



Straight Talk  
from the Editor,  
18 Keys to a  
Rejection-Proof Submission



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[www.Right-Writing.com](http://www.Right-Writing.com)

# Straight Talk from the Editor

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# Straight Talk from the Editor

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# Straight Talk from the Editor

## Chapter 1 Introduction

Writers are full of hope, dreams and expectations. It's one of the reasons we labor to write our thoughts or stories on paper and hope these words will eventually appear in print. We want others to enjoy our fiction or our how-to information in a nonfiction book.

As an editor, I've met with many writers at conferences. They long for their book idea to get published. From one-on-one sessions with writers, I'm convinced every person has *at least* one book inside their mind and heart. "Millions of people—83 percent of Americans, in fact—say they want to write a book," says Susan Driscoll and Diane Gedymin in their book, [GET PUBLISHED!](#) (Follow [this link](#) to get your free copy of this resource.) The Jenkins Group, Inc., a Michigan publishing service firm estimates that more than **six million** Americans have actually written a manuscript—just over two percent of the population. When I meet people with this goal, they don't want to self-publish or pay someone else to publish their book. These writers have done enough research to know it's rare for a self-published book to be sold in a traditional brick and mortar bookstore. Plus, these writers would rather receive payment from a publisher to write their book than to risk their own financial resources before their words are printed. The majority of these writers have no idea where to begin or how to find a publisher.

Many of these individuals are highly motivated and have written their book—fiction or nonfiction. Yet they are stuck with a stack of paper and unsure about their next steps. Jerrold

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Jenkins, CEO of the Jenkins Group, estimates that at any given time **more than six million** manuscripts, book proposals and queries are circulating in various publishers and literary agencies. From the sheer volume of submissions, it's easy to get discouraged and wonder if your book idea will ever receive fair consideration. Maybe you've sent out your manuscript once or twice or even 50 times, and each time your only response is a form rejection letter from the editor. Without any specific reason for rejection, the writer's frustration increases with each submission.

As an editor, I empathize with writers and would like to give more specific feedback. If I did, I would spend my days critiquing manuscripts (not my job) or advising them about how to rework their material (again not my task). My job as the editor is to evaluate the manuscript and see if it has “the right stuff” to be seriously considered for my publishing house. Writers have to convince the acquisitions editor so the writer can gain a champion inside the publisher. I often tell writers that if they want an instant decision, I can render it—no, thank you—which *isn't* the answer they want to hear from the publisher. Yes, takes time because to receive a “yes” answer means marshalling the enthusiasm and agreement of different areas of the publishing house including marketing and sales. Publishers are in business to make money and if the book doesn't make money, then they can't continue. The decision to publish a book involves great risk for the publisher with intense competition.

According to Bowker, the world's leading provider of bibliographic information, [3.1 million new books were published in 2010](#). That is a huge number of new titles and does not account for the previously released books. Your job as the writer is to convince the publisher that you are worth their financial risk. Michael Levine of Levine PR said that 70% of

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Americans hadn't visited a bookstore in *five years*.

Millions of writers are circulating their material trying to get the editor's attention. Some writers are determined to get a literary agent to champion their cause with the publishers. Many writers discover it's harder to secure a literary agent than to find a publisher. Each aspect of publishing presents its own challenges and opportunities.

Writers are always looking to increase the odds of a literary agent taking on their project. I heard about a writer who paid a service fee to a company. This company has a current database of over 450 literary agents. Through an online process, the writer fills in the various elements of a query letter. Next in an email blast format, the query is submitted to these various agents. Because of the sophisticated programming, the document is merged into the perfect format and meets any specific requirements of each agency. This process is so stealth that the receiving literary agency can't tell the writer has used an automated process. Sounds like a good idea. I'd suggest you wait until you count the cost—and this cost is more than a financial cost to the writer.

Can you stand to be rejected? The most rejected people that I've ever met are successful literary agents. For their clients, they will send out thousands of proposals, pitch letters and manuscripts, then receive thousands of rejections—with the hope of selling a certain percentage of these submissions. Legitimate agents make their income from a percentage as they sell a writer's manuscripts. Unless it is submitted, the proposal isn't going to sell and these successful literary agents are constantly pitching projects from their clients.

According to one writer who used this automated submission system to try and snag an agent, she grew discouraged. In one day, she received 176 rejection letters from different

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agents. This stack of rejections was enough to challenge the self-esteem of any writer. In a heartbeat, this writer asked the company not to send any more rejections.

