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clever girl author

Book Proposal Checklist



Leverage this checklist as you build out an amazing book proposal to get your book published!

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Intro

A book proposal is essentially an overview of what your book has to offer. It showcases why anyone would want to read your book and how it can be marketable to your target audience to generate sales.

Think of it like a sale pitch, where the product is your book and the client is the publisher that you'd like to take on the publishing and marketing of your work.

In addition to showcasing your work, it's not uncommon for book proposals to also include sample chapters.

Ultimately, when writing a book proposal, you want to share every reason why your book will do well in the market.

Keep in mind that your book proposal (outside of your sample chapters) should be clear and straight to the point. Between one and three pages is a good baseline.

Even if you are self-publishing, writing a book proposal for yourself can help you create a plan and structure for your book.

Leverage this checklist to layout your own book proposal.

You can use the exact headers below or modify or consolidate them accordingly to make this book proposal template your own.

Author bio

If someone were to pick up a copy of your book and turn it over to read about you, what would it say?

Book title and subtitle

It's a good idea to consider titles and subtitles that not only reflect the content of your book but that are search engine friendly as well.

Book topic summary

A Your book topic summary should explain why this topic is needed or would be interesting to your reader.

Book details

Explain the key points, angles, and takeaways from your book. What's going to make this a "must-read" for your audience?

Market need

Is your book relevant to a specific demographic or country? Or is it relevant globally? This helps give the publisher an idea of the potential sales scale for your book.

Target readers/audience

Who is your target reader? How old are they? Where do they live? What do they do for work?

Why anyone should buy this book

What's the hook for your book?

Book vision

- How many words do you imagine it will be?
- Is your preference a paperback or hardcover?
- Will it have diagrams, illustrations, tables, etc?
- Is having it printed in color an important factor?
- Do you want to have an audiobook?
- What do you believe is a good price point for it?

Competition

So do some research and list out 3 books most similar to yours in topic and price and why your book different.

Related title

Does your publisher already have books in their portfolio that are similar to yours? You can look at their website to see which similar books they have published.

Sales pitch

Share bullet points or key areas that you think will be the strongest selling platforms and angles for your book.

Opportunities for bulk sales

Do you have a business or platform outside of being an author where you can pursue bulk sales?

- For example, a college might decide to buy bulk copies of an academic book you have written, or a library might purchase bulk copies of your book, etc.

Public speaking experience

Highlight your speaking experience over the last 12 to 24 months. Share what organizations you spoke to and what the audience size was and how many speaking opportunities you had.

Upcoming public speaking engagements

If you have upcoming public speaking engagements be sure to list them in your book proposal template. Include details of where, who you will speak to, and how large the audience is estimated to be.

Higher education opportunities

If you are writing an academic title, be sure to list out opportunities to promote your book in the academic circuit.

Author platform metrics

- Social media metrics including platforms, followers, their location, and engagement
- Your website metrics e.g. monthly traffic, time on site, top pages, etc
- Your personal or business email list reach
- Any paid products or services you offer and the associated sales metrics
- Mainstream media appearances

Book add-on ideas

For example, downloadable worksheets, spreadsheets, a supporting online course, a dedicated book website, supporting videos, etc.

Key endorsements

Who would endorse your book? It could be mentors, influencers, or other authors - the whole idea is to leverage their name and reach to provide backing for your book.

Book subject codes

Every published book has assigned book subject codes. You can review the comprehensive list of BISAC codes to determine the best subject codes to suit your book.

Sample table of contents and sample chapters

Include a sample table of contents and sample chapters.

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