under \$1,000. If you as a niche publisher using the self-publishing process expect to receive \$100,000 gross from your book sale; \$50,000 net; and the test may cost 1-2% of returns. If the test is no-go, that’s a 2% risk. Take that bet every time!)

**The second benefit** is that your **niche book can be the core product of an empire** that can triple your book income every year, and multiply that again from spin-off or related books, MP3s, videos, seminars, speeches, reports, consulting, and classes that you can offer or sponsor to your eager book buyers and their colleagues. Why? Because **your book, targeted specifically to those buyers, proves that you’re an expert in their field, that you and your guidance can solve their problems and fix their frustrations.** Why wouldn’t they rush to buy more good stuff from you in book #2 or through a dozen other empire-linked ways once you have proven that what you say or show works as promised?

**So that’s where two elements linked to this blog play key roles.**

In 2008 I published a book called ***Niche Publishing: Publish Profitably Every Time***. See [www.nichepublishing.org](http://www.nichepublishing.org) for full details and the book's table of contents. That book has sold out in four different renditions, and the paperback issue is still unavailable (unless Amazon is selling old copies of it and keeping the royalties.)

Eureka! **The original, last version is still alive in digital format.** It's available for \$7. We offer it, instantly downloadable, at [www.gordonburgett.com.order3.htm](http://www.gordonburgett.com.order3.htm).

I've offered 100+ four-hour seminars about niche publishing and have had the opportunity to hear every question, challenge, and suggestion about the process. I still remain convinced that, done as suggested, it is still the best process (with the least risk, if any) and the fastest and safest way for self-publishers to enter the field and reap the rewards.

Alas, while here are many "empires," as I call them, prospering today, it's more difficult to tie them directly to the emergence of one book and one gutsy, hard-working emperor or empress drawing their buyers to the empirical central theme.

What I see more often is a speaker emerging from a topic field with a new idea or process and a following drawn from attendees at their seminars, keynote speeches, or breakout sessions. Somewhat less obvious is the leader's book that serves as the central focus of the unique message the "leader" comes to represent. But what stays as the binding tool as that "empire" takes form is the book, and spin-offs from it, that continue to give substance and breadth to the person and their idea. The point: **empires are usually built from a book's foundation.**

Final points.

If niche publishing seems to fit your path of development, the

one element least discussed but most needed is likely shared as much by you as it was by me: we can build our niche empires faster, better, and surer if we take the time to **create a solid strategy for growth**. Then focus on one message, like the big tree, from which our modest forests will eventually grow. **Make oneself “the” core of something that others in our orb need for their own development**. Write “the” book that your colleagues must master to create (or at least establish) their own excellence. Focus there, spread your process and message until its name and your become synonymous. (The topic of self-publishing is synonymous with the name Dan Poynter. That began with his book *The Self-Publishing Manual*.)

**That’s where the remaining 21 blogs fit in.** They answer the questions a “niche publisher” must ask. They are trees in our forest. Combine them with *Niche Publishing: Publish Profitably Every Time!*

**Where are those other 15 “magic” blogs?**

Go to [blog.gordonburgett.com](http://blog.gordonburgett.com) (if you’re not reading this blog at that site) and all 21 blogs are there waiting for you! When a blog opens up, go to the **search box in its upper right corner**. Then select and type some key words from a selected blog title, open it with your mouse, and that chosen blog will rather miraculously appear. Hiding the same way is where you’ll also find the 20 more niche-related blogs.

Even if you just type “niche,” about 10 assorted niche-related blogs will appear, and if the sought blog isn’t there, continue downward to the end of that blog chain to where it says “older” or “newer,” and in the subsequent lists of “niche” blogs you will find what you are seeking...

**Here are the titles of the 21 blogs** that help explain “niche publishing”:

## **Niche Authors and Publishers:**

- \* Make a bundle almost risk-free by publishing niche books.
- \* Why niche publishing is a much better deal...
- \* Ten advantages to niche publishing.
- \* How niche authors and niche publishers share the gold.
- \* Niche books are very profitable. How are their authors chosen?
- \* Why you may not want to niche publish.

## **The Niche Blog Bundle:**

- #1. What's so good about niche publishing?
- #2. The goals and assumptions of pre-test publishing.
- #3. How do you define (or find) a profitable niche for your book?
- #5. Are you a niche writer, a niche publisher, or both?
- #6. How much should you charge for your book?
- #7. How much does it cost to pre-test your niche book?
- #8. Get a free mailing list for your niche book pre-test.
- #9. Two sample notes to pre-test a niche book.
- #10. A sample flyer like those used in niche book pre-testing.
- #11. A postcard to know your niche pre-test book results!
- #12. It's time to actually test your niche book!

## **More about Niche Pre-Testing:**

- \* 25 key steps about pre-testing your niche book.

## **Niche Speaking:**

- \* Niche Speaking: Cash in with fewer (but more devoted) listeners.

## **Niche Book Marketing:**

- \* 101 niche marketing topics.
- \* Can we sell two new books by using 12,200 jumbo postcards?

(Incidentally, there are **400+ writing-, speaking-, and**

**publishing-related blogs** also lurking on this page quietly awaiting your visitation!)

That's it. Best wishes to you with your "niche publishing." I do **consult** in this area so if I can be of assistance, please contact me at [glburgett@aol.com](mailto:glburgett@aol.com).

