YOUR EASY START GUIDE TO
Creating and Marketing Your First Information Product

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When most people start a business, they think in terms of merchandise or services. But, did you know that you can earn money by selling information as a product? You may have heard of that before, and you've likely bought information products about how to do something you wanted to know. You know how valuable information can be. If you have knowledge about something that other people want to know, you can create an information product.

But, you say: "I'm not an expert on anything." Well, the truth is, even if you aren't an expert in the topic your audience wants to know, you can still create an information product by outsourcing the creation. So, don't let lack of knowledge stop you. If you have an idea and know what audience you want to market to, you are ahead of the game. You can create an information product.

What is An Information Product?

An information product can come in many forms, such as text converted to a PDF file, with or without images and screen shots, video format, MS PowerPoint format and audio format. An information product can even include all of these formats. You can offer your information product via digital download, or even send DVDs or a Jump Drive through the mail.

It's up to you how you want to do it. What matters is that the content includes something your audience will want to buy because it's information they want to know and need to know.

How Can You Make Money With an Information Product?

Of course, the first thing you want to know is how in the world you can make money from information products, and there are many different ways. Once you know what you want to share with your audience, and whether you're going to create it yourself or get assistance, you can then decide what formats you'll sell it in.

You can:

- Sell it Outright as a PDF from a Sales Page

- Sell it As a Product on Your Website or Blog
- Add it to a Membership Website for Members Only
- Sell it on Kindle as an EBook
- Make it Into a Regular Book
- Turn it Into an Audio Program
- Make Videos Out of the Information
- Host a Webinar to Teach the Information
- Set up An Online Course
- Host a Live Event to Teach and Share the Information

As you can see, the options are limitless when you start brainstorming ways to sell and package the information that you want to sell to your audience. What's more, you can actually repurpose any of the above into any others of the above, and thus create even more information products for your audience. But first, you need to come up with a topic.

How to Brainstorm a Topic for Your First Information Product

Before you can start earning money, you'll need to brainstorm a topic. There are many ways to brainstorm a topic. We'll go over a few of them here, but first things first.

Know Your Audience – What do they struggle with, what problems do they have, what are their needs and what ability do they have to pay for a product to solve those problems? If you're not sure, but you already have an audience who are list members, you can ask them. Send a survey, or invite questions that you'll answer on your blog. This is a great way to get insight into what your audience needs.

Consider Your Area of Expertise -- What do you already know? It's likely that you already know a lot of things that can help others. Make a list of the things that you already know and could easily write a long eBook or report about given the time to do so. Don't leave anything out. Even if you only have a beginner level of knowledge, that's okay, because someone else needs that knowledge.

"A WISE MAN ... CAN LEARN MORE FROM A FOOLISH QUESTION THAN A FOOL CAN LEARN FROM A WISE ANSWER."

— BRUCE LEE

WHAT ARE YOUR INTERESTS?

Think about Things that Interest You – Are there things you don't know yet, but that interest you that both you and your audience would be interested in learning about? If so, write these down too, because you can always hire someone to do the work for you. Ghostwriters can be found on sites like elance.com and allcustomcontent.com that will be happy to write and create the products for you that you can put your name on and sell to your audience.
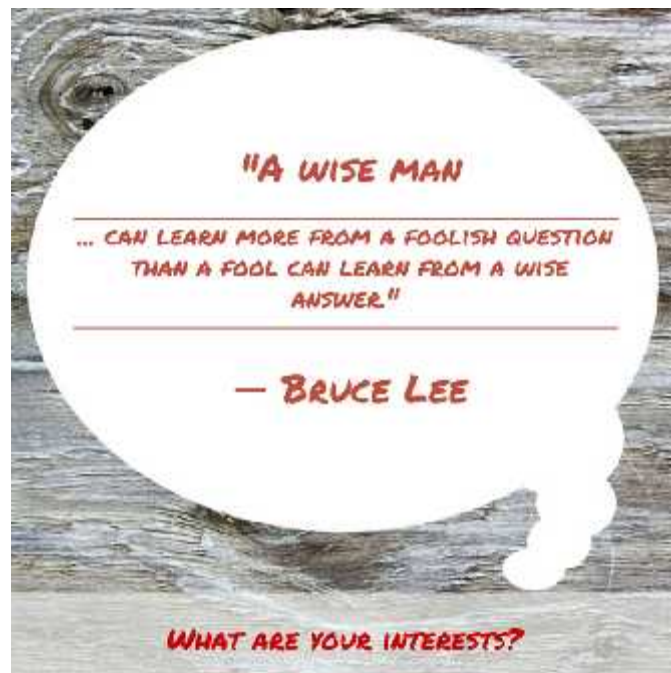
Keep a Running List of Ideas – Whether it's an actual notebook you keep with you at all times or a notebook app on your smartphone, it's important to keep something with you at all times that you can input an idea into easily. Do not rely on your memory. You may wake up at 2 am with an awesome information product idea. If you don't note it, you'll forget it.

