

BOOK PROPOSAL FORMAT

TITLE PAGE

Book Title

Author Name

OVERVIEW PAGE

Title:

Title and subtitle of your book

Alternative Titles:

It's fine to list 2-3 other ideas for title and subtitle combinations.

Author:

Your name as you want it to appear on the cover.

Book Hook:

Include a succinct sentence or two summarizing the contents of your book. Focus on your book's unique hook.

Word Count:

For nonfiction, this could be anywhere from 40,000-65,000. Pick a range of about 5,000. For example, 40,000-45,000, or 50,000-55,000, keeping in mind that most publishers prefer less words due to printing costs.

Manuscript Delivery:

Identify when this manuscript will be available to the publisher, for instance, "6-9 months after signed contract."

Foreword:

If you have a foreword secured, include the writer's name here. If not, leave it off the proposal.

Reader Benefits:

Focus on the felt need and promise in a few bullet points.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

This is all about you! It should feel relatable and friendly. Use your unique voice and perspective here. Let's hear your passions, your heart, even your humor. Jennifer always includes a photo.

SUMMARY PAGE(S)

Here, you will summarize, in one page, the key ideas of your book. Keep this lively and interesting to capture an agent and/or acquisition editor's attention. Consider starting with a powerful opening story, a funny personal anecdote, a thought-provoking question, or a startling statistic. Use information that will make your message stand out in the marketplace.

THE MARKET PAGE

Audience:

Who is the target audience for your book? Consider age, gender, life experience. Below, you'll find what Jennifer used in this section on her most recent book proposal.

- Jennifer's primary audience is Christian women between the ages of 30 and 60. Their lives often feel frantic and rushed. Their calendars are full. They want to slow down, but don't think it's possible. They are seeking the trusted voice of an encouraging friend and mentor to move them toward slower, more meaningful living.
- The secondary audience is Jennifer's growing fan base. They trust her and rely on her to give them language to understand their struggles and find their way to the one true hope.
- The tertiary audience is women's ministry leaders looking for group studies and resources.

Buying motivation:

Why will people want to buy your book? Consider the felt need. Here's what Jennifer used in her book proposal for *Growing Slow*:

Women are overwhelmed by their fast-paced lives and all that they are asked to do and be. They are hungry for a simpler, more beautiful life. Readers are fascinated by the slow-paced life of the farm and the hope it holds out.

Women want reassurance that the good things they are growing will, indeed, grow—whether that's their relationships, their children, their businesses, or their faith. This book invites them to rest in the trustworthiness of God and his timing.

COMPARABLE TITLES PAGE

Here, you will include books that are similar to the one you're writing, and then briefly describe why your book is different. Feel free to use thumbnail images of the book covers you're referring to.

A note from Carly: "Good comp titles are hard and they're almost always a sticking point in internal conversations, but they're crucial to pitch to the sales team, and the earlier a prospective author understands that, the better. A solid comp is written by an author with a similar reach/platform, a similar felt need in the concept, and a recent enough release to show market viability. In other words, a first-time prospective author probably shouldn't be comping themselves to Jesus Calling just because they're writing a devotional OR the market go-to resource for parenting that was published in 1992 OR a new release from the highest selling Christian authors. I'd 1,000,000% rather see a thoughtful, modest (but realistic!) comp on a proposal than to see a recap of the bestseller list with a limited connection to the content."

MARKETING AND PUBLICITY

Here, you will share information related to your platform. List figures for all of your social media channels, the number of people who are subscribed to your email list, your speaking engagements, podcast appearances, affinity groups, and key relationships and endorsers.

Note: when you list endorsers and supporters, do not include people you have no connection with. The people you name should be people who are likely to support you or with whom you have some actual connection.

ENDORSEMENTS PAGE

This is not required, nor is it necessarily typical, but Jennifer says this was one of her secret weapons as a first-time author when she didn't have much of a platform. She included 6-8 endorsements from respected people who testified to her skills as a writer and storyteller (not about the book itself). For her very first book proposal, before she had made many connections with well-known authors, those endorsements came from a previous newspaper editor, a judge's comment on a national newspaper award she had received, a few medium-platform authors, and a couple of other bloggers. No one who offered an endorsement was hugely famous, but the endorsements did catch the attention of agents and editors.

CHAPTER-BY-CHAPTER SYNOPSIS PAGES

Include chapter titles and one-paragraph summaries for each chapter of your book.

WRITING SAMPLE PAGES

Submit the first two to three chapters of your book as your sample writing. If you have an introduction, be sure to include it. It's fine to send a chapter or two from later in the book, but be sure to also include the first one for overall context.