



# *Author* **BUSINESS PLAN**

**A FRAMEWORK  
FOR THE CREATIVE  
ENTREPRENEUR**

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This workbook was created as a companion guide to the post: [Your Author Business Plan: A Framework for the Creative Entrepreneur](#). (Click the link for additional resources.)

## Section A:

# Business Vision + Author Brand

*Whether you are working toward a traditional publishing contract or self-publishing, a carefully crafted business plan will help you establish a plan of action, and guide how you will allocate your (often limited) resources.*

## 1. Mission Statement (Message)

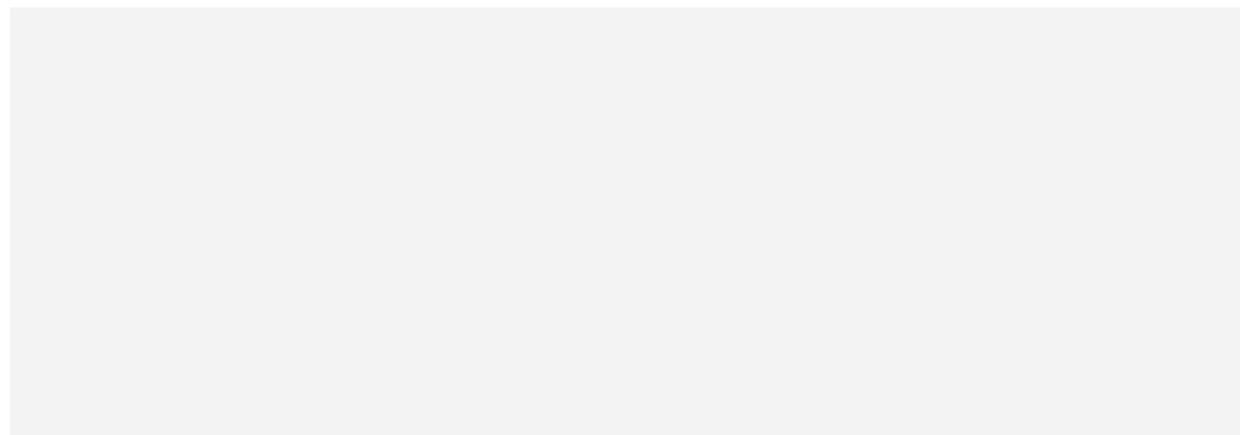
*Define why you write and get very clear on the essence of your work—what problems are you solving or what desires are you satisfying? What is your promise to your reader and how will you deliver on that promise?*

## 2. Your Ideal Reader

*Identify and define the group of people whom you wish to reach. How do they see themselves, and how does your work fit with that perception? Who already 'speaks your language' or conversely, whom does your work speak to?*

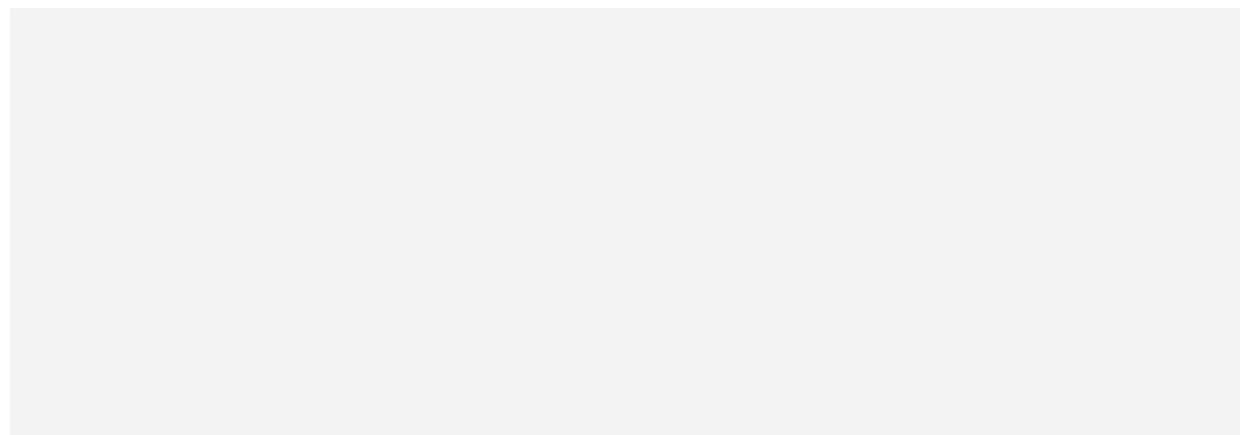
### **3. Brand Personality and Culture**

*What is your brand story and personality? What tone, colours and visuals characterize your writing, and how does your branding reflect the purpose or message behind your work? What values, standards or best practices will you adhere to? What can your community of readers consistently expect from you?*



### **4. Career Goals, Objectives and Expansion Plans**

*Write down your goals and objectives. Make sure they're both S.M.A.R.T and what you really want. Are you willing—and able—to sacrifice the time and effort required to achieve what you've outlined?*

