

# Want People to Read Your Work? Hire a Professional Editor!

by Laura Orsini



Visit any networking luncheon or after-hours mixer anywhere in the country, and chances are, if you asked, “Has anyone here ever thought about writing a book?” more than half the hands in the room would go up. Many people — coaches, speakers, and entrepreneurs in particular — have thought about writing books. And the truth is that a lot of them should.

Coaches, speakers, and entrepreneurs have one thing in common. They’re all

experts in at least one subject matter area. If they weren’t, they would be pretty lousy at their jobs, right?

People often get confused about the concept of expertise. Expertise does not mean you have to be the best in the world at something — like Lance Armstrong or Bill Gates. Can you imagine being ranked **#1 in the World** at a particular skill or talent? It sure would be nice — but it doesn’t happen for most of us. And yet many more of us are experts than we may realize.

Perhaps you’ve given it some thought and have acknowledged that you really are very good at something. Canvas pool covers. The history of birdhouses in America. Ways to help college freshmen succeed. The subjects are limitless — but it’s a good bet that you ARE an expert at one of them. And maybe . . . just maybe . . . you will decide to write a book about your area of expertise.

It’s never been easier to write a book than it is today. With the advent of print-on-demand and self-publishing, almost anyone can throw a book together — a real bound book, with pages and everything — for a few hundred dollars. This news might be rather encouraging to you, and if it is, that’s great. There’s no reason you shouldn’t author the book you’ve always thought about writing.

The question, though, is whether it will be a book anyone other than your mother wants to read. Before undertaking a writing project, it’s absolutely essential to know who your audience is and know why you’re writing to them. We’re all busier than we’ve ever been before, and information pummels us relentlessly from every side. The same is true for your readers and would-be readers. Regardless of what you are writing, whether it’s an e-mail or a novel, you must know two things: (1) that it’s worth your time to write, and (2) that it’s worth your readers’ time to read. Seems pretty obvious, right? Wrong.

Have you looked at any of the books out there lately?

Unfortunate spelling, poor grammar, incomprehensible punctuation, run on sentences, stories that make no sense at all — the vast majority of self-published books never make to a bookstore or onto a library shelf because they are so badly written. But it

doesn't have to be that way. A good editor can make all the difference between a book that should be used as fireplace kindling and the next viral marketing success like *Unleashing the Ideavirus*. (No disrespect to Seth Godin — I'm sure he's a brilliant writer whose work needs very little editing.)

Michael Jordan once was asked how he became the best basketball player in the world. Did he chalk it all up to raw talent? His answer might surprise some folks: "I had great coaches." Likewise, even the most talented writer in the world sometimes needs an objective eye to provide feedback, sharpen the focus, and make an already strong piece of writing a stellar piece of writing.

Most writers are not Steinbeck, or even Mitch Albom. While they may have a great story to tell or have some fantastic information to share with the world, they also might struggle with getting their words on paper (or into their word processing programs). Perhaps they're great at outlining their overall concepts, but they need some help fleshing out the ideas, or finessing the language to make it as clear and compelling as possible. These are writers who would benefit from working with a qualified editor.

One mistake almost every writer makes — even long-time, experienced writers — is overwriting. That is, writing too many words. If there's one thing most good writing has in common, it's that its authors know how to keep it concise. Even with epic novels, detailed self-help books, or Web copy that goes on for screen after screen, if the language of each sentence, paragraph, and chapter is not concise and to the point, people will stop reading it. Precision with language is an art — and it's a talent all good editors have. It's why writers hire them, in fact — to help them get rid of the excess words and phrases that detract from the core of their message.

Here's a quick tip: The next time you write anything, get your piece polished and finished, to the place where you think it's perfect. Then go back and cut it by 25 percent. Really. It will improve your work immeasurably.

If you've got great content (stories, ideas, a message), the essential thing is to get it down! Use bullet points. Create an audio recording of your ideas and have someone transcribe it for you. Write it all in one gigantic 103-page paragraph. Just get it into words — on the page. Then, find a qualified editor to shape it into something publishable.

Sure, you're thinking, but isn't professional editing expensive?

It can be — and often is — but it doesn't have to be. Maybe your Aunt Myrtle is a retired English teacher; she'd probably be delighted to be called on for her skills. A creative writing or journalism major at the local college or university can be a great resource. Consider a trade with someone in your network who has great editing skills. The most important thing is that you commit to the process and find someone to help you.

But if this is a book (or journal article) you are serious about — something you want to be proud to have your name on because it represents you as an expert in your field — take yourself and your work seriously and hire a professional editor. Build it into your budget and spend what you can afford, knowing that more often than not, you get exactly what you pay for.

If you're one of those people who would have raised their hand at the beginning — you've been thinking about writing that book for as long as you can remember — what's stopping you? Why not get started today? And if, at any point along the way, you need another pair of eyes, someone to look over the content and let you know if you're on track, or may have strayed a bit — think about finding a talented editor. Your readers will thank you.

---

**LAURA ORSINI** is a professional editor, writer, and marketing advisor with a BA in Nonfiction Writing from the University of Arizona. She is the author of several eBooks, including eBooks Made Easy, Niching Made Easy, Handwriting Analysis Made Easy, and 1,001 Real-Life Questions for Women. She also gives seminars on social media, eBooks, creativity, writing, gratitude and abundance, visualizing, and brainstorming. Contact her at: [Laura@WriteMarketDesign.com](mailto:Laura@WriteMarketDesign.com) or 602.518.5376.