

Craft: How to Make an Agent (or Editor) Think You're Brilliant

Workshop #31, Sunday, 3:15–4:15 PM  

LOCATION: YOUTH MEMORIAL



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1. Start with the Basics:

Write well

Build your platform

Write something unique

Write an outstanding book proposal

2. Common Questions Writers Ask:

Do I have to write a proposal? What good does it do?

A book proposal is like a business plan. Book publishing is business, and each book is an entrepreneurial venture. A book proposal is a way to “write the vision” so that someone can run with it.

Do I have to have a platform? What will that do for me?

A platform is a measure of your visibility in the market. Between 1880 and 1980, there were 40,000 books published in the English language. 40,000 books in 100 years. In 2011, there were more than 3 million books published in the English language. There is more supply than demand now than ever.

Do I have to be on Facebook and Twitter?

Most likely, yes. However, the real question is more about connecting with your audience.

3. Common Questions Agents/Editors Ask:

Who is this author? If you're not already famous, what makes you stand out? What qualifies you to write this message or story? Agents and editors want to work with people they like. What makes you likeable? Who are you really?

Is this message/story unique? In what way(s)? You must do thorough market research to know for sure. Don't leave this to the agent to figure out.

Who is the audience for this book? Is the author connected to the audience? How can you know if you'll reach your intended audience?

How will this author promote and sell their book? You have to wear three hats to be an author these days.

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4. What *Really* Makes an Agent Think You're Brilliant

Excellent writing. This means good spelling, grammar, etc. in your proposal. Not sure if your writing is outstanding? Join a good critique group, or better yet, hire a freelance editor.

Agents and editors love to read (duh!). If you write so well that they forget they're reading a proposal, they'll think you're brilliant.

Something resonates. Agents and editors will spend more time with your proposal if it hits home with them, or if they see it will hit home with a large audience. If what you're writing is relevant to the masses, they'll think you're brilliant.

The top ten characteristics of best-selling authors. Some things are more important than knowledge and skill. If you build your life and work on an unshakable foundation, they'll think you're brilliant.