

MODULE 7: SALES PAGE & PRICING

“Nobody likes to be sold, but everybody likes to buy.”
~Earl Taylor

Contents

- Elements of an Effective Sales Page..... 2
 - On Spammy Sales Pages 2
 - Where to Host Your Sales Page 2
 - Elements of a Sales Page..... 4
- Creating an Effective Listing on Amazon and Other Marketplaces 7
- Pricing Your eBook 8
 - How Your Niche Impacts Your Pricing 8
 - Pricing Low Versus Pricing High 9
 - Other Things to Consider 11

Elements of an Effective Sales Page

When you're writing an ebook, it can be easy to focus solely on the ebook content itself, but taking the time to think through things like the sales page and your marketing plan is just as important as writing a quality ebook. Your sales page is really something you should start thinking about early rather than throwing one together at the last minute, and I'd recommend taking advantage of the time when your ebook is being reviewed by an editor or formatted by a designer to create a sales page that gives visitors a reason to buy the ebook you've poured so much time and effort into!

Let's look at a few different types of sales pages as well as the elements you should consider including:

On Spammy Sales Pages

I'll be honest: I am not a fan of the typical internet marketing "spammy" sales page. If I click through to a sales page with yellow highlighting, blinking "Buy Now" buttons and a page length that rivals a master's thesis, I rarely walk away with a desire to actually buy the ebook or product in question.

Here's the thing: I'm pretty sure these types of sale pages must work at least some of the time. There are tons of ebooks and courses written about them and successful "get rich quick" internet marketers using them. But while they might result in a sale, I'm just not sure that they work for my brand or what I'm trying to accomplish, and I can't bring myself to put that into practice when I'm writing a sales page.

For example, it seems to me that if you need 2,000 words to convince me why I should buy your ebook, you're probably trying too hard. Tell me what it's about and how it will help me, and let me decide from there.

Similarly, the more you try to convince me that your package is worth hundreds of dollars but available for "a limited time only" for *only* \$9.95, the less convinced I am that it's even worth that much.

I know plenty of successful ebook authors who take a much simpler, more straightforward approach on their sales pages (like [this one](#), [this one](#) or [this one](#), and that's the method I choose to use as well.

Where to Host Your Sales Page

Another question that ebook authors face is whether to host their ebooks on their main website or blog or create a separate page altogether.

If you're not a blogger, I highly recommend [setting up a simple author website](#) to begin building your brand and connecting with your audience. It doesn't even need to include a blog necessarily (although there are definitely benefits to blogging if you're trying to sell ebooks since great free content is an effective way to attract potential purchasers!), but it should include some of the elements we'll talk about in a little bit.

If you are a blogger or a website owner already, there are a couple different ways you can handle your sales page:

Announcement Post

Some ebook authors simply throw together an announcement post on their blog with a few buy now links and call it a day. However, I don't recommend this method for a number of reasons:

- 1) If your post permalinks include dates, it immediately “dates” your sales page as old, which can affect sales more than you might imagine.
- 2) Posts can get very quickly buried in the archives, and one of the goals of writing and publishing an ebook is to build your passive or residual income, which means keeping it front and center.
- 3) A blog post feels much less professional than an actual polished sales page. That’s not to say that you shouldn’t blog about the ebook when it is ready to launch (and throughout the life of the ebook!), but your posts should have a different, more casual tone than your actual sales page, which should be professional and well thought-out.

Dedicated Page on Your Site versus a Separate Website

So that leaves us with two other choices: do you include a dedicated sales page on your site or create a separate website for your ebook? Let’s look at the pros and cons of both methods.

The first thing to consider is how you want to brand the ebook. Is it a stand-alone product or part of your overall brand? Will you be creating a series of ebooks or just one? How does the topic of the ebook align with the topics you cover on your blog normally?

For many people, hosting the sales page on your blog makes sense because it is simpler and contributes to the overall growth of your brand. This allows you to cross-sell ebooks on your site, to promote your ebooks regularly as part of your blog content and to increase the number of inbound links to your site.

This is the method I use for the [Life Your Way Printables Complete Download Pack](#), which are really part of my blog content (since I also offer individual printables free). It’s also how I sell my first ebook, [How to Have Your Cake and Eat It, Too](#). Both are closely related to topics I regularly cover on the blog, so hosting them there makes sense.

