



Editor's Note: The following article is the first in a two-part series on writing a book proposal. The second part will appear in our Winter 2010 issue. Kathleen wrote about finding an agent, Jack Scovil of Scovil Galen and Ghosh, in the Fall 2009 issue of CWO.

Marketing Your Book - A Successful Proposal

PART ONE: CREATING AN OUTLINE

by Kathy O'Keefe Kanavos

In the fall issue of Cape Women Online, I promised to write an article on one of the most difficult aspects of the book proposal: the marketing outline. It is easy to understand why it's difficult for writers to market their books. Blame it on "left brain-right brain differences." Writing is artistic and right-brain oriented. Marketing is statistical, left-brain work. Few of us are proficient at using both sides of our brains equally well.

Although I've used some of my own outline and proposal from SURVIVING CANCERLAND: The Psychic Aspects of Healing as an example, any book or manuscript on any subject matter can be substituted.

A successful proposal outline is more important than ever in the publishing world. The statistics and details contained in it will help get your book into the hands of an agent because the agent can see the book's marketing potential at a glance. That will give the agent confidence to take your book to the big publishing houses. Agents don't like to get turned down, either. It affects their reputations. So help your agent help you.

Big publishing houses are not in the business to publish books. They are in the business to make money. Until the day that you become an author of Dan Brown's caliber, you will be required to show the steps of how you plan to market and sell your book. Stating that you'll use your social networking skills to promote your book will not suffice. You must prove it with names and numbers, facts and figures.

One of the first steps in that sequence is to identify your audience, who will later become your market. Answering the question, "Who will want to read my book and why?" will identify your audience.

The next question, "How and where can I find them?" will help discover how and where to market your book. Identify your audience, and then decide how to "reach out, and touch them." Those are the important components of a successful marketing platform. The Internet has made finding and touching audiences easier than ever in recorded history.

Let's begin with the outline. This will be the foundation for your marketing platform. An outline gives the reader quick information assessment. You want to make the editor's job easy, and make yourself look knowledgeable and professional. My college professors used to require an outline to every essay test question to make grading papers quicker and easier. Your marketing outline accomplishes the same task for the agent and editor.

Sample Marketing Outline:

1. CORE MESSAGE

1A. In one line, write what you want to convey to the reader. What are you trying to tell them?

2. AUDIENCE

Who will want to read your book? That is the audience you're trying to reach.

2A. Identify the primary market for your type of book, with statistics.

2B. Identify groups related to group A (the secondary market for your type of book, with statistics).

- 1.
- 2.

2C. Identify groups related to group B (additional markets for your type of book, with statistics).

- 1.
- 2.

2D. Research Institutes interested in those groups (with statistics).

- 1.

3. MARKETING STRATEGY

3A. Primary Strategy: What is the primary way that you can reach your target audience? As I said earlier, the Internet makes reaching your potential audience easier than ever. A primary strategy is what YOU can do to directly influence your audience. This is what my proposal included:

Create Internet awareness via website, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube video, and blogsite as central platforms to:

1. Broadcast my message
2. Display testimonials
3. Receive feedback
4. Discuss current and real time issues
5. Allow for book ordering
6. Establish cross-links to marketing outreach sources described below
7. Use my web site to establish credibility and credentials
8. Use my Twitter site to build awareness, followers and network
9. Use my Facebook site to build awareness, followers and network
10. Use my YouTube video to connect to younger viewers, and
11. Encourage book signing parties.

3B. Secondary Strategy: There are other media outlets you can reach out to, but can't directly influence. How are you going to use them to reach your target audience? In my proposal, I called this the "Creation of Awareness by utilizing existing outlets to network the message through existing organizations."

1. List all of the existing networks available on the Internet related to target audience, using newsletters, websites, Twitter sites, Blogger, Facebook, etc.)
2. Name the newspapers and their readership numbers, etc. whom you would target

4. CONVERT MARKETING ACTIVITIES TO SALES

How do your primary and secondary strategies turn into actual sales numbers? Some examples from my own marketing proposal include:

- 4A. Use my website as the primary medium to immerse the prospective buyer in the book, then convince them of my credibility and the book's worth.
- 4B. Prominently reference my website in all articles for print and Internet publications.
- 4C. Establish reciprocal web links with prominent related sites.
- 4D. Direct social networking outlets to my website.

In the second part of this series on successful book proposals, I'll talk about "fleshing out" the proposal so that it grabs the agent or editor and makes them pick up the phone!

Kathleen O'Keefe-Kanavos is a two-time, ten-year breast cancer survivor. She recently signed with New York literary agent Jack Scovil to sell her memoir, *Surviving Cancerland*.

She lives on Cape Cod with her husband of 25 years and their cats.

Email Kathy O'Keefe-Kanavos
Follow Kathy on her [Blog](#) and [Twitter](#)