Create a Brainstorming Mind Map – Mind maps can be used for many things, including brainstorming. If you can use the mind map, it's a good way to get your thoughts organized and on paper, so that you can get started creating your information product.

There are also a lot of ways to brainstorm an idea once you have it. Let's say that through these exercises you came up with a subject matter for your information product. That's just the beginning. Now, you need to flesh out your information product so that you can fully develop it.

How to Plan Your Information Product

Some people are global thinkers. Some are linear thinkers. It's important to understand how your mind works best as you plan your information products. A quick way to know is this: If you are good at making outlines, you're likely a linear thinker. If you love mind maps, you're a global thinker. If you've never tried either, it is a good idea to try them to see how you feel about them and which works best for your planning needs.

How to Make an Outline

In school, you likely learned how to make a paper title, a thesis statement, then make major points that are represented by roman numerals, then support for each of your major points represented by a letter. There are actually two types of outlines: topic outlines and sentence outlines.

A topic outline includes short phrases, while a sentence outline includes full sentences. Regardless of which type you choose, to make your outline you'll need to know the topic, understand the main categories affecting the topic, and the subcategories that affect the categories. Every category should have at least two or three entries.

While there are important conventions to follow if you're writing a paper for school and are required to turn in an outline for your purposes of creating an information product, the best thing to do is throw all that out the window and focus instead on the main topic, then the categories you want to cover for the main topic, and a few points you want to make about each category. Then you want to include an introduction and a conclusion.

For example, for the guide you're reading now, the outline might look like this:

Topic: Your Easy Start Guide to Creating and Marketing Your First Information Product

Points to cover: What is an information product? How do I come up with ideas? What formats of information products do I want to offer? How do I develop information products? How do I publish my information product, and so forth.

Introduction: Who, what, when and why about this product and what it will cover.

Conclusion: Summary of what you covered, then the next steps you want your audience to take.

Just write down each point you want to cover, which can become the categories of the main topic idea, and what you want to cover for each, which will become the subcategories. Then you can either start writing and developing your product or you can send it to your contractor.
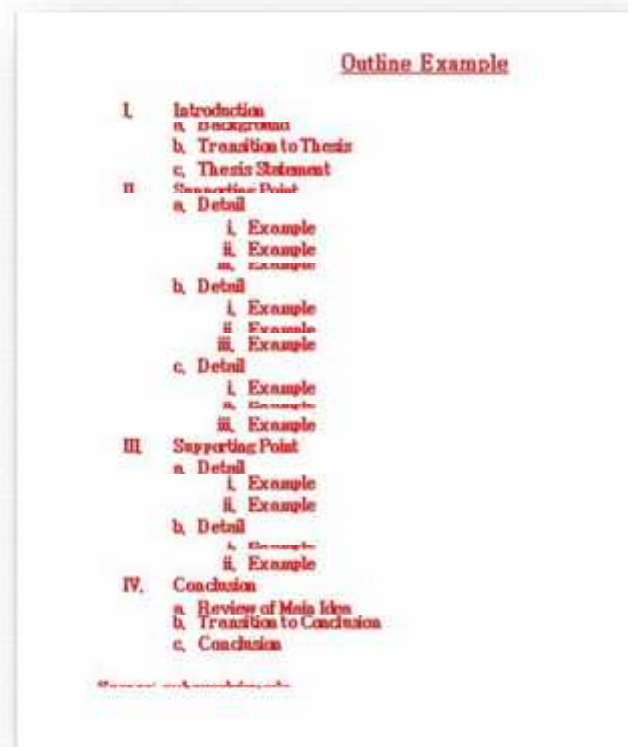
How to Make a Mind Map

Making a mind map is a little different and for some it's easier. The mind map uses a main idea to make associations with the connections to the main idea. They look like branches coming off the main idea. It will end up looking like a map.

- **Generate a Topic Idea:** Consider what the focus of the information product is and write that topic in the center of the page. You can use software made for mind maps or you can just use a piece of copy paper and a pen. It can be as fancy as you want it to be or as simple.

- **Create Branches:** To make branches off the main topic, just draw a line or branch to each idea that comes to mind. The first questions you might ask about the topic are what, where, when, why and how. You want to try to keep words down to two or three per branch. If you have other ideas that come to mind, establish branches off these first ideas.

