



## **Making Money with Your Travel Website**

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SAMPLE CHAPTER: Making Money with Your Travel Website

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## CHAPTER FOUR: SELLING YOUR OWN PRODUCTS

OK, so far we've talked about advertising on your site and selling other people's products on your site. Now for one of the biggest potential money makers: selling your own products on your site.

Some of the best products to sell on your site are information products or ebooks. They are becoming extremely popular because when people want their information, they want it now!

Information products can be written on a wide variety of subjects. Just like a guidebook, they should provide useful, valuable information. The only difference is that information products can be digitally downloaded, which means you don't deliver a physical product to the customer. That means your costs are kept to a minimum (generally the credit card processing cost) so your profits are maximized.

Another benefit is, like ad networks, this is a passive income stream. You do the work once and it keeps producing for you. You're not knitting a new afghan to ship to each purchaser or stuffing envelopes with printed books; you set up your web pages, payment mechanisms, autoresponders and you're set.

Also, information products can be used to send traffic to your website. By creating an affiliate program, others will help you promote your information product, which means they will drive traffic to your website and help sell your product for a commission.

### HOW TO SELL YOUR EBOOK

OK, we've all heard you can't judge a book by its cover but, let's face it: the public will. An obviously homemade cover gives the impression of a book slapped together with content that's not valuable. You need a good ecover, even if that means investing a little money in the project.

 **WHAT WE DO**

We've designed our own ebook covers (*The Destination Wedding Workbook*, *The Castle Wedding Workbook*) and we've also used professional services. Recently we used <http://www.cheapestcovers.com/> and <http://myminisitegraphic.com> and have been happy with both.

What other graphics do you need to promote your ebook?

- **A guarantee graphic.** Guarantee graphics help draw attention to your money back guarantee. A guarantee is vital if you want to achieve maximum conversions, because so many people have been burned on Internet products before. If you don't have a clear-cut guarantee policy on your sales page, or if visitors don't see it, you could be throwing sales out the window.
- **Banners.** If you'll be offering the ebook through affiliates, you need a selection of banners for affiliates to use to advertise your site. Although some affiliates will only promote you through text links or emails, a lot of affiliates will still need banners for websites and blogs.
- **An attractive order button.** Hey, that's what you want them to look for, right? Like an attractive eBook cover, an attractive order button draws attention and lends credibility to your product. You also want it to be eye-catching. If they somehow miss the button, or if it's difficult to see, people might get frustrated and leave.

 **WHAT WE DO**

You can purchase inexpensive graphics packages; we have a subscription to <http://www.clipart.com> which offers all types of graphics (and photos).

## PRINT ON DEMAND BOOKS

As its name suggests, POD books are printed at the point of purchase. Rather than guessing the size of a print run (and looking at substantial transportation and storage costs), writer/publishers are able to literally manufacture and sell one book at a time in hardback or paperback format. The writer delivers the digitized manuscript, ready to print, to the POD publisher for storage. Orders are routed to the POD publisher as they come in; the book is printed and shipped directly to the purchaser without further author intervention.

Fees for print on demand services vary by publisher and are provided in both a la carte and packaged options. Those fees vary from publisher to publisher so shop around carefully and don't purchase services that you feel you can/should do yourself.

Other points to keep in mind as you compare publishers:

- **Exclusive vs. non-exclusive contracts.** Are you bound by an exclusive contract if you opt for this POD publisher?
- **Royalty split.** Unlike short-run printers where you pay for the book printing and any other services you choose and then you keep the money you make from book sales, with POD you'll be in a royalty contract similar to a traditional publisher. Royalty percentage rates vary by publisher.
- **Cancellation period.** How long do you have to cancel a contract with the POD publisher?

Some Print on Demand Publishers include:

- Aventine Press, <http://www.aventinepress.com/>
- Booklocker.com, <http://www.booklocker.com/>
- Infinity Publishing, <http://www.infinitypublishing.com/>
- iUniverse, <http://www.iuniverse.com>
- Llumina Press, <http://www.llumina.com/>
- PageFree Publishing, <http://www.pagefreepublishing.com/>
- Virtualbookworm.com POD Publishing, <http://www.virtualbookworm.com/>
- Xlibris, <http://www.xlibris.com>

## WHAT WE DO

We used Booklocker.com to publish our *The Destination Wedding Workbook*. We've been very happy with their fees and services!

## SELF-PUBLISHED BOOKS—INCLUDING COOKBOOKS

Self-publishing a print book that's sold through your website is another, more traditional, way to sell your content. You can use the services of a local printer or a firm that specializes in self-published books.

The benefit of a self-published book, rather than a print on demand book, is that you'll have more control over the finished product. Working within the printer's confines, you can have control over the cover, inside layout, distribution, mailing and order fulfillment, and every other aspect of the book's life.

All that control comes at a price, though—both in terms of money and time. You're looking at a serious layout of money to have the books printed; you're then facing a storage issue when the books are in print. Fulfilling orders is another job all its own; while it's great to have that interaction with customers, ask yourself if it's a job you have time (and inclination) to do.