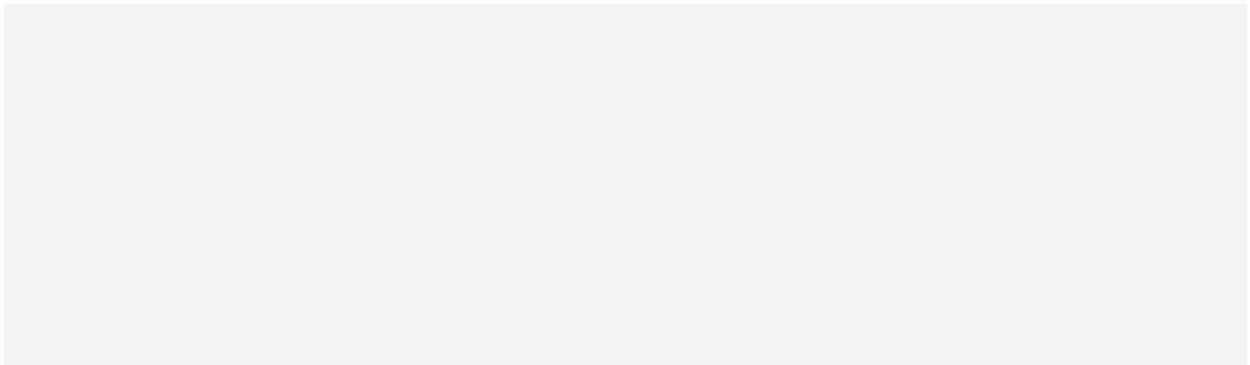


**Section B:**

# **Business Description + Publishing Plan**

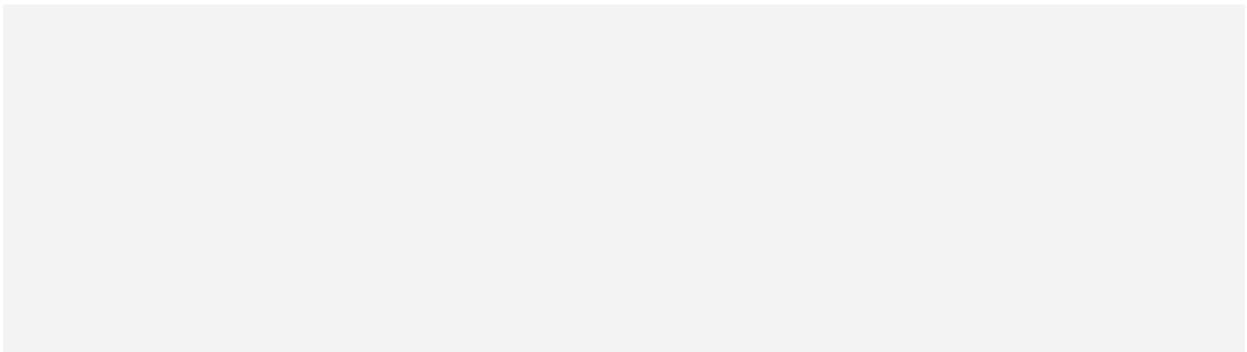
## **1. Your Difference**

*Describe who you are as a writer, and how you will portray that uniqueness to your audience. How do you solve their problem or desire and why is it valuable to your readers? The goal here is to answer the question in your reader's mind, "Why you?". What sets your work apart from others in your genre or niche?*



## **2. Who Do You Serve**

*Describe your target audience (demographics, psychographics), and how you can help meet the needs, wants and desires of that specific group.*



### 3. Production

*In this part of your business plan, include your writing, editing and publishing schedule. How many words per day will you write, and at what times? If editing, how many hours per week will you devote? How many books do you plan to publish (and launch) this year? How often will you post new content to your blog or social media. Also note your genre focus, project length and additional projects (workshops, courses, presentations, etc.) you plan to produce per year.*

### 4. Business Structure

*What is your writing business structure (sole proprietor, publishing company or LLC, for example)? Are you traditionally published, self-published, a hybrid author or not yet published? Describe the components to your business, like books (digital, print, audio), courses, seminars, workshops (in-person/virtual), a speaker and so on. Is your business primarily online or offline?*

## 5. Business Tasks + Schedule

*It's important that you treat your writing business **as a business**. So make a list of regular tasks (everything from sales tracking and accounting, to editorial calendars and words written per day), and add them to your calendar, Asana, your day planner or whatever system works for you.*

## 6. Distribution Channels

*You've defined your audience, so now you need to determine how they want to be reached. Where are they already and what are other ways that they will find you? Think social media, email, traditional media, video, podcasts, conferences and events, website, clubs, Amazon and other retailers, and so on.*

**Section C:**

# **Market Analysis**

## **1. Bestselling Authors/Comparable Titles in your Genre or Niche**

*Identify bestselling authors, top bloggers and other influencers in your niche or genre. Look for those that already have the audience you want to reach (search through social media, Facebook and other groups, and relevant keywords). Who are the movers and shakers? The up-and-comers? Start making a list, including their website and email. (These people may also become future partners and allies.)*

## **2. Pricing Models**

*What pricing model(s) are currently being used in your genre or niche? What are readers used to paying for books, products or services similar to yours?*

### 3. “Competitor” Strengths and Weaknesses

*Choose 3-5 authors from the list you made in section C. 1., and break down their strengths and weaknesses. How do they reach and promote to their audience? Are there any strategies that many of your competitors seem to use (for example, are most of them using email marketing strategies)? What are they doing well and what can they improve. What can you add to the mix that draws upon your unique skill set and brand? Use this knowledge to craft your own, well-rounded strategy.*

### 4. Trends and Opportunities

*Note current events and what’s new and noteworthy in the publishing world. Note predictions and future trends that may impact your writing or bottom line. Are there any collaboration or partnership opportunities that you wish to pursue, both within your topic area and with industries or businesses that reach the same audience as you?*

