

Six Steps To Designing a Successful Ebook Cover.

By James Corless

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A well-designed cover is vital for the success of your ebook! Good ebook covers sell better and justify higher prices.

Realize that buyers WILL judge your book by its cover - because they have to! Apart from the sales copy on your web page, the cover of your ebook is the only thing they've got to go on when deciding whether or not to buy.

Research shows that most buyers will visit your ebook sales page three or four times before clicking the 'buy' button and the design of your ebook cover is a significant factor in their decision. If they're wavering, a good-looking ebook cover will tip the balance in your favor!

That's why you need the best possible design for your ebook - you don't get a second chance to make a good first impression!

So just how do you go about creating an effective ebook cover?

There are six design elements involved. These are - your title, your choice of fonts, the illustration you use, the way you use color, the quality of your cover image and the size of your file.

Yes, there's a lot going on! Now let's look at the elements one by one.

1: The Title:

Your ebook title needs to be short and punchy. Short because you don't have much space to display it in, and punchy so it delivers your USP (unique selling proposition). The more words there are, the smaller the text will be and the harder it will be to read. You have to 'write tight'!

Two-part titles make good use of limited space as you can make your main point in two or three words and then expand on your USP in the second part. For example:

"Designing Great Covers : How To Make YOUR eBook Stand Out From The Crowd!"

2: Choice of fonts

Ebook covers are small so you need to use fonts that are compact and easy to read. 'Sans serif' fonts like Impact, Helvetica and Arial make good use of space. Serif fonts are not so readable in smaller sizes. Mixing two different fonts can be effective but beware of using more - it gets confusing.

Some graphics programs like PhotoShop allow you to alter the proportions of your fonts as well as the spacing between letters so you can compress or expand your text to get the most readable effect.

3: The Illustration

An ebook cover that's just plain text can be pretty boring. An image will liven up your design and also reinforce your USP. Whether you use a photo or some other graphic, the image you use needs to key into the theme of your ebook and help to get your message across.

Use on-line image banks you can subscribe to for frequent use, or buy rights to individual images - good if you only need one or two. You can also buy libraries of royalty-free images on CDs.

Don't be tempted to use an image you find on the Internet! They are all covered by international copyright laws and using one without permission is illegal!

4: Color

Color is another useful tool in the design of your ebook cover. Colors have their own energies - red is forceful, blue is conservative, green is calming, yellow is exciting, and so on.

Pick one main color that ties in with the theme of your ebook and use other colors sparingly. Like fonts, using too many can obscure your message.

5: Image quality

Your cover image must be razor sharp and crystal clear to sell your ebook! Too many of the ebook images you see on the Internet are fuzzy and flat.

One way to get good image quality is to design at a larger scale than the final image size. It's easier to work on and reducing the design to the required size will enhance its clarity.

Use sharpening filters with caution! It's easy to degrade your image by over sharpening so make it the last thing you do before optimization.

6: Image optimization

Although not part of the actual design process, the final important step is to optimize your image for the web.

This reduces the number of colors and gives a smaller file size so your cover image downloads quickly in your customer's browser. Again, optimize carefully so as to have the least effect on the quality of your cover image.

Most image programs have optimization features or there are web sites that offer on-line image optimization services.

So there you have the six stages of designing a great ebook cover!

1: Choose a good, short title that conveys your USP.

2: Use one or two fonts in legible styles and sizes

3: Choose an image that reinforces and illustrates your message

4: Use a small range of colors that convey your message

5: Make your cover image clear and crisp by working larger then reducing, and sharpen with care.

6; Optimize your image so it's small enough to download quickly without sacrificing too much quality.

Master these six aspects of design and you'll be well on your way to producing successful ebook covers. People WILL judge your ebook by its cover so design it well. Remember, the better the cover, the bigger the sales!

James Corless designs ebook graphics - anything to do with ebooks: covers, contents, ezine covers, CD covers, banners, sales buttons and web site graphics.
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