

How to Write a Winning Non-Fiction Book Proposal

Francine Segan, Food Historian and Author of Six Non-Fiction Books

During this 90-minute session we'll explore the best ways to present your book concept to write an effective book proposal. We'll discuss how to answer a proposal's three basic questions: -a- What is your book about? -b-What is the market for the book? -c-Why are you the right person to write this book?

A book proposal consists of the following:

OVERVIEW

This section, of three to four paragraphs, gives a general summary of your book (answering question a). While the title may be the last thing you consider, it's the first thing a potential editor will review in your proposal.

Chapter-by-Chapter Outline

Chapter titles, with a brief description of each chapter

MARKETING NOTES

This is probably the most important part of the proposal (answers question b).

- What are the three most important things about your book?
- Who is the book's audience?
- Discuss the competition that currently exists for your book. Be sure to come to the workshop having researched this!
- Where might your book sell? (besides traditional bookstores...such as gift shops, museum stores)
- What you'll do to promote the book:
 - List any national/local organizations, clubs, institutions, etc., that might be interested in your book.
 - Are there any forthcoming events (i.e. anniversaries, openings) relating to the subject of your book?

AUTHOR CREDENTIALS

This section must answer question c in a narrative format in the third person. Moira Allen, author of *The Writer's Guide to Queries, Pitches & Proposals*, stresses, "No matter how convincing an outline you put together, publishers will still have one 'make-or-break' question: What are your qualifications for writing this book?"

Brief personal and professional biography that gives a sense of your personality and the things about you that are interesting, important, or unusual

- Why are you the ideal person to write this book?

- List any articles you have had published on the book's topic

- List book-related lectures or pod casts you've given on the topic

- What life experience might be interesting to your future readers?

- Website and/or blog address, social media (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram etc)

- Major undertakings or projects completed? (Even if not related to the book, this shows your publishers that you can be counted on to hand in the manuscript on time!)

SAMPLE PAGES

Three to four pages, from several different chapters