Section D:

# Audience Research

## 1. Identify Your Ideal Reader

*Knowing your target audience has come up several times in this business plan—and for good reason. It is **absolutely vital to the growth of your writing career** to have a firm understanding of the audience you wish to reach. This section of your business plan informs the other sections, and it's where you will get crystal clear on who your ideal readers are through research and data (not through guessing or assumptions).*

## 2. Understand Their Needs and Desires

*Your goal is to understand and articulate your readers' problems or desires better than they can themselves. But remember, this is their most pressing problem or desire, not yours. Don't try to create desire or interest where there is none. Outline how you will share your work in a way that encourages people who are already interested, to take action.*

### **3. Differentiate Yourself and Your Work**

*Given what you now know about your target audience, what is the intersection between your unique talents and your readers' needs or desires? What can they get from you and your work that they can't get anywhere else?*

### **4. Determine How to Engage With Your Readers**

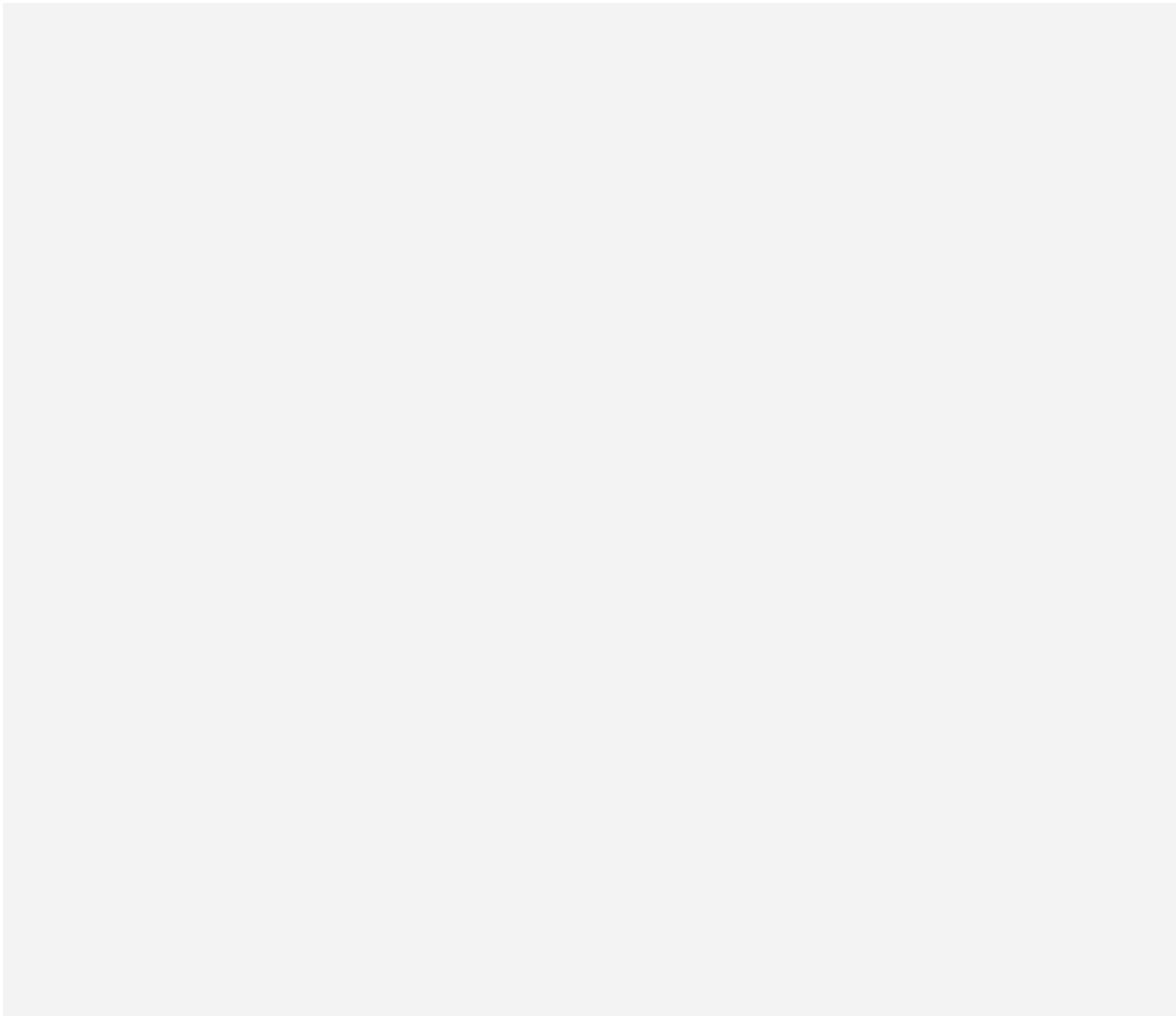
*It is much, much easier to create interesting, relevant and valuable content for your audience now that you know exactly what they are searching for. You can't possibly develop a marketing and book promotion plan when you have no idea who might be most receptive to your message. How will you learn (and continue to learn) about your readers, but still stay connected to the reasons for creating the work that you do?*

