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

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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

The Proposal

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

The Proposal

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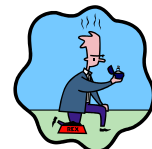
The Proposal

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

The Proposal

- 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

Putting Together a Proposal

- 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

Putting Together a Proposal

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

Putting Together a Proposal

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

Putting Together a Proposal

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

Putting Together a Proposal

- 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)

Putting Together a Proposal

- 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**

Unsuccessful Proposals

- **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 **eperience writting** one. Thanks for the information and tips. I will **definately** 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 **alot** to work on.

The Manuscript

Handing in your masterpiece and impressing your editor

The Manuscript

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

The Manuscript

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

The Manuscript

o 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

The Manuscript

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

The Manuscript

o 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!

And thanks to Jules and Vince, who were invaluable in the making of this presentation, including sitting on the keyboard and attacking the "mouse"