- **Connect Branches:** As you keep branching off and coming up with more points that flow from the main idea, you may find that some of them connect back to the main idea or branched ideas. Draw a branch to show that connection.
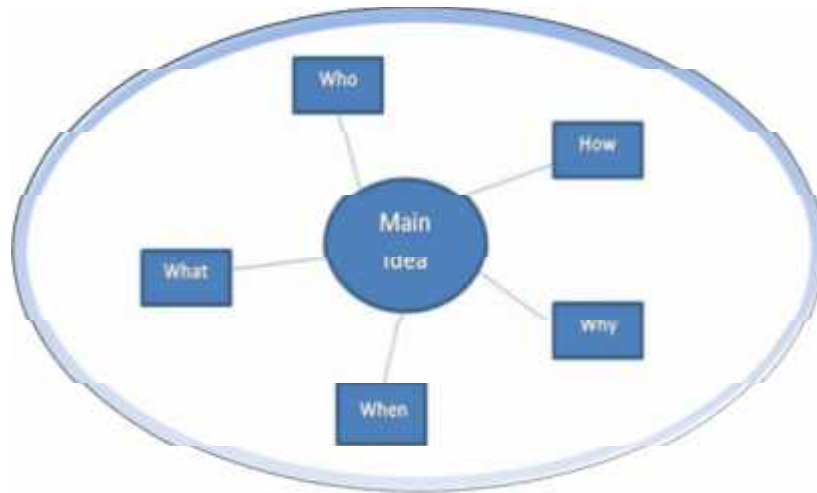
The point is to generate as many branches and therefore ideas as you can on one piece of paper. If you are doing it on a computer, the program will help you limit your space. If you are doing it on paper, use one regular A4 copy paper for your mind map. It's usually best if you refine the mind map before using it for product development, so consider the first one the "brainstorming" session, and then perfect your mind map to help you create your information product.

How to Develop Your Information Product

Once you've decided upon a topic, fleshed out the subject fully so that you know from top to bottom what will be in your information product and what form the first draft will be in, you can now start with product development, which means to actually go through the process of creating your information product.

### Determine the Parts You Need

Once you have an outline, or a mind map to work from, and you have created the format of the product and your table of contents, you are ready to go. Using the table of contents, decide what parts of the product, if any, you'll create yourself or what your role will be in developing the product. Once these things are determined, create or have created the content for the information product. You'll likely need text content, images, maybe even video and audio. Make sure you know what you want before you get started.

Use Your Mind Map or Outline

This is why having the outline and table of contents first is important. It's going to make it easier having pieces of the information product created at the same time, so that it all comes together into one cohesive product. Someone can be developing or finding images, someone else can be writing the content. With a good outline, you can outsource different parts of the content to different people depending on their expertise, too.

Let Go of Perfectionism

Things that will likely come to mind as you start on the creation product is how your product looks, whether it's good enough and that type of thing. Right now don't think of any of that. Instead, focus on getting something down on paper, finding the right images to represent the words, and if you're doing video or audio, be prepared with a script to ensure that the right points are covered at the right time. Everything can be made better during editing, but getting done is always better than perfection. Plus your work is likely a lot better than you give yourself credit for.
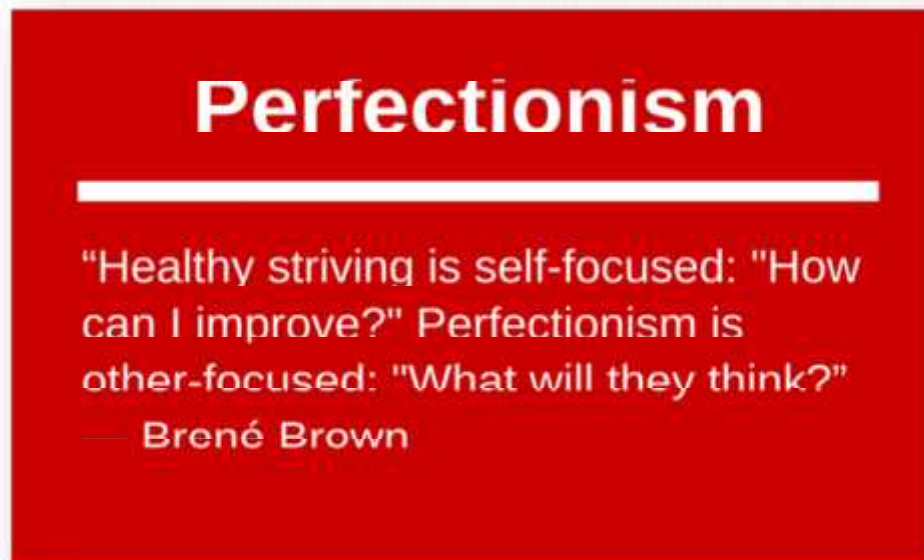
Start At the End

The best way to create the information product is to start at the end. Work from "launch date" backwards to today using a calendar to schedule in the tasks you need to do each day, with deadlines for everything, so that all the work is done on time by the launch date. Be realistic about how much time doing each part of the information product will take. Add in some buffer time to ensure you really have enough time.

