



“An Overview of Creating and Marketing Your Own Digital Information Products”

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NOTE-TAKING GUIDE

Why is this topic so important?

- ❖ Global competition, cooperation, and consumption are increasing
- ❖ As information professionals, we face shifting occupational trends
- ❖ Many people with similar skills are competing in a crowded marketplace
- ❖ Information products offer new opportunities to spark attention and add value
- ❖ You can use information products to create new audiences for your skills

This presentation addresses 3 important questions:

- ❖ **Question 1: *What*** are information products, and how do we ourselves consume them?
- ❖ **Question 2: *Why*** would we want to produce information products?
- ❖ **Question 3: *How*** do you create and market digital or physical information products?

Question 1: What are information products, and how do we ourselves consume them?

- ❖ **Information products are really a form of self-expression**



❖ **Information products can assume a variety of forms**

Here are just **40 examples** of information products:

❖ Printed books	❖ Software programs
❖ E-books	❖ Seminars (full or 1/2 day)
❖ Web sites	❖ Workshops (1-3 hours)
❖ Web logs	❖ Teleclasses/teleseminars/Webinars
❖ Articles	❖ Tutorials
❖ Tip sheets	❖ Surveys
❖ Checklists	❖ Assessments
❖ Booklets and pamphlets	❖ Audio books
❖ Quick reference guides	❖ Special reports
❖ Mini-courses	❖ White papers
❖ Interactive online training	❖ Multimedia presentations
❖ Recorded interviews	❖ Columns
❖ Databases	❖ Board games
❖ Tips of the day	❖ Card decks
❖ Printed newsletters	❖ Posters
❖ Online newsletters (e-zines)	❖ Calendars
❖ Audio messages	❖ Greeting cards
❖ Top 10 lists	❖ Puzzles
❖ Workbooks	❖ Directories
❖ Manuals or "how to" guides	❖ Membership information sites

❖ **Where do we typically go to look for information online?**

❖ **As consumers, we seek information for a wide variety of uses**

Examples: Education and training, entertainment, research and knowledge exchange, and work or task support tools



❖ **We consume information products in online digital or physical formats**

Examples: Displayable, downloadable, and physical media-based

Question 2: Why would we want to produce information products?

❖ **We have a wealth of core skills and knowledge on which to build**

Examples:

- Information gathering and development skills
- Media production skills
- Web site design and construction skills
- Collaboration, project, and team skills
- Ability to create once and output in many forms
- Knowledge and expertise gained through careers and hobbies

❖ **In addition, there are exciting new areas to learn or better understand**

Examples:

- E-commerce technology
- Information delivery tools and techniques
- Other types of online and offline marketing and publicity



❖ **What are the incentives?**

Examples:

- Adding pizzazz to your professional portfolio
- Becoming broadly recognized in your areas of expertise
- Building credibility with prospective clients, employers, or customers
- Re-purposing knowledge gained through career, hobbies for new audiences
- Exercising your creativity and applying your skills and knowledge in ways that may be completely distinct from the work you have been doing before
- Creating additional income streams beyond professional service activities
- Increasing communication and marketing opportunities to both existing and future clients or customers
- Developing a marketing platform from which to woo a traditional publisher, if that is what you are seeking
- Attracting a global audience base for academic, professional, or commercial endeavors

Question 3: How do you create and market information products?

❖ **Here is a 7-step, generic process for creating an e-book or e-course:**

1. Research and Plan Your Product or Program

- ❖ **Identify a target market** and the primary wants, needs, and problems of your audience
- ❖ **Identify ways to solve** your audience's problems with information you have
- ❖ **Consider the forms** your information might take — products, programs, etc.
- ❖ **Identify features and benefits** of your product or program
- ❖ **Identify competition** to your product or program (products, services, prices, etc.)
- ❖ **Identify advantages** of *your* product or program (why would your audience need *you*?)
- ❖ **Research your delivery system options** (Web, CD, download, book publishing, etc.)
- ❖ **Consider the look and feel** of your product or program
- ❖ **Consider future ways** to use the same content to develop related products
- ❖ **Consider pricing** options for your product or program
- ❖ **Research vendors** and production assistants



2. Assemble a Team and Start Designing the Content

- ❖ **Choose a voice** (interviewer, expert, researcher, or repurposer, repackager)
- ❖ **Choose a framework** (e.g., problem/solution, modular, numerical, chronological, or compare/contrast)
- ❖ **Draft a table of contents** and organize as required
- ❖ **Brainstorm titles** and review them with your team

3. Further Develop and Review the Core Material

- ❖ **Write the first draft** of the main content
- ❖ **Identify reviewers** for the main content
- ❖ **Distribute draft #1** and complete a review pass
- ❖ **Incorporate comments** and get any testimonials from review pass #1
- ❖ **Distribute draft #2** and complete a review pass
- ❖ **Incorporate comments** and get any testimonials from review pass #2
- ❖ **Get feedback on titles** from peers and reviewers
- ❖ **Request legal review** of written content (e.g., any claims, disclaimers, etc.)

