

# THE STICKY EBOOK FORMULA

by Kelly Kingman



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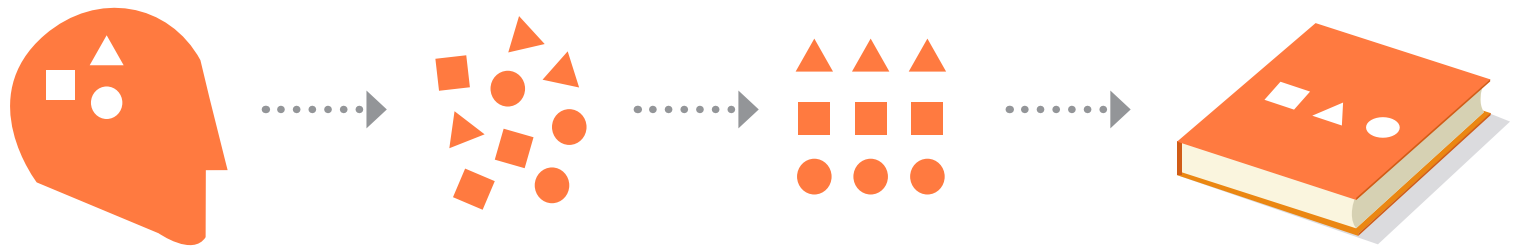
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## THE STICKY EBOOK FORMULA

Like many people, I put off writing an eBook because the task seemed overwhelming. We are bombarded daily with more and more ways to consume information, and eBooks today face some stiff competition. Fortunately, there are simple strategies for getting your eBook head and shoulders above the rest. I wrote the Sticky eBook Formula with that in mind: a simple process for generating high quality eBooks.

I will give you strategies to apply to each step of the formula that will dramatically increase not only how many people actually read your eBook, but how many will remember your ideas and, ultimately, you.



## HOW TO USE THIS EBOOK:

1. Step 1 is about figuring out where you're taking your readers. You'll focus on your topic and the effect you want to have on your audience.
2. Step 2 is about drawing a map to your destination, finding the most logical way to organize your eBook.
3. Step 3 is getting everything out of your brain in every way possible, generating the raw ingredients for the content of your eBook.
4. Step 4 is organizing all of that stuff into a coherent whole using your map, and smoothing the rough edges.
5. Step 5 covers the bells, the whistles, nuts and bolts: titles, design, graphics.

“PEOPLE CARE ABOUT  
THEIR PROBLEMS,  
NOT YOUR PRODUCT.”

— DAVID MEERMAN SCOTT,  
WORLD WIDE RAVE

## STEP 1: THE PAYOFF & THE PROMISE

If your eBook actually is on teaching French expletives to keel-billed Toucans, then congratulations! You may skip this step.

For the rest of you who may be writing about a more crowded niche, like finding your True Self or ways to make money blogging, you need to give some serious thought to the **payoff** and the **promise**.

### **The Payoff: The feeling your readers are shopping for.**

Imagine your target audience. Where would you run into them shopping? Armani or Old Navy? A vintage boutique? Each kind of shopper wants a payoff for dropping their hard-earned cash or platinum Visas at these establishments.

The payoff Armani shoppers want is to project power and sophistication. The payoff for Old Navy shoppers is to look current but casual at a deep discount. Vintage shoppers want to express their own distinctive style with unique items, which turns shopping into a treasure hunt (double payoff)!

### **The Promise: How your eBook gets readers to the payoff.**

For better or worse, the human race is concerned primarily with just one thing: themselves. Think for a minute about a non-fiction book or information product you purchased recently. Let's say it was *101 Ways to Feel Fabulous About Your Butt*. Re-trace your decision making process. Maybe you read an interesting blog post by the author or a review. Maybe a friend told you about it. When you looked at this product, either in a bookstore or online, some part your brain registered what I call the promise. Your brain read the title and thought “*I will feel fabulous about my butt if I read this book!*”

The promise is about the benefits. Essentially it is the answer to:  
*What do I get in exchange for reading this information?*

In the case of *The Sticky eBook Formula* here is my breakdown:

**Payoff:** Increased revenue, expert status, more clients and spreading ideas.

**Promise:** Creating an awesome, creative eBook will draw fans, clients and customers.

**Here is a list of common promises:**

- Make more money.
- Understand how something works, increase knowledge.
- Learn how to make or accomplish something, like finding clients or customers.
- Solve a pressing problem.
- Gain admiration or prestige.
- Gain mastery of a skill or technique.
- Initiate a process of transition or change with a positive result.

Knowing the **payoff** your audience wants leads the way to the **promise**.

The promise is your mission statement, your mantra, your raison d'être. When you find it, write it big and post it somewhere visible while you create your eBook.