Best wishes,

Gordon Burgett

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## **What do I do special as a writing coach?**

I just woke up to a question/discussion on LinkedIn's Promocave:

Carrie Golden, Citizen Journalist/Poetry Consultant to filmmakers at Motionpoems, Inc., asked:

*Writing coach...*

*Not sure if this group [Promocave] is the right place to post this question but...what exactly does a writing coach do to help writers?*

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I wear two hats (on one head): (1) "**court-of-last-resort**" **editor**, providing a last-chance no-nonsense review of what the writer is about to submit (the final final draft) for book publication and (2) a **first-step writing coach** (before much writing). So here was my contribution to the discussion that defines my view of what different do I offer as a writing coach—and why.

*[As a writing coach] I think of myself as a nonfiction “what” coach. I prod the souls [rather deeply] through six or so what’s (?), then the “how’s” make sense (and cents). I’m there if they need me later, more as an action guide and (sometimes) a silent co-planner of their future empire.*

**Here’s a longer explanation of (2)**, if you are interested and it helps you (*sans* me) do your own early nonfiction book planning, writing, and publishing.

There’s not much mystery about the steps a nonfiction writer can and usually takes to prep and submit a book for publication. See a hundred books in libraries worldwide that address that, and I have two books that address it too: [How to Get Your Book Published in Minutes and Marketed Worldwide in Days](#) and [How to Pick the Right Kind of Publisher](#).

What distresses me most is the number of smart, organized, diligent would-be book writers who wander about, with perfectly good words and spelling, looking for something to say and, mostly, a reason to say it. Bewildered souls with hundreds of pages (at least it reads that way) of “what’s that?” copy that has no clear (or any) purpose (or buyers) presented in sweet-reading, grammatically correct prose. Their command of English is strong. (It’s worse if it’s not.) What’s missing is their grasp of elementary common sense about what a book must do to become a book...

The saddest thing is how easily that could have been prevented if they hadn’t been in such a damn hurry to see themselves and their brilliance in print (everywhere), with assumedly a fat advance almost in hand and many years of fatter royalties following assuredly behind.

**About six questions** will create the structure and map, plus point the writer to the most likely reader, why they would read it, what they would do with it, and how they just saved

themselves about 75% in misdirected (or undirected) research, “what’s that?” writing, and the one thing they can’t get back, wasted time. Of course each question leads to deeper, related sub-questions which, in turn, lead to a dozen related books written (or waiting for you to write) that, combined with speaking, consulting, focus book series, perhaps audiobooks, and so on, can rather quickly create an empire based on their acquired expertise (which began with book one and is further proven and strengthened in subsequent products.)

So I guess that really makes me a **pre-writing and empire-building coach** (if being an emperor or empress is your thing).

That’s the longer overview of what my kind of writing coach does. (Most of the others start when the writing itself appears. Bless them.)

Best wishes,

Gordon Burgett

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## [10 Professional Tips to Sell Your Own Books...](#)

Here’s a great list of “to do’s” about how to sell your own books that was shared and discussed at the last (9/10/16) BAIPA (Bay Area Independent Publishers Association) meeting in Novato, CA. That is precisely what my clients (and publishing friends) want and need to know. Since you’re my friends too, let me share it with you—and invite you to share it with your friends as well. (The few notations in *italics* are mine to perhaps clarify the questions I had when I first read it.)



It is from IngramSpark, the huge distributor more known as Ingram or LSI through which most of us sell our books, mostly, to bookstores. It was shared at BAIPA by Jackie Thompson, a delightful soul full of fun, truth, and straightforward info and responses. From them, her, and me to you:

- **Before, during and after (l)earn what you can from industry data.**
- **Leverage distribution opportunities, US and global.**
- **Invest in professional editing, design and marketing, not inventory.** (*What good's the inventory if your book is embarrassing to look at and worse to read?*)
- **Use POD and digital to test demand for your book.** (*Not too many years ago you had to run 1,500+ copies just to see if a dozen unbribed souls would buy their own copy!*)
- **Use POD to increase format choices (paperback, hardcover, large print).**
- **Get to know your local librarian, learn from their collections.** (*You can do the same for niche books by studying the 10 newest books your nichees are reading.*)
- **If you are publishing to children and YA (young adults) have the material rated for age, and add this to your metadata.**
- **Use Social Media to build platform and market to your readers.**
- **Own your ISBN.** (*Even if some of the open publishers don't require it or will give you one of their ISBNs, instead post your own in every format and edition you publish.*)
- **Support your local bookseller and library.** (*Make it easier and a greater joy for them to later support you!*)

Good stuff I wish I had read when Ben Franklin and I were setting type and telling old jokes about older yokes on the Olde Sod.

Best wishes,

Gordon Burgett

[ More how-to writing, publishing, and speaking stuff at [www.gordonburgett.com/order3.htm](http://www.gordonburgett.com/order3.htm). ]

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## Leading your idea in print down its most profitable path...

So you've got an **article** or **book idea** that you want to turn into both **big money** and widely-seen **expertise presence**. That's the way to think! I'd also add that the copy needn't be completely rewritten again and again, so also think **reprint, rewrite, reprint of rewrites, and more...**

Let's say you want to write about the 2016 Chicago Cubs and their playing in the coming National League baseball playoffs—and perhaps for the pennant, of all things! But, if you can't tell, or wouldn't want to tell, a baseball from a ball of wax, your idea and copy to sell again and again could be about the Trump-Clinton presidential election, kumquat delicacies from the kitchen, or driverless autos driving nonetheless on the streets!