4. Finalize the Content and Narrow Down Your Production Options

- ❖ **Complete the final version** of the main written content
- ❖ **Design or commission** illustrations, artwork, or multimedia components (as applicable)
- ❖ **Integrate artwork** with content (as applicable)
- ❖ **Design or commission** product cover and/or any packaging or labeling
- ❖ **Convert content to PDF** or other applicable digital delivery format(s)
- ❖ **Record or commission** audio narration or music (as applicable)
- ❖ **Perform or commission** audio editing and conversion for delivery (if applicable)
- ❖ **Research duplication methods** for any physical products (e.g., printing and CD/DVD duplicating)
- ❖ **Woo a publishing house**, if applicable
- ❖ **Seek self-publishing** venues, if applicable (e.g., Mimeo.com for printing on demand)

5. Develop and Launch a Business and Marketing Plan

- ❖ **Conceptualize a Web site** and create basic mockup (if Web site will be used)
- ❖ **Design or commission** the actual Web site
- ❖ **Write the main sales letter** and/or other marketing and sales content
- ❖ **Select sales tools** (e.g., ClickBank, PayPal, or a shopping cart system)
- ❖ **Assemble and upload** initial Web pages
- ❖ **Apply for a merchant account** (not required if using PayPal or ClickBank)
- ❖ **Set up your shopping cart** and related Web pages
- ❖ **Create Web forms** for mailing list sign-ups
- ❖ **Set up autoresponders** for initial offerings
- ❖ **Create a business entity**, as applicable
- ❖ **Request a legal review** (for Web site and any other disclaimers, terms of service, etc.)



6. Create Additional Promotional Tools

- ❖ **Write articles** and post them on your Web site
- ❖ **Create Web surveys** (as applicable)
- ❖ **Design or commission** a newsletter format; map out a delivery schedule
- ❖ **Create bonus giveaways** (e.g., free reports)

7. Continue to Expand and Test Your Marketing

- ❖ **Research article Web** publishing services (e.g., SubmitYourArticle.com)
- ❖ **Set up or commission** order fulfillment services (as applicable)
- ❖ **File copyright forms** or trademark applications (as applicable)
- ❖ **Seek new promotional** and guerrilla marketing opportunities
- ❖ **Enter your products in award** competitions to earn more credibility
- ❖ **Seek collaborative opportunities** to leverage complementary strengths
- ❖ **Design teleseminars** or exchange interviews to expand exposure
- ❖ **Seek virtual assistants** (VAs, e.g., AssistU.com) or other helpers to manage your load!

Notes:

- ❖ Here are **7 myths** to dispel about marketing information products:

Myth #1: Your main goal is to get people to buy your products as quickly as possible

Myth #2: You have to pay a lot to get good promotional exposure online

Myth #3: You shouldn't give away information for free



Myth #4: There are clear distinctions between products, services, and marketing tools

Myth #5: People with similar offerings are competitors you should avoid

Myth #6: You can make a lot of money quickly using info-products

Myth #7: The faster your rise to stardom, the better

In conclusion...

- ❖ Don't risk being overcome by competition, obsolescence, or unfulfilled dreams
- ❖ You can use information products to create new audiences for your talents
- ❖ The types of products you produce will depend on your goals
- ❖ Using a 7-step process, you'll lay a solid foundation for success!

Resources:

- ❖ **This handout** is posted at http://LearnShareProsper.com/infoproduct_handout.pdf
- ❖ For more information on the **Society for Technical Communication**, see:
 - <http://slostc.org> (San Luis Obispo STC chapter)
 - <http://stc.org> (international STC organization)
- ❖ For **Part 1** of this series (Jan. 31, 2005), see <http://slostc.org/events/jan31.html>
- ❖ For the SLO STC event on **legal matters**, see <http://slostc.org/events/oct25.html>
- ❖ For the **90-Day Product Factory** immersion training program: 90DayProduct.com
- ❖ **Recommended readings:** For information on various subjects, including Internet marketing, sales, and related psychology, see authors such as Jay Conrad Levinson, Robert Cialdini, Dan Kennedy, Robert G. Allen, Stephanie Frank, and Tom Antion, who wrote "The Ultimate Guide to Electronic Marketing for Small Business"
- ❖ For more information on **business performance**, see LearnShareProsper.com
- ❖ **Questions?** Please e-mail Adele Sommers at Adele@LearnShareProsper.com



About Adele Sommers

Adele Sommers, Ph.D. helps people “discover and recover” the hidden profits their businesses may be forfeiting every day because of *missed performance opportunities*.

To do this, Adele offers organizations a **business performance perspective**. She helps them plan where they want to head; develop the systems and processes to make it possible; and create or bolster the instructional, communication, and performance support systems they need to achieve their goals.



Adele’s newsletter offers informative tips and ideas for people who *think* like entrepreneurs, even if they don’t actually run a company. It explains how to use simple, highly effective techniques to increase morale and productivity, multiply customer satisfaction, and strengthen profitability. All of the “how-to” resources available on Adele’s Web site help people positively influence the success of their businesses, regardless of their roles in the organization.

Adele’s credentials include:

- ❖ Award-winning instructional designer who has spent the last two decades helping small firms to large aerospace companies enhance productivity in the areas of instruction, project and process management, performance support, information design, usability, quality assurance, and leadership.
- ❖ Doctorate in Education with a focus on Performance Technology; Master of Arts in Management; Bachelor of Arts in Social Psychology; Certificate in Human Performance.
- ❖ President of the five-time award-winning San Luis Obispo, California chapter of the Society for Technical Communication (STC) 2002–06.
- ❖ Published author on performance improvement topics, including in the *PI Journal* of the International Society for Performance Improvement (ISPI).
- ❖ Over 10 years with GM-Hughes Corporation, earning multiple awards for excellence in leading projects and guiding process improvement teams.
- ❖ College instructor specializing in project planning and systems thinking.

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