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# **INTRODUCTION TO SUBMISSIONS DOCUMENTS**

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### **Key**

**Q:** Question

**A:** Answer

**PA:** Publishing Agency *i.e.* Literary Agency or Publishing House

## **Q1) WHAT'S THE PURPOSE OF A SUBMISSION DOCUMENT?**

### **Q1.1 What's the purpose of a submission document?**

**A1.1** The purpose of a submission document is to introduce my books contents and to anticipate any questions PA's may have concerning it. They offer a detailed outline of contents, explanatory paragraphs and summaries. This particular document serves to introduce all other submission documents.

### **Q1.2 What does a submission document attempt to accomplish?**

**A1.2** A submission document: -

**A1.2.1** Presents the main features of a book

**A1.2.2** Points out the book's target audience

**A1.2.3** Shows relevant personal credentials and experience

**A1.2.4** Conveys a sense of positive and competent professionalism

**A1.2.5** States what samples are available to view

**A1.2.6** Engages the reader in a '*question and answer*' dialogue

**A1.2.7** Lessens any chance of misunderstanding or false expectations

**A1.2.8** Answers any general and specific queries

**A1.2.9** Helps PA's decide whether it meets their requirements

**A1.2.10** Helps PA's decide whether the author is the sort of person with whom they'd want to collaborate

### **Q1.3 What structure do submission documents follow?**

**A1.3** Submission documents follow a structure which addresses the following questions: -

**A1.3.1** What are the main features of your book?

**A1.3.2** How will your book affect its readers?

**A1.3.3** Who are your prospective audience?

**A1.3.4** What about marketing?

**A1.3.5** Who are your competitors?

**A1.3.6** What are the marketing opportunities and threats?

**A1.3.7** What samples will be sent?

### **Q1.4 Why do they use a question and answer format?**

**A1.4** A '*question and answer format*'<sup>1</sup> has been used to better engage the reader.

### **Q1.5 How did submission documents originate?**

**A1.5** Many of the points were suggested following a careful review of information provided by Kingsway Publications, Nova Publishers and the Serendipity Literary Agency.

### **Q1.6 Why does a submission document go into such detail?**

**A1.6** Reputable PA's seem to expect this – especially for Non-Fictional texts.

### **Q1.7 Won't readers be bored by all of this detail?**

**A1.7** The intention has been to provide a useful administrative rather than a flowery literary document – aiding PA's to quickly establish whether they wish to take things further. Where possible I've tried to add a little sparkle.

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<sup>1</sup> The decimal system of numbering has been used in order to facilitate cross referencing.

## **Q2) HOW WERE PARTICULAR PUBLISHING AGENCIES CHOSEN?**

### **Q2.1 How have you heard about particular PA's?**

**A2.1** I usually hear about particular PA's from 'Sally Stuart's Christian Writers' Market Guide 2009' or from any available Internet List.

### **Q2.2 Why did you select this particular PA?**

**A2.2** This particular PA was selected following a careful screening process, wherein it:-

**A2.2.1** Was deemed to have had a well-designed web site

**A2.2.2** Appeared to hold a similar outlook to my own<sup>2</sup>

**A2.2.3** Did not charge 'upfront fees' or expect the writer to pay for his own publication

**A2.2.4** Had no negative reviews from such monitoring agencies as 'Predators and Editors'

**A2.2.5** Had attracted verifiable positive comments from a broad range of Writers' Forums

This screening process involved consulting such sources as: -

*Writers' & Artists' yearbook 2007*  
*100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition*  
 A & C Black London  
 ISBN: 0-7136-7712-0

Stuart E. Sally (2009)  
*Christian Writers' Guide 2009*  
 Water Brook Press

The 'Predators and Editors' website at <http://www.anotherealm.com/prededitors/>

The 'Writers Beware' Website at <http://www.sfw.org/Beware/>

Miscellaneous Bloggs and Discussion Forums

During the period of January-February 2009, an initial list of 102 PAs was reduced to 30. A final check of this list was made in June 2009. No alteration was made to the sample number. One PA found to be charging exorbitant fees was replaced by a more reputable one.

### **Q2.3 Why did you follow such a rigorous screening process?**

**A2.3** This screening process was designed to prevent resources being wasted with either exploitive or inefficient PAs.

### **Q2.4 How many other PAs are you currently approaching?**

**A2.4** I am currently approaching 10 Literary Agencies and 20 Publishers.

### **Q2.5 What qualities and help are you looking for from a PA?**

**A2.5** A good PA should essentially be honest, efficient and have open and positive communication channels. Help in finding contacts and in dealing with such matters as promotion and the nightmarish US tax system would also be appreciated.

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<sup>2</sup> i.e. it wasn't Liberal, New Age or Sectarian

**Q2.6** *What are the characteristics you would not wish to see in a PA?*

**A2.6** A poor PA would display the opposite qualities to those mentioned above. In addition, it may well reveal perturbing characteristics *i.e.* returning a manuscript with coffee rings on it or writing a rejection note on the back of an envelope for everyone to see.<sup>3</sup>

**Q2.7** *How would you decide that a particular PA could be suitable?*

**A2.7** A particular PA could be classified as being suitable following: -

**A2.7.1** The survival of a rigorous screening process

**A2.7.2** The adoption of an ethos broadly in line with my own

**A2.7.3** Clear evidence that it has access to my intended markets

**A2.7.4** Favourable reviews taken from witness testimonies on Blogs and Writers' Forums

**A2.7.5** Evidence of administrative efficiency

**Q2.8** *What can you contribute to a PA?*

**A2.8** As well as my teaching skills I can contribute my finished works, with helpful suggestions about how to market them.