Gather Information from Others – One great way to create an information product is to collect information from other experts, such as with case studies. If you develop the survey, and find the subjects, you'll just have to put the work together in the end.

In addition, note who will do each part of the job and make assignments to contractors as soon as you finalize the particulars of each part of the information product. Don't start putting off things until everything is perfect. Get started now, and you'll get done faster. The point is, if you don't create the product, you can't sell it. Get it created. The awesome part about digital information products is the ease by which you can change things and update things as you move forward.

How to Publish Your Information Product

Once you have completed the work necessary to create your first information product, you'll need to decide how to publish it. There are a lot of ways you can do this, and you don't actually have to stick to only one way.

PDF Digital Download

A PDF file is a portable document file created by Adobe Acrobat. Today, you can create a PDF File from your Word Document, too. Just choose "save as" and choose the type of file you want to save it as. PDF will be a choice.

Kindle Book Format

You can follow the directions on the [Kindle Direct Publishing website](#) for formatting your Kindle book, or you can hire someone to do it for you. But, you don't need special software or anything but Word to create your Kindle book.

As an Online Course

Separate up the information into modules to create a course for your audience that will be delivered over time to them. This is called a "drip" course. This means that the content is delivered to the audience a little at a time. This can all be automated with the right software like [Zenler.com](#) or by using a [Plugin for your self-hosted WordPress](#) website.

Combination Files

You can also include a combination of files, text, Word, PDF, Audio, Video and more that can be combined into a compressed file called a zip file. The zip file is easy to create on most PC's by putting the files into a folder, right clicking, choosing "send to", and then choosing compressed folder.

When you publish these files you'll need to have a cover image. The size of the cover image will depend on what service you're using and their requirements.

For example, Kindle has its own requirements about the size of the cover of your eBook. Get those covers made in advance so that you can ensure that they work with your product.

Once you create the digital file, with the cover, you'll need to upload it to a place that your audience can download it from securely once they pay for it. In the case of Kindle, this is taken care of for you. In the other cases it will depend on the software you use. But in general if you're self-hosting everything, the best course of action is to open an [Amazon S3 account](#).

Alternatively, your hosting company may offer enough space and security for your digital downloads, as well. You can also use other third party systems like Amember.com, eJunkie.com, clickbank.com, [DPD](#) or 1shoppingcart.com.

It's up to you which system is easier for you, but do consider a few facts, such as your technical abilities and budget for outsourcing. Many of these types of software have free trials so you can figure out which works best for you. It's best to choose your technology before you finish the publishing process so that you can be sure to get things into the right form.

How to Market Your Information Product

Believe it or not, marketing your information product coincides with the creation of it. Once you have the outline or mind map, table of contents, launch date, assignments made, and plans set on your calendar, you can start marketing your information product.

- **Build Your List** – Using checklists, small reports, short eCourses, and other information build your email list full of targeted audience members who will want to buy this information product when it's done.

- **Write Blog Posts** – Since you have an outline, you can start writing blog posts educating your readers on the problems that you will solve with your information product. Right now, just focus on small tidbits and fast solutions to the problems.

- **Tease In Your Blog** – Once in a while talk to your readers as if they are your friends with whom you want to share exciting news. After all, they are your friends and they want to know what you're up to. So tell them about the product you're in the process of creating. Make them want it.

- **Tease Your List** – Do the same thing to people who are already on your list. Point them to your blog post, and give them a few extra hints while directing them to the blog post.

- **Get Your Audience Involved** -- Send your list a survey asking for help naming the new product, or even help with the outline or table of contents so you know what they want included. Ask them their preferred method of content delivery. They'll remember this and be more likely to purchase the product when it's done.

- **Host a Webinar** – When you are close to launch date, the product is done but it is not launched, host a webinar for "early bird" deals and savings for those who come to the webinar.

