

Nine Ways To Grab an Editor's or Agent's Attention

with guest Dani Pettrey.

Today I'm going to be sharing Nine Ways to Grab an Editor's or Agent's Attention. This applies to both unpublished and published authors—as you never know when you might need to find a new agent or editor.

1) Write an eye-catching proposal:

Study how to write a really strong proposal. Various agents kindly share what they are looking for in a proposal. Here are some resources for you:

<http://www.stevelaube.com/guidelines/>

<http://www.rachellegardner.com/how-to-write-a-book-proposal/>

As you can see, while each agent has his or her own particular preferences, every proposal should include:

- Title page
- One sentence hook (this is your brief moment to grab the agent or editor's attention, so make it a great one)
- Brief overview (think back to cover copy)
- Your bio
- Comparable books along with why your novel stands apart from others in the genre. Be sure that you've articulated what makes it unique.
- Your marketing platform (show that you are active and professional on social media)
- A strong synopsis
- Any possible endorsements you may have
- Sample chapters

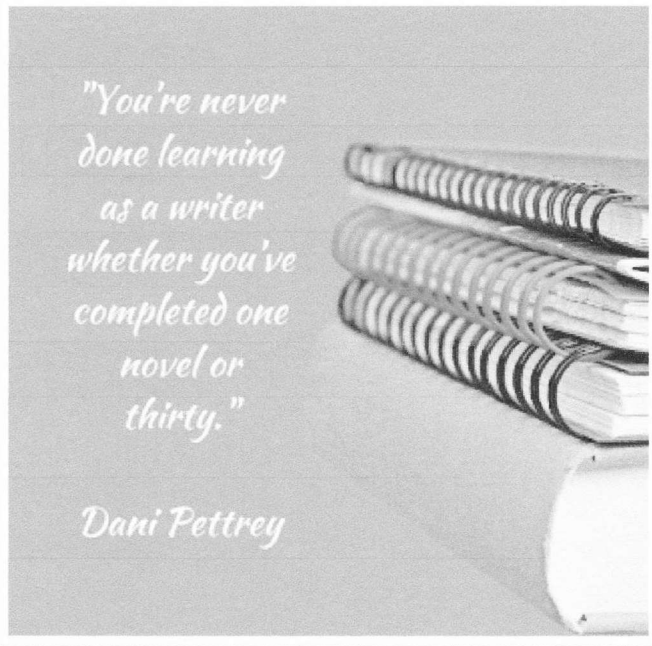
2) Do your homework:

Don't send a proposal for YA fiction to an agent who doesn't represent YA. Don't send a steamy romance novel to a Christian publisher. Do your homework. Know the correct word count for your genre. Know which houses publish comparable titles. Research the agent you are submitting to. Become familiar with the tone and variety of titles they represent. Every agent and publisher has guidelines. Read them and listen to them. Follow their submission instructions precisely. And, whatever you do, please do not send anything extra such as gifts.

<http://www.booksandsuch.com/blog/bribery-isnt-way-get-agent/>

3) Continue to study the craft:

You're never done learning as a writer whether you've completed one novel or thirty. There is always room for growth. Published authors continue to attend conferences, to attend workshops, and to read craft books. Here are a few of my favorites:



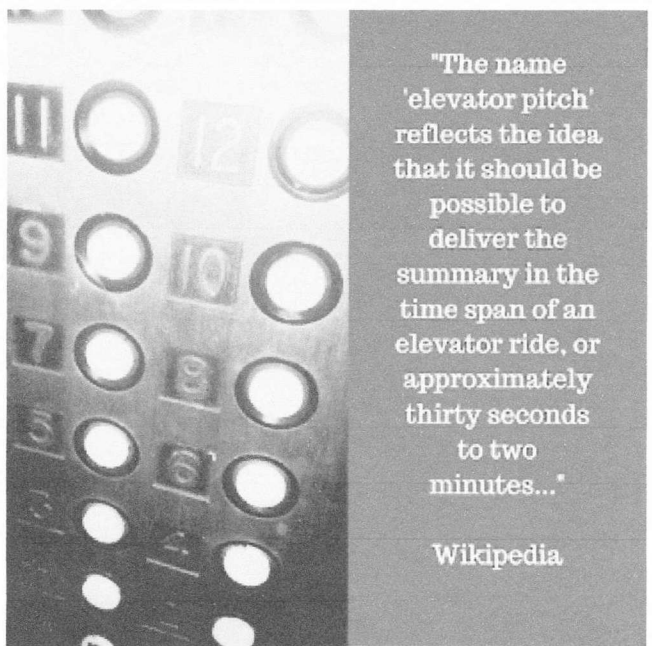
- My favorite conference

- <http://www.acfw.com/conference>

- A fabulous magazine and publisher of craft books -<http://www.writersdigest.com>
- My agency's blog where they share not only marketing tips but some really great craft lessons - <http://www.booksandsuch.com/blog/>

4) Be active and professional on social media:

It's extremely important in this day and age that you are active on social media. That means finding at least one area of social media that you enjoy and really excel at in addition to also having a professional website available. Agents and editors will Google you. Being professional means not sharing anything you wouldn't want the whole world, including the prospective agent or editor, to hear. It doesn't matter if you're published or not. If you are a writer, you're a writer. Be sure to act like a professional one.



