

## 25 Tips on How to Impress a Book Publisher

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Here are **25 tips** that will help you impress publishers and distinguish you *and* your work from the slush piles.

- 1. Understand that publishers are very busy people.** We are juggling multiple authors and manuscripts, as well as promotions, events and marketing. We have little time to spare, especially when swamped with hundreds of manuscripts, many of them sent when a publisher is closed for submissions. Showing a publisher that you understand they are busy and submitting during their open submissions time shows you respect their time.
- 2. Learn everything you can about the publishing company.** Learn about the publisher, their authors and the works they've published to ensure that you'd be a good fit. Connect with them on social networks. Share their posts and tweets. Buy some of their titles, especially in the genre in which you write.
- 3. Read and follow their submission guidelines.** Most publishers post their guidelines on their websites. Read them carefully, and pay special attention to whether or not they have a specific time frame for submissions. Follow their guidelines! Give them exactly what they want. Be prepared to answer questions, especially regarding past sales.
- 4. Hook the publisher in the first sentence of your query.** Just like a well-written book, your query should hook them in the first sentence. Read your first sentence, and ask yourself: "Would this make me want to know more if I were a publisher?" Ensure that you follow the Four Firsts for your manuscript. Don't know what I'm talking about? Learn about the [Four Firsts here](#).
- 5. Let your personality shine as a positive person.** Don't be afraid to show publishers who you are. Just be sure it's someone publishers will like. Be humble, appreciative and a team player. Don't act like you know it all. You don't.
- 6. Be open to learning.** With the ever-changing landscape of publishing, successful authors must always be open to change—and to experimenting when new things come along. Show a willingness to learn and to evolve with the industry.
- 7. Be everywhere online!** Recognize the importance of a website, blog and social networks, and use them frequently. Even if you're not yet published, you should have a website, blog, Facebook and Twitter page dedicated to your writing. Publishers will look for these.
- 8. Have an impressive platform in the SAME genre as the one you're pitching.** If you've been writing non-fiction and have a huge following there but are pitching a work of fiction, understand that the audience *isn't* the same—unless there is a common theme. Ex. Non-fiction books on dealing with Autistic children have a specific audience of people looking for help with dealing with Autistic children. A novel featuring an Autistic child as the main character would then appeal to this audience.

- 9. Don't rave about how awesome your book is and how it's going to sell thousands of copies in the first week.** Be humble and stick to the facts.
- 10. Show you understand your audience and that you know who your target audience is.** Don't pitch a book with a ten-year-old main character as a novel for adults. And don't pitch an unpublished book as "for anyone, any age." There are few titles that fit that description, but this is established by sales and time.
- 11. Don't send the book until the publisher asks for it.** Unless the publisher's guidelines tell you to send it with the query, wait for them to ask for it.
- 12. Ensure your book is as error free as possible.** Run a Spellcheck and Grammar check before sending it. And have at least one other person edit the entire work, preferably someone with actual editing skills who understand CMOS rules.
- 13. Know what CMOS is and understand the rules.** Have a hard cover edition on hand or sign up for the online edition. Show your knowledge of CMOS style rules in your manuscript. CMOS is a writer's Bible.
- 14. Do not email the publisher to ask if he/she has read your book yet.** If the guidelines do not stress a time limit, ask for one when the publisher requests your manuscript.
- 15. Impress them with your publishing credits.** If you have published other works in the same genre or type (fiction or nonfiction) as the book you want to submit, let the publisher know, and point them to your Amazon profile page.
- 16. Make sure you have an Amazon profile page if you have published works available on Amazon.** If you have no profile page, you'll look like someone who doesn't know what they're doing.
- 17. If you have won a prestigious award, mention it briefly.** Ensure you know the difference between a "prestigious" award and one that means very little.
- 18. If you have published other works in the same genre, briefly summarize what you have done to promote them.** Impress publishers with your marketing abilities and creativity.
- 19. Reviews are vital!** Make sure you have a substantial amount of reviews on your published works, especially those in the same genre. Don't query a publisher or agent until you have 10+ reviews on the majority of your works, and a 3.5 or above star average.
- 20. Don't pitch a publisher your manuscript while also pitching them your services as a book cover designer, editor, marketing coach formatter, etc.** Query separately. Be professional.

- 21. Be editable.** Your book isn't perfect. Even if you've had it edited by someone else, the publisher will need to know that you're open to being edited.
- 22. Don't ask if you can supply the cover, cover description or images for the cover.** Publishers have their own creative designers.
- 23. Understand you have competition.** Know who your competitors are and who has written works comparable to yours. Watch how they promote their works on social networks. Learn from those who are selling.
- 24. Make the publisher curious enough to want to ask you questions.** Don't tell them everything in your first email. What you want is for the publisher to engage in conversation with you. You want to give them everything they ask for and hint at anything outside of that. For example, if a publisher doesn't ask for sales data in their guidelines, you could mention you made a bestsellers list for two weeks in a row. Let them ask for *more* information. When they do, give them everything you can, including where the bestsellers list was published, how low you got, and total sales to date for that title.
- 25. Express gratitude.** Be thankful for the publisher's time and for any feedback or advice they give you. They don't have to give you any feedback—or their time.

Cheryl Tardif is the publisher at Imajin Books, a hybrid publishing company based in West Kelowna, BC, Canada. She is also known as Cheryl Kaye Tardif, an award-winning, international bestselling author represented by Trident Media Group in New York. She is best known for *Children of the Fog*, *Submerged* and *Whale Song*. *Booklist* raves, "Tardif, already a big hit in Canada...a name to reckon with south of the border." Check out [Cheryl's website](#) and [Imajin Books](#) website, and connect with her on Twitter ([Cheryl](#) and [Imajin Books](#)) and Facebook ([Cheryl](#) and [Imajin Books](#)).