



## **Tips For Pitching Your Book at the 805 Writers Conference**

An in-person pitch is an excellent way to get an agent excited about both you and your work. Here are some tips that will help you pitch your work effectively at the event during a 10-minute consultation. You should:

- Try to keep your pitch to 90 seconds. Keeping your pitch concise and short is beneficial because 1) it shows you are in command of the story and what your book is about; and 2) it allows plenty of time for back-and-forth discussion between you and the agent. Note: If you're writing nonfiction, and therefore have to speak plenty about yourself and your platform, then your pitch can certainly run longer.
- Practice before you get to the event. Say your pitch out loud, and even try it out on fellow writers. Feedback from peers will help you figure out if your pitch is confusing, or missing critical elements. Remember to focus on what makes your story unique. Mystery novels, for example, all follow a similar formula — so the elements that make yours unique and interesting will need to shine during the pitch to make your book stand out.
- Do not give away the ending. If you pick up a DVD for Die Hard, does it say “John McClane wins at the end”? No. Because if it did, you wouldn't buy the movie. Pitches are designed to leave the ending unanswered, much like the back of any DVD box you read.
- Have some questions ready. 10 minutes is plenty of time to pitch and discuss your book, so there is a good chance you will be done pitching early. At that point, you are free to ask the agent questions about writing, publishing or craft. The meeting is both a pitch session and a consultation, so feel free to ask whatever you like as long as it pertains to writing.
- Remember to hit the big beats of a pitch. Everyone's pitch will be different, but the main elements to hit are 1) introducing the main character(s) and telling us about them, 2) saying what goes wrong that sets the story into motion, 3) explaining how the main character sets off to make things right and solve the problem, 4) explaining the stakes — i.e., what happens if the main character fails, and 5) ending with an unclear wrap-up.

**Then listen and learn from a publishing professional as they review your manuscript. It's rare new writers have an opportunity like this.**