

Panic-Free Pitching By Anna Sugden

This interactive, hands-on workshop gives you both practical tips and the tools you need to make the most of your appointment. The handout covers all aspects of the workshop. You will need five different coloured index cards and a scrap of paper.

Feedback from previous attendees has complimented this workshop for giving them confidence by enabling them to prepare for their pitch in a constructive, non-threatening, easy-to-follow, step-by-step way. In addition, many were thrilled with a successful result to their pitch - for a number, this was their first success after several failures.

Preparation is the key.

1. Mental Preparation

A. Tackling Fears

Most fears can be dealt with in two practical ways - dispelling the myths and developing a PMA (Positive Mental Attitude).

Some common myths that are discussed.

- a. The image we have of editors and agents in our minds
- b. They'll take one look at me and spot I'm faking it/tell I'm a bad writer/see I'm a beginner and reject me.
- c. They won't want me because I'm not Nora or Debbie or Suz Brockmann
- d. But they've just bought x new authors!
- e. They'll try to catch me out with tricky questions about craft and technique
- f. What do I know? I'm no expert
- g. They will say no.

2. Physical Preparation

A lot of this is common sense - but worth repeating, because somehow nerves make common sense fly out of the window. For each topic, practical hints and tips are given.

- A. Time
- B. Appearance
- C. Practice
- D. Calming exercises

3. Work Preparation

Attendees are given a pack of five different coloured index cards and shown how to complete (with examples) and then use them to assist in a successful pitch:

- a. You card (yellow) - key information about the individual

- b. Elevator (Lift) Pitch (pink) - a one-liner which gives the main thrust of the book (three different methods are demonstrated with examples: strapline; hook, mix and twist;
- c. Blurb (blue) - one card which summarises the story (how to distill the story into the key elements - hero's story, heroine's story, overall theme/conflicts and challenges, a final question). Perfect for a pitch!
- d. Book card (green) - key information about the book - allows writer a chance to think about the kinds of questions they'll be asked and write the answers down, in case of mental block!
- e. (Optional) Questions for the editor/agent (orange).

And Finally ...

Some handy tips and do's and don'ts to make the appointment run smoothly.