### **Differentiating Your Promise from the Competition**

Who else is vying for your readers' time, money and attention?

How can you package your information in an unexpected or entertaining way that will give it a new twist? Can you take something the big boys use and scale it down for the stay at home mom? Can you take mom's time-tested wisdom and apply it to the corporate boardroom?

#### **Other things that help differentiate you:**

- Beautiful design
- Humor
- Writing style
- Background or experience
- Credentials
- Graphics
- Special features like worksheets or exercises.

Pay attention to whether the appeal of the payoff is practical or emotional. This will help determine whether the presentation of your entire content package — the writing, the design, the tone of the marketing — is subdued, aggressive, wacky, etcetera.

## **Making a Start: Two Ways to Beat Inertia and Get Moving**

by Ali Hale

We all put stuff off. I know I do. I'll have a big project or goal in mind — something which is going to require at least a few hours' work — and it's daunting. Whether it's losing 10 lbs, writing an ebook, spring cleaning, or doing my taxes, I feel like I'm just too busy to get on with it.

A few years ago, this meant I generally didn't. I had all sorts of plans and projects, from regular exercise to writing novels to launching businesses, which never got started. If they did get started, they rarely lasted more than a day or two.

Now, I *do* manage to get things done. I'm definitely not perfect, but I'm considerably better at turning my ideas into action.

### **1. Break it Down**

It's great to have a grasp of the big picture. A whole novel. A clean house. A target weight. A completed project. But when you're looking at getting started, that's insanely overwhelming. You can't wrap your head round it in a meaningful way, because it needs hours of work — way more than you can do in one session.

The trick is to break it down. Split your project into subprojects and individual tasks. Don't go insane and try to plot every step of the way, though; just make sure you've got enough to get going. The next steps usually become clearer once you've made a start.

"Write a novel" splits into subprojects like "plan the novel", "write the first draft", "get feedback and revise". Then "plan the novel" splits down into "decide on an idea" and "write brief character descriptions" and "rough out a plot". That's more manageable. You can do one of those in a morning.

## 2. Block Off Time

If you've got a *big idea*, picking away at individual tasks for an hour or two a week can feel futile. Sometimes, especially when you're just getting started, it's best to find a solid chunk of time to devote to this new project.

Find a clear weekend on your calendar, and block those days out. Protect them from social commitments. Use them to jump right into your project and make progress.

### You could:

- Write the first two chapters of that book.
- Go through all those training materials you've bought and haven't used.
- Join a gym, have an induction and do your first session.
- Clear out the garage and the attic.

Whatever your project, you'll make a *huge* stride forward if you devote a whole weekend to it. If a weekend really isn't practical, how about a day, or a single afternoon?

If you get going like this, you'll work up the momentum you need to carry on.

So, over to you. What's the big thing you just can't get round to starting? Grab your calendar. Find a weekend (or a day, or just a single afternoon) which you can devote to it. And break it down. What are the subprojects? What individual steps are needed on the first subproject?

Good luck!

Ali x  
[www.aliventures.com](http://www.aliventures.com)

“AN EBOOK IS  
TECHNICALLY EASY  
AND WHEN IT WORKS,  
YOUR IDEA WILL  
SPREAD FAR AND  
WIDE. EVEN BETTER,  
THE ACT OF WRITING  
YOUR IDEA IN A  
COGENT, ORGANIZED  
WAY WILL MAKE THE  
IDEA BETTER.”

— SETH GODIN,  
AUTHOR OF LINCHPIN  
AND FOUNDER OF CHANGETHIS.ORG

## STEP 2: DRAW A MAP

Mapping out your eBook in advance achieves three goals:

1. It will show you your boundaries. Knowing what to include and what to leave out will make the project feel more concrete and therefore doable and readable.
2. It gives you a way to organize the information you may already have, as well as chunks of writing that you will do in the later exercises.
3. When you can see a bigger picture, it becomes clear where you need to fill in the gaps.

### **Our Brains are Non-Linear!**

The struggle most of us have with writing something long, like an eBook, is that our brains do not function in a linear fashion. We cannot immediately conceive of how to take everything we know about a subject and put it in sequential form, reading left to right. We think in a web or cloud — a little spark of insight here, a metaphor there and a story over there. Gradually we string the dots together into a line.

This became painfully clear to me when I embarked on revising this eBook. I sat staring at the pages in my word processing program, my brain glazing over and the urge to organize my desk instead growing stronger. Luckily, in the course of my procrastination I happened upon the index card method (explained below) that saved me by shifting my perspective from one long text document to a series of puzzle pieces that I could see laid out all at once and easily reorder.

