

How a UK Agent Submits to Publishers

by Julia Churchill, Agent at A. M. Heath

When I submit a new project to a UK or US publisher, my submission package will be similar to the submission packages that you routinely receive from foreign rights teams at UK and US publishers and agencies.

Pitching the Book

I will craft a couple of paragraphs that pitch the book. This takes the most time. How do I clearly and appealingly convey this concept and story, with enough detail that it sounds distinctive, but not so much that it's weighed down? I don't want my initial email to take more than a few minutes to read. So in broad strokes, I include the concept and direction of story, with the odd little detail to bring it to life. And I'll send the pitch around to colleagues for feedback, and share with the author, and keep on chiselling until I feel confident that it sounds clear and standout, and does justice to the book. It's very satisfying to send out a book and get responses from editors saying, "This sounds amazing!". It means it's going to the top of the pile, and things move faster when they're at the top of the pile.

Include Information about the Author & Book's Success

I'll also include as much relevant and fun detail about the author. Maybe your author is a beekeeper?! Maybe they've sold 10,000 copies and are a top ten bestseller, or won a literary prize, or hold the world record for free-diving? If you're selling into the UK, for a book or author that's been published in your market, it's great to share positive sales news. And keep in mind that the editor might not know your market and country, so you should give some context that X prize is the most prestigious in your market, or X bookshop/chain that made your book "Book of the Month" is the leading retailer.

Highlight Other Books by the Author

If possible, I'll also have an outline of the next book, even if the book I'm selling is a stand-alone. I want to give the publisher the confidence to invest in the long-term with the author. Having a strong Book Two idea means we can start to plan for a longer future together, and secure a multi-book deal, if that's what the author is looking for. Sometimes this outline is a few lines, more of a sketch, and sometimes a full synopsis.

Deciding which Publishers to Contact

I send out most books widely, to lots of publishers, rather than selecting one or two. I may have an instinct about which editor will love and need the book, but to be sure I'm getting the best possible opportunity for the author, it is best to put it across everyone's desk and be systematic and thorough. That will likely mean sending one book out to ten, twelve, fifteen publishers - sometimes more.

If you don't feel you are up-to-date with UK publishers, I can recommend **The Writers' and Artists' Yearbook** as a starting place for your research. Spending time in the halls at book fairs and following the children's trade news on Twitter will also help you build a picture of which publishers are doing well.



Julia Churchill joined A. M. Heath in 2013 to run the children's department, after four years building up the UK arm of the Greenhouse Literary Agency, and six years at the Darley Anderson Agency where she started the children's book side of the list.

Additional information

Trade news for English language books:

- The Bookseller (UK): <https://www.thebookseller.com>
- BookBrunch (UK): <http://www.bookbrunch.co.uk>
- Publishers Weekly (US): <https://www.publishersweekly.com>
- Kirkus Reviews (US): <https://www.kirkusreviews.com>

Recommended publishing directory:

- **The Writers' and Artists' Yearbook** published by Bloomsbury Publishing. Updated annually: www.writersandartists.co.uk

Social media:

- For a list of the 500 most influential children's publishing Twitter accounts in the UK and Ireland, please visit: <http://www.spoiltchild.com/picturebook-childrens-publishing-influencers-uk-ireland.htm>

Note: all links are correct as of March 2019.