### *The Never-Ending Stories*

Have you ever eaves-dropped on the conversation of a bunch of doctors talking about their patients? If you do, I hope you have a strong constitution. I've done it several times and been fascinated by the stories these physicians will tell about their strange experiences.

Book editors and literary agents are just like doctors. When I get together with other editors and agents away from the listening ears of writers, I discover unusual stories. Each person has a different spin on the strange ways writers will approach editors or pitch their projects or push for the success of their projects. The majority of these out-of-the-ordinary approaches from writers don't work. Instead, the writer makes a memorable and negative impression.

Over the last ten years, I've read thousands of pitches and proposals. Some submissions come from agents and professional authors. With other submissions when you open the package, you can tell it's clearly a first-time author. If it isn't their first time, then it's someone who is clueless about how publishing works and what the editor expects to receive from an author.

Sometimes in my mail, I will receive a query without the expected self-addressed-stamped envelope or SASE. If the writer doesn't send the SASE, then they need to include an email address or some mechanism for a response (besides their cell phone number—which the editor is not going to call). It is a false expectation for the editor (and publisher) to respond to

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a writer's query and put their own postage on the envelope. Publishers receive thousands of these submissions and such an unbudgeted expense would amount to many dollars over a year with extremely little return (other than good will). Most authors understand this SASE requirement and include a response mechanism with their submission.

These days the bulk of submissions are handled electronically and not through paper copies. With the use of the Internet, editors work remote and publishing decisions are made with teams scattered in different locations rather than one central office. Instead of physical meetings, editors meet through video and conference calls to work together. For example, I live in Colorado but work for a New York publishing house. When I call my authors or literary agents, I use my New York phone number. Some authors answer when they see it is a New York area code on their caller ID.

While most of the submissions now are electronic, I do still handle some physical manuscripts and have them to return. Sometimes I make a mistake. One evening I was working in my office and my phone rang. I answered it and began talking with an author who had recently received my form rejection letter. He said, "I put enough stamps to return my manuscript, but the manuscript wasn't in the envelope. It only contained your rejection letter. Where's my manuscript?"

I explained how I had processed a number of manuscripts at the same time, must have made a mistake not returning his work and apologized. "I don't have your manuscript but put it into my recycle container and it's long gone."

The author launched into a pity-filled tirade about how writers don't have a lot of money, put their hard-earned postage on the envelope and expect their manuscript returned.



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I apologized a second time for my error and since there wasn't any remedy for my mistake, I wished him well to find another publisher and ended the call. Before this call I didn't recall this author. During our conversation, I wrote his name then after the call, I looked into my manuscript log to locate his name.

In my internal recorded comments, I added something to remind me of our exchange. This author definitely made an impression—but not in the way that he desires. It's an example how *not to respond* to editors. The world of publishing is a small universe, something never to forget.

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### Where The Rubber Meets the Road

Throughout this Ebook at the end of each section, I include an application section. Unless you take action and apply this information to your own writing life, then you are simply gathering information. Where true learning takes place, or the rubber meets the road is when you apply the information to your dreams and desires.

1. Think about the number of books published each year. Does that information discourage you or only make you more determined to succeed?

2. Are you one of the people who dreams about publishing a book? Are you ready to handle the rejection with a good measure of determination?

3. From the stories in this section, do you see the necessity of getting good counsel and advice? Otherwise, you can use someone's automated submission system and be overwhelmed with rejections.

## Chapter 2 Six Keys Why Book Ideas Are Rejected

As you submit your ideas to book publishers, you will discover there are numerous reasons for rejection. Some ideas are rejected purely on the basis of their pitch or presentation. Other ideas are rejected for a reason which isn't expressed to the author. Editors don't tell authors mostly because of time constraints. Occasionally I will add a postscript with some detail and writers will thank me as though I've offered a drink of water to someone who has been walking for days in the desert.

In this section, I'm going to run through six of the most common unexplained reasons for rejection:

### **1. Sounds like a magazine article.**

The typical magazine article is between 500 words and 2,000 words. Sometimes a magazine article can be the spark plug for an excellent full-length book (typically 50,000 words or longer). As the editor or literary agent evaluates your idea, they are asking the question: Is this idea big enough for a book? Or is it a magazine article? Can the subject for this book be sustained over many chapters or can it be told in a single shorter magazine format?

