

# This Book Means Business:

## Clever ways to plan and write a book that works harder for your business

By Alison Jones

Practical Inspiration Publishing, 2018, paperback, xxix + 258 pages, £15.99, ISBN 978-1910 056691

Alison Jones's excellent work *This Book Means Business* ('TBMB') is packed with 'a selection of tools, techniques and tips on the business of writing business books' (p xv) gained through Jones' many years in the publishing industry (with OUP, Macmillan et al). TBMB reflects what the author has learned from establishing her own business; hosting a popular podcast (The Extraordinary Business Book Club); and being Head Judge of the Business Book Awards. It's fair to say that Alison knows her stuff – and it shows!

The advice provided is aimed firmly at those writing 'business' as opposed to 'academic' books.

TBMB provides an eclectic mix of factors to think about when planning and writing a book, as well as things to consider when marketing for maximum reach and influence. As Christians we should not 'hide our light under a bushel'. The same is true when trying to get our ideas across to impact the marketplace for good.

TBMB comprises two broad parts, each split into four sections and then several mini-chapters which conclude with practical exercises. These 'Over to you' sections reinforce the point that there is no easy way to write a book: authors must take time to work out their ideas and approach.

**Part 1: Your business and you** (pp 1 – 148) assumes you are writing a book to help develop your business. It is based around the concept of a growth

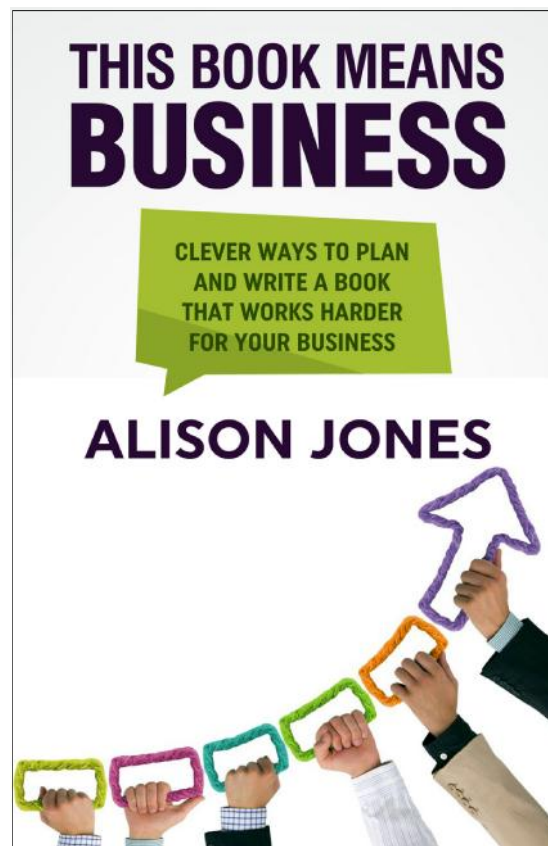
connections is highlighted throughout.

Many of the ideas are as applicable to internal business documents as they are to books. The widely-used SWOT analysis makes an appearance (pp 16–19) and helps emphasise that TBMB is a book about business as well as for business. By mentioning elements of publishing, TBMB also relates to the business of books. The title works well in several ways.

In a crowded market, a book has to stand out. Jones shows that it is insufficient just to write a technically good volume – it must be made known to target readers. A useful starting point is to define your target reader and develop a persona for them (pp 7–12). This will help to ensure that your content and writing style appeal to the intended audience.

Another marketing device is a 'street team' (pp 77–78) whose members can provide early

feedback on ideas and chapters and who act as ambassadors to market the book through their social media outlets and contacts. (Hands up, I was part of Alison's team! (p 247)). For balance and realism, include "a couple of friends who have nothing whatsoever to do with business books but who can always be counted on to give an honest opinion and bracing encouragement"(p 78).



spiral covering your business, your platform, your network and yourself.

There are regular references to building trust (p 63), helping others, being generous with time and feedback, and ensuring that those you seek advice from get something in return (pp 71 –73) . Encouragingly, the importance of building relationships and not just