**Q2.9** *What extra inducements could you offer a PA?*

**A2.9** I could offer a wide range of business and marketing expertise.

**Q2.10** *What percentage of royalties do you hope to receive?*

**A2.10** I would expect to receive 10% (in accordance with the guidelines established in the *'Writers and Artists' Handbook*)

**Q2.11** *Would you be willing to pay 'upfront fees'?*

**A2.11** No! Market Research would suggest that the payment of *'upfront fees'* is a *'scam.'* Reputable PAs should make a profit from the sale of a book rather than from desperate writers.

**Q2.12** *What procedure will you follow in relation to Publisher Contracts?*

**A2.12** I would exercise *'due diligence'* in relation to Publisher Contracts by: -

**A2.12.1** Reading and re-reading them on different days

**A2.12.2** Making annotated notes, where necessary

**A2.12.3** Obtaining feedback from *'Writers' Forums'* and publisher monitoring agencies

**A2.12.4** Procuring professional advice when necessary

**A2.12.5** Requesting clarification, as and when needed

**A2.12.6** Rejecting those contracts which require a lifetime commitment from the writer

**A2.12.7** Rejecting those contracts classifying a book as *'still in print'* and available in any form (even if it's just on the publisher's own electronic database and making no sales)

**A2.12.8** Resisting any pressure to sign a contract with only very short notice

**A2.12.9** Presenting a list of questions about the PA's credentials and other pertinent matters

**A2.12.10** Launching further checks on the Internet

If accepted, any contract would be returned within four to six weeks of delivery. It would need to clearly specify when a book was considered to be *'out of print.'*

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<sup>3</sup> This last piece of behaviour (which was displayed by a certain small American Literary Agent who apparently worked from home) became a talking point among writers on various *'Discussion Forums.'* I used it as an example of poor customer relations when delivering a poetry seminar to a certain community group on Wednesday, 18<sup>th</sup> March 2009.

**Q2.13** *When would you expect your book to be published?*

**A2.13** I would expect my book to be published within nine to eighteen months of any contract being signed.

**Q2.14** *How long are PA's given a chance to reply to initial enquiries?*

**A2.14** If nothing positive is heard from a PA within twelve weeks of an initial enquiry, it will be assumed that they don't want to take things further. No further contacts will be made them about this offer.

**Q2.15** *What will you do if no PAs are interested in your books?*

**A2.15** I would take a break in order to seek out an alternative strategy to propagate my teaching emphasis. During that time I would carefully assimilate any relevant lessons learned from my encounters with PAs. Serious consideration would be given to distributing my material to specialised agencies in the undeveloped world. Underlying this stance is a strong determination to have a major impact on Christianity.

**Q2.16** *What works have you completed?*

**A2.16** My completed works are: -

**About God**

(A Bible-Based Analysis of the Attributes of God – With Particular Reference to the Relationship between Divine Holiness and Divine Love)

**About Worship**

(A Prayer Book enabling Christians to 'Worship God in Spirit and in Truth')

**Facing the Unthinkable**

(What the Jewish People May Feel When They Find their True Messiah)

**By Popular Request**

(Poems on 'This or That')

**Q2.17** *Do you have any other works in production?*

**A2.17** Other works currently in production are: -

**Why the Tragedy?**

(Some reflections on the Downfall of Global Christianity)

**Handling the Tragedy**

(Surviving the Downfall of Global Christianity)

**Testing the Spirits**

(How to Test Spiritual Phenomena and Avoid Deception)

**Ancient Passions**

(A Poetical Drama in Two Parts, Eight Acts and Sixteen Scenes)

**Q2.18** *Do you have any other works in mind?*

**A2.18** Other works currently in mind are: -

**Is Love All You Need?**

(A Study of 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a: Examining the Nature of True Christian Love)

**One Truth, Many Corpses**

(Does a Firm Belief in Absolute Truth Lead to Acts of Mass Murder?)

**The Lot of Lot**

(The Plight of True Believers within Apostate Denominations)

**What is Midrash?**

(A look at First Century Jewish Methods of Bible Interpretation as used by Jesus and the Apostles)

PAs are welcome to enquire about any of the above listed works should they wish to do so.

**Q2.19** *What is your doctrinal basis?*

**A2.19** My doctrinal basis consists of the 'Apostles' and 'Nicene Creeds' and the great Protestant 'Statements of Faith' e.g. the 'Baptism Confession of 1689.' For further details please visit the doctrinal statements on my Web Site at [www.geocities.com/midrashcreed](http://www.geocities.com/midrashcreed)

**Q2.20** *How will you position yourself as a Christian Writer?*

**A2.20** I will position myself as *'the writer who's passionately committed to re-moulding Christianity through the provision of bible-based literature that will employ an original range of teaching methods in order to equip God's people to withstand global persecution and witness faithfully to Christ in the midst of it.'*

**Q2.21** *What impression would you like to convey among your readership?*

**A2.21** I would like to convey an impression of someone who's grimly realistic but thoroughly committed to following God's will to the degree he understands it. Such an impression would indeed be very near the reality – although I do have a sense of humour to lighten things up. Discerning readers would correctly gauge that I am a man who's deploying all his different talents to pursue a very clear mission. Those preferring to follow a bland or insipid form of Christianity will be highly disconcerted by this approach. I am a *'face reality'* rather than *'feel good'* writer. What I won't do is *'water down'* biblical truth in order to gain some cheap popularity.