

# Voicing Vision and Values Through a Book - How to Get Published by a Mainstream Publisher

*"The most solid advice to a writer is this, I think. Try to learn to breathe deeply, really to taste food when you eat, and when you sleep, to really sleep. Try as much as possible to be wholly alive, with all your might, and when you laugh, laugh like hell, and when you get angry, get good and angry. Try to be alive."*

*William Saroyan*

*"The difference between the right word and the almost right word is the difference between lightning and the lightning bug!"*

*Mark Twain*

*"A book is a mirror; if an ass peers into it, you can't expect an apostle to peer out!"*

*George Christopher Lichtenberg*

*"I am a part of all I have met.—  
But these parts have been transformed:  
We each are artists of the self, creating a  
collage—  
A new and original work of art—  
Out of scraps and fragments of identifications."*

*From Tennyson's Ulysses*

**C.A.R.E**

Presented by:

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Spreading Contagious Enthusiasm™

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## Tips from Barbara Glanz



1. *Don't be afraid of long titles—just make them memorable.*
2. *Always be thinking of how you can leverage the material you already have.*
3. *Always make friends with gatekeepers and use names of mutual contacts.*
4. *The average business book only sells 3000 copies, so if you do much better than this, you are a hero!*
5. *Always make friends with as many people in the publishing company as possible. Visibility and good relationships will help them want to sell your book and will keep you in their mind for future projects.*
6. *Network with anyone anywhere on your chosen topic. You never know what may happen!*
7. *Try to think of an experience or story which exemplifies in a heart-touching way the message of your book. Readers—and editors—will never forget a story!*
8. *A good editor with whom you have rapport, who will challenge you to stretch, and who will fight for your ideas is crucial to the success of your book.*
9. *Add something creative to your proposal to get the editor's attention.*
10. *Subscribe to the Wall Street Journal and comb it each day for articles that relate to your topic area.*
11. *Study proposals that sold books. Read *Write the Perfect Proposal* by Jeff Herman and Deborah M. Adams.*
12. *As you're negotiating your contract, you may be able to receive a larger than the usual 40% discount if you guarantee that you will purchase a certain number of books in the first year.*
13. *If you can tie your book in with a non-profit organization, both they, you, and the publisher will benefit.*
14. *Also notice which publishing companies published the books which have similar subject matter to yours. That will help you target the publishers most likely to want your book.*
15. *Use your NSA network to find fellow speakers who have published with your target publishers and ask them to look at your proposal and if they like it, to recommend you to their editors. That way you will not go into the slush pile but to a real person.*
16. **YOU CAN DO IT!!!**



# Book Proposal Structure



## REQUIRED SECTIONS

### Book Concept

*An overview describing the book. Written in succinct, objective terms. Gives the “what” and “why.” The “what” covers the primary concept and scope of the book. The “why” gives the background of what’s happening in the marketplace that creates the need for the book. Specify the length of the manuscript (number of words), describe illustrations and/or photographs, and give projected date of completion. 1-2 pages.*



### Purpose

*States the main purpose or theme of the book in one or two sentences. When someone asks you, “What is your book about?”, readily and succinctly answer. Learning to speak and write in sound bites will impress the media as well!*

### Market

*Describes the audience for the book. Be as specific as possible. Avoid broad generalizations. Give numbers of potential book buyers if possible. 1 page.*

### Competition

*List competitive books (books someone might buy instead of yours) and state how your book is different and better. Avoid being overly critical of other books. Answer the question: “Why should there be another book on the market?” 1-2 pages.*

### Content Summary

*Give table of contents. I recommend that you have at least 10 chapters and use titles and subtitles. The title should be informal or catchy and the subtitle descriptive. Polish the chapter titles and subtitles—they are key selling points. Table of contents is the “make a break” part of retail book sale. 1-2 pages.*



### Chapter Summaries

*Give a short summary of each chapter. Usually one or two paragraphs (1/4 to 1/2 page) but can be as long as one page per chapter. 3 to 10 pages or more. Many publishers will also ask for a sample chapter or two.*

### Author

*Your qualifications and experience that enable you to write the book. List previous*





*publications and advantages that you have as an author (contacts, resources, research data, personal experiences, etc.). Include who you know, how many you can sell, how you are going to help sell this book. Usually 1 page.*

## Promotion

*List all the means you have and are willing to use to assist the publisher to promote and sell the book. Examples are presenting workshops or classes, making presentations at regional and national conventions, writing magazine or journal articles, appearing on radio or TV, etc. Usually 1 page.*

## OPTIONAL SECTIONS



### Comments from Readers

*If others have read the proposal and have favorable comments, their comments may be good selling points. Review comments from “name” people and “name” organizations are most valuable. Construct this section so that it reads like book jacket copy. If you have speaker contacts and clients who are willing to provide a testimonial for the book when completed, include their names here. Usually 1-2 pages.*

