

Book Proposal Plan and Schedule

What the Book Proposal consists of

1. Cover letter. A quick hello and thanks for the opportunity.
2. Title page.
3. Table of contents (for the proposal)
4. Overview of Book. 10 or so (double-spaced) pages describing what the book will cover, what it's about
5. Promotion: What you, the author, are going to do to promote the book.
6. Market Analysis. How many people affected by the issue you mean to address. Who are they? What's the source of confusion about this topic, the misinformation or old paradigm? Overview of take on issue currently out there. How your book will cut through that confusion or add something new to the conversation. Books within 5 years: Their take, where your book differs.
7. Bio: A page about why you're the expert to be writing on the topic
8. Chapter Outline: Half a page for each chapter. Structure of the book, including parts.
9. Chapter samples
 - Intro
 - Chapter 1 (or most promising/interesting/punchy chapter)

Here is the order in which we'll write the proposal:

Market Analysis

Opening paragraph that explains your main argument and why your book absolutely needs to be written. Explain the hole it will fill or the fresh angle or present staggering statistic that shows how badly it's needed.

Prove this point via comparisons with 5-7 books. Choose books that did well, still on bookshelves. Pay attention to voice, POV, organization. Include a wide scope of books on the topic.

First layer of analysis:

1. List about 15 books you could compare yours to. Look on Amazon, the library, bookstore, and appendices of popular books on the topic. Ask librarians, other professionals, and bookshop owners.
2. What is your book bringing to the party that's different or better?
3. What is your book going to do that has been proven successful by other books?
4. Why does it need to be written?

5. What are some interesting statistics, stories, or studies that support your argument for why it needs to be written?

Second layer of book analysis:

1. We'll start weeding the books down to 5-7. Things we want to consider:
 - Was it a NY Times bestseller or bestseller of any kind. (Not mandatory but good)
 - Is it fairly current or reprinted fairly recently?
 - Do you have books that are similar to yours and something that comes at it from a completely different angle?

We work on analysis first because it helps us get clear about your book.

The Outline

State the name of each chapter and then beneath each heading in specific economical language, summarize the goal, content, and flavor of the section.

Use lists, bullet points, stories and anecdotes.

If you're going to be using photos, illustrations, graphs, maps or so on, you'll want to mention those here.

Some options for structuring the book:

1. Chronologically: Say you're writing about starting a business. First chapter would be about honing your idea, the second could be about branding yourself, the third about writing a business plan, the fourth about finding funding. Step by step of the process. It might help to break it up into sections.
2. Story-by-story: Interview people (or introduce case studies) and mold chapters around each story. Organize around themes with those supporting stories.
3. Category by category: We could break up the book into different types of trauma.

Things to keep in mind:

- Look at other books and see how they're outlined
- Figure out what flows best. What provides the most logical flow.
- Put information that could fit in a number of places into the most appropriate place.

First layer of outline creation

1. List chapter and note the big idea.
2. Organize these chapters to see what works best, coming up with a couple of possibilities.
3. Choose the best organizational option.
4. Write the chapter heading and then spew all the information you could put in that chapter as bullet points.

Second layer of outline creation

1. Get creative with chapter headings and sub-chapter headers
2. Change bullet points into sentences and write a short paragraph.
3. Show that each chapter has a beginning, middle and end.
4. Indicate if there will be exercises included and case studies.
5. Create the final list of chapters (this will be the TOC for the book.) Include appendix and notes.

The Overview

This is the sales page for your book. It should be from 3-10 pages long. We need a clear understanding of what your book is about, who it's being written for, the tone it'll be written in, and why they should bang down your door for the honor of publishing your book.

It should explain:

What your book is about

1. Who will buy it
2. Why it needs to be written
3. Why it needs to be written by you.

We open with a book hook—a fascinating and/or convincing statistic, quote, statement, or anecdote that draws the readers in instantly. (Why now is trauma and trauma resilience so important?)

First layer: We'll brainstorm ideas for your book hook. Write down anything that comes to mind:

- Statistics that you know or will research
- Historical or current events
- Personal stories
- Scientific discoveries

- Jokes
- Bold statement
- Questions
- Interesting trivia
- Dramatic tear-jerking anecdotes
- Song lyrics

Second layer: write the draft

Use specific examples to summarize what your entire book is about. Give a summarized scope describing specific chapters, stories, exercises, charts, photographs, sidebars to bring book alive.

Note key points and specifics to be included. Get clear on trajectory of book.

What chapters are you going to single out to use as fence posts to mark the journey. Write down any key charts, photos, illustrations, sidebars you want to discuss as well as language, POV, messages, lessons, stories.