### **Scope: What Not to Include**

Maps show us a slice of a certain type of information. We have climate maps and topographical maps, political maps and site maps. They all have edges to the area that they cover; even a globe, that shows the entire earth is just a piece of the story, it doesn't give us the relation of the planets to each other. The scope of your eBook is the slice you're focusing on, how to get from point A to B.

A trap many writers fall into is wanting to tell readers not only how to get from point A to point B, but what to pack, what kind of car to drive, where to eat along the way, and the histories of both point A and point B. We want to include it all. When that happens, you end up with a 300-page eBook.

In order to get a handle on this, you want to sketch a map of your path. Don't censor yourself here, you want to get all of the ideas you have about your topic out of your head and somewhere you can see them. You may not need every single one this time around, but you can save them for next time.

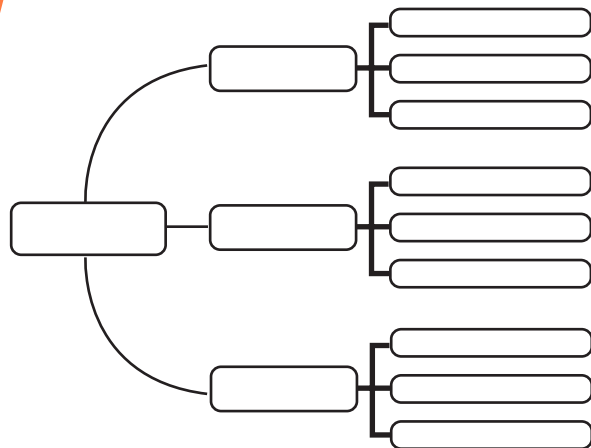
The following techniques will help you begin to see the map of your eBook.

### **Mapping Tools:**

**Index Cards:** Novelists often use index cards to capture ideas and plot twists and then physically rearrange them in an order that makes the most sense. Having physical objects to rearrange gets you out of the linear world of your computer and into a holistic thought pattern more in line with how our brains work.

**Here is a great video that helped me grasp this idea.**

1. Buy a stack of white index cards, blank or lined.
2. Write down every idea you have for your eBook on an index card, one each. You can abbreviate concepts to “that story about Joe” if you want, just get the essence on the card.
3. Spread the cards out on the floor (tables run out of room) and begin to group cards that seem to go together. An order will emerge organically from the chaos.
4. You might see gaps where you can add a card to cover something you’ve missed.
5. If a card doesn’t feel like it belongs with any of the others, remove it from your map but don’t throw it out until you’re finished writing, just keep it in a separate pile.
6. Your groups of cards are the main sections or chapters of your eBook. You can arrange each group in order of importance for further structure.



**Sticky-notes:** These work the same way as index cards, just on a wall instead of the floor. A client of mine writing about nutrition used different colors for themes (vegetables, protein, fats) and different sizes to represent hierarchy: larger stickies for broad topics and little ones for specific, practical tips. They have the added benefit of being harder for your cat to accidentally rearrange by walking across your work area.

**Mind mapping:** Mind mapping begins with a central circle from which you branch out. You can move nodes around and unfold your structure organically. If you want a digital tool to make editing easier, try using a **MindNode** for Mac or **FreeMind** for PC, both of which are free.

One drawback to mind mapping is that sometimes it is harder to transfer your ideas to a linear sequence, because your map forms a circle around the main idea. For an eBook, keep the main idea to the left and branch to the right. The resulting structure will give you enough hierarchy to translate it into a table of contents and subheadings. Refer to the diagram.

**Visualizing:** The act of drawing out your thought process unlocks creative, under-used parts of your problem-solving abilities. Stick figures work just fine! Check out [Dan Roam's \*The Back of the Napkin\*](#) for inspiration, or just start messing around and see what you come up with. (Perfectionists please note: it doesn't have to look pretty.) Flow charts are another way of visualizing your thought process, check out [Google Drawings](#) for an easy, free tool for creating a visual map.

Visualization exercises have the added benefit of forming the basis for graphics that you may want to include to clarify your points. I began doodling the framework for this eBook before I typed one word. Trying to visualize the process of creating an eBook, was the seed of the [graphic on the first page](#).

**Old fashioned outlining:** I don't recommend starting with outlining because it's very linear but a traditional outline is great for recording the sequence of information you have uncovered with other techniques. Also, tools like [OmniOutliner](#) make rearranging and nesting your ideas easier than in a word processor.

Depending on what kind of thinker you are, you might find some techniques more comfortable to use than others. This is especially true for those of us who have spent the last 20 years writing and emailing, not doodling or drawing. I encourage you to experiment with the techniques that aren't as comfortable, you may be surprised at what pops out of your brain!

If you've enjoyed this sample, I hope you'll  
**purchase a complete copy of *The Sticky eBook Formula*.**

Thanks, Kelly Kingman