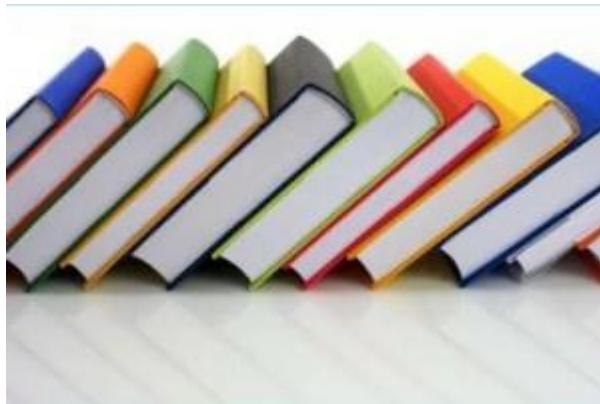


The First 10 Percent: Optimising Your Sample for Sales



You can have the best cover and the best marketing campaign, but if the reader clicks "Look Inside" and is bored, you lose the sale. The "Look Inside" feature (or the downloadable sample) is the final hurdle in the customer journey. It is the test drive. **Book marketing services** focus heavily on getting traffic to the page, but optimising the *interior* file is what closes the deal. The first 10% of your book must do heavy lifting: it must hook the reader, establish the tone, and end on a note that makes buying the book inevitable.

A common mistake is clogging the first 10% with "front matter"—copyright pages, dedications, long tables of contents, and slow prologues. If a reader has to scroll through five pages of admin to get to the story, they might bounce. Strategic formatting involves moving the copyright page to the back (for ebooks) so the sample opens directly on Chapter One. The first sentence needs to be visible immediately. The goal is to reduce the friction between the reader and the narrative.

The "Also By" List

The very first page of the sample should be a list of the author's other books, with clickable links. This establishes authority. It tells the reader, "This is an experienced author with a catalogue." Even if they don't buy *this* book, they might see another title in the list that appeals to them. It turns the sample into a menu for your entire brand.

The Hook and the Cliffhanger

The first chapter must hook the reader, but the sample *cut-off point* is equally important. Amazon typically shows the first 10%. Authors should check exactly where this cuts off. If it ends in the middle of a dull conversation, that's a lost opportunity. If possible, structure the early chapters so that a major question or cliffhanger occurs just before the 10% mark. This creates a "curiosity gap." The only way for the reader to close that gap is to hit "Buy Now."

Newsletter Sign-Up in the Front

Many authors put their newsletter sign-up at the end of the book. However, putting a link in the front matter ("Get a free starter library by joining my list") captures readers who might be browsing the sample but aren't ready to buy yet. They might download the freebie instead. This converts a "window shopper" into a lead. It captures value from people who would otherwise leave without a trace.

Clean Formatting

The visual experience of the sample matters. Messy indentations, bad spacing, or poor font choices signal low quality. The sample must look professional. Readers subconsciously judge the editing quality based on the formatting. A clean, readable layout builds trust that the story will be equally polished.

Conclusion

The "Look Inside" is your final sales pitch. By strategically structuring the front matter and the opening chapters, authors can ensure that once a reader takes a peek, they are compelled to stay for the whole story.

Call to Action

If you want to ensure your book's interior is optimised for conversion, let our editorial team review your opening pages.

Visit: <https://www.smithpublicity.com/>