Alas, I've been a baseball fan from/in Chicago almost since the Great Fire and the hapless Cubs haven't won a pennant for 107 years. You know us by the fetching blue, red, and white "C" hats that we have had to hide in our cupboard for generations. Alas, this is our year, so we dusted them off and wear them on our heads for breakfast, lunch, dinner, and almost all the hours between—until October when we will know

if the hex of the billy goat is true. **So I'm picking the Cubs for this empire-building article writ long...** (But if you're reading this in the Philippines, on the Pyrenes, or in Peru, kumquat delicacies might be easier to understand...)

Let's start with an **article** about the "plight of the Cubs" (or any fetching topic) for an American magazine. You do the usual things: some basic research to find the most interesting angles or slants, pick the best approach, and subject that idea to a two-pronged **feasibility study**—is it feasible to write and is it feasible to sell? (Go to the search box in the upper top right corner and type in **feasibility study** to see how the magazine approach works. The blog copy comes from either [How to Sell 75% of Your Freelance Writing](#) or [The Travel Writer's Guide](#). To read those books, used and sold for a pittance, check the [Amazon catalog](#).) The feasibility study tells how to test magazines vs newspapers, who are the most likely readers, the querying process, and (for magazines), should you get a "go-ahead," how you best present the copy for sale. (If it fits newspaper freelance buying fields too, submit the written article in final form, without a query and sent in ready-to-go fashion.) If the idea is a "go" as feasible to write and sell, send your articles to the best markets in both categories.

If the **magazine** buys your submission, you can use much of the article's contents again (at least slightly rewritten) two ways: as a **reprint** or a **rewrite**. Then if a rewrite is bought, you can send that off to a still-virgin magazine as a reprint. With cunning, you can have several of each of these three partially-completed masterpieces filled in (completed) and in print, all paying you! (Again, go to the Search box above and write in reprints or rewrites to see step-by-step blogs with more details.)

With **newspapers**, there are two paths: (1) you can literally sell the first copy to as many newspapers as will buy it as long as they aren't "national" newspapers (like the *New York*

*Times*, *Washington Post*, or the *Wall Street Journal*—sell them one at a time, and, after it is sold, thoroughly rewrite the piece before selling it to another “national”) and (2) don’t simultaneously sell it two or more regional newspapers within 100 miles of each other (“distribution ranges”). Otherwise, you can sell the very same newspaper article(s) to any other newspaper (except the “nationals”) as long as they don’t overlap. Just tell the newspaper editor yours is a simultaneous submission and you are selling it outside of their 100-mile circulation orb.

What more can you do with reams of unused copy parts shouting to be read? Throw all the used copy into a cauldron, add the unused gems, mix them up again, and “**topic spoke**” them to find as many of the other potential eager buyers as will shriek and pay, delightfully, to use your genius and make you rich. Check the blog search for items about “topic spoking” in the 400+ blogs waiting to be used!

How many **books** can you pluck from that cauldron (adding in other sources still untouched)? You could write/publish a book for all kinds of Cubs’ *aficionados*: one for kids/young adults, one for the regular folk, another for seniors (some praying for the Cubs to win, others incredulous that they are anywhere near the top), another for the Cubs fans focusing on this year and the past two, another putting all 107 years in perspective, and so on.

And because each book requires a mound of research, interviews, anecdotes, photos, and more, you can turn this into new wealth of found and reworked copy and pluck out more **articles**, and thus more **rewrites**, **reprints**, and **reprints of rewrites**. You can also sell related **photos** where you sell copy (check photos in Search), often the same photo repeatedly since they are almost always sold on one-time rights.

Lost in this pile of print are the **directly related spin-offs**, like **audiobooks** of any or all of those books just mentioned;

**focus books** about specific elements of baseball for the truly absorbed, of the past year or two or of all time, like the pitching, the records set and broken, ERAs, a projection of future years and records of new(er) players emerging in the 2016 excitement; even **videos** and **movies**, all being in print before being converted to other media. Then using the most visible of the platform builders, authors speaking about their (new) specialty from the platform: see **rallies, speeches, how-to workshops, seminars, talks**, and so on...

Every time your champion copy has your by-line attached to your super writing in a newspaper, magazine, or book, you are solidifying yourself as an **expert** in that field, building a following, and making yourself more wanted by **information and product producers**. They want to get more good items from you, a recognized “valuable and prolific source” of, in this case, baseball, Cubs, and sports ideas, information, and articulation.

The point here is that **almost any word or idea has lots of legs (and ears) and can be multiplied very profitably many times by many means**. The trick is to create interesting copy about ideas that others want to know more about that is spelled properly and has the facts, quotes, and anecdotes artfully blended into more good ideas. Most exceptional writers don't stray too far from what others want to know, and they churn a fair amount of interesting text into many articles, then books, rather than just making one sale or two before wandering off to find unrelated subjects for articles that are also sold a few times. **It's wiser and fills your coffers faster by turning your related ideas and copy over and over.**

Best wishes,

Gordon Burgett

[ More how-to writing, publishing, and speaking stuff

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## A very new format for a seminar workbook...

