

JUDGING A BOOK BY ITS COVER Seven Keys to Successful Publishing Deal

Not every project will pass each of these criteria points with flying colors. But these are points to consider.

1. The “Hook”

- ✚ An elevator pitch that is impactful and inspires action
- ✚ A “why” that is deeply meaningful to the target persona
- ✚ The ability to complete the following statement in less than two sentences. “Oh my gosh, I LOVED this book, and you will to. It’s about...”

2. The Story, or the Subject

- ✚ A subject book buyers care about, or a story that propels the reader forward consistently throughout the book – need to see an Annotated Table of Contents. (It’s also a big plus if it’s on a subject or story I care about)
- ✚ A Subject, or characters that the reader cares about – who is the demographic?
- ✚ A story, or subject the reader wants to share with others (...the virtual “water cooler” effect)

3. The Writing

- ✚ Mastery of Narrative (*language, dialogue*) Do the first 5 pages...propel the reader into the story...Leave the reader desperate to read more?
- ✚ Research – Footnotes? Primary sources?
- ✚ Character development (fiction)
- ✚ How much work is needed to submit the project to publishers, either on the materials, or the manuscript?

4. The Author

- ✚ Personal platform to reach an audience.
- ✚ Industry/author/bookseller/librarian connections
- ✚ Reputation within given field
- ✚ Active and engaged – willing to try new things and make connections to sell the book
- ✚ Lives in America is a huge plus

5. Title/SubTitle/“flap copy”

- ✚ A title/subtitle combo that is memorable and impactful (*though this will likely be changed by the time a book gets published*)
- ✚ A description that reads like hardcover book flap jacket copy

6. Comparative Titles

- ✚ What three books were published in the past eighteen months that illustrate the demographic audience for the project?
- ✚ There is no such thing as “there is no other book like this”

7. Annuity

- ✚ Is this a one-shot deal or does the author have more projects down the road (*in the same genre*)?
- ✚ Is this a flash sale, or “evergreen” backlist i.e. will sell over a long period of time.