However, if I was going to establish myself as a business or blogging coaching (something I’ve done briefly in the past but don’t especially enjoy in a formal way), I’d consider moving the sales page of How to Have Your Cake and Eat It, Too to a separate domain where I also blog about those topics and offer various services.

From [Katie Kimball](#):

I never gave [a separate website] a thought when I first launched, because I had no precedent.

Now that I have many books, I recently considered a new site for all of them. The main reason TO make a separate site is so that the sidebar doesn’t distract the customers. We decided that, since KS needs a new theme anyway, we’d get one where we can put a custom sidebar on the eBook buy page and leave it where it is. I enjoy the SEO benefit of affiliates linking to my site, one reason I changed shopping carts a year ago.

I definitely didn’t want 5 new sites to manage (one for each book) and I also wanted all the books together for those customers who might buy more than one. Making a new “KS eBooks” site didn’t seem to make sense for the reasons above.

[Read Katie’s full case study interview here.](#)

From [Amy Lynn Andrews](#):

Right. So a website or blog is a must-have for authors these days and they're [so easy to get](#), really, it's a no-brainer. In my case, I do own the domain [TellYourTime.com](#) which currently forwards to my main site, [AmyLynnAndrews.com](#). The reason I did it this way is two-fold. First, I didn't want to have to think about building and maintaining a separate site (read: laziness).

More importantly, I never intended Tell Your Time to be a stand alone project. It is only the first of what I hope to be many projects. I'd like the book to have a strong association with my name so marketing efforts of future projects will have a wider reach.

For example, if I come out with another ebook or product down the road (that may or may not be related to time management), there will be a greater chance someone will consider making a purchase if they can say, "Oh! This is from Amy Lynn Andrews. I remember enjoying her time management book...I bet this is good too."

[Read Amy's full case study interview here.](#)

In fact, my latest ebook, [Easy Homemade](#), is hosted on its own domain for that exact reason. I wanted to be able to release additional Easy Homemade ebooks and have those stand as their own brand. I also wanted to be able to blog about related topics and have visitors quickly discover the ebook rather than getting lost in the myriad of topics we cover on Life Your Way. Having it on its own domain means that when an Easy Homemade blog post is shared, a new visitor very quickly discover there's an ebook by the same name that they can explore as well.

Elements of a Sales Page

No matter where you host your sales page, there are important elements that should be included on every sales page as well as optional elements you should consider including to make your page useful for visitors and effective for selling your ebook:

Cover Image

We've talked about the role that a good cover design plays in selling your ebook, and it really should be front and center on your sales page. Although readers can't hold or flip through an ebook before purchasing like they can with a traditional book, they still want to see what they're getting, even if it is a static cover image!

This might seem obvious, but your sales page should also have your book's title and subtitle in a prominent position. It may not be easy to read on the cover image itself, but you can use it as the title of your page or include it in the text in another way. This also has SEO ramifications, and you want to be sure that *your* book comes up when someone Googles the title, so you need to include the text (preferably in a heading) so that Google will consider it when it's returning the search results!

Description

Just like journalists start newspaper articles by writing the synopsis first and then adding more details as the article progresses, your sales page should feature a prominent, skimmable "elevator pitch" – a 3-5

sentence description of the ebook that concisely tells visitors what the ebook is about and why they should buy it.

You can go on to include more details about what the book offers, but someone shouldn't have to hunt for that overview because it may be enough to close the sale all by itself.

Call to Action / Buy Now Button

Another obvious feature of your sales page is the call to action or buy now button. The truth is that many online purchases are impulse purchases, which means you need to make it extremely easy for someone to buy, not send them hunting for a way to complete the purchase. You want to actually invite them to make the purchase in your text and make that button obvious.

As a side note, while I'm not a fan of long sales letters, I don't think there's anything wrong with including a buy now button in several different places on your page so that a visitor doesn't have to scroll all the way down to the bottom or back to the top in order to make the purchase!

Price

I'm not sure if there is differing advice on this or if it's just an often overlooked item, but it makes me nuts to visit a sales page and not be able to quickly find the price of the product I'm considering. Having to use the "Add to Cart" button just to figure out how much the ebook or product costs feels manipulative to me (even if that's not the author's intent), and it actually makes me less likely to buy the product, even if the price is good.

If your ebook is priced correctly (which we'll talk about more in a little bit!), there's no reason not to include it a visible spot!

