

How to Pitch Your Book to A Literary Agent and Get Your Manuscript Read

If you're thinking of going down the traditional publishing route with your book, rather than self-publishing it, and you want to go with a big publisher, the first thing you will need is a literary agent.

I often get asked how you actually go about getting a literary agent, and this document will share with you everything you need to know to get your manuscript represented.

Choosing an Agency

How To Write A
Pitch To A
Literary Agent
That Will Get
Your Manuscript
Read



The first thing you need to do is decide who to send your manuscript to.

You can choose to send it to as many or as few agencies as you wish. Obviously the more agencies you send it to, the more chance you have of acceptance, but if there's something problematic in your manuscript that you need to fix and you submit it to a lot of agencies, your options will be limited as to who to send the new and improved version to.

- Do some research. Look at agencies who specialize in your genre. Sending your manuscript to agencies that don't represent the genre you write in is a waste of your time and theirs.
 - Make sure the agencies you are submitting to are accepting new clients, otherwise, you are just wasting your time.
 - Make sure you understand the submissions process. Not all agencies use the same process so check each one.
- Have a look at the various agents available at each agency, and choose the one who represents authors closest to you in terms of topic and style.

Nailing Your Pitch Letter

Once you know who you're pitching to, and you've checked that they are the right agent for your book, you will need a stand out pitch if you want an agent to even read your first three chapters.

This industry is hugely competitive and agents get hundreds of queries a week – they aren't going to waste their time reading manuscripts that have no appeal to them.

Make sure you read the submissions guidelines for your chosen agent before you write your pitch and follow them.

Here are the things that a pitch should include to grab the agent's attention and make them see you're serious about your career as a writer:

A Bit About You

Open with a brief introductory paragraph that tells the agent a little bit about you. Include your name and location.

This is also your chance to show an agent why they should take a chance on you.

Tell them about your writing experience – Have you self-published before? Have you won any awards for your writing? Had an Amazon best seller?

Tell them about your social media following and website. This might not seem important, but even with a traditional publishing deal, authors are expected to do the thick of the marketing for their book. If you have 50,000 Twitter followers, or an email list with 10,000 plus people signed up, they are more likely to take a chance on you as an unknown author.



A Bit About Your Book

This is your chance to sell your book to a potential agent. Don't be shy and don't be vague.

Mention the genre and word count of your book. Explain who the ideal reader of your book is.

Include your book's elevator pitch ([look here](#) for how to nail this). This should be a concise sentence or two that sums up the plot of your book.

Add at least three comparable titles that have been published in the last three years. Comparable titles are books in the same genre as yours that explore similar themes and are aimed at the same audience.

Including these not only shows agents that you know your stuff, it instantly gives them an idea of which editor and cover designer would work well with your book, and which publisher they think would be interested.



Your Contact Details

This should go without saying, but people seem to forget it according to interviews I've read with agents.

Include your email address (even though you're sending the email from it, it's best to include it; maybe the document will be saved and the email lost).

It's also worth including a telephone number, although not essential unless it's in the agency's guidelines.



General Tips for Your Query Letter

Below, you will find some general tips to make your query letter the best it can be (scroll to the end of this document for details on how to get a "done for you" pitch letter template):

THE QUERY LETTER: THE ART OF SPENDING HOURS PERFECTING A WAY TO GET YOUR DREAMS BROKEN

- Put a bit of personality into your pitch – it should be professional, but it doesn't have to be bland
- Address the agent by their name and mention a favourite author of yours that they represent – this shows you've done your homework and not just sent out a blanket pitch to any agent you find
- Getting an agent is about so much more than a good pitch. Your book has to be good (obviously) and live up to the excitement you've built in your pitch for agents to want to take it further. A good pitch only means your book stands a better chance of being looked at by the agent.
- The book has to grab the agent, which is often a very personal thing, so don't think a rejection automatically means your book isn't very good.
- Make sure you treble check your pitch letter for errors. Pay a proof reader if you have to. Agents won't spend much time on a pitch that's riddled with errors.



You Have to Have a Damned Good Book

The most important thing is to make sure you have a damned good book. Literary agents receive hundreds of queries a day – your manuscript is going up against them. It has to be beyond just quite good.

Think about the following ways to get your manuscript totally ready before you start pitching to agents:

- Make sure your story line is original, or at the very least puts a completely new spin on your idea.
- Make sure the spelling, punctuation and grammar is correct. The book will be professionally edited and proof read if it's accepted, but if it appears you don't even have a basic grasp of the language, most agents won't bother trailing through it.
- You don't need a cover or any illustrations. All of these will be done for you if you are accepted, and most agents won't even entertain looking at any art work you send.

After Your Submission

Your query is sent. Now it's mostly a waiting game, but there's still a few things you should be doing to help your chances of getting representation:

- Make sure you have a thirty second elevator pitch prepared. If an agent is interested, there's a chance they might call you and ask for an idea of the rest of the book. You need to be able to sum up the book quickly and efficiently while not losing any of the parts that make it unique and interesting. It won't bode well for you if you're stuttering and spluttering. You know your book better than anyone – prove it.
- Ensure the rest of the manuscript (most initial queries are only a small sample) is ready to go at a moment's notice. Don't be caught out. The manuscript should be completed before you pitch your query and if you are going somewhere on holiday for example, make sure you have access to the manuscript. Making an agency wait isn't a good idea.
- If you get a rejection email, count yourself privileged – a lot of agents don't even bother to respond if it's a no. Yes, it's kind of rude, but it's accepted practice and getting upset about being ignored isn't going to help anyone, least of all you.
- If you do get a rejection email, make sure you send a reply – a polite reply thanking the agent for their time. You never know when you will want to pitch



to them in the future. Always remain professional. Go off and have a cry or a rant first if that's what you need to do.

- And remember, a rejection is only that one person's opinion.

The most important thing I could tell anyone, is if you are convinced this is the only route for you, then don't give up. The right agent is out there!

Done for You Pitch Letter Template

Does writing a pitch letter that will get you noticed for the right reasons sound too hard?

It's the first impression an agent gets of you, and with around seven seconds to grab their attention and keep them reading, it's not something you want to risk getting wrong.

To grab a pitch letter template that you can fill in and tweak to ensure your structure is sound, and see a working example of the letter, click the button below or click [here](#):



Get Your Pitch Letter Template Here