



Silicon Valley Author Kevin Payne, A Tech Marketing Expert, Elevates Strong Book Draft Into Publication-Ready Manuscript

Several years ago, Kevin Payne started writing a book about his career in tech marketing in Silicon Valley. He wanted to share his experiences and learnings about how technology and marketing evolved over that time. He finished the draft manuscript toward the end of 2024 and prepared to start the publishing process.

“I knew the manuscript needed editing—not only for punctuation and grammar but also for flow and continuity,” Kevin says. “I wanted a fresh set of eyes to review it objectively and honestly. No one had read it but me.”

He reached out to a friend and former colleague who owns a small publishing business. Although they were interested in the project, the cost to employ them was simply too high. Then, he reached out to a former colleague, freelance writer Becky Lawlor, to ask if she knew of anyone who could edit his book.

Kevin had hoped Becky would say she’d do it. Instead, she offered to check her network. A few days later, she wrote to Kevin introducing him to Nate Birt.

“I thought to myself, *That name sure sounds familiar*,” Kevin recalls. “Very shortly thereafter, I got an email from Nate introducing himself and saying he was excited to meet with me to discuss my project.”

Kevin wrote back to Nate.

“Nate, we know each other. We met at a conference in Chicago around eight or so years ago, and then we had dinner when you were in the Bay Area.”

“I remember that!” replied Nate. And we set up a time to meet,” Kevin recalls.

Two editing support tracks, one book publishing goal

After discussing various options, Kevin and Nate decided to collaborate on two levels. First, Nate would review the manuscript and recommend basic proofreading revisions for grammar, punctuation and the like. Second, Nate would provide content editing support, recommending revisions for clarity, flow, and improved storytelling.



“It was almost like he was inside my head – in a good way. Nate captured my voice, my style, and my sense of humor.”

-Kevin Payne, Silicon Valley tech marketer, mentor, and author



**SILVER MAPLE
STRATEGIES, LLC**
Rooted In Creative Possibility™

“Nate’s contributions and suggestions far exceeded my expectations,” Kevin says. “Not only were they thorough and comprehensive, but his edits sounded like I would have written them. It was almost like he was inside my head—in a good way. Nate captured my voice, my style, and my sense of humor.”

Nate supported Kevin in setting up a collaborative process that combined book coaching and critical feedback designed to take a strong manuscript and enhance it for reader enjoyment.

“Nate and I initially set up a meeting schedule for touchpoints throughout the process,” Kevin explains. “He then started editing away. He would send me his first-round edits and comments chapter by chapter. I would then review them, accept or comment on them and send them back. When we got through the entire book, Nate started the second and final round of edits and sent them back to me chapter by chapter.”

Kevin notes that while the technical input proved extremely valuable, Nate’s genuine enthusiasm for the project—and for helping him succeed with his publishing goals—buoyed him through the ups and downs of the writing process.

“Beyond just providing editing, Nate also provided encouragement. He would tell me how he found the book to be an exciting read and his favorite project for the week,” Kevin says. “For a first-time book author, I had seriously wondered if anyone beside me would find the book of value. Nate’s graciousness and enthusiasm motivated me to keep plugging away!”

As a book coach, Nate made himself available to answer Kevin’s questions over Zoom and email ensuring Kevin had access to the just-in-time insights he needed.

Reflecting on the Book Project and Looking Ahead

As of this writing, Kevin is in the final editing stages and will then move into formatting and self-publishing of his book.

“The book is much, much better because of Nate’s fine work,” Kevin says. “It reads better. It flows better. It’s more interesting and more concise.

“Nate’s nature and personality are a natural fit with mine,” he continues. “I doubt anyone else could have been as thoughtful, supportive and enthusiastic. Nor do I think anyone else could have edited the book as well as Nate did.”

Kevin acknowledges the many unknowns of book publishing despite having a great final product. Yet to him, the value of the experience wasn’t just about having a finished manuscript in hand.

“As much as I have enjoyed reading, writing and rewriting my book, it could be a drag at times,” Kevin admits. “Tweaking this, tweaking that. Nate kept me excited in the project. I don’t know if they’ll ever make a movie from the book or if it will sell 100 copies, but I’m now very proud of the final product. It’s everything I hoped it would be and more.”



Heartland Hopefulness and Humor for Busy Author Clients

A final story from Kevin’s experience reflects the fact that the engagement with Nate wasn’t all about processing reams of comment bubbles and suggested adjustments in Google Docs.

“The odd nature of our coming together on this project—me reaching out to Becky in Utah, who happens to know Nate in Missouri, whom I happened to know from years gone by—can only be described as providence,” Kevin says. “I think I knew that from the first moment we spoke.”

He continues: “The added benefit of working with Nate was that I now know what to do with a dead cow, if I ever come across one. You’ll have to ask Nate to recount that story. But I share it because sharing such odd and random thoughts was an enjoyable part of the process and a signal that our collaboration was more than just a client-vendor relationship. I feel like I rekindled a friendship with someone whose opinions and perspectives I value. I hope I can someday visit Nate and take him to dinner, so long as all of the cows are doing OK.”

As for what other authors will experience when they hire Nate, Kevin—ever the marketer—is quick with a succinct summary.

“Be prepared to work with an excellent collaborator and partner,” Kevin advises. “Your project, be it a book or an article, will be better because of Nate. And you’ll have fun all the way along!”