

Writing and Selling Recipe Booklets

By Jill Black

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Are you creative in the kitchen with a flair for combining ingredients and creating new recipes?

Do you have a collection of recipes that have been passed down to you from previous family generations?

Are your drawers bulging with scraps of paper from recipes your friends have shared or magazine recipe clippings you have collected?

If so, you are on the road to writing recipe booklets and books...

The old business axiom "find a need and fill it" is alive and well when it comes to writing recipe booklets or cookbooks especially for dieting and other special needs that people may have. You only have to look around at how many books like "The Carbohydrate Addicts Diet (Rachel and Phillip Heller, 1993) that have enjoyed an extended stay on best seller lists because there proved to be a genuine need for the book.

Sharing your recipes can prove to be a financially rewarding experience as people will always enjoy eating and are on the

look-out for new recipes that they can try.

On my bookshelf I have my grandmother's carefully hand written recipes from the war and depression years when butter, sugar and eggs were rationed due to short supply.

These recipes have more recently provided a wonderful inspiration for producing low fat and sugarless recipes that are sought after by many heart patients and diabetics seeking to reduce their dietary intake of fat or sugar.

As with all book and booklet projects you must know who your target audience is and how you can reach them before you begin writing - remember the axiom I mentioned earlier... "find a need and fill it".

Is your recipe booklet going to be for a general audience or for a specific group of readers e.g. vegetarians, heart patients, diabetics?

Another important question you need to ask yourself is... are you are sure your idea is saleable? If the answer is yes then begin work on your booklet.

WRITING YOUR RECIPE BOOKLET

When writing recipe booklets be consistent with wording and in the way recipes are presented throughout the booklet.

POINTS TO WATCH OUT FOR ...

1. Consistency in the way the ingredients are listed.

Decide if they are to be listed in the order they are to be used or grouped the way they are used together with spaces between each group.

An example for a meat pie recipe:

Filling:

750g (1½ lb) minced steak
2 beef stock cubes
Salt, pepper
1½ cups water
pinch nutmeg
2 tablespoons plain flour
¼ cup water, extra
1 teaspoon soy sauce

Pie Base:

2 cups plain flour

½ teaspoon salt
½ cup water
60g (2oz) beef dripping

Pie Top:

375g (12oz) packaged puff pastry
1 egg-yolk
1 teaspoon water

The directions will then follow after the ingredient list in the proper order of how it is prepared. Make sure there is no chance for misinterpretation of the directions and your writing is clear, concise and easy to understand.

2. Always write each recipe with the same choice of capitals and small letters.

Will you use "Tbs." or "tbs."? Be consistent throughout once you make your choice and use the same abbreviations for teaspoon, tablespoon, and cup (usually tsp., Tbs., C)

3 Write the same way in each recipe.

For example:

If you write "cut into small pieces" in one recipe then do not write "cut into quarter-inch pieces" in another recipe.

4. Proofread every recipe very carefully checking:

- Quantity: a small mistake can ruin a recipe.
- The consistency with words and how the recipes are presented.
- Spelling, grammar and punctuation.

5. Have each recipe tested by a number of other people who have not tried it before to ensure that it is easy to understand and can be followed successfully by others.

6. If your recipe booklet is a diet book or for a specific group of people e.g. heart patients, diabetics etc you can add credibility to your work by having your recipes tested by a registered dietician for the calorie and/or gram percentage of fat.

MARKETING YOUR BOOKLET

Recipe booklets that are stapled in the center or with plastic combs or wire spirals can be printed or photocopied in any quantity, but most booklets are unlikely to sell through normal bookstore or library outlets unlike cookbooks.

To know the best way to market your booklet first decide how your intended recipe booklet will be used...

- As a booklet to sell by direct mail order or online from your web site. To gain maximum profits from your booklet it is advisable to sell to both markets.

- To be used by non-profit organizations to raise money for a specific cause or campaign.

- By a food manufacturing organization for the purpose of promoting the company.

SELLING IN YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY

Supply your professionally published recipe booklet to schools, non-profit organizations, and religious institutions who are always on the lookout for ways to raise money for a specific cause or campaign.

For example: You intend writing a booklet titled "101 school lunch ideas for busy mothers" and your target market will be the mothers of children attending schools in your local area.

So how will you market your idea to the school?

When approaching a school with your idea emphasis the benefits of...

1. No need to send children door-to-door.
2. No bags of leftover unsold candy.
3. No organizing for bake sales or other fund raising methods.

Provide artwork on the cover and market to more than one school in your area.

Personalize the presentation copy of your booklet by inserting the individual name of each school to take along when approaching the person who is the decision maker for such matters.

Print on demand i.e. when the school has received the orders from a form the children have taken home to their parents you then print off the required number of copies or alternatively the school may photocopy the booklet and pay you a fixed price for each booklet sold. There are many alternatives for receiving payment. Work out a method of payment that suits both parties.

MANUFACTURER, SUPPLIERS, DISTRUBUTORS - whose business activities can profit by distributing your recipe booklet.

Look in the directories at your local library to find local food manufacturers, suppliers and distributors who may be interested in your recipe booklet.

When approaching potential companies with your presentation copy (actually seeing how the finished booklet will look often becomes a determining factor in persuading the company of the value of your idea) remember, you are not selling a booklet, rather you are trying to show them a way to promote their company using your booklet as a marketing strategy.

Stress how your booklet can promote the company either as a giveaway product that promotes the company name and products or by sponsoring the booklet under the company name and supplying to retail outlets that carry the company product e.g. grocery stores.

Side note: Often companies will buy in bulk so determine your pricing structure for bulk buying before initial contact.

MARKETING YOUR BOOKLET ONLINE TO REACH A WIDER AUDIENCE.

Set up a small focused themed-based content site and market your booklet from your site. To see an example of a theme site visit <http://www.ragu.com> or <http://www.hothothot.com> both of which have been designed for the purpose of selling a product and offering recipes for using that product based on a single theme.

You may also decide to write a series of booklets e.g. 101 best cake recipes, 25 all time favorite family meals or a cooking from around the world series e.g. French, Chinese, Indian and so on.

Side Note: If you are selling your booklets offline then ensure your web site URL is also on the booklet.

For more resources, ideas and information for work-at-home writers and e-publishers visit "Net Writing and e-Publishing Success" <http://www.netwrite-publish.com> or send a blank email to subscribe to ebiz-publisher-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

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