

The **My Online Biz** **Tool Kit**



**The 50-piece toolkit to start, scale and
sustain your online business!**

Tool #6 - Outlining And Organizing Made Simple (Done-For-You Structures)

When some people sit down to create a product, they do it “*by the seat of their pants*,” meaning they write about whatever comes to mind in the moment. However, if you want to be sure you create a really GOOD product – one that’s useful and your audience will love – then you’ll want to outline your content before you write. Not only does this help you produce a great end result, but it also makes the actual writing process easier.

Inside this guide, we’ll talk about how to construct three popular types of outlines:

- ⇒ **Chronological:** Use this for step-by-step information.
- ⇒ **Complexity:** Use this to organize information from easiest/takes the least time to more difficult/takes longer.
- ⇒ **Categorical:** Use this outline to organize information into categories.

NOTE: in some cases, you may use multiple outlines in a product. For example, you might organize a set of modules by complexity, but then organize the actual instruction within each module chronologically. You might even embed a categorical outline inside a step.

For example, a course on traffic generation lists modules by complexity. Each module – such as SEO – is organized chronologically (*Step 1, Find Your Keywords. Step 2, Do Competitor Research... etc.*). But then you might have information within each step that you list by complexity (*such as SEO tips*) or categorically (*such as SEO tools*).

So, the point is to keep in mind that the more complex your information is or the more information you’re sharing, the more likely it is that you may have “*mini outlines*” embedded inside your larger overall outlines. And that’s perfect because it will ensure your end result is well-organized and as useful as possible for the user. Let’s take a closer look at each of the three:

Outline One: Chronological

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Use this outline to organize “*how to*” information.

For example:

- ⇒ How to Teach Your Puppy to “Sit”
- ⇒ How to Buy a Used Car
- ⇒ How to Invest for Your Retirement
- ⇒ How to Make Candles

In addition to providing the steps of a process, you can also include tips, examples, mistakes, dos and don’ts and more to add value to your content.

Here’s the outline:

- A. Introduction
- B. Step 1
- C. Step 2
- D. Step 3
- E. [Other steps as needed]
- F. Conclusion

For example, let’s suppose you’re teaching people how to write a Facebook ad. A rough outline would like something like this:

- A. Introduction
- B. Step 1: Profile the Audience
- C. Step 2: List the Benefits of Your Offer

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D. Step 3: Craft a Benefit-Driven Headline

E. Step 4: Create Your Body Copy

F. Step 5: Call the Prospect to Action

G. Conclusion: Summary of what they just learned, plus encourage them to take action and put this information to use.

To add value to this particular example, the outline might include swipes or templates in Steps 3, 4 and 5. Every step should include tips and examples to make the information easier to understand and easier to implement.

Outline Two: Complexity

This is a great outline to use when organizing information that's not in step-by-step order. You can organize it easiest to hardest. You can also organize it so that prerequisite information comes first (*e.g., if it's helpful to know one piece of information first, then that should appear first in the outline*).

For example:

⇒ 7 Surefire Ways to Rev Up Your Metabolism

⇒ 101 Tips for Landing Your Dream Job

⇒ 10 Tricks Every Dog Owner Ought to Teach Their Smart Pup

Here's the outline:

A. Introduction

B. Item 1 (*easiest item to understand or implement*)

C. Item 2 (*little harder to understand/implement*)

D. Item 3 (*a little more difficult to understand/implement*)

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E. [Other items as needed]

F. Conclusion

As mentioned, sometimes the complexity outline works well to organize the overall information in a multimodule course.

For example, let's suppose you're teaching people how to generate traffic. Each module teaches a specific method, and each method can be organized chronologically. However, the modules themselves can be organized by complexity like this...

A. Introduction

B. Module 1: Guest Blogging

C. Module 2: Social Media Marketing

D. Module 3: SEO

E. Conclusion

Guest blogging is easy to understand and fairly quick to implement, so that's first. Social media marketing takes a bit longer to set up, so that's second. SEO takes longer to understand and implement, so that would be last in this short example.

Outline Three: Categorical

This outline is for information that needs to be categorized.

For example, if you're sharing traffic-generation tips, you might categorize by general type of method (*Free Traffic and Paid Traffic*), or you might break it down further by specific method (*Social Media Tips, JV Marketing Tips, SEO Tips and so on*).

A few more examples:

⇒ 10 Apps Every Writer Will Want to Own (*Organized by proofreading apps, productivity apps, formatting/design apps and so on.*)

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⇒ 20 Places to See Before You Die. (*Organized by type of place, such as Mountain, Beach, Natural Landmark, Historical Site, etc.*)

⇒ 50 Dog Breeds: Which One is Best for You? (*Organized by AKC category, such as Hound, Working, Sporting, etc.*)

Now, here's the outline...

A. Introduction

B. Category 1

- ⇒ Item 1
- ⇒ Item 2
- ⇒ Item 3
- ⇒ (Etc.)

C. Category 2

- ⇒ Item 1
- ⇒ Item 2
- ⇒ Item 3
- ⇒ (Etc.)

D. Category 3

Item 1
Item 2
Item 3
(Etc.)

E. [Other categories as needed]

F. Conclusion

Here's an example where you might share tools that every marketer ought to be using, and the tools are organized into alphabetical categories.

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A. Introduction

B. Autoresponders

- ⇒ Aweber
- ⇒ MailChimp

C. Content Management Systems

- ⇒ WordPress
- ⇒ Joomla

D. Keyword Tools

- ⇒ WordTracker
- ⇒ Google Trends

E. Conclusion

Depending on what you're doing, you may offer descriptions, pros and cons, or similar information about each of the items you've listed within the category.

Conclusion

As you can see, there are multiple ways to organize information. If the information is in a step-by-step format, then the chronological outline should be used. Any information you include in that step can use one of the two other outlines (such as organizing a set of 10 tips beneath a step – you might order those tips by complexity).