While I have been evaluating book ideas for years, I'm sometimes surprised with this response. Several years ago, I spoke with the mother of the oldest living snowflake baby in the United States. This mother and her husband had been to the White House, met the President of the United States and been interviewed on television and print media. If you've never heard of this term, a "snowflake baby" is a baby adopted as frozen embryos and brought to full term by their adoptive parents. One of my publishing friends approached me to write a book for this couple. I called the mother, spent some time listening and gathering some information. Then I prepared my oral pitch and called a couple of literary agents. Neither one

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of these agents was familiar with the snowflake baby term but I explained it and the potential book. Each agent asked more questions about the visibility of this couple in the media *and* each concluded, “It sounds like a magazine article.”

Because I have personal relationships with many top literary agents, I could have presented this concept to other agents. When each of these trusted agents had exactly the same reaction, I decided this “snowflake baby” idea wasn’t large enough for a full-length book nor would it capture the attention of a publisher. I set the book project aside and pressed on to other projects.

### **2. It has already been done.**

Books have a lengthy turnaround time from when they are contracted then released into the marketplace. Normally publishers want the author to deliver the completed manuscript 12 to 18 months before the publication date. Each day, thousands of new books enter the marketplace and join millions of books which are already in print. The flood of information is too vast for anyone to keep up on this ever-changing environment.

When you submit your proposal to the publisher, you are expected to include some analysis about the competition from other published books for your idea and why your idea is distinct. The sales and marketing personnel in a publishing house may know about books in your subject area which you’ve never seen. If a publisher has a reputation and track record in a particular subject area, possibly they have a forthcoming book that is similar to your proposed idea. Your submission will be rejected, and you will never know the specifics.

Or if you are a first-time author or attacking a new subject area, your proposal will be rejected if a bestselling author comes up with a similar concept during the consideration process (before the publisher offers a contract and sometimes even after the publisher has contracted the book). Because we work in publishing, we read news about books and forthcoming books. For each idea, there is limited bandwidth of readers for possible sales. If some members of the publishing team don’t think enough room for sales is there because it has already been done, your submission will be rejected.

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### 3. It has never been done.

You are excited because you've done some comparative research and discovered a "hole" in the market which you can fill with your book idea. You work hard and create a well written book proposal for the idea and send it into the marketplace. Yet the proposal is repeatedly rejected. It's hard for unpublished authors to understand the reason.

Several years ago, I received an excellent book proposal for "seniors" from a published author. The proposal included numerous current statistics about the graying population in America and some persuasive words to snag a book contract from my publisher. As an acquisitions editor, I felt this project would be perfect for our line of books. I prepared my documents and presented the concept to a room full of publishing executives. The discussion quickly turned away from the senior book. Instead, the conversation asked questions like: Where will these books be purchased? Do seniors purchase books? In what volume do they purchase books?

Ultimately the consensus of the decision makers was to reject this senior proposal. They decided our publishing house didn't know how to tap this particular target group. We had never done it before and would *not* be breaking new ground with this book idea. This experience is only one example of the types of conversations around the decision making process. It happens inside the publisher and the author rarely hears or understands the decision. Is your target audience large enough? Does this target audience buy books? Will this publisher where you are pitching the project be able to reach this target? Does this publisher reach the target audience currently? If the editor considers these questions and decide the answer is no, then your proposal will be rejected. You will simply receive a form letter.

Part of your task as a would-be author, is to understand these discussions inside the publishing house then give your acquisitions editor the ammunition to overcome these objections. There is a lot of competition within a publishing house for a limited number of books. You have to pour a great deal of energy into overcoming these objections and receiving a book contract.

## Straight Talk from the Editor

### 4. Topics like that don't sell.

While authors are connected to their particular topic or story, the decisions about whether to publish a book or not are based on bottom-line profits. Beyond creating an excellent story or a valuable how-to book, will your book sell into the market? The editor has to answer this question.

At a recent writer's conference, a distinguished gray-haired woman named Alice greeted me and sat down for her 15-minute meeting with the editor. I wondered what Alice would pitch for my publishing house and internally I groaned as she began to tell her story. For the last 40 years of her life, Alice lived in Kenya, West Africa and through her missionary work many lives had been transformed. As a lasting legacy, she had written a book about her work and wanted to approach my publisher. Why my internal groan? I knew that I had to gently explain to this elder saint why publishers aren't taking a risk on these types of books. I explained my personal affinity for these stories but how publishers make decisions based on profitability and sound business practices.

