

Non-Fiction Proposal Guidelines

Your book proposal presents your book to industry professionals, including literary agents as well as acquisition editors and marketing teams at publishing houses. It is the document that will influence and inform the person reviewing it showing that your book is worthy to be published, and that it is a product that can be marketed and sold. Think of it as the business plan for your book that communicates:

1. There is a strong market for your book
2. It will stand out from similar books on the market
3. You are qualified to write this book

Basic Proposal Structure

- Times New Roman, 12pt font
- 1” margins
- Single spaced
- Sample chapters double spaced

TITLE PAGE:

Proposal for

NON-FICTION BOOK

Author's Name

1. **One-page sell sheet**
 1. Title, genre, and word count
 2. Tagline: One sentence that explains the book and/or its benefit to the reader
 3. Back book cover paragraph: **SHORT** paragraph
 1. What to expect
 2. What to take away
 3. How this is done
 4. Abbreviated bio with author photo: Short information
 1. Current profession
 2. Education/qualifications
 3. Affiliations
 4. Prior publishing
2. **Biographical sketch**
 1. Elaborate on brief bio sketch. Publishing history, affiliations, awards and achievements, publishing history, other qualifications

2. Links to web page, blog, social media
3. Few, if any, personal details.
3. **Description of the book**
 1. Detailed description
 2. Three or four paragraphs
 3. Present the overall topic and how it is approached
 4. Not a play by play, but the big picture of the story
 5. Purpose: Bullet points of four to six things that will address what problem the book solves for the reader and/or what questions will be answered.
 6. Arguments: Bullet point descriptions of the major themes/points of your book.
 7. Audience: Identify the type of reader you have written your book for: lay person, academic audience, vocation, leaders of organizations, etc.
 8. The very distilled core audience using these elements as guides: ideal reader using age range, generational identity, life stage, gender, marital status, parents, education level, spiritual state, geographic location, specific life needs.
 9. If your writing is for a niche audience offer statistics.
 10. Reader take-aways: Bullet points of the concepts the reader will engage with and take with them once they've read your book.
4. **Chapter outline:** Two or three sentence synopses of each chapter. Spend a lot of time on this.
5. **Market analysis:** A deeper look at your audience and how they are reached. What are your readers lifestyle and habits? Could be bullet points.
6. **Competitive analysis:**
 1. Not just competing books, but also comparable books that show the potential audience for your book.
 2. Author, Title, Publisher, Publication Date
 3. Brief statement on how your book is similar
 4. Brief explanation on how your book is different. What new information are you bringing to an existing conversation or topic.
7. **Marketing strategies:**
 1. This is how the audience is going to be reached. Not just what you plan to do, but
 2. what you currently have in place
 3. what you know you can guarantee you'll be able to accomplish.
8. **History of the manuscript:** People and places you have previously submitted your manuscript such as potential endorsers, reviewers and publishers. If the proposal is being submitted to several literary agencies indicate that it is a simultaneous submission, without listing the actual agency or agent.
9. **Three sample chapters:** Include three or four samples. If there is an introduction include it. Include first chapter. And then one or two other chapters within the book that you feel are strong.
10. **Is It Ready to Submit?**