Next, explain why this book needs to be written. State your case. Is your target market not being reached? How will your book meet their needs? Are there loads of books but none that do A, B, or C the way yours does? Why is your book going to sell boatloads of copies?

Next, explain why this book needs to be written by you? What experience do you bring to the subject? Why should we listen to you? Sell you as the author.

Next, who will buy this book? Who is the target market? Be specific. How will your book meet their needs?

Will you have exercises, make suggestions?

Remember we're writing directly to agents, editors, and publishers. We use the same voice we're using in the book.

Keep 4 questions in mind at all times:

- What is your book about?
- Why does it need to be written?
- Why does it need to be written by you?
- Who is going to buy it?

Bio

The bio we'll include is all about the you who is the author of this book.

Need to focus on 4 areas in particular:

1. Your expertise and years of experience in the topic you're writing about.
2. Your prior writing experience/success (if any).
3. Any experience you might have in the areas of marketing and promotion. You'll be largely responsible for helping to promote yourself and your book so agents, editors, and publishers will be glad to see you know what you're doing. All about bragging.
4. Any speaking experience you have or any experience you have being on radio and TV. These people want to know you'll be out there promoting this book, that you know how to handle yourself in an interview or speaking situation.

First level:

Write down all the fabulous things you've done. Job and personal experience, published works, publicity experience, years of research, education, awards, memberships, workshops, lectures, TV and radio appearances...

Highlight all the things that relate to or that you could spin to make relate to your book topic, writing, speaking, and your ability to promote your book.

Write down any additional education, personal and job experience you have.
Additional writing experience.
Additional marketing experience.
Additional speaking experience.

Go through everything and pick out the most impressive and relevant.

Second level:

Create a draft of bio.

- Start with your connection to the topic.
- Keep it as short as possible.
- Keep it interesting.
- Be specific if you've got the goods, vague if you don't.

The Promotion Plan

Agents, editors, and publishers want to know what you can do and see what ideas you might have; what you're going to do to sell and promote your book using your own time, money, ideas, and connections.

The plan should include: All the resources and connections you already have; all the resources and connections and ideas you'll pursue.

Answer these questions:

1. What contacts do you, or any of your friends, or any of your friend's friends have in TV radio, papers, magazines, blogs, podcast, etc. Who could you reach out to for their connections?
2. What contacts do you et al have with celebrities, experts in your field and other fancy people who will commit to writing gushing cover quotes or reviews or the forward to your book?
3. Do you have a mailing list? How big is it? Do you have a newsletter or ezine? How big are your followings on Twitter, FB, OI, and other social media outlets? List anything impressive here.
4. What organizations are you a member of that would be interested in the topic of your book? How many members do they have? Can you/will you speak in front of them or partner with them in some way? If you're not a member, which relevant organizations or clubs can you solicit or join?
5. Will you go on a book tour (understanding that it's on you to pay and organize)? If so, where will you go? Choose places where you know the most people and/or have the most media connections.
6. Will you do, or continue to do workshops and or courses based on your book? Which workshop or courses?
7. Which internet media outlets (blogs, podcasts, etc.) will you solicit that would be a great fit for you and your book?
8. Which print media outlets (magazines, papers, etc.) will you solicit that would be a great fit for you/your book?
9. Which radio and TV outlets will you solicit that would be a great fit for you/your book?
10. Will you buy ads or write articles for the newsletter or blogs of other relevant organizations? Which ones and how big are their readership (if available)?
11. If you have a column and/or blog on your topic? How big is the readership? What is it called? If not, will you start one?
12. Do you have or will you create a website around you/your book? What is it called?
13. Do you already have an outside publicist in place? If not, will you hire one? Which one and why?
14. Could your book be of interest to schools and universities? Will you solicit them? Which ones?

Pay attention to other books and authors—how they're promoting themselves. Why do you know about the books you know about? What ideas can you borrow?

When putting the plan together, list the most impressive stuff first. Brainstorm more cool ideas.

- Video trailer
- Paid social media campaigns
- Free plus shipping launch
- Amazon Bestseller push
- Joint venture opportunities

Sample Chapters

We want a chapter or two from your book. They should represent approximately 10% of completed manuscript.

These will show:

- What a good writer you are (or have at your disposal).
- How fascinating and meaty your topic is
- What a creative and solid handle you have on the material

The choice of two chapters can be a number of things (even though I tend to go for the first two chapters).

- Which chapter are you most passionate about writing?
- Which ones can you do the best job on? Which are easiest?
- Which have the most compelling information, anecdotes, and statistics?
- Which showcase the widest range of material you're presenting?