

3 Things Every Publisher Must See to Say “Yes”

In order to say "yes" to a writer's nonfiction book proposal, every publisher needs to see three things:

1. A Fresh Concept

Your concept is the—fresh, unique, compelling—premise of your book.

A publisher is looking for a book with a unique and compelling concept. The best books serve readers by presenting a timeless truth with a vibrant fresh angle. When publishers read these proposals, they say, "Hmmm...I haven't heard it put quite this way before."

2. A Growing Platform

Your platform is how you're reaching audiences.

You must demonstrate that, as an author, you are building a solid platform and are already reaching audiences. This might be reflected in social media numbers, speaking gigs, podcast listens, etc. Although there is no magic formula, an author does need to be reaching readers.

3. Strong Writing

Your writing is how you organize and express your unique concept.

Your writing captures the reader's attention by engaging him or her with well-organized and beautiful writing.



Could missing one of these three be a deal breaker for a publisher? Unfortunately, yes. Occasionally they'll take a risk on a brilliant writer who is working to grow her little platform, but that's rare. If your book proposal demonstrates that all three of these elements are strong, it will be hard for a publisher to say "no. If your proposal lacks one or more of these, it will be hard for a publisher to say "yes."