

# How I Got Paid to Write Online!

Little Known Ways to Make  
Money Online!



**Suzie Saylor**

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## Introduction

### ***Sell your book the easy way --- sell a proposal***

You can get paid to write a book. It's easily possible to make a fast \$10,000, or even a six figure amount. You could even make **seven figures --- over a million dollars for twenty pages of text**. It sounds incredible, but a fast seven figures is certainly possible if you have a HOT, hot idea or have had an experience that hundreds of thousands of people want to read about. In his 2001 book about writing non-fiction, *Damn! Why Didn't I Write That?*, author Marc McCutcheon says that it's not hard to make a good income: "you can learn the trade and begin making a respectable income much faster than most people think possible".

The good part is that you don't need to write your book before you get some money. You write a proposal, and a publisher will give you an advance, which you can live on while you write the book.

Writing a proposal is the smart way to write a book. It's the way professional writers sell non-fiction. Selling a book on a proposal is much easier than selling a book that you've already written. A book proposal is a complete description of your book. It contains the title, an explanation of what the book's about, an outline of chapters, a market and competition survey, and a sample chapter.

A book proposal functions in the same way as any business proposal does: you're making an offer to someone you hope to do business with. It will be treated by publishers in the same way that any business treats a proposal. A publisher will read your proposal, assess its feasibility, cost it, and if it looks as if the publisher will make money, the publisher will pay you to write the book. When you've sold your proposed book to a publisher, your role doesn't end with writing your book. You're in partnership with your publisher to ensure the book's success. If you do your part, both you and your publisher will make money.

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## ***You and your publisher: a partnership***

The publisher's business is selling books. The company acquires books which it hopes will sell, and sell well. Your publisher is putting up the money to publish your book, so you need to approach the project from his point of view as well as your own.

We haven't got the space to go into great detail about the publishing business here, but you need to know about "returns", because the challenge of returns makes publishing different from other businesses. Publishers sell books on consignment. Publishers ship books to bookshops, and if a book isn't sold within a certain time period, it's destroyed. The bookseller strips the cover from the book and sends the cover to the publisher for a full credit. This is the "return". If a title doesn't sell, the publisher takes a beating. As you can imagine, publishers are no more keen to lose money than you or I.

What does this mean to you as you write your book proposal? It means that your proposal needs to emphasize the ways in which you, as the writer, will take responsibility for the book's success.

You will try to ensure the success of your book by gauging the marketplace. You will work out who the likely buyers of your book might be, and the reasons they will have for paying good money for your book. You'll assess the competition for your book. You'll work out ways in which you can promote your book, so that people hear about it. You're in partnership with your publisher, and if you're prepared to take responsibility for that role, the publisher will be much more likely to buy your proposal.

## ***Why write a proposal first?***

All non-fiction books are sold on proposal. A book proposal is much easier to sell than a complete book.

Here are some of the reasons:

- It's easier to read a 20 or 30 page proposal than a 400 page book;
- It's easier to make changes in the book's concept at the proposal stage;

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- With a proposal, the publisher, in the person of your editor, can take ownership of the book. It's like bespoke tailoring: the editor feels that the book has been specifically written for the publishing house.

Even if you decide to write your book first, you'll need to create a proposal once you've written it. No agent or publisher is interested in reading an entire book to assess its viability. That's the proposal's job: to ensure that your book has a niche in the marketplace. As you do your research for the proposal, you'll work out whether or not your book is likely to sell. You can shape the book at the proposal stage, much more easily than you can when it's a huge stack of print or a giant computer file.

Sometimes you may get an idea for a book, but the idea is amorphous, it doesn't have a real shape. You may want to write several thousand words to see whether the book becomes clearer in your mind. But write the proposal before you write more than ten thousand words, because your book must target a specific group of buyers.

### ***How do you write a book proposal?***

You write a proposal step by step. In this ebook, we'll work on your book proposal together. Each chapter has tasks for you to complete. Once you've completed all the tasks, you'll have a book proposal which has an excellent chance of selling.

Here's what we'll cover:

- (Day One) Getting an idea for your book.
- (Day Two) Developing the idea and expanding on it. Assessing the market. Who needs this book? What's the competition for the book?
- (Day Three) Writing the blurb. Outlining your book.
- (Day Four) Researching your book proposal, and fleshing out your outline.
- (Day Five) Writing a proposal query letter. Sending your query letters to agents and publishers. (You send the queries while you're working on the proposal. This helps you to gauge reaction to your work.)
- (Day Six) Writing the proposal.

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- (Day Seven) Writing the sample chapter. Revising your proposal.

I'll be including a sample of a book proposal for you to look at, so you can see what material the proposal contains. This proposal garnered an agent contract the first time I sent it out. I'll also include other samples, so that you have plenty of templates from which to construct your own proposal.

### ***How to use this ebook***

First, read through the book, to see what information it contains.

Next, work through the book, chapter by chapter. As you read each chapter, do the tasks and the exercises in the order in which they appear. Doing them will help you to write not just one, but many book proposals. Remember, the primary aim of this book is to help you write your first book proposal and be well on the way to selling it by the time you've worked your way through all the chapters.

### **Work FAST**

It's vital that you concentrate on getting the words down on paper. As long as you have something on paper you can fix it. As we work through the material, I'll be encouraging you to work FAST and not think too much about what you're writing. Thinking has no business in your first draft. Thinking comes later as you rewrite.

### **Can't devote a week to writing your proposal?**

If you're on vacation you can set aside a couple of weeks to work on your proposal. But what if you don't have a vacation due? Easy! You can fit writing into your busy life. You'll still follow all the steps, but it will take you longer. Try to stick to a set schedule. You may decide that you'll complete a chapter a week, for example.