### Research Methodology

*If your book is based on research, it may be helpful to provide more information about your techniques and methods. New research can be the most powerful selling point.*

### Sample of Writing

*If you have a good, short article that has been published recently (especially one that covers the same topic), include it as a sample of your writing style.*

### Supportive Material

*If you have short newspaper or magazine clippings that describe what is going on in the market that creates a need for the book, they may be good selling points.*

#### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

##### Books and Articles

*How to Write a Book Proposal—Michael Larsen, *Writer’s Digest Books**

*Write the Perfect Book Proposal—Jeff Herman and Deborah M. Adams*

*How to Get Happily Published—Judith Appelbaum*



*"How to Write an Irresistible Book Proposal," Bud Gardner, Professional Speaker, July 1994*

*Books in Print*

*The Writer's Market*

*Publisher's Weekly*

*Literary Market Place*

*NSA Directory of Learning Resources*



### **Suggested Conferences and Workshops**

*Publisher's University sponsored by Publishers Marketing Association,  
310-372-2732*

*Maui Writers Conference, P. O. Box 968, Kihei, Maui, Hawaii, 800-879-0061*



Barbara has been a member of NSA since 1991; however, she did not attend a convention until 1993. (You might ask her the reason why sometime today.) She has been a member of the Board of Directors of Professional Speakers of Illinois, and PSI awarded her with the "Wordsmith Award" in recognition of Platform Excellence in 1997. She earned her CSP in 1998 after starting her own company August 1, 1994.

She presented at the National convention in 1998 and 2001 and at the Western Winter Workshop in 2000, 2001, and will be presenting again in Hawaii. She has spoken to 15 NSA chapters to date, including keynoting at two speaker's school events and headlining a "Celebrity Series." In fact, the New England Speakers Association made her an honorary member along with Og Mandino and Rosita Perez!

A member of the 2000-2001, 2001-2002, and 2002-2003 Editorial Boards for *Professional Speaker* magazine, she has written three feature articles for the magazine since she first became a member. She was in charge of the staff sessions at the 2001 Winter Workshop and has presented at "Meet the Pros" for several years at the national convention.

Barbara is the author of five best-selling business books, four of which have been published by major publishers without an agent, and she has been featured in three live satellite television productions. This year she was selected by Meeting Professionals International as one of only four Platinum speakers worldwide. Her master's degree is in Adult Education, and her brand is "REGENERATING SPIRIT—Creating Cultures Where People Matter."

Having spoken on four continents and in 48 states in five years with almost no marketing, Barbara is a living, breathing message of hope to all speakers that you, too, can be successful even if you do not follow all the rules!

Barbara is deeply grateful for her NSA family and the love and support they have given her through some recent very difficult times in her personal life. As she thinks of all her many NSA friends, the following quotation comes to mind:

**"Friends are angels who lift us to our feet when our wings have trouble remembering how to fly."**

*If you would like a cheerleader/  
helper/friend, call:*

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RE: National Speakers Assn. Presentation

Hi, Barbara!

Sorry I don't have time for a more thorough response, but I'd tell speakers the same things I'd tell anyone who wants to be published:

1. Do your homework about the company's list. Ask them for a catalog, check out bookstores, etc.
2. Give the publishers what they ask for in your proposal. Ask for their submission guidelines and FOLLOW THEM.
3. Never, EVER tell an editor "there's never been anything published that's like my book." If it's a legitimate project, this claim is never true. Find something similar, then tell me why your proposed book is (a) still needed and (b) better.
4. Know your audience. Do not try to have your book be all things to all people; you'll end up pleasing no one. We call these "'tweeners" here, and it's this kiss of death for proposals/books. If your book is aimed only at financial planners, for example, don't be afraid to say so. Don't hope it will appeal to everyone with a checking account.
5. Understand that, in this age of staffing cutbacks, editors are very busy people and it might take them a month or more to get back to you with any feedback.
6. Avoid gimmicks (we've been sent glitter, candy bars that were smashed in transit, proposals on hot pink paper, and so on). Make your proposal clean, professional, and thorough yet succinct--like something YOU would want to read on the train home at the end of a hectic workday.
7. An author's "platform" is increasingly important, given publishers' shrinking marketing and advertising budgets and staffs. If you can help sell your book through your speaking engagements, website, media connections, professional affiliations, etc., let the publisher know.

I hope these ideas help! It's fine to use my name and company.

All the best, Betsy

Betsy Lancefield Lane Senior Editor

NEW ADDRESS! Contemporary Books

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Chicago IL 60601 phone: 1-312-233-7601 fax: 1-312-233-7569

RE: National Speakers Association Presentation

Barbara, you're welcome to give out my name and phone number in your speech or in the handout. Here is my book proposal form too which you are welcome to duplicate.

