

BOOK PROPOSAL CONTENT CHECKLIST: WHAT TO WRITE WHEN

From *How to Write a Book Proposal, Fifth Edition*

By Jody Rein with Michael Larsen

Writing your proposal in this order will enhance your productivity and reduce stress and procrastination. Give it a try! Check off each section as you complete it—and let us know if it works for you:

MIKE LARSEN: larsenpoma@aol.com

JODY REIN: coach@jodyreinbooks.com

Use this list in conjunction with [link and name other list], which includes organizational and finalizing steps.

- CONSIDER PIZZAZZ.** Get into the right mind-set by learning about the elements that engender editorial enthusiasm.
- WRITE THE COMPS SECTION ROUGH DRAFT.** Gaining an understanding of comparable and competing titles will inform every other part of your proposal.
- CREATE A DRAFT OF YOUR BOOK'S TABLE OF CONTENTS.** Structure your book while the organization of comparable titles is fresh in your mind and the books you've just analyzed are still on your desk or in your Kindle.
- DRAFT THE BOOK SPECS.** Immediately after drafting the book's table of contents, jot down objective features like the estimated length, your writing style, and the content structure.
- DRAFT THE AUTHOR BIO AND PLATFORM SECTIONS.** Why now? For most writers, creating an author bio is relatively easy. You could work on it at any time throughout this process, but tackling it after the book specs provides a break after the more intense organizational thinking required for the previous steps. Also, platform ideas will flow naturally from the research you've done to write your bio.
- WRITE ABOUT THE AUDIENCE.** You've just documented your platform, which is the means you have in place to reach your audience. Describing that audience will now be a straightforward task.
- WRITE THE DETAILED OUTLINE, AND ADD DESCRIPTIONS TO YOUR TABLE OF CONTENTS DRAFT.** Here's a welcome change: Leave marketing behind, and reenter the world of your book. You've flash-written some manuscript pages and determined your book's structure by this point in the proposal-writing process. Using this material to flesh out your outline is less daunting—and speedier—than coming to it cold.
- WRITE THE OVERVIEW.** You now know your book, your audience, your platform, and yourself. Finally, you've collected the information needed to craft a strong introduction that summarizes your proposal.
- REVISE YOUR FLASH WRITING.** Because you have planned your book's structure and style, you can now productively revise your flash writing into sample chapters.
- ADD PIZZAZZ.** With most section drafts completed, you're equipped to make an informed judgment about whether to add an attention-getting opener.
- CRAFT ADDITIONAL SECTIONS AND SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL.** Your proposal may include extra sections and closing supplemental material. The order in which you write remaining sections won't affect your efficiency.