In a now very long past—decades—I must have literally copied and carted 40,000 seminar workbooks (sometimes a half mile, too often up stairs). Most of those workbooks were 12-20 pages long! Too late to complain: that was the way it was done. But yesterday technology finally removed my shackles—and perhaps my blinders!

Some fact-setting now, then a detailed explanation copy of the new format that you may be interested in modifying and using. Explaining the 40,000: I have given more than 2,000 four-hour seminars, most as college/university extended ed offerings, almost all in California. They rarely had less than 20 participants, which meant 24 or so workbooks in case last minute registrants were waiting at the door. Ugh.

But yesterday a different request opened my eyes. I spoke to the **NSNC** (National Society of Newspaper Columnists) in L.A. about “[Publishing for Profit](#)” and, even though I myself had been a columnist several times, I had no way of knowing what other writing experiences the veteran audience had nor which of the dozen or so suggestions I would offer and expand upon they might wish to pursue.

Nor did I want to schlep any workbooks nor published books to sell BOR. (The airlines made that impossible anyway by charging for baggage—and rubbing in more salt by starving me en route!) But I did slip a copy of eight different books into my suitcase to display on a side table so they could see that

they actually existed!

I know, I could have run copies off of the workbooks once I reached L.A. But I'm doubly convinced now, the day after, that the new format is many times better and smarter for the future, it gives the audience more options, and it reduces or eliminates the burdensome task of hauling products for sale. That's why I'm sharing it now, while the fire burns, in case it would help you too. (If you have already discovered this "new" workbook process, congratulations! I'm sure you double agree! Why didn't you tell me?)

**The rationale:** I knew that all of my attendees were writers, they used computers daily, understood how to find websites, blogs, and could figure out the free-book code. Therefore all I had to do was explain the media or means needed, where the items could be found, the links or addresses for each, and what the resource references referred to. I gave them the instructions needed in the first two paragraphs, where the program was going in the next two, and the broadest of explanations of what the four sections to be covered in the text that followed.

That took a minute or two to re-explain at the beginning of the presentation, but then I could focus on the most important ways columnists might earn more and live happier. When appropriate, I could direct them to one or several of the references and, in some cases, tell them the best subtitles to the critical step-by-step details. There must be 600+ printed pages in the three free books and 200+ in the other items. Thus, by knowing where the information is at hand, almost immediately, they can pick, select, or reject it as they wish—or go back later, if they change their minds.

**The workbook:** The two-sided page *is* the workbook. In this case the program was designed to show U.S. columnists how else they can share, market, and expand their written gems (now or later) into other lucrative venues or ventures. That is what I

talked about. If they need the application guidance, the resources would then send them to the “how-to” support material.

Enough explanation. What follows is the “workbook” they received.

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## **Workbook as delivered to the NSNC presentation:**

### **Welcome!**

I’m Gordon Burgett. It’s 2016, we’re all experienced writers, and the airlines won’t let me schlep boxes of handouts as baggage anymore, so I’m going to use the Internet to let you pick what specific information you think will be useful to you later. At that point, you can download what you want or need, if anything. The most important material is free, there’s no shipping or tax, and it’ll be in your hands almost immediately!

Thus you have no workbook or piles of paper to lumber through. Just sit back for the first hour and let me explain a sort of strategy and ways that should help you considerably increase your writing income, then I’ll answer any questions you have during the remaining 15 minutes. If you have more questions later, please email me at [glburgett@aol.com](mailto:glburgett@aol.com).

My task is to help you fill your coin bags and increase your second-life options by doing more of what you already do very well—and make even more money (heavens!) by doing it.

I think the more-mullah quest starts with you strategizing at whatever point you are along your moneymaking-by-writing trail. I’ll address that.

The rest of our oral trek today roughly follows the other four



sections on these pages. I've posted lots of backup resources here that you can download if/when you want or need them. The most important material is free—three full core books, three helper reports, four website articles, and 400+ blogs to pluck from. To download most of that information, use our order page at [www.gordonburgett.com/order3.htm](http://www.gordonburgett.com/order3.htm)

Here's how to download or see the resources: (1) find and separately order each **free book** on the order form—but *before* you submit each order write the coupon number [        ] in the coupon code box on that order form. Then submit the form, the price will drop to zero, and follow the download instructions that follow! (The freebies expire on 8/20/16.) Other items, unless noted, are from the order form and can be ordered separately or together at any time. They are also available from Amazon but if you want the three books free you must follow the instruction in (1). How to get the three **free reports** is explained below. See [blog.gordonburgett.com](http://blog.gordonburgett.com) for the blogs listed. Once there, find the SEARCH box, upper right corner under the Twitter logo. In that box enter either the topic you want to see more about (like query letters or niche) or the word I will give you. The **website articles** are from the direct website link location.

(I) **WRITING—Travel Writer's Guide** (free ebook)

Explains how to sell 75%+ of your freelance writing (mostly newspaper and magazine articles), how to triple your income by topic-spoking, how to earn more with sidebars, and how to organize profit-packed copy-, quote-, and anecdote-gathering trips...

