

Beth K. Vogt

author - speaker - editor



How to Craft a Pitch Sheet

By
Beth K. Vogt



Pitch Sheet designed by Martin Graphics

Writers like to talk about book proposals. Well, "like" might not be the correct word. Let's just say writers talk about book proposals *a lot*. They discuss the key elements of a proposal, the best way to craft their proposal, and when a proposal is ready to be sent off to a publisher or editor. I've found one thing that writers--especially beginning writers--often overlook: a pitch sheet (also called a one-sheet.)

I'm an advocate for pitch sheets. Why? I pitched my first book, *Baby Changes Everything*, with nothing more than a bare bones, black and white pitch sheet and my elevator speech. Those two things -- my



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pitch sheet and my passion for my book-- landed a request for a book proposal and, ultimately, a book contract.

Let's consider the "why" of a pitch sheet and then we'll look at the "how."

When you pitch your book idea to an editor at a writers conference, remember you are not the only writer in the room. Most editors will not ask for your proposal. I've seen it happen--but rarely. Editors don't bring an extra suitcase to lug home a mass of manuscripts. And they certainly don't want to pay the extra baggage fee.

A pitch sheet or one-sheet is just that: one sheet of paper. Most editors have no problem accepting one sheet of paper that contains the basic details of your book idea.

Another advantage of a pitch sheet? It helps you connect with an editor. Do you really want to lose face-to-face time while an editor skims over the first chapter of your manuscript? Correct answer: *No*. It takes only a few minutes for an editor to glance at your pitch sheet. The rest of your appointment is spent talking with the editor about your novel. You're making eye contact, using your enthusiasm to sell your novel.

So, what belongs on a pitch sheet? Since it's only one piece of paper--and one side of that paper--you stick to the basics:

1. An author bio (Include a photo.)
2. A brief synopsis of your novel (Don't forget to hook the editor!)
3. Information about your agent (And you really need to be agented nowadays.)
4. Contact info (Address, phone number, email, website)

Consider adding graphics to your pitch sheet, especially if they reflect the plot of your novel. My debut novel, *Wish You Were Here* (Howard Books, May 2012), has a postcard theme. That's why my pitch sheet has postcards on it.