5) The ability to succinctly tell what the novel is about, also known as the two-minute elevator pitch:

You may very well end up sitting next to an agent or editor at a conference luncheon. Be prepared for them to ask what your book is about. Also be prepared to give a complete and succinct description. This is

also known as the elevator pitch. Here is a wonderful tutorial resource for you:

<https://tutorials.writersdigest.com/courses/create-the-perfect-pitch-for-your-novel>

6) Be prepared:

If the agent or editor likes your pitch be sure to have professionally made business cards and a stellar one-sheet to share with them. They need a way to learn more about your story as well as a way to contact you. Here's a sample of the one-sheet I used when I sold my debut novel:

<http://danipettrey.com/creating-an-eye-grabbing-one-sheet/>

7) Be professional:

I know I've said this twice before, but it begs to be repeated one final time. Being professional isn't just about professional websites, social media posts, or business cards, but rather how you present yourself in person. The biggest recommendation I can make is to dress professionally. Don't show up for a pitch session with an agent wearing ratty jeans, a sweatshirt, and tennis shoes. Wear dress jeans, a nice blouse, nice heels or flats, and a blazer. You want them to understand you take your passion for writing seriously as well as how you represent yourself. If you are in the lobby bar at a writing conference in the evening, be sure your behavior is still professional. You never know who may be listening or watching. It's okay to enjoy 'down time' with your friends, but still be professional.

8) Write a great book:

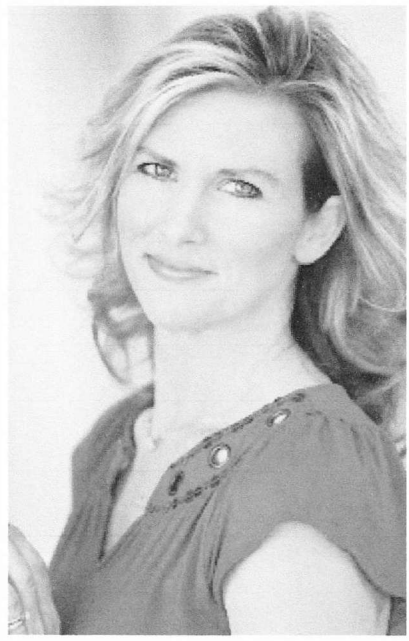
Everything else aside, if you don't write the best book you can, you'll never grab an agent or editor's attention. Write the book of your heart with as much passion and refined craft as you can. Get feedback on it via a mentor if you're able, or paid critique with an author at a conference, and make sure you finish the book. Many agents and editors won't seriously consider a writer if they don't have a finished manuscript.

9) Pray:

Most importantly and what should come first and last—pray! Pray God will be with you in your writing, in your social media, in everything you do. Pray He will bring you to the right agent or editor in His timing and give you the patience you may need until that happens. I wrote for seven years before I got published, but looking back I can see it was exactly the right time for it. My girls were older and I was in a better position to really dedicate myself to writing and promoting. I'm thankful for God's timing and still pray for him to be with me every step of the way.

Following these 9 steps will ensure that not only do you grab an editor or agent's attention, but will do so in a positive way. Out of these 9 steps, what do you feel is most important in grabbing an editor or agent's attention? Is there something different that you do that works for you? Please share your

experiences.



Dani Pettrey is a wife, mom, grandma, and the author of *Cold Shot*, the first book in the Chesapeake Valor series, and the Alaskan Courage romantic suspense series, which includes her bestselling novels *Submerged*, *Shattered*, *Stranded*, *Silenced*, and *Sabotaged*. Her books have been honored with the Daphne du Maurier award, two HOLT Medallions, a Christy Award nomination, two National Readers' Choice Awards, the Gail Wilson Award of Excellence, and Christian Retailing's Best Award, among others.

She feels blessed to write inspirational romantic suspense because it incorporates so many things she loves—the thrill of adventure, nail-biting suspense, the deepening of her characters' faith, and

plenty of romance. She and her husband reside in Maryland, where they enjoy time with their two daughters, a son-in-law, and a super adorable grandson.