



## The Big, BIG Book of Lists

Hundreds of 'em, holding your hand through the basic steps of running a small biz

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I get a lot of stuff in the mail (yes, via the good ol' USPS) as vendors try to promote their physical wares and experts try to convince me of their intellectual powers.

Sometimes the packages include treats like [USB](#) drives, jelly beans, once even a bottle of wine privately labeled by a leading disk drive vendor, but mostly it all goes into the circular file (OK, I ate the jelly beans and tried to drink what turned out to be undrinkable vino). But a book arrived the other day that I not only opened with interest, but which also actually kept me awake browsing through. Amazing!

Called the [Small Business Book of Lists](#), this is a book containing hundreds of lists, each penned by an expert in his or her field, and compiled by editor Gene Marks. It has everything from a step-by-step list on how to approach a venture capitalist, to dealing with the IRS, to choosing a database. You can find the top 10 places to get discount airfares, the best ways to speed up cash flow, and a multitude of other topics, all presented in an easy-to-read, numbered format.

OK, so I'm a sucker for lists of all types anyway. I especially like ones that tell me what to do, firmly and concisely, whenever possible. Of course, there are a lot of areas in business, as in life, where things aren't black and white. That's what makes this book so comforting, I think: no ambiguity here. Just handholding through the basic steps you need to take through some of the biggest challenges of running a small business.

Since this is a marketing blog, I should probably say something special about the marketing advice it offers (there's a whole section devoted to getting and keeping customers). I liked the list on how to prepare a customer survey, as well as the one on the benefits of an [extranet](#) (and don't worry, it first defines an extranet clearly and succinctly).

The book retails for \$19.95. If I hadn't gotten it for free, I would have forked over the cash. Sure, it's just an overview of what are some very complex topics (such as how to deal with the IRS). But you can always look elsewhere to drill down into particular subjects. In the meantime, it deserves a place on your bookshelf. Check it out.

— Alice LaPlante is a veteran freelance business and technology writer who lives in Palo Alto, Calif. She is the author of four books, including *Playing for Profit: How Digital Entertainment Is Making Big Business out of Child's Play*.