Sample and/or Table of Contents

Your sales page should also include a sample of the content readers will find. You can do this in several different ways, such as offering [a chapter in exchange for a tweet](#), a "peek inside" or a table of contents of all that is included.

About the Author

If your sales page is hosted on your blog or website, you likely already have an About page, but if you're building a mini site for your ebook, be sure to include one there too. People love to get to know the authors behind books, and this is a great place to share your story and credentials as well as link to other projects you may be working on!

Reviews

Reviews are an extremely powerful tool for selling your ebook, especially when they're written authentically, because readers like to hear from other, objective third parties before purchasing. Offer your ebook ahead of time to well-known bloggers in your niche, to loyal readers and to friends and family, and begin gathering their reviews on your sales page.

Note: Just because someone submits a review does not mean you have to use it. Think carefully about what you want that reviews to convey, and if a review is poorly written, offers lofty promises in flowery language or doesn't convey the message you want potential purchasers to walk away with, simply leave it off.

Other

Finally, your page should also contain contact information for you, information on becoming an affiliate (if you'll be hosting an affiliate program, which we'll talk about in a couple weeks), links to the various purchase options available – PDF, Kindle, Nook, etc. – and a satisfaction guarantee.

You may also want to include an intro video where you actually talk about why you wrote the ebook and what readers will find inside. This is a casual, friendly way for visitors who prefer videos to written text to learn more about the ebook.

You can also include a list or page of related freebies – printables, tools, resource lists, extras, etc. to help [fill your funnel](#).

And finally, consider including your social media links, especially if you'll be hosting conversations or challenges related to the ebook topic in those forums.

Creating an Effective Listing on Amazon and Other Marketplaces

When you sell on Amazon, BN.com or other online marketplaces, your ebook listing works the same as a sales page but contains a few different elements. These vary by marketplace, so we're going to focus on Kindle listings for now:

Author Profile

Amazon offers great author profiles where you can include a bio, photos, your latest tweets and blog posts, and a list of all of your books. Although writing a bio is never fun, there's really no excuse for not filling this out (and keeping it updated, which I need to do this week!), and it's a great way for Amazon customers to learn more about you and discover other titles you've written.

[Head here to setup or edit your Author Central listing.](#)

Description

Like your sales page, your ebook listing should include a 3-5 sentence elevator pitch that customers can quickly read while skimming the listing. Amazon's "read more" feature lets you include much longer descriptions, but you'll want a concise summary at the top.

Beneath that, you can include some of the most compelling reviews, anything potential customers should know about you or the ebook and a more detailed description.

Be careful that you don't incorporate spammy sales letter techniques in your ebook listing either, though. Sometimes authors add so much bolding and capitalization and so many exclamation marks and asterisks that it's hard to quickly skim the description. This can take away from the professionalism of your listing and make it feel like you're an amateur who is trying too hard!

Ask for Reviews

One of Amazon's strengths is its customer reviews section, and having reviews gives an ebook additional credentials that can push a buyer to the decision point of buying your ebook. While I would *never* recommend faking or buying reviews, it's a great idea to simply ask people to leave an honest review. Do this within the ebook itself or via social media, and don't forget to ask the people who received early copies to take the 30 seconds to leave a review as well!

Categories & Keywords

Finally, be sure to take advantage of Amazon's categories and keywords, which help your ebook show up in search listings, on category pages and on bestseller lists. I am always shocked by how many ebooks simply aren't categorized, and it seems like a huge missed opportunity to me because it only takes minutes to set the category while you're listing your ebook!

Similarly, refer back to the [keyword tool](#) we used when choosing a topic and set keywords based on popular searches related to your ebook topic so that people searching for ebooks on Amazon are more likely to discover your ebook.

Pricing Your eBook

Pricing is a huge topic, and – unfortunately – it’s one without any clear guidelines or cut-and-dry answers!

I’m going to do my best to delve into this topic from several different angles to give you the information you need to price your ebook effectively, but at the end of the day, I follow my gut when I’m pricing my products, and I recommend you do the same.

I think about what I would be willing to pay for an ebook, what I see other ebooks in the same genre selling for and how much the information included is really worth. For me, it’s easy to price low because the early years of my business model were built on giving information away free on my blog. So if I’m willing to give it away free (and I am!), it’s not too painful to offer a product at a low price. After all, low still equals more than free!

