

### Book Proposal Bootcamp - Willamette Writers Conference - August 2013

#### I. The State of the Industry

##### Trends in nonfiction

- Narrative – history, biography, journalism, memoir - character, story - imagine the movie
- Self-help – practical, pursuit of happiness, news you can use
- Concept history (a noun, preferably that changed the world) - *Longitude, Cod, Salt, Secrets of Saffron*

##### Structural changes in the book business

- Digital transforms everything, but big changes even before that
- Retailer concentration: Amazon vs. B&N vs. Apple vs. Google vs. Kobo vs. independents
- Publisher concentration
  - *Bertelsmann*: Random House (Knopf Doubleday, Crown, Little Random...) + *Pearson*: Penguin (Dutton, Gotham, Putnam, Riverhead, Tarcher, Viking...) = Random Penguin
  - *Hachette*: Grand Central (Twelve, Business Plus...), Little, Brown
  - *Holtzbrinck*: Macmillan (FSG, Henry Holt, St. Martin's Press, Palgrave-Macmillan...)
  - *News Corp*: HarperCollins (Harper, Morrow...)
  - *Viacom*: Simon & Schuster (Little Simon, Free Press, Touchstone, Scribner...)
- Changes in academic presses / Small publishers always exist
- Value chain from author to reader is upended: changing roles & relationships of authors, agents, editors, publishers, retailers
- Self-publishing - new modes and impact of e-publishing, print-on-demand: Smashwords, Amazon, B&N, Apple, Book Baby, Lulu, Blurb...
- Genres changing at different paces. Everyone wants (needs) "platform" and "synergy"

#### II. From Idea to Book Tour

##### Three Key Principles

- "All Publishing is Self-Publishing"
- "Get Famous First"
- "You're CEO of Your Own Multimedia Empire"

##### Recruit a great management team - "Board of Directors"

- Writing group, copy editor, consulting editor, book doctor, lawyer, literary agent, booksellers

##### Book proposal = Business Plan

- Substance
  - Detailed table of contents
  - Sample chapter(s)
- Style
  - Author credentials, Target audience, Comparable titles, Marketing and promotion
  - Overview/Synopsis
- Publishing Plan

#### III. Further Resources

- "Self-Publishing Bootcamp" - [www.selfpubbootcamp.com](http://www.selfpubbootcamp.com)
  - "Book Proposal Bootcamp" and "The Business of Publishing" - [www.twliterary.com](http://www.twliterary.com)
  - Publishers Marketplace - [www.publishersmarketplace.com](http://www.publishersmarketplace.com)
  - Publishers Weekly - [www.publishersweekly.com](http://www.publishersweekly.com)
  - Galley Cat - [www.mediabistro.com/galleycat](http://www.mediabistro.com/galleycat)
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### **Nonfiction Book ~~Proposal~~ Business Plan Outline**

#### **I. Overview**

Describe your book in two or three paragraphs (500 words or less). What is the title and subtitle? Who is the target audience and what makes your book unique and worthwhile for them? Think of this as the copy that would go on the back cover of your book or in the publisher's catalog, or as the brief review that you hope to see in Publishers Weekly or the NY Times Book Review.

#### **II. Target Audience**

Who are the likely purchasers of this book? Who is in the core audience and the wider audiences. How big is the market? What are the best ways to reach them?

#### **III. About the Author**

Your credentials and experience. What makes you uniquely qualified to write and promote this book? What other media outlets do you regularly appear in?

#### **IV. Competitive Titles**

List and summarize the major competitive titles and explain why yours is different from each. You are trying to accomplish two things with this section: prove there is an audience who would find your book interesting, as demonstrated by earlier, successful books, while making clear how yours is different enough to compel those readers – and others – to buy it.

#### **V. Marketing and Promotion**

What is your comprehensive plan to actively promote the book? Where should publicity be focused? What are the magazines and other media outlets that your target audience pays attention to? Where should you and your publisher work especially hard to get the book reviewed?

Blurbs: What "name" people would be willing to contribute a blurb? Can you get their commitment before the manuscript is completed?

Media and Speaking Appearances: Does this book or your prior experience give you credentials to speak on any current topics in the media? What are the topics and target outlets? Beyond book stores, what other types of groups and organizations would be interested in having you speak to them?

Serialization: What parts of your book lend themselves to excerpting in magazines and journals? List the appropriate excerpts and the 5 or 10 most important publications in which they could appear?

Describe additional promotional opportunities you will pursue: Speakers bureau? An independent publicist? Organizational connections? Mailing lists? Workshops? Tours? Does the book have series potential? Opportunities for regular updating? Other "legs"? Think creatively, think big.

#### **VI. Detailed Table of Contents**

Include the full Table of Contents, with detailed summaries of each chapter. This section could be anywhere from three to 20 pages - it needs to give a comprehensive, detailed map of what the book will contain.

#### **VII. Sample Chapters**

Include the first one or two chapters – not the introduction, but sample chapters that offer an accurate sense of the style, substance and structure of the book.

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