Work fast. Work on your book proposal EVERY DAY, even if you only have five minutes to spare. This is because at the beginning, ideas are fragile. Time spent with

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your proposal each day helps you to build and maintain your energy and your enthusiasm.

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## **Day One: What's a book proposal? Get an idea for your book**

### ***Day One Tasks***

#### **Task One: Look over four non-fiction books**

Take your notebook and visit a bookstore. Skim four non-fiction books of the kind which you hope to write. Check the number of pages, the table of contents, and chapter length. How are these books written? Are they written in a casual, tongue-in-cheek style like the *For Dummies* series? Do they include lots of anecdotes and personal information about the author?

In your notebook, write down each book's title, author, publisher and year of publication. Also write down anything you find interesting about the book. Scan the acknowledgements page to see whether the author thanks her editor and her agent. Make a note of their names if she does. (These people may be interested in your proposal if it covers a similar subject area.)

#### **Task Two: Work through the Idea Generator exercises in this chapter**

Read the Idea Generators, and do at least three of them, even if you've already got an idea for your book. Working through this material is important because it will give you confidence that you it's easy for you to find as many ideas as you need.

#### **Task Three: Create a computer folder to hold your working files**

Create a folder on your computer to hold all the files for your book. As you work, you'll generate many files. Create sub-folders as you need them.

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### Task Three: Create a Work Log

Create a file on your computer as a diary for this project. Paste all the information you gather while searching the Internet and while communicating with others in this log. Date each entry. If you need to leave your project for a few days, you can read your log to get back into the groove of your project.

### ***What's a book proposal?***

A book proposal is a business document which convinces a publisher to buy your book before you've written it. Your proposal says, in effect: "Hey, I've got a great idea for a book which lots of people will want to buy. Do you want to publish it?"

Think of it as a combination brochure and outline of your proposed book.

There's a standard format of material that your book proposal will need to cover. This doesn't mean that you need to hew completely to this format. It's just a guideline of topics your proposal must contain.

*Your book proposal must contain:*

- A title page, with the title, subtitle, author, word count of the completed book, and estimated time frame for completion. You might state: "75,000 words, completion three months after agreement".
- An overview: a description of the book. This can be as short as a paragraph, or several pages long.
- The background of the author. Your biography, as it relates to your expertise for this book.
- The competition in the marketplace. This is where you mention the top four or five titles which are your book's competitors. (Note: if there are dozens of competitors for your book, this is a good thing, because it means that the subject area is popular. Your book will need to take a new slant.)
- Promotions. This is where you describe how you will promote your book, both before and after publication.

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- A chapter outline.
- A sample chapter, or two chapters. This is always the first chapter, and if you're sending two chapters, it's the Introduction and Chapter One, or if there's no Introduction, it's Chapters One and Two.
- Attachments. Optional. You may want to attach articles you've written about the book's topic, or any relevant supporting material.

### ***Got an idea for your book? Great!***

If you already have an idea for your book, that's great. Please work through the material in this chapter using your current idea, or join us in developing new ideas. Open a new computer file so that you can work through the exercises as we progress.

### ***Start here to develop an idea for your next book***

There's nothing mysterious about coming up with ideas. Within a page or two, you'll have more ideas than you know what to do with. Your ideas start with YOU. When you think about what you enjoy, about your past experiences and your knowledge, you're guaranteed a regular fountain of ideas. Let's turn on the fountain.

As you do the following exercises, work through them quickly. Don't allow yourself to bog down. Do them as quickly as you can, and then go and do something else for a few hours, to let the ideas gestate and bubble in your subconscious mind.

When you come back, read through the ideas you generated, and add to them as you read through your lists. ***Please don't discard any ideas at this stage.*** This is because the way to a brilliant, fantastic idea is by twisting an idea slightly, reversing it, or by combining several ideas into a new one.

Searching for ideas alerts your subconscious mind that ideas are important to you. Over the next few days, you may get a nudge from an idea which says: "Write me down". Do that right away, even if you're in the middle of a shower or you're driving along the freeway. (If you're driving, pull over.) Write that idea down, because even if you're one hundred per cent certain that you will never in this lifetime

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forget that amazing idea you just had, believe me, you will forget it. Write it down, always.

When you stay alert to the idea hovering at the corners of your consciousness you will never be without a book bubbling away. This is how you turn your first book into a long series of books.

First thing in the morning is a great time to generate ideas. Set your alarm ten minutes early, then sit up in bed and jot down 50 ideas.

### **Idea Generator One: What you're good at**

Make a list of 20 things you're good at. Don't think too hard about this. Maybe you're good at buying presents for people—you've got a knack for choosing just the right gift. Maybe you're a good cook, or a good parent, or a good swimmer or a good tennis player. Or maybe you used to be good at one or more of these things. For example: I grew up with horses, and owned horses for many years. I'm good with horses, and a good rider. If I saw a gap in the market for a horse book, I'd feel comfortable writing the book.

You get the idea. List at least 20 things that you're good at, or have been good at in the past. For example, if you know you're an excellent gardener, even though you now live in an apartment, list "gardening".

### **Idea Generator Two: Your past experiences**

Experiences sell. If you've been abducted by little green men from Mars, it's a book. If you're a bigamist, it's a book. People have written books about their illnesses (see from challenge to opportunity below), their addictions, and their pets. Browse through the bestseller lists to see what personal experiences people are writing about.

Here's where you walk down memory lane. If you're in your twenties, it'll be a short stroll. If you're in your forties or older, it will be a hike. Don't get bogged down with this, list 20 experiences you've had that spring to mind.

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