Many publishers have tried this type of book and failed. One editor friend told about a book he believed held value for the marketplace. In the 80s, the Colombian guerrillas executed an American missionary named Chet Bitterman. CALLED TO DIE was the story of Chet Bitterman's life. An excellent, much published author wrote this page-turning book. CALLED TO DIE won several book awards of excellence—yet as this editor explained, the book didn't sell. Overall, these types of stories are based on reaching out to others and they are other-centered. Such a focus on others is completely contrary to the focus of the book marketplace. The book market is me-centered or self-centered. Readers pick up a book and are internally asking, "What is in this book for me? What do I need from this story?" As an editor, it's not easy to tell this information face to face to a writer yet it's one of the benefits of attending a writer's conference and meeting with an editor. With correspondence, I don't provide this information and instead I resort to the form rejection letter.

When you propose one of these types of topics to a publisher, you should be prepared to be rejected because the publishing team doesn't believe they can sell it to the public. It is a

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difficult reason for any author to hear but one of the realities of today's marketplace. In rare incidents, it is possible to overcome these objections. If the writing is absolutely spell-binding or the writer includes several additional persuasive reasons, then the publisher may proceed with this type of book. Often the writer simply proposes the story without any additional reasons and if this happens, the idea is almost certain to be rejected.

### **5. There is too much competition for this topic.**

Walk into any general bookstore and what is the largest category? It's almost bound to be self-help. Just because you've tackled one of these areas with your book idea, doesn't mean it will always be rejected. At the same time, you have to be aware many publishers will reject the idea because of the stiff competition within the topic.

If you can craft an excellent story, it's true you don't need a particular college degree to be published. Yet to convince a publisher, the writer has to show how they handle a topic with distinction and a unique twist yet at the same time the book fills a felt-need for the reader. New titles appear in every category of books. For the writer and the publisher to achieve success with their book, the writer needs to show how their idea is unique and how their approach to this particular topic will strike a strong response from potential book buyers. The family and parenting books are another area of the book marketplace where there is immense competition. Don't forget you aren't just competing with other new books but you are competing with the classic books in your category.

If the publishing team looks at your proposal and feels there is too much competition for your idea to have a place, then your concept will be rejected. It's the responsibility of the writer to overcome any objections with their presentation or face rejection.

### **6. It is too expensive to produce.**

From working with hundreds of writers on their book ideas and because I also write books, I have a bit of insight into how writers think about new ideas. Typically, they are

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focused on the creative part of their book idea and making the most attractive book possible.

They have not given much thought to the business aspects of book production or the cost factor in producing a book. While editors in publishing houses are also focused on the creative, they are also looking out for the bottom-line of their publishing house. Each bell and whistle that you've proposed with your book adds additional costs to the overall project—and reduces the margins for profit. If you've written a 200,000 word novel, you haven't considered these production costs. The typical adult fiction novel is between 80,000 and 100,000 words. If you've written a story which is double the word-limit, it is going to be a large book to produce. This weighty book is going to involve shipping and packing challenges plus other marketing concerns. I understand you've devoted a huge amount of energy to have written 200,000 words. At the same time, don't be surprised if your submissions are routinely rejected on the basis of your unusual word count.

Other writers envision a photograph to introduce each chapter of their book whether it is fiction or nonfiction. They propose these concepts without considering the additional production costs for each photograph or the question of payment of rights to use the photograph and other related issues. When you propose illustrations and photographs, be aware that these items might be giving the editor a reason to reject your work because it will be too expensive to produce.

Many writers fail to understand with the high volume of submissions the editor is looking for some reason to reject your work and say, "no." As the writer, you should rejection proof your submission and not make it too expensive to produce.



## **Straight Talk from the Editor**

### **Where The Rubber Meets the Road**

1. Review all six reasons why book ideas are rejected. Have you received rejections for any of these reasons?
2. One of the keys to overcoming the common reasons for rejection is to answer the objection before it is raised. Think about your book idea. What information or sales potential can you build into your book proposal or sample chapter which will overcome the objection?

# Straight Talk from the Editor

## Chapter 3 Six Keys to Guarantee Rejection

I've examined some little known reasons why your book might be rejected. Let's consider six basics which if you commit them, they will almost guarantee rejection. From the sheer volume of submissions, the editor is looking for any way to cut down the stack of manuscripts. One way is to reject anything which violates these basics.

