



How a Book-Writing Coach Helps You Plan Your Nonfiction Book

by Bobbi Linkemer

A book coach asks all the right questions during the planning phase and helps you structure the answers in a comprehensive book proposal. If you were to submit your book to a publisher, a proposal would be a requirement. But, even if you prefer to “self-publish,” writing a proposal organizes your thoughts and helps you plan every aspect of your nonfiction book. A proposal is your thinking document — a work in progress. It is much more than a mere exercise because almost every word of it will become a part of the book later on.

While the form of the proposal may vary and the answers may be in different order, it must answer the following questions:

1. Why are you writing this book?
2. What is your book about (in one or two sentences)?
3. Why is this an appropriate and timely topic?
4. Who are your target readers? How will they benefit? How will you reach them?
5. How big is the market? (How many books can you sell?)
6. What else is out there on this subject?
7. How is this book unique/special/important?
8. Why are you the best-qualified person to write this book?
9. How much control do you wish to exercise during the publishing process?
10. How will you help to promote your book?

Most often, a book proposal is arranged in these basic categories:

- Concept Statement (a very brief summary and sales piece that determines whether an editor continues reading or stops)
- About the Book (a summary of all the major sections of the proposal)
- About the Author (your bio, focused on your qualifications to write this book)
- About the Market (what potential readers are reading, watching, and doing)
- About the Competition (what is available and how your book is different and better)
- Production Details (your preferences in terms of size, appearance, illustrations, type, paper, color, etc.)
- About Promotion (your specific plans for getting the word out to various audiences)

- Table of Contents (front and back matter and chapter titles)
- Chapter Summaries (one paragraph encapsulations of each chapter)
- Sample Chapters (1-3 completed chapters)

All of this may appear to be pretty straightforward, but many new authors find the proposal process intimidating. A book coach takes the mystery and confusion out of writing a book proposal, which, in turn, makes the writing goes much more smoothly.

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