



TIPS & ADVICE FOR FINDING AN AGENT

The Submission Process

1. Prepare your manuscript, paying close attention to the opening pages. Take the time to revise and polish. Submit your best work.
2. Research agents (See below) and their submission guidelines
3. Write a query letter that can be customized for each agent
4. Send queries in rounds, adhering to each agent's submission guidelines. Don't send all at once.
5. Track your submissions: date, project (and version), agent/agency, response, pitch, etc.
6. Give yourself time between each submission round to rethink your strategy/pitch, revise, etc.
7. If you are fortunate enough to get feedback, consider their suggestions. Do you agree? Is there a way you could revise to "fix" the issue, yet still stay true to your vision? If you get rejections, don't worry. It happens to everyone. Don't give up. Keep revising. Keep submitting.

NOTE: Agents reject projects for many reasons—changing trends in the market; because they have something similar on their list; because they know of similar published/forthcoming titles; because something isn't right for them; because although something may be strong, well-written and even publishable, they didn't fall in love with it. A rejection doesn't mean your project won't sell.

Researching & Finding the Right Agent

1. Find comparable books for your project. Who represents those comps? Who represents your favorite books?
2. Go to writing conferences where you can meet agents. Attend their sessions. Read interviews. Listen to podcasts. Follow them on social media. Who seems like a good fit? Why?
3. Consider what you are looking for in an agent. Some questions to consider:
 - Do you want an experienced agent with a strong deal track record and lots of best-selling clients? Or would you consider working with a newer agent with less experience but perhaps more time to devote to your projects?
 - Do you want a big agency with many resources, or a smaller boutique agency that might offer customized service? Do you want an agent in NYC? Or someone local?
 - Are you looking for an agent who will work with you editorially?
 - What communication style works best for you?
4. Once you have your list of agents, look up the submission guidelines for each agency. Many have different requirements and are fairly strict about submissions. Some agencies allow writers to resubmit if a step was missed, but many agents, especially those who already have a full client list, will not accept anything that doesn't follow their guidelines.

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Questions to ask if you get an offer

1. What is their communication style? How much will they share with you? How do they plan to communicate with you? Email only? Phone? Is texting okay?
2. Are they editorial? What kind of editorial will they provide (letter, in-draft comments, line edits)? How much will they expect you to revise? Do their expectations mesh with yours?
3. How often do they meet and communicate with editors? How do they keep up with the market? A good agent will have strong working relationships with many editors at the various houses and will help devise a strategy to find the best editor/house in terms of fit.
4. What is your submission strategy?
5. Do they want to represent you long-term? Will they represent all of your projects? Do they plan to help you strategize your career? Do their priorities mesh with yours? What happens if this book doesn't sell? A good agent will know and understand what terms to negotiate, depending on the stage of career and future projects, as well as the best terms such as advance, royalty percentages, rights, future options, etc.
6. What did you love about my book?
7. How long have you been with your agency? What type of support does the agency provide?
8. Who do you work with to sell foreign/film rights? What does the agency's support staff entail? How do you handle contracts?
9. What does your agency agreement look like?
10. Ask for client references.