How Your Niche Impacts Your Pricing

Truthfully, the thing that probably has more impact on your pricing than anything else (quality included!) is the niche. Now, to be clear, I’m not saying you should go out and choose a niche solely because it pays more. I think that’s a pretty poor business model, honestly. Instead, be happy for the people in those niches and focus on your strengths instead.

But some niches – like paleo recipes, online marketing / money-making ideas and photography – justify higher prices because of market demand, although the reasoning is different for each of these examples:

Paleo is trendy right now, so the market demand simply comes from people being interested in the topic and wanting to jump on the bandwagon. That’s good news for paleo authors who develop their own recipes and sell them as \$25 ebooks, although I would question the long-term sustainability of such trends.

On the other hand, making money on the internet is an enduring niche. People are always looking for ways to “get rich quick” or build profitable legitimate businesses, and there is a certain level of expectation that you have to pay for advice from experts in order to do this. In many ways, a higher price in this niche actually adds to the level of credibility of a product.

And then there are niches like photography (which Darren discusses in more detail in the case study box below this), which is a fairly expensive hobby and also offers a money-making opportunity, so customers really don’t balk at a higher purchase price as long as a product has a good reputation and delivers what it promises. A \$30 ebook is cheaper than a \$250-500 course or a \$1000 lens, and buying an ebook from a reputable source is a good way to make sure you’re getting quality advice before you put it into practice!

From [Darren Rowse](#):

I wish I had a great answer to [the pricing question] except to say that when my readers first suggested I turn 31 Days to a Better Blog into an ebook I asked them how much they would pay. The answer was \$20-\$30.

I took their advice and started in that range and the ebook sold really well.

On my photography site I surveyed readers not about what they would pay for an ebook but about what they spent elsewhere on their photography. What I found is that many of our readers would regularly spend \$15-\$20 on photography magazines. This gave me a hint that many would probably pay that much for an ebook.

\$30 is a fair bit for an ebook in a time when people are selling them for \$0.99 – but I believe in the quality of our ebooks.

They all provide useful, actionable information that solve problems that people have and as a result they are valuable. They tend to also be fairly much packed with content – we don't pad with images and some of our ebooks are 150 or so pages long (and others come with bonus information in bundles).

Lastly – these days I also have a team who works hard on producing any ebook we release for up to 6 months before they come out. I employ a producer who manages the team, we have designers, authors, editors, proof readers, someone who helps with marketing and a customer support team. They bring considerable time and effort into the production of our ebooks.

I'm not sure there's a magical number for an ideally priced ebook but we tend to go at the premium end of things both in terms of what we try to produce as well as price.

[Read Darren's full case study interview here.](#)

Pricing Low Versus Pricing High

Outside of the genre, there are other factors to consider to consider as well:

Your Audience

If you think of the sales process as a funnel, only a tiny percentage of the people filling the funnel at the top are going to drip out of the bottom at any given time, but the more you put in, the more will come out. If you have a large, established audience, pricing your ebook on the high side will probably work, because enough people will be able to cross that price barrier and make the purchase to offset the ones who aren't willing to pay as much. But if you have a fairly small audience to start, pricing an ebook high can actually stop the funnel up and keep you from making sales. Unfortunately, it can also keep people from sharing the ebook with other people.

Another question is who actually makes up your target audience. Are they single-income families who have to be careful about every dollar spent, young adults with disposable income to burn, upper middle class professionals? This can make a big difference not only in your ideal price point but also in the promises you have to make – and deliver – to close the sale.

From [Stephanie Langford](#):

Again, when I first started selling, ebooks had a higher price point. There wasn't nearly the same level of market competition, nor did Amazon Kindle and things like \$0.99 or \$1.99 ebooks exist. In fact, most ebooks were on very niche topics, things that were not available as print books, and thus were priced higher as speciality topics that you couldn't get anywhere else. I priced my first two books along those lines, as I really didn't know of any books (print or digital) that were like them or offered the same type of information.

Since that time, a flood of ebooks have hit the market, and my books are not as unique as they once were. I have actually been in the process of considering lowering the price on my first two books recently, and am particularly affected by the pricing regulations for Amazon Kindle, where books over \$9.99 are penalized and authors earn a lower commission (30% compared to 70%), since Amazon wants to incentivize authors to keep Kindle book prices low. I haven't reached a firm decision yet, but the reality of the internet is that as trends and seasons change, sometimes what worked before doesn't continue to work as it once did, and so you always have to be willing to change and evolve your strategies as the market shifts.

