

Storyboard Your Nonfiction Book

Before You Story Board

Have You Selected the Right Nonfiction Topic?

Five Questions Every Book Editor Asks:

1. Is it true? Does this person know what they are talking about?
2. Is the book significant? How many people care about this subject and why?
3. Is it well written or at least salvageable? Will the reader be captivated by the paragraphs?
4. Will enough people pay to read this?
5. Can the publisher afford it?

Six Reasons Book Ideas Are Rejected

1. Sounds like a magazine article
2. It's already been done.
3. It's never been done--editors don't see a market for your book
4. Topics like that don't sell.
5. There is too much competition
6. It's too expensive to produce--length or photos or illustrations, etc.

Storyboard Origins

Walt Disney invented a highly visible planning tool called a storyboard. It is normally made out of a 4 x 8 foot sheet of cork board. On the board, you pin colored index cards and other things to tell the story about what you're working on. Alternative methods include using a blank wall and colored Post-it notes. The concept gives you an overall view of the book without many words.

Before You Begin the Session

- The group for storyboarding -- as varied as possible.
- The timeframe for storyboarding -- a couple of hours.
- The goal of story boarding -- a creative, finished book outline
- Four ground rules for storyboarding and creative thinking:
 - No Criticism
 - The more ideas, the better & the wilder the ideas the better
 - Spelling Doesn't Count
 - Hitch-hike on ideas - Ideas will spark other ideas.

During the Actual Session

- Develop A Warm-up Topic
- Select a Pinner and Writers - no card should have more than 12 to 15 words on it.
- Every idea is spoken aloud and one at a time, then written on a 3 x 5 card.
- Brainstorm the overall purpose and audience
- Then refine the purpose through sharpening
- Refine the various categories created with specific ideas for each subber or chapter.
- Examine the subcategories.
 - Can any categories be combined?
 - Do any categories need further divided?
- Arrange the chapters in a chronological sequence.

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