



## **GUIDE TO WRITING A PROPOSAL**

Thank you for considering Kogan Page in your publishing plans. This document is designed to give you an idea of why a proposal is an important part of the publishing process, and what the main elements should be.

### **Preparing Your Proposal**

Writing a project is a major undertaking. At Kogan Page we firmly believe the first step towards getting your idea developed into a published project is an exciting and well-conceived proposal.

### **Why Write A Proposal**

Many authors are eager to plunge into the actual writing of their book. They wonder why they should spend time and effort on something that will not be part of the finished project. A good proposal is anything but a waste of time.

### ***The Proposal as a Sales Tool***

It is essential for our success as a publisher and yours as an author that we are certain you have found the most suitable publishing programme for your work. The more information we have, the easier it is for us to make the right decision. A positive reception of your proposal by the professionals and market experts called on by the publisher to review it will assure confidence in the saleability of your book. It will also help 'pre-sell' the project and garner the kinds of constructive criticism that will help you produce a book with the greatest possible appeal.

### ***The Proposal as a Writing Tool***

A good proposal is also the framework for the project. It - and the editor's and reviewers' comments - should serve as a guide in preparing an initial manuscript. If you can execute the ideas embodied in a well-received proposal, you may expect a similarly warm reception for your book.

### ***The Proposal as a Framework***

Finally, you should look at your proposal as the basis of the framework that you will eventually need to construct for your project. If you incorporate the elements specified below, you will have already written most of a framework that will form a solid basis for the structure, content and approach of the published project.



## PROPOSAL CHECKLIST

When submitting your proposal please provide the following **essential** information:

1. A synopsis of the book's **vision**/ philosophy.
2. A synopsis of the subject matter of the book including a detailed table of **contents**.
3. Analysis of the **competition**, including strengths and weaknesses, and a description of features that distinguish your book from the competition.
4. Target **audience** for the book, their needs and challenges.
5. Specific **markets** for which the proposed book would be suitable.

Please also try and provide the following details where possible. The more detail you are able to provide, the better able we are to obtain constructive feedback on your proposal.

6. Key features of the book, i.e. learning aids, case studies, illustrations, examples, exercises, summaries, readings, etc.
7. Supplementary material or resources that you would prepare for readers.
8. Any new theories or developments in the subject that you intend to cover.
9. Present state of the project (i.e. idea, partial manuscript, lecture notes, etc.)
10. Estimated final number of pages, words, diagrams, tables, etc.
11. Any sample material you may have including chapters, preface, etc.
12. A Curriculum Vitae - including previous publications.



## What Belongs In A Proposal

If your proposal is to achieve all the above goals, it needs to answer a variety of questions.

### ***Your Vision of the Market***

How do you view the market for your book? Where do you see that market going in the next five years? Whom do you hope to reach with your book? What is the typical profile of your target audience?

What **readership** will it best fit? Who wants to read the book and why? Is there a compulsory or practical reason for purchasing the book, perhaps for teaching or learning purposes? Would your book be specific to a geographic area, or will it have a broader international appeal?

What aspects of the book will **appeal to readers**, for example type of examples, pedagogy, appendices, references, case studies, questions and answers, glossary, special features? It is important to keep in mind your target audience: what do they want and need from a book in this area? How will you help them achieve those aims?

Is there an audience for your book outside the primary market? If so, what is the audience like? How can it be reached? Are there any relevant professional bodies, institutions or companies?

### ***Your Vision of the Book***

Why your book? Many markets are crowded with competing titles usually including several very popular ones. Why should someone be interested in your book? What aspects will **set your book apart** from existing ones (for example, approach, organisation, special topics, illustrations, boxed inserts, etc.)? Which books now available will your project most closely compete with (please give as much detail as possible on these titles), and why? Why do you think these books have succeeded? What aspects of these books need improvement?

### ***Nuts and Bolts***

How long will your complete manuscript be? Roughly how many illustrations (photos, tables, graphs, drawings) will it contain? When do you expect to complete your manuscript? When would you be able to supply a sample chapter?

### ***Supplementing Your Book***

Although the book is still the heart of every project, today many readers enjoy and respond to additional resources and materials that complement the reading experience. Are there any resources which you see as crucial to the success of your book in the current market? Which do you see as desirable? What features would you want to include in these ancillaries? Do you envisage any supplements that would be new or unique to your market? If so, do you plan to create these yourself or would the publisher need to contract for them with a specialist? Do you think that software or other media are needed to support your book?



### ***You, The Author***

The most important part of the proposal is of course you. Have you written any other books or projects? Note that the proposal is not the place for a full CV. Rather, you should focus on aspects of your career and writing that bear directly on your planned book. Of course, if your professional, academic or practical background is likely to influence reviewers and editors positively, you will want to include this information.

### **Is A Proposal Enough?**

The proposal is a vital element in the publishing decision process. However, reviewers - and editors - can give more specific evaluation of your proposed book if they are given complete details. To give a full sense of the scope of the project **a detailed table of contents is essential**. Moreover, because the proposal is targeted at a specific audience, including one or more chapters that reflect the level and writing style you plan to use will give a more accurate picture of your book.

*We at Kogan Page believe that writing a proposal is an important phase in a book's development. For us, it represents the pre-planning and attention to detail vital to creating a successful book. Your proposal will give us the opportunity to consider your project for publication. Together, we can produce a book that satisfies the market and reflects your enthusiasm and expertise.*

### **Submit your proposal to:**

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*If you wish to talk through your ideas before putting together a formal proposal, or have any queries on the publishing process, please do not hesitate to get in touch at any time.*