

Part 1. Developing a Book Plan

1.2 GUIDELINES FOR WRITING A BOOK PLAN

The book plan should contain the following information:

1. *The general theme, approach, or application of the book.* Meaning should be attached to whatever theme you use. For example, if you subtitle your book "A Problem-Solving Approach," you should be able to explain what this means. This may become a primary selling feature of your work.
2. *The general organization of the contents.* More than just the listing of contents, you should have an understanding of *why* the contents are put into a certain order. This may include:
 - Prerequisite or "building block" order. For example, in math or science books, content may be in a sequence that builds upon what was learned in previous chapters.
 - Pairing of theory and application. Many technical and trade books pair chapters. For example, a "theory" chapter that identifies a device's components and explains how and why it operates may be followed by an "applied" chapter that discusses diagnostic and repair procedures, operating principles, assembly operations, and so forth.
 - Contents that follow a prescribed curriculum, certification examination, or accreditation standard.
 - Contents designed so that each chapter works independently of all others. In some markets it is important for chapters to be flexible so an individual instructor may adapt them to his/her course syllabus.
3. *The pedagogical organization within chapters.* While it is generally advisable to go from "general" to "specific," there are many variations. Having a plan, or template, may make a book more consistent and easily used by students. For example, many software books have a chapter organization that proceeds as follows:
 - Objective(s) of learning unit
 - Review of functions and features to be used and what they do
 - Demonstration of these features in a step-by-step format
 - Student exercises
 - Activities and review questions

Another example would be electronics technology or math books, where the organization may be structured as follows:

- Information, theorem, equation, or rule explained
- Examples showing steps of working out a problem using the above
- Practice problems
- Higher-level or specialized application problems

In repair or service-oriented books, chapter organization may include:

- Overview of the system and its standard operating mode
- Identification of major system components
- Routine system maintenance
- Diagnostic troubleshooting procedures
- Repair procedures

4. *Chapter features.* Listing the features and using them as a guide for each unit may help you be more consistent in their use. Features can help make content more relevant to a student and may include:

- Performance-based learning objectives
- Chapter introduction
- "History of" section
- Example problems
- Key term list
- Marginal definitions
- "Special interest" boxes
- In-depth sections or challenge problems
- Case studies
- Summary
- Review questions

- Internet activities
- Bibliography or references
- Exercises and projects

It can be very useful to look at the competition's features as well. While we don't want you to copy competing books, knowing what features they include will let you know what your potential adopters may expect or desire. We as a publisher want to benchmark ourselves against other books in the market.

5. *Artwork.* It is critical to determine the sources and types of art to be used at the outset. This will help maintain the publisher's budget, save you time and aggravation, and give you a far better chance of creating a book you will be pleased with. Possibilities include original photographs, screen captures from the Internet, art cut from manuals or catalogs, art from published books or magazines, advertisements, line arts combined with photos, art with extensive labeling, still images taken from videotapes, art rendered by the author or an illustrator, tables and graphs generated from data, and many more. A discussion with your Acquisitions Editor (AE) or Development Editor (DE) or, in some cases, your Project Manager (PM) will help the publishing team understand and assist with the development of the art.

Your job as author is to:

- Think about the types of illustrations that will make your book competitive and useful (with an emphasis on function).
 - Plan for how the art will be acquired and/or rendered.
 - Communicate your needs to the publisher.
 - Ensure that permissions for artwork, tables, photos, etc. are completed prior to manuscript submission.
6. Other features you and your AE may discuss and agree to add to your book budget include:
 - Use of color
 - Trim size
 - Perforation of pages
 - Three-hole punching of pages
 - Binding (hardback, paperback, etc.)

- Endpapers: In some cases, the endpapers (the blank sheets on the inside of both the front and back covers of the book) can be printed. Since this is costly, printing endpapers or an inside front cover is an AE's decision. There must be a very clear purpose for placing material on the endpapers.
 - Inserts usually feature 4-color photos on heavy, glossy paper, in multiples of two pages, placed between signatures. They may also contain one- or two-color diagrams or blueprints. Sometimes inserts can be printed and used as an advertising tool. Your AE will decide if a 4-color insert is needed for your book.
 - Software to be packaged with the text on CD or DVD or available online: Your AE also decides whether software or other materials should be packaged with your text or available online. Permission should be obtained for any borrowed material that will be available electronically. If your AE decides to have software packaged with your text, we strongly recommend that the master disk or CD-ROM be submitted to production as early as possible—no later than a month after manuscript is received in production—to allow for testing and duplication. The instock date of your book could be jeopardized if the master disk or CD-ROM is not received on time. Much of what was once stored on CD-ROM is now being moved to the Internet. Discuss this with your AE.
7. In some markets, *ancillaries (or supplements)* may drive sales of the product. As with text features, it is vital for you and your AE to share knowledge of the competition and market expectations. As with features of the main text, having a plan for the types of ancillaries to be created should be understood and agreed upon at the beginning of the project. You and the AE must decide who will create each ancillary, so there is no misunderstanding. You should discuss with your AE whether or not ancillaries should be planned to accompany the text. You may determine that further information would be valuable in making this decision, and it can be obtained through peer reviews, surveys, or other less formal means. Popular ancillary tools include:
- Instructor's Manuals or Solutions Manuals
 - PowerPoint Presentations
 - Test Item Files or Computerized Test Item Files
 - Companion Websites
 - Online Courses
 - CDs and DVDs

8. *Feature-Benefit Analysis.* A feature is an aspect or element of your book that provides pedagogical value. Once you finish your book plan, you should be able to define or identify each of the above outlined attributes as a “feature” of the book or book package you are creating. For each feature, you should be able to explain the benefit to the teacher or student. Consider writing these down in order to create your own “feature-benefit analysis” by simply listing each salient feature and its corresponding benefit. For example:

Feature: AutoCAD book includes projects in the field of Interior Design.

Benefit: Students learn how program is actually used in the field.

Feature: Math book includes word problems with detailed applications.

Benefit: Allows students to work with both the “how” and “why” of math.

This will help you in two ways:

- Consolidates your plan into a guide that you may refer to throughout the project development.
- Creates most of what you will need to provide to our marketing department on completion of your text. Your marketing manager will ask you to provide three of the most important features of your book for promotional materials. The better the information you provide to our marketing department, the better they will be able to market your text.