### **1. Use the incorrect name or misspell the editor's name.**

For a moment, imagine you are an editor opening your mail. Whether you have five pieces or 50 pieces to open in a single day, what will be the first thing you see on the cover letter? It's normally the editor's name. If that name is the wrong name (the previous editor) or the name is misspelled, what type of first impression does it make? As an editor, I continue reading but I've already got some questions about the writer and quickly I render a decision— usually “pass” or “rejection.”

### **2. Push the literary agent or the editor for a quick response.**

Usually, a publisher or literary agent will provide an estimated response time on their website or in the WRITER'S MARKET or in their printed guidelines. Even if you don't have a time estimation, I would not advise following up for a response any earlier than six to eight weeks after submission. Almost all submissions are simultaneous—and you should include the wording that you are simultaneously submitting in your query or proposal to the editor. The publishing process is slow—even for those of us who work on the inside of a publisher.

Some time ago, a well-known literary agent told me about receiving a rejection letter from a publisher for a project which a different publisher had just released as a printed book. Now that's a slow response!

If you push the editor to respond, you are showing several things. First, you are

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showing a lack of understanding of the publishing process. It takes time to achieve a “yes” answer and to build consensus for your project. Also, you are showing a lack of patience and the potential to become a high-maintenance author. No publisher needs any more of these types of authors—no matter how well they can communicate. Finally, your push will tip your project toward rejection.

### **3. Shotgun your submission without any target publisher.**

Repeatedly I've seen writers use this approach. A shotgun sprays a broad area with a single shot. It's what some writers try with their submissions to publishers and literary agents. These writers instantly reveal their inexperience and only add weight to an already overloaded system. For example, several years ago I was the fiction acquisitions editor at Howard Books, an imprint of Simon and Schuster. I was exclusively looking for great novel submissions.

Yet during a six month period, I've received several dozen children's book submissions from well-intending authors. These writers claim to have looked at the publisher website and have the perfect children's book for my consideration. There is only one problem. At that time, I did not acquire any children's books. I was the adult fiction acquisitions editor and I work remote from the publishing house. I did not take the time to re-route their submission through the inter-office mail or get it to someone who does acquire children's books. It's not my responsibility to reroute their submission and instead I send a rejection letter.

Currently I acquire books for Morgan James Publishing, one of the fastest growing independent publishers ([see this link](#) from Publishers Weekly). I acquire nonfiction, fiction and even a few children's books. We receive over 5,000 submissions a year and only publish about 180 books. The process is still selective and if you approach dozens of agents or editors at the same time you are guaranteeing rejection. If you want my Morgan James contact information, [make sure you follow this link](#)—and see my work phone and email at the bottom of the second page.

These authors would increase their possibilities of success if they research the market then send to appropriate editors. The shotgun approach guarantees rejection.

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### **4. Not understanding the typical manuscript word lengths.**

Anyone who processes manuscript submissions tries to quickly handle them. This responsibility isn't a major part of their job—but is one of their tasks. Maybe they've let the pile of submissions grow for several weeks. One method to quickly eliminate (reject) these submission is to look for the word length. If the author proposes something out of the required range, then the proposed idea is rejected. In my search for adult fiction, I'm only seriously considering something that is in the typical range of 80,000 to 100,000 words. For adult nonfiction, I am looking for something that is 50,000 words to 60,000 words or about a 200 page published book. If your pitch says that you have written a 120,000 word book, you are asking for rejection. If your query says your manuscript is 20,000 words, then it's rejected. If your query says your manuscript is 150,000 words, again it is rejected. If you propose something shorter or longer, you either need to add a reason for the unusual length or you are assured rejection. At Morgan James, we are always looking for reasons to say yes, but we need to know these reasons in your initial pitch or you are risking rejection.

In the busy world of publishing, the editor doesn't have the responsibility to educate you as an author about something as basic as manuscript word length. You have been caught in one of the simple screening devices to guarantee rejection.

### **5. Mention in your cover letter to the editor that you are “looking for representation.”**

This reason for rejection is more subtle but I want you to know editors read submissions. With the boomerang-like responses from publishing houses (a quick rejection), writers wonder if their idea was seriously considered. Editors have learned how to quickly spot areas of a query or cover letter to reject. If you use the phrase “looking for representation” then you are likely looking for a literary agent and trying to use the same cover letter for both editors and literary agents. The same letter will likely not serve both audiences—especially with this phrase. Editors don't “represent” authors. Instead an editor represents their publishing house and negotiates with the writer or the writer's literary agent.