**Section E:**

# **Community + Platform Building**

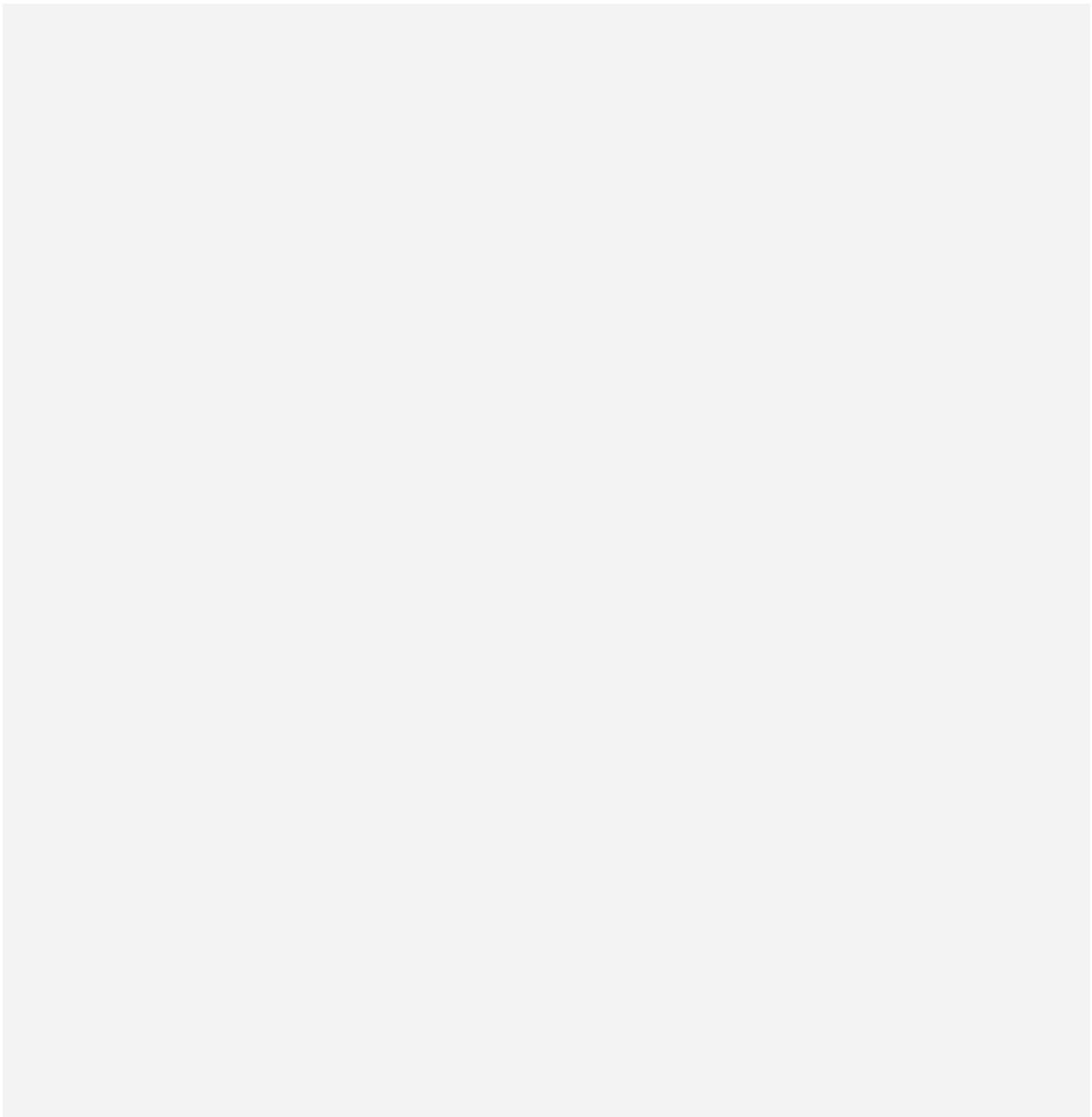
## **1. Social Media Plan**

*What are your (and your readers') preferred platforms? Where will you place your emphasis and what strategies will you use to develop visibility and interest for your writing? What will you share, how will you create it, when will you share it, and where will you share it, to get the most engagement? (Create a specific plan for each social media platform you'll engage on).*