Related resources:

“4 Proven Ways to Sell 75% of Your Freelance Writing” Go to

**blog**, enter 4 proven ways

“How to Sell 75% of Your Travel Writing” (2 cassette program), \$20 + shipping

“25 Professional Query and Cover Letters” (ebook), \$4.99

“Reprints, Rewrites, Reprints of Rewrites, and Resales” (ebook), \$4.99

“The magic of topic spoking.” Go to **blog**, enter topic spoking

(II) **PUBLISHING–Niche Publishing: Publish Profitably Every Time** (free ebook)

A huge percentage of the risk-free, market-guaranteed book money is found here. We made \$2 million from dentists and are now following the same path from K-12 school administrators, supers, principals, and school boards. That process and business plan is explained in this book. If you write and publish, almost all the niche profits are yours. If you find experts in the field, you direct/edit, they write, and you publish, most of the profits are still yours but the fame is theirs.

Related resources:

“12-Step Pre-Test for Niche Publications” (ebook), \$4.99

“How to Test Your Niche Book before Writing or Publishing” (ebook), \$9.99

“How to Get Niche Articles in Print 75% of the Time” (ebook), \$2.99

(III) **PUBLISHING–How to Get Your Book Published in Minutes and Marketed Worldwide in Days** (free ebook). If you’re not niching, use the “open press” revolution plus Create

Space/Kindle [Amazon] and Lightning Source as your first or major paths to building your own empire. Publish here, then (perhaps) try the major publishers.

Related resources:

“Open Book Publishing: Almost a Miracle! (ebook), \$3.10

“When Would I Always (or Never) Self-Publish My Book?” Go to **blog**, enter self-publish

“12 More Ways to Turn Your Book into Many More...” Go to **blog**, enter more ways

“Focus books and Selling a Book by its Parts” Go to the **blog**, enter focus

“Sample Focus Book: Rights and Responsibilities of School Principals” (ebook), \$3.99

“Sample Focus Book: How to Create the Best Staff Possible” (ebook), \$3.99

(IV) BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER—Empire Building (O.P., no replacement book yet.) Ultimately, for big money, expand the perception of your expertise through related information dissemination means, like speaking, seminarizing, giving workshops or retreats, audiobooks, classes, consulting, social media venues, radio-TV, guest performances, and so on. Or create/sell little empires along the way. Or align your writing, researching, interviewing, and publishing skills with others’ empires. Or do it all.

Related resources:

“How to Set Up and Market Your Own Seminar” (4-cassette seminar), \$40+shipping

“Six Special Tools That Get Speakers Booked First” (ebook), \$9.99

<p><b>MORE FREE REPORTS:</b> <i>Lifelong Wealth by Being Indispensable</i> <i>Finding Indispensable Article Topics</i> <i>101 Niche Marketing Topics</i></p>	<p>Just subscribe to my newsletter (seldom sent) at <a href="http://www.gordonburgett.com/free-reports">http://www.gordonburgett.com/free-reports</a> and all three reports are immediately downloaded. Nobody else ever sees your address. Then if you want to escape my elist, just email me to be removed. I'm not offended—I forget names instantaneously.</p>
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That's it. If it helps, go to it.

Best wishes,

Gordon Burgett

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## [Writers: how to find more people to interview...](#)

Sometimes you're writing an article or story and try as you may you can't think of or find another person to interview, other than your kids or some shlunk on the street corner. So what do you do?

Let's start with an expectation that few new writers know about or think they might be able to tiptoe around: that **almost every paying editor expects you to interview at least several (think three or four) people for your article**—and what the interviewee is asked or says is directly related to what the article is about.

After I say that in my seminar about interviewing a rather bizarre question usually pops up: **“Must the interviewee be living?”** I imagine they are really asking if they can use quotes from someone who has passed or, perhaps, can they include interviews with aliens or ghosts or the like? In the second case, no. But quotes from the defunct, yes. Still, the quotes must come from a source that did once live—and the words must have been “captured intact” at that time, preserved, and passed down. Also, they can’t be “helped” to directly pertain to the subject at hand.

**An example where this worked.** I sold several articles about Dom Pedro II and his visit to the U.S. to open the 1876 Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia. All of the quotes came from a detailed diary that the King of Brazil kept during the visit that was published a few years after his death. I sent the editor a copy of the relevant phrases from the diary that I had translated from Portuguese. No problem.

Thus historical comments from the living or dead might provide background information and, sometimes, direct quotes that apply as said.

The best way not to get caught without interviewees is to read many other articles or accounts about the topic and note all vital information you can about their speakers or authors. The challenge is finding those publications. Your librarian will show you the “trace” books, if needed. “Google” will too, as will the company or college they work for.

Another way, if the topic is being actively discussed in the media, is to find all of the related interplay in print: who is taking part, their position, the group or association they represent, anything else that gives a clue. And if you only have one side of the topic, ask the speaker defending that viewpoint the names of the three most frequent (or best) speakers on each side of the issue—plus for phone or mail contacts.

Or delve more deeply into the topic. Specifically: a cure for Parkinson's disease, how to get ahead (and stay ahead) of road deterioration, one-world currency, age-based income equity? Focus as much on the best brains and problem-solvers in each field. Mine their expertise. Ask who you should contact to get a solid exchange.

Said another way, **ask the best informed expert(s) on the topic** if they could (or would) identify the top minds in their field, the top three or so best informed people who would identify the most important questions that must be asked, then offer their thoughts about possible answers or solutions to each. Sometimes that works. Sometimes they laugh uncontrollably, step back, and stare at you like you've just overdosed on your own brew!

Another way is to simply ask the chosen person after you finish interviewing them, "Would you point me to another expert as well informed as you that I can interview so my editor will have two points of view for his/her pages?"

