How to Make an Editor Happy
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What Makes an Editor Happy?
- Proposals: Complete, well-thought out
- Manuscripts: Communication is key

The Proposal
Getting an acquisitions “I Do” for your non-fiction manuscript

The Proposal
- What's the Type or Style?
  - General reference
  - How-to
  - Memoir

The Proposal
- What’s the Scope?
  - Encyclopedic
  - Quick and Easy
  - Beginner
  - Advanced

The Proposal
- What’s the Tone?
  - Friendly
  - Authoritative
The Proposal

Who’s the Audience?
- General Population
  - Must be broad
  - Easy to understand
  - Easy to market

Who’s the Audience?
- Specialty Market
  - Will they trust you?
  - Reputation
  - Is there a channel to reach them?

What Are Your Qualifications?
- Experience?
- Accreditations
- Co-author?
  - Vet
  - Trainer
  - Behaviorist

Do a Competitive Analysis
- Google
- Amazon
- Bookstore
- Library

Ask Yourself:
- What do you like about the competition?
- What don’t you like?
- How is your book different?

Putting Together a Proposal
- Cover letter
- Summary
- Competitive Analysis
- Marketing Analysis
- Bio
- Sample TOC
- Sample Chapters
- SASE
Putting Together a Proposal

- Cover Letter
  - Your address
  - Why you're writing the book
  - Your idea summarized in a few sentences
  - Your title
  - Email address and phone number

- Summary
  - Make it interesting and lively
  - Short paragraphs for each idea
  - Include extent and when the manuscript can be delivered
  - Ideas on how the book would look

- Competitive Analysis
  - List competitive book titles, authors, publishers, date published
  - Underneath, put why your book is different or better

- Marketing Analysis
  - How would you sell the book?
  - Do you have any contacts that could help get publicity?
  - Reviews/quotes
  - Web presence

- Bio
  - Accreditations, experience
  - All prior published materials (books, articles, web pages)
  - Sales figures of prior publications (if you have them)
  - Media experience

- Sample TOC
  - Is it organized?
  - Is it complete?
  - Is it logical?
  - Does it reinforce your summary and competitive analysis?
  - Make it as detailed as possible
    - Use subheads
Putting Together a Proposal

- Sample Chapter
  - Best example of theme of the book
  - Best example of your writing style
  - Send two to four chapters (depending on length)

- SASE
  - If you want anything returned, you should include a self-addressed stamped envelope
  - If you don’t mind being contacted by email, state that in your cover letter (no SASE needed)

Unsuccessful Proposals

- Handwritten
- No contact information
- No idea what else is on the market
- Wrong type of publishing house

- Inappropriate
- Self-involved
- Grammar and spelling mistakes

Successful Proposals

- “Wow” factor
- New and fresh
- Individual voice
- Passion
- See handout for example

The Proposal

- Can you guess why this writer’s proposal was rejected?
  - In all honesty, I was not ready to summit any of the content to a publication yet. This is also my first book, so I have no experience writing one. Thanks for the information and tips. I will definitely work on those areas and perhaps summit it again in a few months, that is if you will allow me to do so. It looks like I have a lot to work on.
The Manuscript

Handing in your masterpiece and impressing your editor

Communication Is Key!
- During the Process
  - Email
  - Phone
  - Pony Express…

Be on Time
- Lateness can throw off publishing schedule
- Rush = less care
- Let your editor know asap if there are special circumstances

House Style Sheet
- Follow it as best you can
- If publisher doesn’t have one, try to be consistent throughout the manuscript
  - Pick a style like Chicago or AP
  - Make headers and subheads consistent

Follow the TOC/Outline
- Editors hate surprises
- Changes to the TOC should be run by your editor during the writing stage

Ask About Extras
- Glossary?
- Bibliography?
- Sidebars or boxes?
- Photos or drawings?
- Resources
The Manuscript

- Right Format
  - Electronic
    - Email
    - Disc
  - Hard copy
    - May not be needed

The Manuscript

- Examples of Unhappiness
  - Plagiarism
  - No formatting
  - Not the idea that was contracted
  - Handwritten or typewritten

The Manuscript

- Examples of Unhappiness
  - Too short
  - Too long
  - Unorganized
  - Passive voice

The Manuscript

- Examples of Happiness
  - On time
  - Right length
  - Right tone
  - Well-organized
  - Proofed

Thanks for Your Time!

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