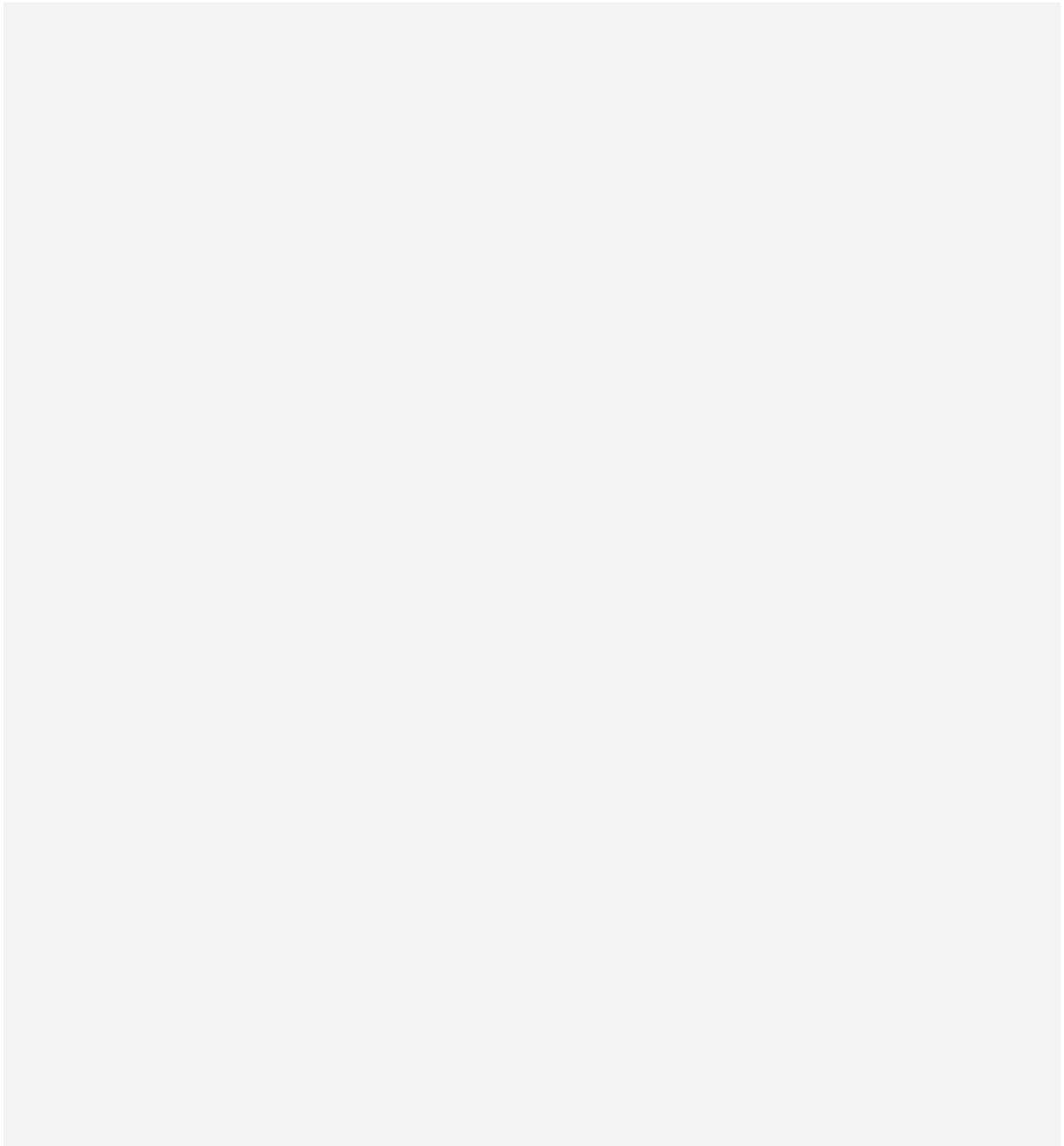
## 2. Email List Building Plan

*Developing a responsive email list is one of the most important things you can do to grow your business and stay connected with your readers. What strategies will you implement to grow your list? How often will you communicate with your subscribers, what will you share and what opt-in incentive will you develop to encourage sign ups?*



### **3. Content Strategy**

*A content strategy is your publishing plan of action for what to create, how to create it, when to create it, and for whom to create it. Develop an editorial or content calendar to map out and keep track of your content plan o' action. Ensure your "brand story" is woven into the content you share.*



## **4. Speaking, Appearances and PR Plan**

*Keynote speeches, personal appearances and other speaking opportunities all allow you to connect with your readers and fans in real life. Add presentations, interviews and other appearances you have booked (or plan to book) into your business plan. What strategies will implement to increase bookings?*

## **5. Reviews, Testimonials and Endorsements**

*What steps will you take to encourage reviews (ARC's, email request, build relationships with influencers and book bloggers)? How will you gather testimonials and endorsements for your work? Keep in mind that relationships take time to develop, so ensure you include steps to build these connections and goodwill before you ask for something in return.*

## **6. Engagement + Exclusivity**

*How will you ensure your readers feel special? Will you offer special perks, bonuses and sneak peek behind the scenes? Create a street team or other type of "membership" to your community? How is what you have to offer different from other authors in your niche, and how can you add more value?*

## **7. Networking and Relationship Building**

*Who are people talking about, sharing content from and influenced by? What strategies will you use to develop relationships with industry influencers, advocates and supporters of your work? How do you plan to build connections with organizations, institutions, schools, bloggers, reviewers, businesses and media outlets?*

Section F:

# Offerings + Monetization

## 1. Your Products and Services

*What will you offer to your audience? Books (digital, audio, print, series, bundles), services (speaking engagements, teaching at conferences, and hosting workshops) courses, freelance work, or other products and programs that relate to your work? How will your readers benefit? How will it impact their lives? Given what you've discovered about your target audience, will they want, need or desire what you have to offer?*

## 2. Pricing Strategy

*What pricing strategy will you employ? Premium, freemium (free + premium), permafrees or discount pricing? Given your goals for your business, will your pricing strategy help you meet your objectives? Does your pricing meet or challenge genre standards? How will your target audience view your pricing? Map out your pricing structure for your books, services, courses or workshops, series, and bundles.*