**Or just ask the shlunk on the street corner and take your chances.** I did just that in a piece about the huge Schloss in Heidelberg. Seems there was a giant crack in a wall large enough to march an army through. So I asked a fellow just standing next to me if he knew anything about that crack and why the wall didn't just collapse or slide down? He smiled, then gave me an eloquent, point-by-point response! When finished, I applauded his knowledge (and clarity of expression). He smiled even more, then told me that he was a professor of architecture at the University of Heidelberg!

If in this somewhat rambling blog there is guidance that helps you, great.

Best wishes,

Gordon Burgett

P.S. You can't just interview yourself, sadly. Such wit and erudite articulation untouchable! But if you have solid quotable comments in an article, book, or publication about the topic, you can say something like: "...in my 2016 book about ... I mentioned that ..." A bit awkward, alas, but better than just saying, "Somebody once said ..."

I will be writing a book about interviewing soon. If that interests you, please stay tuned.

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## [Article you're submitting need a sidebar? Here's an example...](#)

Typically, as I write a "go-ahead" article, I encounter some additional facts that are so spectacular or unique I think they would make an interesting sidebar or box, in or near the printed article, to excite the readers and add much substance to the article without changing its primary structure. So I write and send a sidebar cover note (see below) by email or snail mail to the editor, reminding him/her of the subject of the article of mine they are considering or just accepted. Here, I share some of the most exciting facts (for baseball fans) that apply to the first year that the Cubs (and the National League) were in existence: 1876. That's it. He/she will likely respond by email, a short yes or no, with a suggested content size.]

### **Sidebar Cover Note**

Dear Ms So-and-So:

I doubly appreciate your giving me the go-ahead on the article "Wrigley Wouldn't Recognize His Field." I'm shooting to have it there within a week. But as I'm gathering current facts amid the cranes and disappearing bleachers, I wondered if you'd also want a Chicago-based sidebar (or box) about the earliest Cubs, long before P.K. Wrigley was in baby britches.

Here are some of the items it might contain:

1. The Cubs are the oldest team in the National League. They played from day one, in 1876—and won the first pennant by beating the Louisville Dark Blues in six games. Called the White Stockings then, they finished the year with a 52-14 record. (They didn't use the name "Cubs" until 1907.)

2. Chicagoans also gave birth to the term "out of left field" in their early years. The left field in the pre-Wrigley playing grounds butted up to a many-storied insane asylum, and when the crowds made too much noise the lunatics screamed out the windows and banged on pans. Their comments truly were "out of left field."

3. Al Spalding (of later sports equipment fame) managed that team, plus he helped write the first set of official baseball rules. He also pitched in 60 of the 66 games they played in 1876, winning 47. (Spalding was also the only pitcher on the team wherever he played, winning more games in his six professional baseball seasons than any other player in the league.) Al was the first major league player to use a fielding glove. His total pitching record was 252-65 with a 2.15 ERA and a .313 batting average! He also owned the team for a decade.

4. Players had no numbers or names on their uniforms then so crowds only vaguely knew who they were or what they did. Spaulding's solution one year was to assign each position a different color, and the player there wore a hat that was



colored to match the position's hue. The fans called the team the "Tulips." Hats (and baseball gloves) were sold, of course, by Spaulding.

5. Ross Barnes took most of the rest of the honors that year, batting .429 in 1876, hitting the Cub's first home run, and winning nine of the other 10 major categories that inaugural season (hits, RBIs, runs, and so on...) But he got the ague (a fever) in the Windy City after 22 games in 1877 and never fully recovered. Fortunately, "Cap" Anson was there to pick up the slack, and, later, Tinkers, Evers, Chance, Hornsby, Dizzy Dean, and Grover Cleveland Alexander.

That may seem like a lot of numbers for a sidebar, but what numbers! And those reading about Wrigley Field will be Cub fans eager to relive those golden days. They are also hoping that the new playing grounds will bring the glory back.

If that interests you, on speculation of course, please let me know. It would help if you would indicate an approximate number of words you'd like in the sidebar.

Many thanks,

Gordon Burgett

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P.S. This is an excerpt from my book **Profitably Resell Your Copy Again and Again (and Again)...**, *with the subtitle **Magazines, Newspapers, Reprints, Rewrites, Modified Reprints, Sidebars, Sales Abroad, and Other Copy Resales.*** Available from Create Space and Kindle after March 10. Or contact [us](#) for details.

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# Stretch one skinny article into five with minimal effort

How would you like to design one article to appear in five different magazines or newsletters that explains the benefits, through example, of **your firm's specialization** and why they may want to know more about your services? The best thing: it's pretty much the same article with a similar message, and the five articles will probably take far less than 40% of the time and effort!

Let's say you consult in the first-contact field, to help improve relations and create more business follow-through between receptionists and front-desk employees in small to medium-sized businesses. You can outwit your competitors by using the same basic idea five times through a popular **reprint and rewrite concept** familiar to journalists.

Perhaps your consulting would work well for offices that deal in insurance, real estate, loan processing, titles, and interior designing. What you must do is **create a master article** that will work well in publications to each of those five fields. Let's say the creation of a telephone answering approach and basic script that would make all who phone (1) feel welcome and reassured by the professional message content and tone, (2) would be promptly directed to the person best prepared to answer their question or give advice, (3) or would be sent to the department or desk that handles their needs, and (4) would experience the properly directed pass-off smoothly and courteously.

