

Part 1. Developing a Book Plan

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Before you signed the Author Agreement to produce your textbook, you most likely created a proposal and possibly sample materials. It is now critical to have a plan for your work that you and the publisher agree to and can refer to as the product develops.

When we publish your text, we don't want to publish a single edition; we hope that the book will be successful enough to last through several editions. What can set your text apart from others in the field? Look within yourself to incorporate some aspect of the field about which you are especially knowledgeable or passionate.

You may reveal this uniqueness through pedagogy, writing style, special experiences, or through research. Are you an acknowledged expert on a topic?

Your special qualities or qualifications can usually be converted into something that will work in a textbook. If you do a lot of consulting, you may have some wonderful examples that can become mini-cases. If you have worked for years in a field, you may understand the "realities" of a job-task or procedure versus what is written in a technical service manual. If you have special knowledge, it can become a theme for the book—highlighted through boxes or integrated with special headings. Are you good at coming up with analogies that help your students understand complex topics? Reviewers sometimes indicate that an author has explained a topic or presented information extremely well. Perhaps you can build on that.

Spend time analyzing competitors' texts. Always remember to ask yourself why your book is needed in this field, and use the answers to create a book that is different and better than the others on the market.