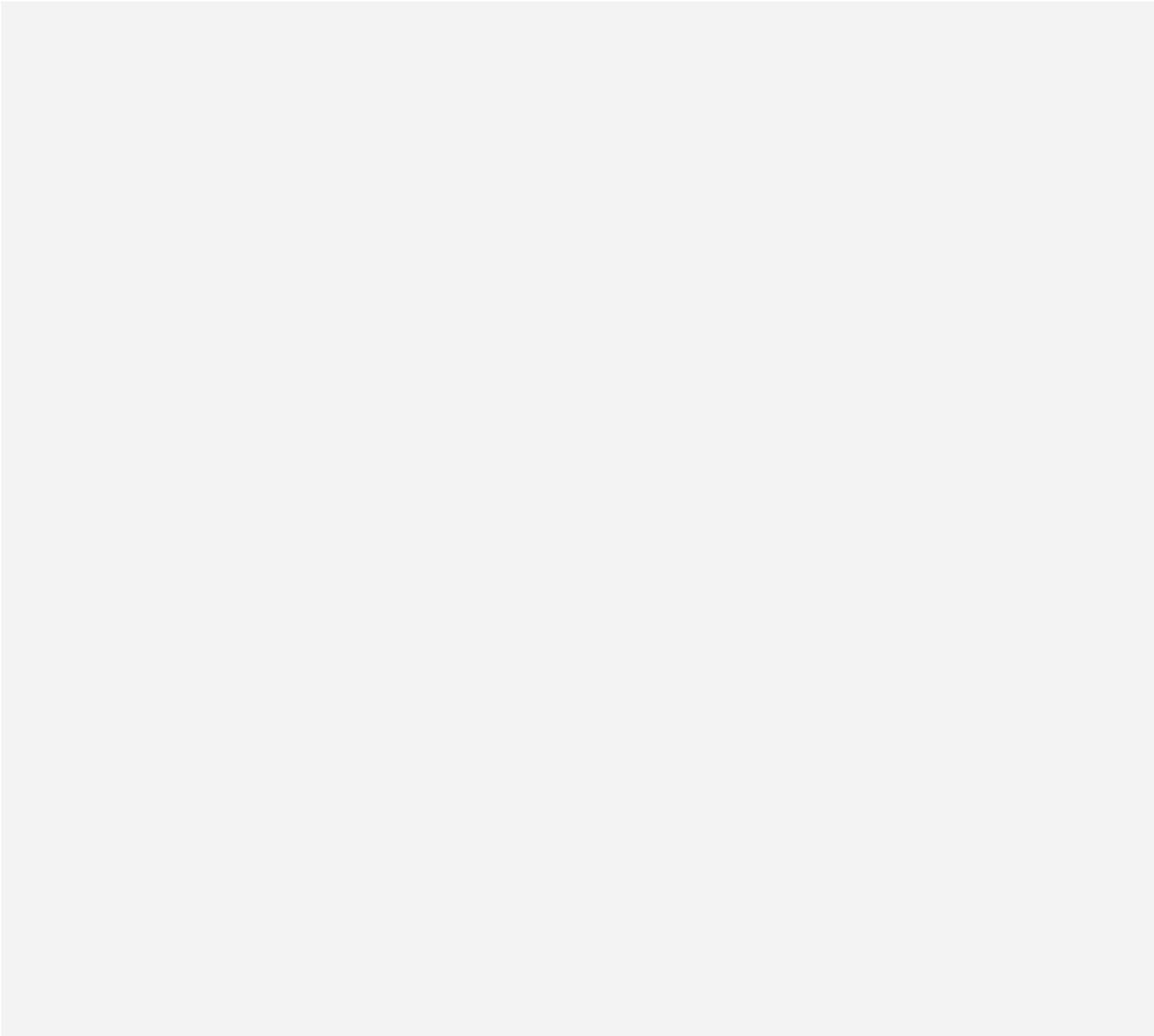
## 3. Collaboration and Partnerships

*Affiliate marketing, book bundles, co-writing and cross promotion (via email lists) are all great ways to boost your business, visibility and sales. What methods will you use to develop partnerships and encourage collaborations with other authors?*

## Section G: Marketing Strategy

### 1. Marketing and Promotion

*In this section, outline the methods you'll employ to market and promote your books, products, content and brand. You'll want to develop a separate book marketing strategy for each book, as well as an overall strategy that ties current projects together with future plans for your writing career.*