That master article (probably about 650-900 words long) would give an example of how the greeting program you would design would function, with now-and-then examples and benefits clearly visible. But it would be niche-tailored to meet the needs in the five fields just mentioned. To do that you might

**interview a first-contact person** or two in firms in each field, so the article has the right tone and vocabulary, and meets the unique needs in the different niches.

For example, you might call the office manager in, say, a loan office nearby and tell that person that you are \_\_\_ and you are writing an article about greeting solutions in the loan field and could you interview her/him for 15 minutes in person or by phone to have a better understanding of how greeting is handled in the loan office field. **It's surprising how eager others are to be interviewed.** You could do the same to the other four fields too. What you need for all or most of the niche articles is inside, hands-on, how-to information from an experienced practitioner.

Later, you might call the same person again, thank them once more, and ask if they could suggest the three niche magazines in their field they think might be interested in sharing the short article—that you will handle the placement but thought it prudent to see what is most read right now.

Since you already know how positive greeting programs can be designed, you can then take the problems mentioned in the interview and design a program that would **provide significant benefit.** (And do the same in the other fields too. The second article will be much faster; the fifth, about as fast as you can type.)

Then you use the usual submission procedures to the target magazines, in this case a **query letter** suggesting the article or a **direct submission** of the finished article with a cover letter. When accepted and submitted remember to include a "**bio slug**," a 20-35-word short that tells about you, the author, or the firm, plus the address/phones/email info so the readers can contact you for business!

**Why would you do this?** To make local contacts through the interviewees, get your firm's beneficial suggestions in front

of readers nationwide in five different fields, and to have copies of in-print articles to use for your p.r. or direct promotions. **What I like best is doing five while you do one.** As long as you are thinking this way, why not think a bit deeper and get a much better return?

Best wishes,

Gordon Burgett

P.S. To see other blogs about **reprints, rewrites, query letters, and selling freelance writing**, just type those words in the **search box**, upper right, and the other blogs will appear after this article.

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## [Some thoughts about interviewing...](#)

*This is an excerpt (part of a chapter) from my coming book, **Interviewing**. I talk about tools and means used to interview:*

Interviewing is mostly you asking questions to a person or, rarely, a group, and receiving an intelligible response in return. When you record what you asked and what they replied, that is the thinnest skeleton of a completed interview.

That's a bit simplistic but most of the rest just adds bulk and hope to the process.

A huge percentage of my interviews have involved direct communication with my target person. **More than half were done eye to eye (really mouth to ear)**, and most of those were done when I was learning how, usually on the road last century gathering travel material. I asked and they responded, and I

translated and wrote what they said into a notepad, in a kind of shorthand that spontaneously evolved (nouns mostly, other key words underlined.) It was give and take, staccato fashion, one question/a reply, segues... My goal was about five minutes, which was a long time for them and for me. It rarely lasted 30 minutes; an hour interview never happened.

Well, that sense of brevity may be somewhat misleading because many "interviews" became conversations, and ended when it was comfortable or necessary to do so. If the other person wanted to keep talking I was usually game to do so (unless I absolutely had to be somewhere else right then—sometimes we resumed the exchange later over lunch or coffee.) Other times they just wanted someone to talk to, or were lonely, or were proud of what they had done or seen and wanted to share more of it. That was fine. Often it gave me more, better information and a deeper interview.

Occasionally I was drawn to an interviewee. I wanted to know them better, and (hard to believe) that seemed mutual. They were interesting, often passionate about some cause, and they almost always bubbled or bristled with humor. What they said was worth sharing; it was fun; they were worth knowing. A few of those contacts became lifelong friends, particularly those still living.

But mostly interviewing is fast and focused. It's kind of a dancing duel: you extracting what you need (and hoping for more); them telling you what they want you (and your readers) to hear, hoping they didn't say too much.

In my mind, first interviews should be courteous, painless, and fairly fast, leaving open the possibility of a later follow-up. But I don't mention that before or during the first interview other than asking them how I might later contact them should I run into a fact or a phrase that needs clarification and asking for or verifying an address where I would send them a copy of the printed article. (If you offer,

do send it.)

Most of my interviews not done eye-to-eye were done by **telephone**. Those weren't as satisfactory because you couldn't tell how much of what they were saying was true, a greased lie, or something in between. Nor did you ever know if the voice you were hearing belonged to the actual person you had called. (I don't think I ever interviewed a stiff or a stand-in, but surprisingly often they grilled me to make sure I was the journalist they were supposed to be talking to and that I was writing an article for such-and-such a publication. Everyday people took me at face (or voice) value, happy to be the one being interviewed. The higher ups were more likely to have their assistant or caretaker vet or check me out first).

Another telephone problem: the tenuous connection between you and the person you are interviewing—one wire—almost invites the other person to simply hang up or disconnect when they have said what they think you should (or need to) hear. It's a true test of your interviewing (and inventive) magnetism to be able to keep the other person focused and actively responding. Some of that is created before starting the actual interview by getting the respondent's buy-in to the importance of the exchange so what they say can reach their target listeners' or readers' ears.

