

PITCHING YOUR BOOK TO AN INDIE PUBLISHER

Notes for success by Teri Rider

A few basic thoughts:

- Start with a really great manuscript
- No matter how good you think your book is, until you have the feedback from professional book editors, you're probably not ready to submit it to a publisher
- Book editors are highly skilled at polishing good manuscripts. Listen to them.
- Your sister's friend who is a high school teacher is not the right editor. They can be a good beta reader, though.
- Don't rush the process. If you want to publish on your birthday and that's in two months, you should self-publish. Publishing a book with an indie publisher can take 12 to 18 months on average. There is a lot to do to get a book to market.
- Indie publishers will most likely either love your book or tell you it's not for them. Don't be offended. You want a publisher who falls in love with your book!
- Keep in mind that your publisher will be working with you for possibly years, so make sure you can get along and like or respect them. Communication is very important.
- There should be a contract that you can understand and be happy with. Many indie publishers will negotiate terms if it makes sense. Don't be afraid to ask questions.

A few business bullet points:

- Publishing your book is a business
- The better you know your market, the better you can present your manuscript. You should know these things:
 - What is your genre?
 - Who is your reader and what other authors do they read? Goodreads is a really good place to find this information with just a little bit of research.
 - What other books are like yours that have been published within the past 3 years and how are they like yours and how are they different? These are called "comps."
 - Besides Amazon, where would your ideal reader find or look for your book?
 - Is there a certain demographic for your reader? Age, other interests, gender, things like that.

How to prepare:

- Most indie publishers do not require an agent so you are your own agent. That means you need to know your book well enough to know which publishers to pitch it to. Study that publisher's existing catalog. Do they publish books like yours?
- Writing a query letter shouldn't be daunting. One page is all you need. Write in your own genuine voice. Be sincere.
- If the publisher is interested, send them a "Brief Book Proposal" not more than 10 pages, that includes these things:
 - Brief description
 - Chapter outline or TOC
 - Author bio
 - Comparative titles
 - Author platform (website, social media, LinkedIn profile, business specialties or qualifications)
 - Marketing plan and budget (are you going to hire a publicist? If not, how will you reach the media? Do you have plans to advertise and where? Do you have a list of possible people of influence to blurb your book? Write fictitious burbs so you know what you're hoping for.)
 - Target audience
 - Sample chapters (beginning, middle and end) or full manuscript.

"When an author submits this information, whether it is perfect or not, it tells me they are serious about the business of publishing their book and they are invested and willing to do the work alongside the publisher to give it the best chance of success."

— Teri Rider, *founder and CEO*