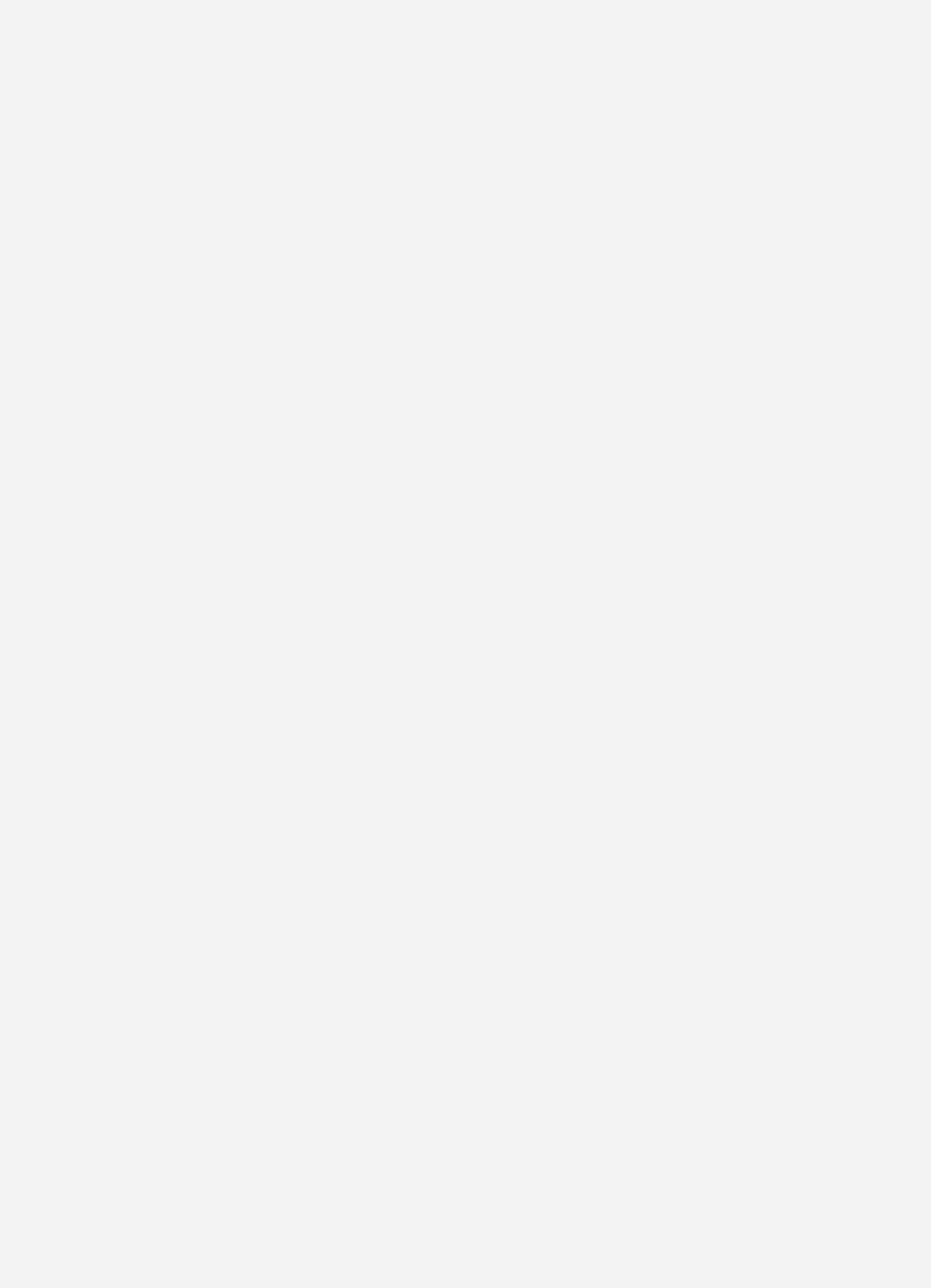


## 2. Resource Commitment

*Finding time to write is difficult enough, but your business won't run itself. You need to schedule time and resources for both the writing side of your business and the marketing side (and then squeeze in family and personal commitments, too). How much time, money and other resources are you prepared to realistically commit?*

## 3. Launch Strategies

*Designing, organizing and implementing a book launch action plan is not easy. There are a lot of moving parts, so it requires the careful preparation (and execution) of just the right mix of launch activities to propel your new book out into the world. Layered launch strategies (where you use the momentum from one launch to boost the next) can create urgency and excitement, and further establish your brand, message and authority. What actions will you take to leverage the assets and relationships you've established through your marketing activities to promote an upcoming book?*

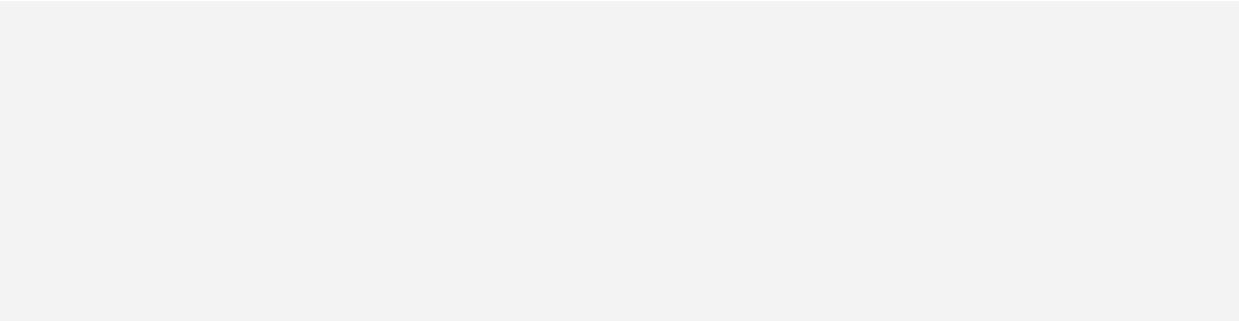


## Section H:

# Financials

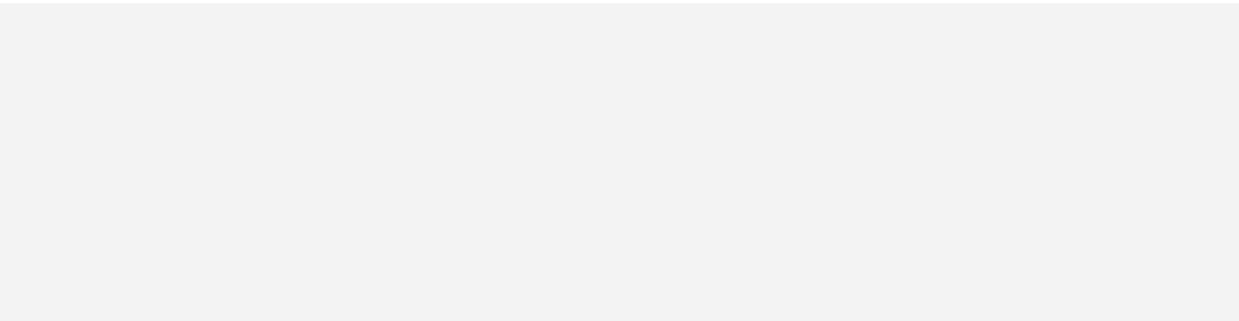
### 1. Monthly Expenses

*Make an itemized list of all the things you will need for your business to run monthly (website design, hosting and domain name, email marketing service, business cards and other promotional items, office supplies, membership dues, etc.). If you are saving for some larger future expense (computer, software, cover design), then note this in your budget.*