My restraint to interviewing by phone was personal—and, in my dotage, still is. I grew up weaving waggish humor and pun-riddled, antic wordplay into my everyday conversation. It drove my few friends crazy. But all of that tomfoolery had to be excised when phone interviewing strangers for print, particularly when they envisioned sparks or bolts of radiated global fame emanating from the article (or even book) they would be in. It was their big moment and they didn't expect mirth or frivolity—any humor at all—then, particularly over the telephone where smiles are never seen and barely heard. So half of what I normally might have said, or how I might have said it, was verboten and probably dumbfounding. However

funny, they never, ever would have laughed. They were expecting to be asked to share gems of wisdom, poignant observation, Christian guidance, and household tips. Out the telephonic window flew my witty high jinks, which left the interviewer, me (or you), nearly speechless, jocularly disarmed.

Alas, nothing is incurable when regular eating is at steak. I immediately reverted to my telephone high school date-getting scheme of imploring (or interviewing) by script. My first 100 or so interviews (it may have been 500) were very, very tightly structured, almost every word written or typed. It looked something like this, although where you see ideas below I had complete sentences, short sentences to give them time to respond:

- \* wee introduction
- \* reminder of why I was calling and where their words would be shown to the world
- \* a question
- \* a second question—these were the most important answers in case something else interrupted the call—it happens often—and there would be no chance to finish... [more on this later]
- \* [if something relevant in their reply to my questions was said or hinted at I would ask more, prodding queries about it, to provoke more facts or brilliance]
- \* a third question
- \* [if they verbally wandered off and what they said would also interest my imaginary readers I let them wander. I only reherded them back into my imaginary readers' corral of interest when they wore out or I still had a final question to ask]
- \* fourth question (or more) if needed. See above.
- \* anything else, Mr./Ms. \_\_\_\_\_, that I should have asked but didn't?"
- \* "is there a phone number I could use to reach you if I find something I need to verify later?"

- \* "I'll gladly send you a copy of the printed article as soon as it appears—remember, printing can sometimes take months"
- \* "is \_\_\_\_\_ the address where I should send the article, in your name?"
- \* "thank you again, Mr./Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_, for the information and your time"
- \* "it sounds like a very interesting article. I appreciate your kindness and your sharing"
- \* (hang up softly, breathe deeply, wipe brow, hydrate rewardingly, and type out the whole interview then or before nightly repose)

Interviewing by **email**, or even by **social media**, is fast, sometimes too public too soon, and a whole lot less expansive. Combined with **Skype** or other computer-to-computer linking, it's fairly easy and much faster to talk with others now—if they agree to talk with you.

For example, ...

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This is an unedited extraction of part of **an early chapter of a book called INTERVIEWING**. Check future blogs for more copy about the topic.

Best wishes,

Gordon Burgett

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[Here's how to submit changes](#)



# to your book at Kindle

Here's a comment/question that I get too often: "I published my book on Kindle but I don't know how to make changes in it. Help"!

So let me **list the steps** that will let you tinker or rewrite or clarify your book. Whatever you want to change, the train always takes the same simple track.

Your book enters the Kindle publishing brainworks through **two files**, one for the cover, the other for the interior copy and artwork. Let's assume the interior copy was prepared in Word and that you have it stored on your personal computer (or you have access to it). You or another person submitted both of those files at KDP.Amazon.com. And as the publisher you also opened an account at Kindle, which is how you got through the publishing gate.

Let's say that the book being displayed on Kindle says, on page five, "I am the greatest writer alive." But others (including the greatest writer alive) told you that claim should be corrected (or painfully censored). So now you want to substitute "After having been the greatest writer alive, I am now number two." You want to modestly set the record straight.

**Get or find the book's interior copy file**, make a digital copy of that file, and set that copy aside, for old-time's sake. Now go to page five and replace the offensive boast by erasing and retyping a correction. First check to see the font and font size that copy was prepared in. For example, if it's Century Schoolbook 11-point, make your correction in the same font/size. Give this new file a new name (say, from Book 1-1 to Book 1-2) and save it. **That's how changes begin. Find the original file, change it, and save it with a different name**—or you will drive yourself, Kindle, and us batty. Then here's how

to put that “corrected” file inside Kindle so it will appear on monitors (or like devices).

Assuming by now you have a Kindle publishing account, open it up and do the following:

1. Go to the Dashboard, then the Bookshelf.
2. Find **“Your Books”** and the title of the book you want to change.
3. On the far right side along the book title line find a shaded box with three dots on it, near **“Book Actions.”** Push **“Edit Details.”**
4. Go down to #6, **“Upload Your Book File.”**
5. Open **“Browse.”** It will take you back to your home files. Find Book 1-2 and open it.
6. Kindle will start downloading the corrected version of your book right away.
7. It may take a few minutes to download. When it’s done, it will invite you to look at the changed book by going to #7, **“Preview Your Book.”** You will see how fast one can plummet from being the world’s greatest writer to the second greatest.
8. If that’s what you want your book to say (and how you want it to look), check the orange **“Save and Continue”** box at the very bottom of that section.
9. That will open the #8-#11 section. Below #11 is a wee box that you must check. Read the text you just approved, and confirm it again in a yellow **“Save and Publish”** box on the lower right.
9. You’re done! But Kindle isn’t. If your book is in English it will take about 24 hours for your changed book to reach eager readers and buyers.

That’s it.

Congratulations on having a book or good news to share at Kindle!

Best wishes,

Gordon Burgett

P.S. This is an updated submission version from my [How to Get Your Book Published Free in Minutes and Marketed Worldwide in Days.](#)

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