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Sample Book Proposal Report – General Nonfiction

Author name: [REDACTED]

Project title: [REDACTED]

Subject: International development

Presses pitching to: Unknown

Editor's availability for Zoom call (within 14 days of delivery):

Flexible – most availability Mondays and Fridays

Areas on which Author would like particular feedback/focus:

"I am hoping for a review of my proposal and advice on how to improve it further so I can pitch it to presses."

Editor's approach/introduction:

It's unclear from the proposal whether your book fits best at a trade or a university press, so I'm trying to consider both sides as I offer recommendations to improve "further." The key difference would be that you have a bit more room to build your story in a trade proposal, whereas the academic proposal is tighter and thus has to deliver more substance with every sentence.

Assessment

Overall Strengths & Weaknesses:

This is the beginning of a solid proposal, but it needs a lot more specificity. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

FLATPAGE

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[REDACTED]

Related: If this is for a pitch to trade presses, it needs a lot more depth – it can be a lot longer. If it's for university presses, it needs to be tighter and clearer in the limited space one has.

Thesis and argument:

The key drumbeat [REDACTED] is clear... but what that means vis-à-vis a book is unclear. What will it argue or offer? How will it do that in terms of structure?

[REDACTED]

Length:

Proposal: a fine length for an academic proposal, but there's a lot of room to expand for non-university-press pitches.

Book: 120k is very long, even for a "big ideas" book. I recommend aiming below 90k.

Book Title:

I like the title and subtitle. The title is simple and clear. I feel like "[REDACTED]" is a bit big and could be honed to give a hint towards more specificity or content.

[REDACTED]

Sections:

FLATPAGE

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Overview:

Overviews have the job of saying why the book matters, why it matters in this particular moment, why the author is the only person who can write it in this moment, and why readers' lives will be changed. It's more sales than summary.

[REDACTED]

About the Author:

I would recommend reorganizing the strong bio to make it more effect faster.

[REDACTED]

Audience:

There are really marketable audience segments here and my advice is to take all of them a lot further. Build the story of these audiences with context as well as more stats.

Competing/Comparable Works:

This is a great list of books and I really like the split of books on [REDACTED]. However, the books need context. Choose 5-6 published within the last 5 years that really can make a case for the importance of your book and talk about how and why.

[REDACTED]

FLATPAGE

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[REDACTED]

Market:

There are strong marketing pieces in this list, but I think you can make them stronger and more compelling by approaching the section as a chance to prove you have a plan.

At its core, this is the business-y-est (?) section of the proposal. This is where you get to say to the agent/publisher “I have a plan that will make your life easier.” [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Chapter Summaries:

In some ways, the chapter summaries should be the driest part of the proposal. By the time the agent/publisher gets here, they should already be sold on your idea and ready to run with it. The summaries are the space to quickly and clearly lay out pure content.

[REDACTED]

FLATPAGE

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Style, Voice, or Copyediting issues:

I think as you expand on this, you will have more room to let the reader see a bit more of your style and voice. In general, it's clear and direct. I love how your enthusiasm and passion for the work emerges in the chapter summaries – speaks well to an engaging set of sample chapters in the eventual final product. Nice work.

Next Steps & Editor's Conclusion:

Overall, I say go further, deeper, bigger.

A few places to begin:

[REDACTED]

FLATPAGE

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[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

Sincerely,
Caroline M.