- **Set Up a Landing Page** – Even though the product is not ready yet, it doesn't mean you cannot go ahead and set up most of the landing page. Instead of buying the product, those who sign up can be added to a list to be told when the product is ready. Offer a discount to them for signing up. Then after launch, just switch it out to actually selling the product.

- **Set Up a Facebook Page** – While it might seem like a pain, setting up a separate page or group for your information product is a good way to handle advertising and promoting the product on Facebook.

- **Promote Your Content** – When you create a blog post, always create an email to tell your list about the blog post, and also promote the blog post on your social media accounts with an individualized blurb depending on the social media site.

- **Create an Affiliate Program** – One of the best ways to get more sales and market your information product is to let other people do it for you. Work on building up your affiliate program before launch date. Don't be afraid to approach people that you know who promote products like yours with an outline and information of what will be included as well as a review copy, if needed.

- **Ask Movers & Shakers for Reviews** – Just like you approach affiliate super stars to promote your product, ask people who are known in your niche for reviews. The more reviews you can get and publish on the sales page the better.

- **Give Some Away for Free or Very Low Priced** – It's not unusual to offer a few free or very low cost information products to a select audience first before your general launch to the public. This is a good way to get more affiliates, as well as testimonials.

- **Ask for Testimonials** – Don't forget to actually ask for testimonials from early bird buyers or recipients. Many people will be happy to offer a review but they might not do it if you don't ask.

With these ideas, combined with the idea of always marketing, and creating a product that is for your audience, you'll have no problem making sales of your new information product.

How to Sell Your Information Product

Marketing your product and selling it are two different things. You'll need to have it published and ready for sale, and all the marketing in place.

To sell one product you need the following:

- **Email Marketing Service** – A service like Aweber.com is important to use for selling an information product. You'll use your email list to collect information on your audience, and to send thank you notes and follow up.

- **Shopping Cart Service** – There are many choices for shopping carts that you can use. From 1shoppingcart.com to Clickbank.com and there are many in between. Test out a few during the free trials to see if you understand them. Keep in mind that if you're going to have an affiliate program, your shopping cart system needs to allow that.

- **A Payment Processor** – Most people use Paypal.com, but there are others you might consider such as Stripe.com, or an Authorize.net account of your own. The simplest way to start is Paypal.com.

- **A Hosting Platform** – A webhosting platform such as Hostgator.com, Godaddy.com, Momwebs.com, or another one that you already use that "hosts" your website will work. You may want to use another service like [Amazon S3](#) to store digital downloads securely. Remember some shopping carts will work with S3 and some have their own storage. Either way, you need a host for your website, blog, squeeze page, thank you page and so forth.

- **A Website / Blog** – If you do not already have a website with a blog directed toward the audience your information product is for, you need to create one. It's simple to do with self-hosted Wordpress.com, or an all in one builder like NewRainMaker.com.

- **A Sales Page** – This is an important part of selling your information product. You may want more than one landing page, depending on the different ways that you want to sell

it. For new people you want a long sales page that gives the person who lands there all the information they need to make a decision. For someone who has been primed via the email list you may want to send them to a shorter landing page.

- **A Thank You Page** – When someone chooses to buy, they should pay and immediately go to a thank you page. The thank you page can also be a download page. Be very clear with the instructions on the pages you expect your customer to take an action on.

- **A Download Page** – This is the page that houses the link to download the product. It is often combined with the Thank You Page.

- Bookkeeping Software – While you do not need this to sell a product, it's nice to have the bookkeeping decided before you start making money. There are some automatic systems such as Go Daddy Bookkeeping and Wave Accounting.

- **Analytics Software** – Google Analytics is the best software for analyzing your sales, but you can also use the analytics that comes with every app and software that you use. But you need some way to figure out your conversation rate.

- **The Information Product** – Of course, you need your info product to market and sell. You can set up everything simultaneously. You do not need the product to be done to get started.

By understanding the way everything mentioned works in concert to help you sell your first information product, you'll be much more likely to be successful. It's not hard to create these pages for your product. You can use your current WordPress website to make sales pages and landing pages or you can invest in software like Leadpages.com or a plugin like Ultimate Landing Pages to help you.

Remember though, that you can always outsource to an information product sales manager. This person will take your product and set up all of the above for you. Some companies will even help you create the product. How much you do yourself or outsource is totally up to you, your budget, and your skill set.

You can get your information product completed and ready for sale within a matter of weeks and even days. Make sure to set up a plan that is easy to follow, where you enter the tasks in each day of your calendar or project management system like Basecamp.com, that need to be done to reach your ultimate goal of selling your first information product and making money online. Don't wait for perfection, get started today and within a few weeks you'll be collecting real money for your information product.