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As you write these cover letters and query letters, make sure your letter is perfect for that particular editor. As readers of submissions, editors become experts at spotting out of place phrases. I've received query letters addressed to me yet with the wrong publishing house. These letters are automatic rejections.

### **6. Call the editor or worse unannounced drop into the office.**

One of the worst steps any writer can make is to call the editor. For a lengthy period of time, my office phone number was on the publisher's guidelines on the Internet. At the time, I worked remote from the editorial offices so my mailing address and email address appeared on the publisher's website. I was acquiring adult fiction for this publisher.

Early one Sunday morning, my telephone rang. It was an author who had determined my publishing house was the perfect place for her children's book manuscript. While polite, at this particular time in my career, I firmly told this author that I did not acquire children's books and I wished her well in placing such a project with another publisher. There is negative fallout for whoever makes such a phone call. The next day (Monday morning) I called my colleague at the publishing house and asked for my telephone number to be taken off the company website. It was removed within the hour.

Because I've worked with a number of writers, I understand their enthusiasm to meet the editor. It's one of the reasons I use a post office box to receive my publishing mail. Last month the owner of my mailbox called saying, "A friend of yours dropped by your "office." This man was visiting his son in Scottsdale and wanted to see you. I promised to give you his phone number." I did not recognize the name of this "friend." Later I called the phone number. It was an author who several weeks earlier had mailed a query letter. From this phone call, I dug out this query and it did not have an email or an SASE for a response. Again I called the "friend" and collected his email address. A week or so later, he received my form rejection letter. Yes, he made an impression, but it wasn't positive. Instead, he guaranteed rejection.

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### **Where The Rubber Meets The Road**

1. Have you ever made a pitch or a proposal to an editor which was guaranteed to be rejected? After reading these reasons, are you better equipped not to make these same sort of mistakes in the future?
2. One of the keys to overcoming rejection is to form a relationship with the editor. How can you begin to form a relationship with more book editors? Can you plan to attend a local writer's conference? Create a plan then execute it to get to a writers' conference.

# Straight Talk from the Editor

## Chapter 4 Six Keys To Gain An Editor's Attention

I've been exploring the various ways to instantly trigger rejection. In this final section, I want to give you six ways to get an editor's attention. If you add one or two or even all six of these elements to your pitch letter or proposal, I guarantee it will be distinct from anything else in the consideration pile. It may not earn you a book contract but you will certainly be remembered in a positive way—and possibly receive a personal note of rejection (rare but it does happen).

### **1. Create your own realistic marketing plan.**

After reviewing many proposals and query letters, it's unusual for any author to include realistic marketing plans with their proposed book project. I add the word "realistic" with intention. Too many authors suggest magazine ads which cost thousands of dollars or other outrageous methods and don't pour thought and energy into something they can actually accomplish. Educate yourself and understand as a new author, even a traditional publisher can provide limited resources and the bulk of the marketing responsibility will be on your shoulders.

Editors are looking for authors who will actively partner with publishers to market their books. If you add your plans into your pitches and proposals, it will stand out from the others in the editor's consideration stack.

### **2. Learn and incorporate the principles of PYROMARKETING.**

Several years ago, HarperBusiness released a business book called [PYROMARKETING](#) by Greg Stielstra. This book contains valuable marketing insights. It's a four-step strategy to attract readers to your book. First you gather the driest tinder or promote to the people most likely to buy your book. It means identifying a firm target audience for your book. Second, you touch it with a match or give the reader an experience with your book that touches them

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deeply. As the author, you can create these ideas. Third, you fan the flames or help them tell others about your book. Finally, you save the coals or keep a record of your readers so you can sell them additional books. I recommend you pick up this book because it will provide you a detailed understanding and if you incorporate these principles into your book proposal, it will pick up the editor's attention.

### **3. Gather high-profile endorsements.**

Many authors assume endorsements are something gathered after you have a publisher. It is correct these endorsements occur late in the publishing process. But if you have someone high profile to endorse your book or idea, it can sway the editor (and the publishing group) from the beginning.

And what if you don't know any high profile person for an endorsement? Go to this article, "[The Elder Rage Success Saga](#)" by Jacqueline Marcell. Read and study this article. You will learn about a self-published book with numerous high-profile endorsements. Many authors want to gain an editor's attention and her persistence is something you should follow.

