

HOW TO MAKE THE PERFECT PITCH (WITHOUT STRIKING OUT):

By Christie Craig & Faye Hughes

(with a little assist from literary agents Caren Johnson of CJLA and Kim Lionetti of BookEnds, LLC)

1) Do Your Homework before You Commit to Pitch

- a. Research the agent or editor before requesting a pitch. (If they don't handle your type of work, you're wasting both your time and theirs.)
- b. Ask how the pitch appointments "work" for your session. (Some pitch sessions encourage bringing along a proposal for the editor or agent; others most strenuously do not. Knowing what to expect means you'll be prepared.)

Never walk into a pitch appointment unless you know how it will work and who the agent or editor is and the types of fiction (or non-fiction) they handle.

2. Preparing For The Pitch

- a. Start with a single paragraph that explains what your book is about. (Put everything in there you think you need, but most especially the plot and external conflict; ultimately, of course, everything you include may not end up in your pitch but it's good to have a place to start.)
- b. Explain who the hero and heroine are. (Ideally, you included this in the above paragraph, but if not, add one line each for the hero and heroine that explains their internal conflict.)
- c. Add a line that explains why your book is different from the others in the market. (Yes, we know this is hard but all you need is a line that plays up the twist.)
- d. Polish the pitch until it shines. (And remember to keep it short – if that single paragraph seems too large, it's okay to break it into two paragraphs.)
- e. Read it out loud and fine-tune some more. (As you talk, you'll notice the things you need to tweak.)
- f. Practice makes perfect. (Rehearse your pitch until you know it by heart. Better yet, have someone listen to your pitch that doesn't know your plot to make sure it makes sense.)
- g. Be prepared to pitch not only your book but yourself. (In two or three sentences tell the editor/agent about your qualifications as a writer.)

Make the most of your 7-10 minutes with an editor or agent by being prepared for your pitch.

3) Make The Best Pitch You're Capable of Making

- a. Arrive early for your pitch. (Use the extra time to rehearse your pitch. Besides, you never know if a new pitch opportunity will arrive.)
- b. Dress for a job interview. (Dressing professionally helps to make you feel like a true professional.)
- c. Smile and introduce yourself to the agent/editor. (Take your cues from the editor or agent.)
- d. Be enthusiastic about your work. (Editors and agents will pick up on your enthusiasm and feel it, too!)
- e. Try to relax while you are pitching. (Being nervous is normal but throwing up on the agent or editor's new shoes is so not a good impression.)
- f. Offer the editor or agent your business card, but don't force it (or anything else) on them.

(Act as professionally as you are dressed.)

Making a pitch is like attending a job interview; you'll never get a second chance to make a good first impression so make sure you're at your best during the pitch.

4) Follow Up After the Pitch

- a. If the agent/editor requested your work, send it in promptly. (You'd be surprised at how many people ace the pitch and never follow through!)
- b. Send a thank-you note to the agent/editor, even if they declined to request your proposal. (Your mother told you to be polite. She was right.)

The proper follow-through is almost as important as a good pitch.

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For more tips, visit Christie and Faye's website, www.WritewithUs.net, where you can view the video for How To Make The Perfect Pitch (Without Striking Out.)