One type of self-publishing that's successful for many is cookbook publishing. Why cookbooks, you may ask? Because even in tough economic times, travel budgets may get trimmed and trip plans may be canceled but eating goes on. You might have armchair travelers coming to your site who would like to bring a taste of the region featured on your site to their table. Or just cookbook collectors adding a new title to their collection; cookbook collecting is a huge market.

You can always go the printer route, having your cookbook published and bound at a local printer but check out the cookbook fundraising companies as well. If you've ever bought a cookbook from a church group, a school group, or fraternal organization, you've probably seen their work. Some offer several binding styles from comb binding (great for opening a cookbook flat on the kitchen counter...and economical as well) to ring binding with hardback covers. Since they specialize in cookbook preparation, they have formatting down to a science, offering you several recipe formats with and without recipe notes, photos or clip

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art, introductory pages and more.

Most of the fundraising cookbook publishers allow private businesses and individuals to publish with them as well using the same program (the difference is generally that you'll need to make a larger down payment on your order). You'll see that the price per book is based on a sliding scale depending on the number of copies you order and the extras you tack on.

If you operate a bed and breakfast, distribution can be a breeze; put a flyer for the book in your guest rooms and sell directly to your guests. Writers who do public speaking will also find it easy to sell and distribute books.

If your interaction with readers is all via the Internet, you'll need to fulfill orders in a timely manner. It's easy to prestuff and prestamp mailers with the books, printing out a shipping label as orders come in. Travel writers, though, who spend a great deal of time on the road, will need a backup person who can fulfill orders during their absence.

If you're selling the books through your website, you'll want to be able to accept credit cards. Monthly fees for accepting credit cards are hefty so a more economical way is to take payments via PayPal. PayPal charges a small percentage on each sale and it's a widely recognized name that customers feel comfortable giving their credit card number to (as the business, you'll never see the customer's credit card information). Other similar options are Click2Pay (<http://www.click2pay.com/>) and Google Checkout (<http://checkout.google.com/sell/>).

### **WHAT WE DO**

We did a short run of *The Destination Wedding Workbook* and sold them through Lovetrippler.com, using PayPal to receive payments. We did fulfillment of orders ourselves. With our travel schedule, we found it difficult so we moved *The Destination Wedding Workbook* to a print on demand publisher (Booklocker.com) and haven't regretted the move for a second.

## Cookbook Publishers

You'll find numerous publishers that specialize in cookbook printing; many of these will send sample kits upon request with information on cover pricing, recipe layout options, and sample cookbooks. Some offer both hardback and softcover options.

- Cookbook Publishers, Inc., <http://www.cookbookpublishers.com/>
- Fundcraft, <http://www.fundcraft.com>
- G&R Publishing, <http://www.cookbookprinting.com/>
- Heritage Cookbooks, <http://www.heritagecookbook.com/>
- Morris Press Cookbooks, <http://www.morriscookbooks.com/> (Morris also has a more traditional self-publishing arm <http://www.morrispublishing.com/>)
- The Cookbook Company, <http://www.cookbookco.com/>

## MORE REVENUE STREAMS

We hope this book has provided you with food for thought regarding ways you can make additional income from your travel website. One last idea: always be thinking of ways to repackage and sell material through your travel website.

Along with ebooks and printed books, here are the most effective and profitable information product types which you can use as a guide to package your own products:

### 1. Audio Books

Record yourself (or someone else) reading your book content. Voila – you've got an audio book.

### 2. Workbooks

Examine your content and create a book or report specifically designed to 'teach' the material. Present the information in a summarized format and have questions for each book chapter/section. We did this with our *The Destination Wedding Workbook*. Using material we had previously published in articles and books on destination weddings, we repackaged the information to include a combination of instruction and fill-in-the-blank workbook pages to create an all-new product.

### 3. Multi-Media Package

Combine your book and audio book into a joint package that's less expensive than the two packaged separately.

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#### 4. **Coaching or Consulting Program**

Present your content via the phone or email depending on how you've structured your coaching program. Could you offer consulting on trip planning to your destination?

#### 5. **Teleseminars**

Present your content via the telephone – normally in an interview type format. However, some teleseminars feature just the expert speaking the entire time.

#### 6. **Teleworkshops**

Present your content via telephone in a “workbook” type scenario. Make it a smaller group with an interactive layout.

#### 7. **Home Study Course**

Combine books, audio programs, video programs, workbooks, etc. into one product. This is a high-end product that can command a higher price and usually it's a business-to-business type of product. If you're an innkeeper, could you produce a home study course for other innkeepers about how to offer weddings at your B&B? how to run a mystery weekend at your B&B?

#### 8. **Membership Site**

Include your text, audio and video content in a secure website where your clients pay you each month for access to the material.

#### 9. **Radio Show**

With the power of the Internet anyone can have their own radio show. You can record the content and have it played at various times or you can do a live show.

#### 10. **Mini Books or Reports**

You guessed it... if you have a book with five chapters, you could make it into five “special reports.”

These are all are just various ways to package the same content—but at different price points.

**In all, you'll find plenty of ways to monetize your travel website, some of which will be a good fit and some that won't. Monetizing your website isn't an end result but, thanks to new programs and changing technology, a journey...much like travel itself!**