### **4. Bring special sales to your proposed idea.**

Many would-be authors have never thought of this concept of special sales. Books have value and are often used in different ways. On the back of some food product, often if you send in several coupons, you can receive a free book (you name the type). These books are special sales. Each of these books have something different on them when printed—such as a different back cover. This type of book becomes a valuable promotional avenue for your book idea — If you know about it and use it. I recommend you go to [www.booksaremarketingtools.com](http://www.booksaremarketingtools.com) and look around for ideas related to your book concept.

The majority of these special sales ideas begin with the author and your book proposal will catch attention from the editor if you include them.



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### 5. Gather sales outside of the bookstore.

You may be thinking, “What do you mean outside the bookstore?” More than half of the books sold are sold outside the regular bookstore market. If you are aware of this statistic and include some information about this knowledge in your proposal, then it will stand out to the editor. Use [BEYOND THE BOOKSTORE](#) by Brian Jud ([follow this link](#)) as a resource to learn more about how to incorporate this information in your mailing to the editor.

### 6. Create a “must have” title.

As an editor, I’ve been in publication meetings with a room full of executives. Sometimes a “must have” title will sway the room and achieve a book contract. The process is much more complicated but I know you have purchased books purely from the title. This element is a place where you should give lots of attention.

In general, publishers will pour a great deal of energy into the title for a book and in particular if the author doesn’t pick a good one. Sometimes despite this effort, they will miss the boat. Many years ago, a publisher released a solid book from Dr. Ross Campbell called **KIDS IN DANGER: DISARMING THE DESTRUCTIVE POWER OF ANGER IN YOUR CHILD**.

While the subtitle gives away the subject of this book, if you were a parent with a kid in danger, would you purchase the book? Or would you be hesitant to go to the checkout counter with it? Most books appear in the bookstore with the spine out and the customer sees only the main title. The book didn’t sell as well as expected. The publishing team decided to repackage it. This means they created a new cover and a new internal design for the book and poured more effort into this book. It still didn’t perform so eventually it was put out of print.

As an acquisitions editor, I located and read this out-of-print book. I determined it had the wrong title. I called Dr. Campbell to ask if another publisher had picked up this book. No one had so the rights were still available. I floated my title with Dr. Campbell saying, “This book should have been called **HOW TO REALLY LOVE YOUR ANGRY CHILD**.” Then the

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book goes with Campbell's other best-selling titles such as HOW TO REALLY LOVE YOUR CHILD and HOW TO REALLY LOVE YOUR TEEN.

The new title carried more customer appeal and was something Dr. Campbell loved immediately. I pitched the book to the publication board, gained their approval and contracted the book. As a part of this process, Dr. Campbell wanted to completely rework the contents with updated information. I paired him with a writer who accomplished this matter with excellence. Today all three of Dr. Campbell's titles are tied into a cohesive package. Create a "must have" title and your idea will gain additional interest from the editor.

### **Where The Rubber Meets The Road**

1. Think about the six ways to guarantee an editor's attention to your book idea. How many of these ideas can you build into your current proposal?
2. If you build several of these ideas into your proposal, you will receive more than attention, you will improve the possibility of landing a book contract. How can you implement these ideas in your writing?

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## **Chapter 5 A Final Word**

In these few pages, I've tried to paint a realistic yet hopeful picture of the book publishing process. It's a tricky balance for anyone. The key from my perspective is to always be increasing your understanding and learn about different aspects of the business. Finally, persist with your idea and continue searching for the right editor at the right publisher at the right time. All three of these elements have to line up before something can become a book. Through reading these words, you have taken a step to fulfill your dreams about book publishing.

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### About The Author

#### W. Terry Whalin

W. Terry Whalin understands both sides of the editorial desk--as an editor and a writer. He worked as a magazine editor and his magazine work has appeared in more than 50 publications. As a book acquisitions editor for several publishers and a former literary agent, Terry is an acquisitions editor at [Morgan James Publishing](#). If you have a book that needs to get published, [contact Terry](#) and he can help you. He has written more than 60 books through traditional publishers in a wide range of topics from children's books to biographies to co-authored books. Several of Terry's books have sold over 100,000 copies. Whether you are unsure how to start on the path to publication or want to take your publishing career to the next level, Terry's [Jumpstart Your Publishing Dreams, Insider Secrets to Skyrocket Your Success](#) is packed with insight. His latest book is ***10 Publishing Myths, Insight Every Author Needs to Succeed***. [At this link](#) you can get the free 11<sup>th</sup> Publishing Myth. As a special offer, you can get ***10 Publishing Myths*** for only \$10 includes shipping and over \$200 in FREE bonuses ([follow the link](#)). Terry is a popular speaker and teacher at numerous writers' conferences and an active member of the [American Society of Journalists and Authors](#). His personal website is located at [www.terrywhalin.com](#). Terry and his wife, Christine, live in Southern California.