As for advice, I would tell NSA members that they are in a very good position to attract publishers to their work because, as you know, an author's public speaking is one of the most powerful marketing tools for any book. The key is to come up with a fresh idea or new perspective, and present it well in the proposal. NSA members who can't write that well (like some I've published--not you!) should think about partnering with someone who can. Having a co-author is often a good idea if the co-author can add value to the book project.

Usually it's not enough to just have a good idea for a book, unfortunately. The book needs to have some kind of pre-existing marketing momentum or built-in audience of people who know the author and are likely to buy the book. Public speakers have a great advantage in this respect, though you don't have to be a public speaker to get a book published. It often helps, though.

As for finding the right editor to send a query or proposal to, one of the best ways is to find successful books that are similar to your proposed book, and try to identify the acquiring editor or at least the publisher of that book. That editor is more likely to be interested in your proposal if they have had a related book that sold well.

It's not easy to get published! Editors see a lot of proposals and very few ever become books. Most prospective authors underestimate how hard it is to write something that hasn't already been written and published before many times in a slightly different form. It helps a lot to read business books widely to get perspective on how your book might fit in with the competition. But with perseverance, a self-marketing mindset, a good idea (preferably based on some kind of important and interesting research or consulting work with name brand companies), and some luck, it can be done.

Good luck at your presentation, Barbara.

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## FW: Author Tips

What to consider when you're contemplating authoring a book:

\*Are you writing a book or a magazine article? Not every good idea is right for a book-length project. If you're not sure, send out a query letter to a publisher before preparing a full-fledged proposal.

\*Prepare a complete proposal, including a competitive analysis that details how your book is different from other books available. Remember that there are approximately 50,000 books published each year. It's your job to convince a publisher they should choose you.

\*Prepare a marketing plan. Publishers want to know what you are going to bring to the partnership beyond what the Publisher will supply. For example, as a professional speaker, will you include a copy of your book for each person attending one of your sessions? Keep in mind that your Publisher's focus will be on promoting your book, not you.

\*Be sure you weigh all factors when choosing a publisher. Large advances do not always guarantee greater attention, and first time authors should not expect them. Many publishers will tell you that their bestsellers were unplanned, and advances on those projects were low. Those same publishers will tell you that timing has everything to do with a book's success, along with a strong promotion and marketing program, as well as a strong relationship with the house.

\*Choose a publisher that specializes in what you speak about: a business publisher for leadership topics, a self-help publisher for self-help topics, a fiction publisher for a novel. In addition, good chemistry between you and your editor is essential because your editor has to convince the Publisher that your project has merit.

\*Respect your publisher's advice: if you think your photo belongs on a cover, and your publisher doesn't, follow your publisher's advice. Your publisher has much more experience than you do, and their goal is to sell as many copies as possible.

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## Book Proposal Submission Guidelines

Please use these guidelines when preparing your proposal. If you follow them carefully, you'll give us all the information we need to review your proposal fairly and quickly. Please provide as much detail as possible.

Brief Description - In two or three sentences state the content of your book and the

market for which it's intended.

**Content Summary** - In 1-2 pages, describe your book, its purpose, approach, organization and overall content. What prompted you to write the book now? If you have clips of any news articles supporting the popular interest and relevance of your topic, please be sure to attach them to your proposal.

**Special Editorial Features** - If the book will include any special features -- e.g. blank forms or case studies or photos or references to recent research, etc. -- please list them.

**About Yourself** - Please tell us about your background and achievements. What experience or professional credentials do you have that uniquely prepare you to write this book? Have you published any other books?

**Your audience** - Describe the primary and secondary markets for your book. Where appropriate, indicate both the general type of reader (e.g. managers, executives) and the specific type of job or function held by the reader (e.g. CEO, middle manager).

**Sales/Marketing Handle** - In fifteen words or less, tell us what unique aspect of your book's content will sell it. What will make someone buy your book?

**Existing Marketing and Sales Opportunities** - Do you have a client list to whom the book could be sold? Do you have ties to any appropriate professional associations? Do you regularly hold seminars at which the book could sell? Do you have any contacts with the media that would help promote the book? Use your imagination.

**Comparison with Key Competition** - List 2-6 competing books and positively distinguish your book. If there are not any direct competitors, list the books on this topic that come closest. Do not simply write "there are no competitors."

**Project Status** - How long will the manuscript be (manuscript pages)? When will it be completed? Will it contain photos, art, charts, or graphs? If you are writing on a computer, please give details.

**Outline** - Please give us an outline of the book. Include chapter headings, subheadings, and a brief explanation of each chapter. Be sure to include appendices, glossaries, etc.

**Sample Chapter/Writing** - If you've already started writing, include a sample chapter -- preferably one that represents the heart of your work. Otherwise, please include clips of relevant, published writing.

Where to Submit Your Proposal  
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Be sure to keep a copy of everything you submit.  
Only materials with a SASE will be returned.