



Kindle Cover Design Principles

Purpose

In this lesson you will learn how to create and design Kindle covers for your Kindle books.

Designing a Cover

At the Bookstore

Whenever you visit a bookstore you see a bunch of different styles of book covers. Unless a book is given priority placement, a lot of books only get discovered by their spines.

As a result, cover designers will use contrast principles to get their book noticed. For example, if all the books have black spines, making your book cover with a red spine gets that book noticed and people are most likely going to check it out. The more people that check it out, the more that are going to buy it.

This same principle works on Amazon as well. If you browse Amazon books you'll notice there are a lot of different styles of covers. Choosing the right style can be a worthwhile effort.

Choosing "Right/Choosing "Best"

It should be noted that choosing a cover style isn't necessarily about choosing "right" as much as choosing "best". There are so many different ideas and approaches but in this lesson you'll learn two key principles that should help you choose best for your Kindle books.

It should also be noted that choosing the "best" cover for your Kindle books isn't that critical either. Choosing a good cover does matter but there are a lot of other things that matter as well and if you browse Kindle book listings, you will see plenty of examples where the cover isn't the best but the book still sells fine.

However, you do want to put your best foot forward and do everything you can to generate as many sales as possible. Creating or choosing a good cover can help in that it draws attention to your book.

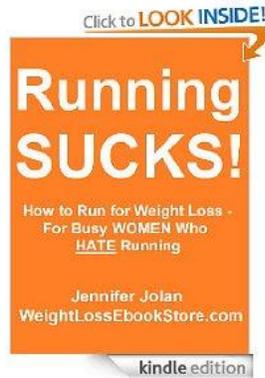
Example

People will tell you to have high quality images and cover design. The cover for our example Kindle book probably took all of about 2 minutes and the book is doing very well, likely in part because of the cover and the title combination.



The book we're talking about is "Running SUCKS! How to Run for Weight Loss – For Busy WOMEN Who HATE Running" by Jennifer Jolan. You can find this book on Amazon by searching "weight loss".

This book uses a very simple cover design but in doing so, gets noticed. Here is what the cover looks like:



This is a great example. The title stands out and the cover stands out. It uses an extremely simple yet extremely bold approach, with large, bold font type, a real grabber word in the title ("SUCKS!") and great color contrast (white font on orange background). The smaller font use near the bottom is also a good use of design, making the upper portion stand out even more.

One of the criteria to think about when creating your cover is that covers can be made dependent on your market. For example, people in the weight loss market are probably tired of fluff, junk and pictures of some guy with credentials giving them the latest and greatest info on how to lose weight. A cover like "Running SUCKS!" is a simple, refreshing change.

However, in another market, this simplicity may not work so you may need to test it out.

TIP: don't fret over whether you have the perfect book cover because you're going to want to switch it out anyway. A physical book has to be as good as possible off the press because it is not that simple to change it later. With a Kindle book, however, you can switch out the cover in about 2 minutes. Amazon will review and make sure everything is good with your book and you should see it back on the Kindle shelf again in about 12 hours.

It's actually a good idea to switch it out now and again to compensate for "banner blindness", something known to be a factor on websites that display advertisement banners. People become so accustomed to the banner they simply start ignoring it. There is an argument that says people want consistency and so leaving your cover as is provides for that, but in all likelihood they are only buying the book once, so for someone who didn't buy, maybe the reason was the cover didn't appeal to them.



When thinking about creating your cover design, you can go with a simple one like "Running SUCKS!" and if it doesn't appear to be doing well, try something fancier, like adding more color, include an image, etc.

Design Principles

It can be difficult to come up with hard and fast principles for cover design because of the variety of covers available that seem to work quite well, but there are a couple of principles that seem consistent across the various designs and so should be taken into consideration. These are:

- **Bold and unique** – the cover should be able stand out amongst all the others, like a red spine book amongst black ones.
- **Fits your market** – one design can work for one market and not necessarily for another. Be discerning and you should be able to select what's best for that market.

To illustrate this, do a top level category review of "Advice and how-to" Kindle books. What you will see are a number of covers that:

- relate to their market
- use images – the image alone can tell you what the book is about (e.g. food images on a recipe book or couple holding hands on a romance book cover)
- use "big and bold" title font
- go for contrast - e.g. "Real Sex: The Truth about Chastity" has font type that isn't that clear and a picture of a white rose that doesn't really tell you what the book is about but the white rose on black background stands out amongst all the other covers with light-colored backgrounds on the same list

One other really good use of design is in the fiction series "The Hunter Games" (by Suzanne Collins). If you view these books together you see a common theme on the covers (e.g. a bird) which gives a sense of interrelation between the covers, thus emphasizing the clear fact that these books are related.

As you can see, it is possible to distinguish your books from others within the market/keyword/category you're trying to rank for by differentiating your cover from the common types that are in the same listing as your books.

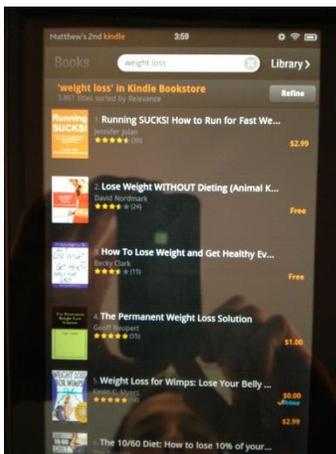
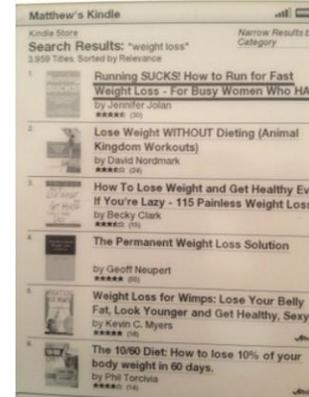
Kindle – Old vs. New

One other consideration you want to keep in mind when designing your cover is just how it views on an actual Kindle device. Remember, it is on the Kindle device that most people are



going to see your cover. Viewing the cover on Amazon just on your PC or whatever is not going to give you a proper sense of what others will see when browsing the Kindle lists on their device.

For example, on the old black and white Kindle, a lot of different covers don't appear well. The "Running SUCKS" cover does because of its big and bold font type. A cover with a clear image (not all images are clear) is nicely displayed but for many, the cover may not be viewable because of poor choice of font, font color, background color or image on the cover. These poor choices can actually make it difficult or prevent altogether the viewing of your cover on the Kindle device.



The Kindle Fire has a much better display. This device displays in color so it displays more of the covers better than on the older Kindle, but the ones that stand out are still those that use big and bold font type with good color contrast and high quality, clear images.

Conclusion

As you can tell, there is a lot of flexibility in designing your cover. However, there are some basic principles that can be adhered to no matter what category or market you want to rank for:

- **Be loud and visible** - people need to be able to read your text
- **Create for your market** - people will believe the book delivers on what they expect

Keep these in mind while being flexible and creative in the designs you come up with and you should have no trouble creating good covers for your Kindle books.