

# How to Query

Pitching Magazines, Agents, and Publishers

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# What is a Query?

## Your sales letter

- Keep the editor or agent reading to the end of the pitch
- Make it as easy as possible for the editor/agent to do what you want
- Assign the article, request to see a fiction manuscript or a nonfiction book proposal.



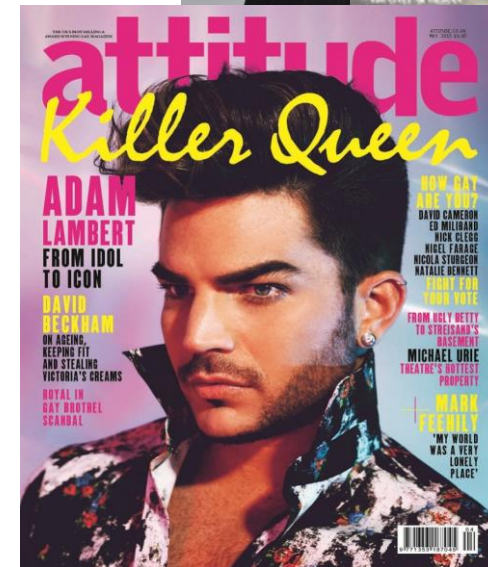
# What Goes in a Query?

- Why cover the subject
- Timeliness of the subject
- Hook
- Angle of the article
- Experts you want to interview
- Credentials for writing the article



# Magazines—Choosing Targets

- Geographical – local, regional, national
- Specific industries
- Specific hobbies or interests
- Age or lifestyle
- Demographically appropriate



# Types of Articles

- Service/how to
- Profiles
- Features of people/events
- Personal experience
- Analysis based on expertise/data
- Front of book

# Finding Submission Information

## **Alameda County Library**

- <https://www.rbdigital.com/alamedacoca/service/magazines>
- [http://go.galegroup.com.ezproxy.aclibrary.org/ps/start.do?p=STND&u=alamco\\_main](http://go.galegroup.com.ezproxy.aclibrary.org/ps/start.do?p=STND&u=alamco_main)

## **Online Submission Guidelines for 775 Publications**

- <https://www.freelancewriting.com/writers-guidelines>

## **Trade Magazine List**

- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Professional\\_and\\_trade\\_magazines](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Professional_and_trade_magazines)

# Constructing a Magazine Query

- Hook – the start of the article
- Pitch – why this article is important/timely/interesting
- Content/Experts to quote
- Fit – why this specific article fits this publication
- Your credentials

# Etiquette of Magazine Queries

- Formality
- Multiple submissions
- Multiple ideas
- Follow up





# Pitching to Agents: Fiction and Memoir

- How is pitching an agent different from querying an article?
- Selling the agent on the idea that your book will make them money
- Platform
- Marketing ideas



# Anatomy of an Agent Pitch

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- One sentence introduction
- One paragraph book description
- One paragraph competitor analysis
- One paragraph credentials
- One paragraph marketing ideas
- Additional material (if any)
- Call to action



# The One Sentence Introduction

- Genre/subgenre
- Finished word count
- Defining characteristic—voice, tone, setting, character quality
- Why you are targeting this specific agent

# The One Paragraph Book Description

- Protagonist
- Antagonist
- Main problem
- Major subplot
- Resolution



# The One Paragraph Competitor Analysis

- Similar but different
- Like a cross between book A and book B
- Like book C but with a twist
- The problem is...
- Comparison to specific books with similar characteristics
- Pitfalls

# One Paragraph Credentials



- Writing credentials
- Professional, experiential, or content credentials
- Contributions to well-known blogs
- Moderator of related list-serves or Facebook groups
- Online links

# One Paragraph Marketing Ideas

- Your target audience
- Professional/experiential connections
- Organizations you belong to
- Blogs, websites, social media
- Ideas for nontraditional marketing



# Additional Material

- Synopsis—one page, single spaced
- Agency requested pages or chapters
- Call to action



# Dos When Pitching Agents

- Do make sure the agent represents your genre
- Do address the agent by name
- Do follow the instructions on the agent's or agency's website
- Do make sure your pitch is grammatically and typographically impeccable
- Do pitch only after your book is complete and as polished as possible

# Don'ts When Pitching Agents

- Don't tell the agent your book is going to be a best seller
- Don't tell the agent that they will love your book
- Don't tell the agent everyone who has read your book has loved it
- Don't send out blast "Dear Agent" pitches
- Don't send material not asked for
- Don't pitch more than one agent at an agency
- Don't expect a prompt reply



