

# Selling: 10 Tips on Selling in 50 Words or Less

Workshop #2, Friday, 4:30–5:40 PM  

LOCATION: BROOKSIDE: LOWER DH



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1. **Have three pitches prepared:** the elevator pitch (15-20 seconds), the “meal” pitch (1-3 minutes), the appointment pitch (10-15 minutes).
2. **Hone the tag line** until it shines. This will be your elevator pitch, but it will also introduce the longer pitches as well.
3. **Focus on the reader’s POV**, not the writer’s. In other words, when preparing pitches, think less about the writing process and more about what will sell a book to a reader. And remember that most readers make a buying decision in less than 10 seconds. What would make YOU want to pick this book up?
4. **Include the major conflict in the book for the protagonist, primary turning points in the book, and the resolution.** Yes, be prepared to tell how the story ends.
5. **Be prepared to answer follow-up questions.** I’ve include a list of questions below that agents and editors have been known to ask authors during pitch sessions. Most of the answers should be in a longer pitch, but you should definitely know the answers to these before you sit down.
6. **Don’t worry about being nervous.** Editors and agent expect that. Take a deep breath and try not to vomit on them. Everything else is normal.
7. **Don’t be afraid to inject your own personality or voice into the pitch.**
8. **Know something** about the agency or publishing house, and feel free to ask questions.
9. **PRACTICE!** Have someone call you at unusual times and demand, “Tell me about your book!” Record yourself. Become friends with the mirror. Learn how to pry your tongue off the roof of your mouth.
10. Expect to be interrupted. If your editor doesn’t buy speculative and your tag line includes the words “zombie apocalypse,” she’s going to stop you. Sometimes, they’ve just heard enough to say, “No, thanks,” but sometimes they want you to expand on a point. Practice stopping to answer questions, then picking up where you left off.

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## The Elevator Pitch

No more than 50 words. Should include a tag line and two sentences with a simple summary.

## The Mealtime Pitch

No more than 250 words. Start with the tag line, then include the 5 basic elements of the book (main character, situation/setting, MC's primary objective, the opponent/antagonist, the black moment). Prepare 1-2 sentences about each, then a conclusion. Voila! The perfect appetizer for rubber chicken.

## The Session Pitch

Will vary in length. Start with the mealtime pitch and expand a bit on each element (except the tag). Include a bit about yourself, your career, and what you might do to market the book (your blog, Facebook, Pinterest, etc.).

## Potential Follow-up Questions

1. Who is the protagonist (the hero or heroine) who moves through the story (carrying the reader along)? Does the book start with the protagonist?
2. What is the protagonist's overarching goal? (In other words, what is he or she struggling to achieve?)
3. What's the plot/story arc?
4. What's the inciting incident that launches the plot? What's at stake? (What happens if the protagonist doesn't succeed?)
5. Who (or what?) is the antagonist who opposes the protagonist (e.g. make him/her struggle to reach his/her goal)?
6. What drives the protagonist to struggle against the antagonist? (Why can't s/he forget the whole thing and go home?)
7. What's the subplot?
8. How well do the Christian elements blend into the story and reflect a world view as opposed to a "preachy" message?
9. What made you want to write this book over other ideas that you have?
10. What makes this book stand out from other books like it on the market?