

Titles Sell Books

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A clever title is great if it is clear, but a clear title is always preferable. The best? A clear and clever title. A shorter title is better than a longer one. Your reader will spend only four seconds on the cover. While some long titles have succeeded, usually the shorter, the better.

A title is part of your book's front cover. Busy buyers including bookstore buyers, wholesalers, distributors and your audiences buy mainly because of the cover. Dan Poynter, author of *Writing Nonfiction*, says, "The package outside sells the product inside." Make your cover sizzle.

Start with a working title before you write your chapters. Include your topic, your subject and use the book's benefits in your sub title if possible. Here's your ten tips for titles that sell:

1. Create impact for your title-check out print and radio ad headlines. Check out other authors' titles on the bookstore shelves. Your title must compel the reader to buy now.

Which title grabs you? Elder Rage or Caregiving for Dad?

2. Include your solution in your title. Does your title sell your solution? Make sure it answers the question rather than asks one. For instance, *Got Minerals?*, or *Minerals: The Essential Link to Health*. Use positive language instead of negative. For instance, *Without Minerals You'll Die* can be *Minerals: The Essential Link to Health*.

3. Make it easy for readers to buy. Readers want a magic pill. They want to follow directions and enjoy the benefits the title promises. For example, *1001 Ways to Market Your Books* by John Kremer gives at least 1001 ways for authors and

publishers to market their books.

4. Expand your title to other books, products, seminars, and services. Make sure that your title will work well with the title of your presentations, articles and press releases you'll need to promote the book. Such seminars and teleclasses titled "How to Write and Sell Your Book- Fast!" and "Seven Sure-Fire Ways to Publicize your Business" come under the umbrella "fast book writing, publishing and promoting."

5. Use original expressions--a way of expressing one idea for your book--yours alone. Sam Horn, author of Tongue Fú!, puts her special twist on defusing verbal conflict.

6. Include benefits in your subtitle if your title doesn't have any. Specific benefits invite sales. For instance, Marilyn and Tom Ross' Jump Start Your Book Sales: A Money-Making Guide for Authors, Independent Publishers and Small Presses.

7. Choose others' book covers in your field as models. Go to your local bookstore with five-colored felt tips pens and paper. Browse the section your book would be shelved on. Choose five book titles and covers that attract you. Photo copy or sketch those, noting the colors, design, fonts, and sizes of fonts. Add other colors you like.

Place the book cover you love near your workstation to inspire you. For the final copy, use professional cover designers if possible.

8. Be outrageous with your book title. People do judge a book by its title. Your reader will spend only four seconds on the front cover and eight seconds on the back cover. It must be so outstanding and catchy that it compels the reader to either buy on the spot or look further to the back cover. Take a risk. Be a bit crazy, even outlandish.

9. Be your strongest salesperson self. Choose the strongest words, benefits, and metaphors to move your audience to buy. Titles do sell books.

10. Include your audience in your title. This gives your book a slant. When your title isn't targeted other famous authors' titles win out. Always make your title clear and make it easy for your audience to recognize they need your book.

Your title and front cover is your book's number one sales tool. Short titles are best, say three to six words. John Gray didn't get much attention with his book "What Your Mother Couldn't Tell You and What Your Father Didn't Know." He shortened it to the now famous, "Men are From Mars, Women are From Venus."

An outstanding title sells books. Make sure to give this part

of your book, the number one essential "Hot-Selling Point,"
some time and effort.

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