When I launched my third book, I priced it at \$4.99 for several reasons. For one, it was significantly shorter than my previous books (75 pages, compared with 170 and 280). For another, it contained some writing that had previously been posted (and still existed) on my blog and could be accessed for free. I had edited that writing and added to it significantly, so I knew that it was worth something, but I didn't feel like I could charge as much for that reason. Lastly, I wanted to experiment with a lower price point, compared to my first two books, and see how that impacted sales and whether the sheer quantity of sales made up for the loss of profit per sale. Whether it did or not is still hard to say, but that third book has done extremely well and added a nice Amazon income stream as well that I didn't have before. It's difficult to compare, but I do feel that both strategies (both pricing higher for a niche, unique product, as well as pricing lower for higher volume and affordability for more people) can work. A big part of it is knowing your market and what they're willing to pay. I will be the very first person to say that I am NOT even remotely an expert on any of this and I work by trial and error, learning as I go!

[Read Stephanie's full case study interview here.](#)

Your Goals

Is your goal to establish/build a brand as well as earn money, or is sales revenue your only focus? An ebook (or two or three!) is a great way to build your brand, promote your website and gain name recognition, which can ultimately result in more sales now and in the future, but the way that happens is by appealing to the masses and getting your content in the hands of people so that they can share and talk about it.

If you have the option of selling an ebook to 100 people at a higher price or 1000 people at a lower price and walking away with the same profit, there are benefits to getting your ebook in the hands of ten times as many people even though you earn less on each copy!

Length & Originality

Although it's dangerous to make the assertion that a longer ebook is worth more, length *does* play a part in pricing an ebook. It would be fairly silly to charge \$35 for a 5-page ebook, and while that's an extreme example, the same principle applies to all ebooks. All other factors being equal, a cookbook with 25 recipes is worth more to the consumer than one with 5. One with 50 recipes is worth even more, although at some point adding more content stops paying off!

Similarly, how original is the content in your ebook? Is it stuff people can find anywhere on the internet? Is some/all/most of it found on your own blog and you've just packaged it into one ebook? There's nothing wrong with creating an ebook from prewritten content for the convenience of your readers, but you'll want to be upfront about that decision, add additional exclusive material and price it accordingly.

Other Things to Consider

Amazon List Price Requirements

If you're selling your ebook on Amazon, be sure to [refer back to the pricing guidelines](#), because those really should have an impact on how you price your ebook. To encourage authors to price ebooks between \$2.99 and \$9.99, Amazon offers a 70% royalty for that range of prices, dropping the royalty to 35% for ebooks outside of those parameters. In addition, remember that they charge delivery fees for ebooks based on the size of the file, so if your ebook is image heavy, you want to be sure to set a rate that justifies the cost of delivering the ebook and selling through Amazon!

From [Joshua Becker](#):

To be honest, I struggle often with this question [of pricing]. At first, I sold the book for \$9.99. It sold well, but not incredibly well. Two years ago, we decided to launch it on Amazon Kindle and I started it at \$0.99 just to see if I could get it ranking somewhere on Amazon. To my surprise, it ended the day (and spent the next two weeks) as the #1 Self-Help book on Amazon. Because I announced \$0.99 as just a promotional price, I couldn't leave it there indefinitely so we adjusted the price to \$2.99 (at \$2.99, Amazon begins compensating 70% royalties rather than 35%). So that's it. Nothing very scientific. I keep it at a lower price because I really want it to find its way into peoples' hands. I love the message and the more people that read it the better.

[Read Joshua's full case study interview here.](#)

PayPal Fees

Similarly, be sure to keep PayPal fees in mind when you're calculating your revenue on ebooks sold directly through your site. For example, in a regular PayPal account, the fee for a \$0.99 ebook is \$0.32. That means you'll only earn \$0.67 from each copy sold, which may not be worth the effort you've put into writing it unless you're offering that price as part of a limited-time offer.

Affiliate Splits

And finally, if you'll be working with affiliates, calculating their split (which we'll get into in more detail in that module) should also factor into your ebook pricing, not only because you'll earn less of the total purchase price when you sell through an affiliate but also because earning \$0.33 on a \$1 purchase is not nearly as enticing for an affiliate as earning \$5 on a \$15 product.