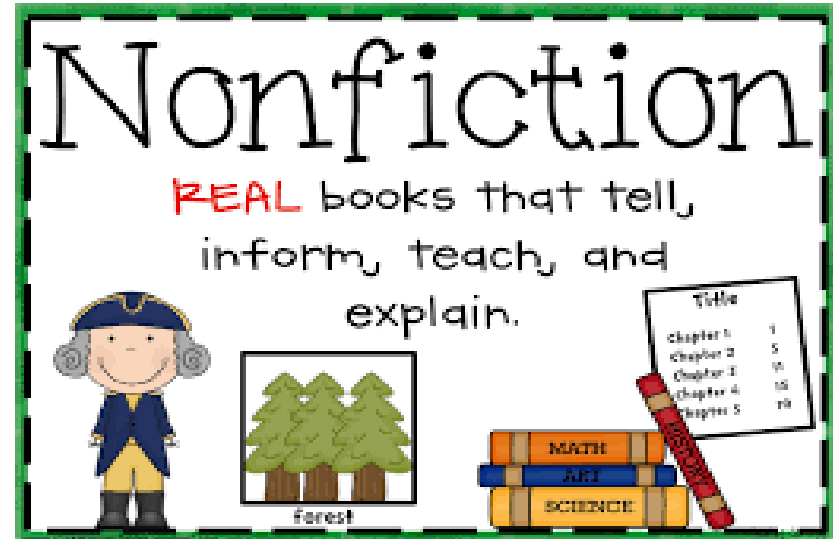
# Where to Find Agents

- Acknowledgements in books like yours
- Books on finding agents
- Magazines for writers
- Writers conferences
- Query Tracker Online <https://querytracker.net> (free)
- Duotrope <https://duotrope.com> (free trial but \$50/year subscription)



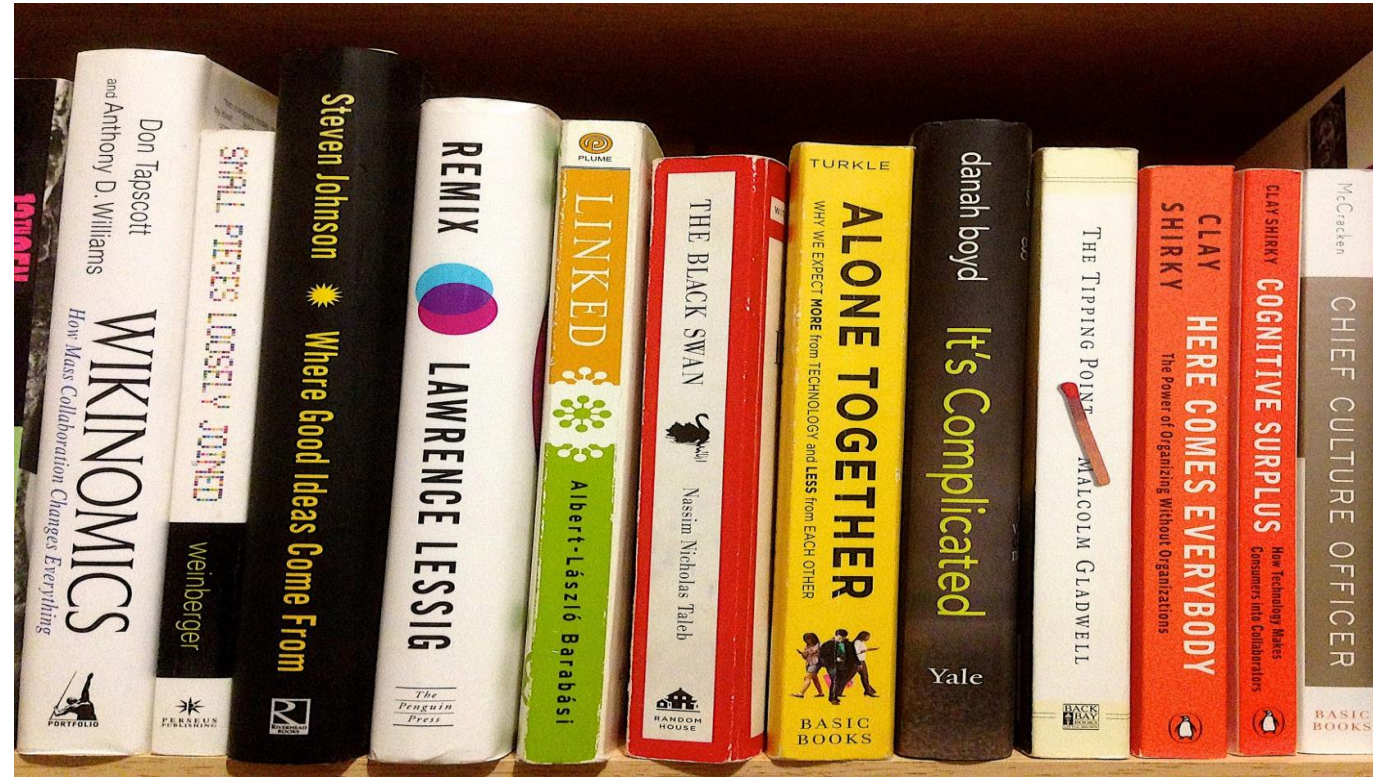
# Pitching a Nonfiction Book

- Pitch before book is written
- Create a book proposal
- Show evidence of need for book
- Pitch memoir like fiction



# Elements of a Book Proposal

- Overview
- Competitive title analysis
- Target audience with data
- Marketing plan
- Author credentials
- Table of contents
- Sample chapters
- <https://www.janefriedman.com/start-here-how-to-write-a-book-proposal>



START YOUR  
JOURNEY TODAY

