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1-2-3 Submitting Your Work to Publishers

By Lisa Hood

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I've finished my first book: each word has been read and re-read, each sentence edited, each page a labor of love. All my family and friends have read my book and assured me it's wonderful - sure to be the next bestseller. I have an agent, who praises my work and artistic genius. He submits my manuscript to dozens of publishers and soon a bidding war ensues. I can imagine that big advance in my bank account right now.

BUZZZZ (This would be my alarm clock, because I've been dreaming!)

My book may be done, but the work has just started.

There are various types of publishers: some are large commercial houses, while others cater to niche markets. You (or your agent) must find appropriate publishers for your book, based on the genre, whether it is fiction or non fiction, the intended audience, etc.

To locate a publisher, you may begin your research at your local library or bookstore. Here you can find books which are similar to yours and appeal to your target audience. The publisher's name and address can usually be found in the front of the book. Once you have a list of possible publishers, you can continue your research by visiting their web sites, where you will look for submission guidelines, whether or not the publisher accepts unagented or unsolicited queries and a list of editors. If the web site does not include a list of editors in house, find a copy of the Literary Market Place reference guide, which contains a list of publishers and their editors. If you can not find an individual editor's name, do not send materials to that publisher. With so much incoming mail, a package addressed to "Editor" or "To Whom it May Concern" will most likely be thrown away, unopened. Save your postage.

Include an introductory letter which is informational, no more than one page in length, to the point and professional. Tell the editor if your work is fictional, non fictional, include a sentence or two summarizing the book and then a brief summary of your credentials. Do not make claims that your book will be the next best seller, or comparisons to other works.

1–2–3 Submitting Your Work to Publishers

It is acceptable to submit your work to more than one publisher at a time, however, do not submit to more than one editor at a publisher at a time. If one editor passes, do not resubmit to that particular publisher.

Fiction

An editor, sorting through thousands of submissions a week, does not have the bandwidth to receive, store and read entire manuscripts. Instead, you should submit a story synopsis (spoilers and all), a sample of your writing and a resume.

1. Story Synopsis – The synopsis should be concise and include a complete description of the story. An editor does not have time read your entire manuscript when evaluating your submission, so you need to lay it all out there. Don't tease or drop hints that there is a terrific surprise ending.

2. Writing Sample - 100 pages or the first three chapters is a typical submission, although you should tailor this to meet the specific guidelines of the publisher you intend to contact. Keep in mind appropriate formatting as well: 1" margins, 12 point font, double spaced, indented paragraphs, etc.

3. Resume - Should include your writing credits, published works, articles, awards, etc.

Non Fiction

When proposing a non fiction book to an editor, you do not need to have a finished work. Instead, you should have a proposal, a table of contents, a short writing sample and a resume. This information, in addition to your credentials and ability to contribute a new perspective or information to the existing market will be sufficient for an editor to evaluate your work.

1. Proposal - Identify a question or problem and how you intend to provide the answer or solution. According to Susan Rabiner and Alfred Fortunato, authors of *Thinking Like Your Editor: How to Write Great Serious Nonfiction* — and *Get It Published*, editors require answers to the following 5 questions:

- 1.What is this book about?
- 2.What's new here?
- 3.Why are you the person to write this book?
- 4.Why is now the time to publish this book?
- 5.What is the core audience you are writing this book for, and why will that audience find what you have to say a "must read?"

Rabiner and Fortunato do not recommend you include these questions in your proposal, but rather, they recommend you incorporate them into the letter's text. This is important to demonstrate your ability to communicate in text rather than Q&A or outline form.

2.Table of Contents - Proposed structure of the book, which may be topographical or chronological. Include the title for each chapter and in one or two paragraphs, summarize the chapter's contents

3. Writing Sample - Will demonstrate your skill level and voice. It must be appropriate for the type of book you intend to write. A humorous antidotal tone may not be appropriate for a book on cancer research whereas a dry, matter of fact tone may not be appropriate for a book on craft projects for kids. The best way to know the appropriate voice is to read current books on the market.

4. Resume - You must establish yourself as an expert on your subject, so include any and all relevant information, including: your occupation, your lifestyle, your life experiences, education, organizations, awards, publicity, etc.

Don't forget to include a SASE (self-addressed stamped envelope) if you want your materials returned.

Now, finally, you can get back to the business of writing, and wait for the money to come rolling in.

BUZZZZ

Resources

Rabiner, Susan, Fortunato, Alfred: Thinking Like Your Editor: How to Write Great Serious Nonfiction --

and Get It Published, 2002, Norton, W. W. & Company, Inc. New York, NY

Author Unknown: Publishers' Submission Guidelines, Retrieved 2004,
<http://www.authorlink.com/aguide.html>

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Lisa Hood is the author of "Shades of Betrayal" and "Shades of Revenge". She has been writing for over 10 years and is presently working on her third suspense novel, "Shades of Jealousy." Other articles by Lisa Hood can be found at <http://www.BOOKJOBBER.com>. <http://BOOKJOBBER.com> is an Internet based company, which publishes and sells fiction and non fiction e-books.

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Who Said You Can't Make A Profitable Income Selling Your Short Stories?

By Georgina Stath

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The truth is, selling your short stories to publishers is not the way to make a comfortable living from something you enjoy doing. The reason isn't hard to understand. Publishers pay a once-off payment for your stories, if

they are accepted. And that once–off payment, in most cases, isn't anything to get excited about.

But most writers settle for this because they tell themselves, well, at least my story is published.

Wrong.

You can have your cake and eat it too. You can become published and you can make a comfortable income too.

Other writers have done it. I have done it. And you can do it too.

What has brought this change of events? You might have guessed the Internet. The Web far surpasses all those other options open to us. With the Internet...

* It's in your capacity to start your own business, it doesn't matter what your circumstance are.

* You can keep building on that business to increase your income

* You can run your business on autopilot. Have you heard the stories where Internet business owners make money while they sleep? They aren't kidding.

* You can keep generating sales from your short stories. Don't only sell them once to a publisher. Keep selling the same stories over and over again.

Becoming frustrated with submitting to publishers I thought I'd try to sell my stories myself and `see what happens.' I saw what happened alright. I saw I'd been wasting my time all those years settling for less. I'm thankful to that writer who opened my eyes to the power of the internet.

I've made more from this book of short stories than I sell at <http://www.storieswithatwist.com> than I've seen all those years waiting for publishers to sell my stories.

I've learnt something from this experiment.

If you want things to happen - you have to make them happen.

The transition between unpublished and published lies in your thinking.

Do you want to keep submitting to publishers to see what happens?

Or

Do you want to sell your stories yourself and see what happens?

Georgina Stath is a creative writer who took matters into her own hands. She runs her own business. She writes what she wants. She keeps all the profits. You can do it too. Just change your mind. Join the `Entrepreneur Creative Writer's Course To Success.' It's free and highly informative. Send a blank email to subscribe@beyond-short-story-writing.com <http://www.beyond-short-story-writing.com>



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