**Book Proposals**

**Who are you initially trying to reach?**

* Agents
* Acquisitions Editors
* Editorial Board
* Publication Board
  + Sales
  + Marketing
  + Creatives
    - Art and design teams

**Q&A** Do you understand the personal reach of the Proposal?

**Why?**

* Encourage them to take a chance on the book
* Encourage them to financially back the book
* Convince them the book will change lives (meet the need you have established)

**Q&A** Do you understand why the proposal is so important?

**Industry standard for formatting**

* Times New Roman, 12 pt.
* 1” margins all around
* Chapter headings 1/3-1/2 down the page
* Everything will be single-spaced except the sample chapters
* Number your pages
* Use a footer if you are sending a paper copy (which almost no one requests at this time)
  + not generally necessary if you are sending electronically

**All should be assembled into one Word document to send to the agent/editor:** don’t send sections in individual files

When sending electronically (email) be sure to have a subject line. Query, or fiction proposal, nonfiction proposal, etc. We don’t like to open email attachments when we don’t know what they are. And I, personally, like to see the cover letter copied into the email as well as attached to the proposal.

**Q&A** Do you have any questions about formatting the proposal?

This is your exclusive opportunity to convince one or more industry individuals that they should have faith in your work and be willing to take a chance on you. It is possibly your ONLY opportunity. So make it count!

**SAMPLE: Cover/Title page**

**A Proposal**

**Title**

**Author**

**Genre**

**Word count**

**Agent**

**Address**

**Email**

**Phone**

**BREAKING DOWN THE ELEMENTS OF A PROFESSIONAL PROPOSAL**

**FICTION**

1. **Cover letter.** I like to see one as if you are writing a query letter, short and sweet, and to the point, but feel free to include more about you than you might in a simple query. In your cover letter, you might want to include a comparison to make the agent/editor actually SEE what you are trying to convey about your book. In other words, think of a thriller about a common everyday man who is out to wreak vengeance on a corporate predator responsible for the death of his granddaughter. How might it play out in an imagine scenario:

Imagine: ***Dexter* meets *Mr. Rogers* and**

**they create a deliciously frightening and satisfying bond of revenge**

1. **Short bio**. A short bio as it would appear on your book jacket. Remember, you’re greeting your public with this one.
2. **Long bio**. Tell me who you are! I want to feel like I’m actually meeting you. Feel free to give me a true look at Jane or John Doe.
3. **Elevator pitch/tag line**. Twenty to thirty words that sum up your overall story idea.
4. **Short one-page summary** of your book. Give me the overall story line, but in just one page. Learn to do this well and you’ve arrived! You’re a pro!
5. **Market analysis**. Who is your target audience? Who would be your perfect reader? BE SURE that you can answer this, because if you can’t, how do you write the book?
   1. Give us a secondary and possibly a tertiary audience. A romance novel that is about a female veterinarian on a ranch will obviously have a female romance readership probably in the 25-45 age group. A secondary audience might be women who love horses, farms, ranches. A third could be women in high octane jobs: doctors, nurses, corporates, etc. who see strong women as a driving force in the story.
6. **Competitives/Comparables/Position in the Marketplace**. What book shelf will your book sit on? What books would garner the same readers as yours? Not: who do you write like, but whose readers might also seek out your work? 2 or 3 from within the last 5 years (the more current, the better). No more than a short line or two about how the similarities might play out.
7. **Marketing strategies**. YES! The dreaded platform. It’s fine, don’t stress, but let us know how you are going to help a publisher market your book and what you are doing right now to network successfully. In order to intrigue a publisher to take a chance, the better the platform, the better the opportunity to connect. What is your strategy to draw a publisher in and entice them to take a chance on you? Please include all pertinent information. An agent or editor can pare it down if necessary, but now is not the time to me modest. Honest? Yes. But modest? No!
8. **Synopsis.** 2-3 single-spaced pages covering the entire story. No cliff hangers, no what ifs. You want the agent/editor to see the ending spelled out**.**
9. **First 3 consecutive chapters**. Yes, chapter one, two, and three for fiction **UNLESS** the agency or publisher requests a specific number of pages or the full manuscript to be included.

You may also include **felt need** in the fiction proposal. Readers want to know what they’ll take away from your novel. Learning forgiveness? Learning to trust? What kind of love is real and what is soap opera sappy (nothing to do with real life)?

If you have **possible endorsers** (these should be recognizable names in the industry), include them under your marketing strategies. This will apply to both fiction and nonfiction.

**Q&A** Are the elements easily understood and ready to be included in your proposal? What elements are confusing?

**NONFICTION**

What are we going to include and add to the nonfiction proposal? What are the differences and how can I make my proposal stand out—in a good way?

**We will always include (not optional)**:

**Felt Need**. What emotional connection do we expect the reader to feel?

**Emotional Payload**. What will the reader take away from the read? How will it help them meet that need? How might it change their lives?

**Specific Genre**. Don’t say it’s Christian nonfiction. It is so much more. Is it narrative nonfiction? Christian living? Devotional? Memoir? Be specific so that you immediately connect with the agent/editor/publisher reading your proposal. Leave no doubt where the book is heading and where it would be shelved in the bookstore.

1. **Chapter Outline** will be #10 in the nonfiction proposal. One to two sentences detailing each chapter.
2. **How will you accomplish the information**? For instance, in a devotional, what format will you use to draw them in, show practical application to daily life, and provide a satisfying outcome?
3. **Sample chapters**. Always include chapter one. Most agents/editors are willing, then, to see two additional chapters of your choice. But if they ask for the first three or last three, give them what they ask for.

**Q&A** Are the differences between fiction and nonfiction easily understood? Do you understand the differences and what is required of them?

These are guidelines that will help you look like the consummate professional. But if an agency or publisher askes for a different format, don’t dig your heels in, be flexible and obliging. Make the adjustments as they want to see the elements spelled out. You’ve got this! A proposal isn’t a test. This will only help to make you appear the professional you are meant to be in an ever more demanding industry.