### 2. Monthly Revenue

*Record your monthly income from all sources related to your writing business (royalties, freelance work, affiliate income, speaking, etc.). At first, this may seem like an exercise in futility, but with a solid business plan in place, you'll soon start to see your revenue streams grow. :)*



### 3. Production Budget (Per Book or Project)

*Copyediting, line editing, proofreading, formatting for publishing, formatting for print, cover art, copyright registration, ISBN's, review copies, shipping and research costs can all be budgeted on a per book basis. These input costs will help you determine the potential viability (and profitability) of each project. If you also have a website and blog, there may also be production costs for blog posts, email newsletters and other items (image or graphic fees, costs for giveaways, apps or software, etc.).*

### 4. Sales + Income Projections

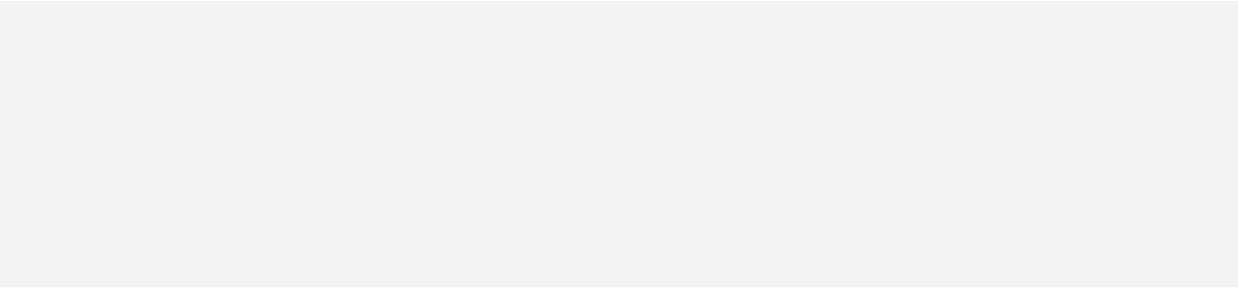
*If you're just starting out, creating sales projections may be difficult to do, but it's certainly a good habit to develop if you'd like to ensure you're making good business decisions. Forecasting is vital to planning sales, marketing, and spending.*

**Section I:**

# **Additional Growth + Expansion Strategies**

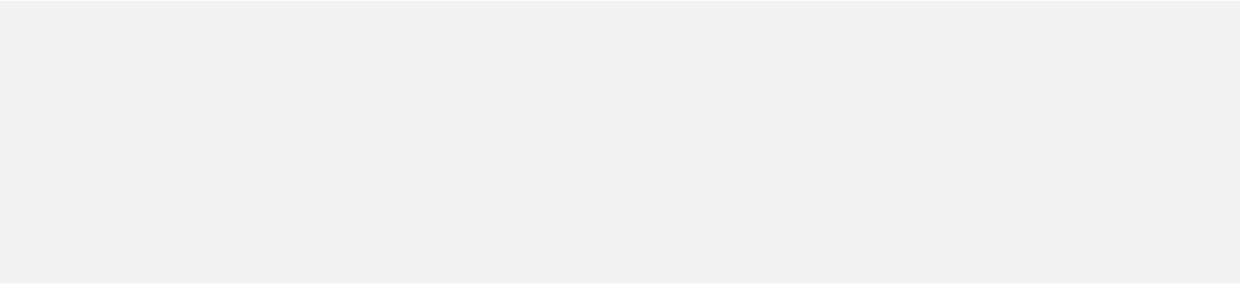
## **1. Professional Development**

*Your talent is your best asset. Continuing to improve upon both your writing AND your business skills, is a wise investment. Use this section of your business plan to note any classes, workshops or conferences you plan to attend, if you plan to find a critique partner or writer's group to join, or even specific books you plan to read (for genre or topic research, or to gain additional skills).*



## **2. Paid Advertising and Other Paid Options**

*Paid advertising, hiring a publicist or anything else that requires cold hard cash upfront—without a guarantee of return—may not be on the top of your priority list. However, if you are considering some paid options, ensure you note your strategies here. Tracking your return on investment may be easier for some options than others, but it's always wise to note your efforts and results.*



### **3. Repurposing**

*Continuously developing new content can take a lot of effort. Get more mileage out of the excellent content you produce (articles, newsletters, blog content, updates, videos, etc.) by repurposing it into something fresh. You can change the format, share it on different mediums, turn a book or post into a course or workshop, and reach all new audiences. How will you stretch and repurpose each piece of content you create?*

### **4. Outsourcing**

*Wise outsourcing can not only increase your efficiency and help level the playing field, but it allows you to focus on the core of your business – your writing. If you decide to outsource, determine what tasks you'll pay someone else (editors, virtual assistants, designers, accountants, etc.) to handle.*

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