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### Terry Recommends

**Each bold title in the following list of resources is a website address. Simply click it and go to these valuable resources.**

**[1. Jumpstart Your Publishing Dreams, Insider Secrets to Skyrocket Your Success.](#)**

Available in paperback or Ebook Editions, this book will give you the insight and skills to succeed in today's market. A free [30-page sample of the book](#) is combined with Terry's guarantee of your satisfaction.

**[2. Write A Book Proposal Course.](#)** Learn one of the critical elements about book publishing. Editors and literary agents do not read manuscripts. They read book proposals. In a step-by-step program, Terry provides 12 lessons to write a book proposal. If you would like to sample Terry's teaching on proposals, here's a FREE resource: [AskAboutProposals.com.](#) Whether you are writing nonfiction or fiction, you will profit from this course.

**[3. Book Proposals That Sell, 21 Secrets To Speed Your Success \(Revised Edition\).](#)** Originally published in 2004 and with over 130 Five Star reviews, this book has been completely revised and updated for a new generation.

**[4. The 31-Day Guide To Making Money Writing Small Reports.](#)** Many people are puzzled how to make extra income through the Internet. This 84-page Ebook gives step-by-step instruction. Use it for 60 days with Terry's risk-free guarantee that it will work.

**[5. The 31-Day Guide to Blogging For Bucks.](#)** Many people have passion for blogging and it's a great way to build a presence—yet they have no idea how to monetize their passion and make their blog profitable. This 62-page Ebook includes a specific plan and comes with Terry's 60 day risk-free guarantee. Check it out today.

**[6. The 31-Day Guide to Making Money on Ebay.](#)** For years, Terry has been on Ebay and now he takes his experience to teach you how to use your writing to make money on Ebay. As with his other products, it comes with my risk-free guarantee so what do you have to lose? Check it out.

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7. **[Your Membership Course](#)** . Terry is convinced that everyone has learned a skill that they can teach others. If you want to earn extra income and help others, then you can do both through this Simple Membership System. The course is a complete package and includes three bonus reports, nine lessons and even a sample lesson template. Terry guarantees if you get the course, set it up and follow the lessons, you will make money.
8. **[Mastering Twitter in 10 Minutes or Less](#)** . Thousands of people are joining Twitter each day. Get this free Ebook and join the fun. Also, here's where you can [follow Terry](#) .
9. **Learn the [Secrets About Proposals](#)**. What catches the editor's attention? Immediately gain access to the insights from eight top editors and literary agents.
10. **[Editor Reveals Book Proposal Secrets](#)**. Through this audio program, Terry provides in-depth teaching about book proposals.
11. **[How to Succeed as An Article Writer](#)**. One of the best ways for any writer to get published and build your platform in the market is through magazine articles. Terry provides detailed instruction in this resource.
12. **[Writing For The Christian Market](#)**. You can tap into one of the hottest areas of the marketplace. Whether you want to write books or for magazines, this Ebook provides seasoned advice.
13. **[The Writing Life](#)**. Terry's blog includes over 1,500 searchable entries about writing and publishing. [Use this link to subscribe](#) to Terry's entries and receive them via email.
14. **[Right-Writing.com](#) & [Right Writing News](#)**. You gain immediate access to thousands of pages of free how-to-write information and receive over \$100 of free Ebooks plus more than 400 pages of free how-to-write information only available to subscribers.
15. **[Terry's List of Literary Agents](#)**. If you are looking for an agent, you need this free resource of over 400 agents and their contact information.
16. **[Mywebmarketingmagic.com](#)**. If you need an excellent yet simple shopping cart, consider this one.
17. **[MyInstantTelewebcast.com](#)**. Use this teleseminar system to build your platform as an

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author.

**18. [TerryInfo.com](#).** Terry's free affiliate program includes training and 50% commissions on his various products. Join Terry's program and begin earning monthly income from selling his products and using his ads.

**19. [You Can Make Money, A Step-by-Step Guide to Making Passive Income Through Affiliate Marketing](#).** The affiliate industry is a billion dollar business and Terry gives you his insight in this free Ebook.

**20. [Morgan James Publishing](#).** Want to get your manuscript published? Email: [terry@morganjamespublishing.com](mailto:terry@morganjamespublishing.com)