

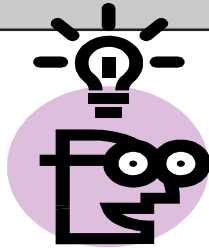
The
Wow

e-newsletter

by Ken and Dahlynn McKowen

Principles

Volume 3 No. 11 November 2007



The Importance of First Impressions

First impressions say a lot about a person. That's why it's so important that your first impression—a.k.a. query letter—to a prospective editor, publisher or literary agent is your best professional work, ever.

What is a query letter?

Essentially, it's your personal interview as a writer before a magazine editor, a book editor or even a potential literary agent. It allows you to showcase your writing skills, your professional writing experience and your ideas for articles, books and scripts appropriate to the market you are soliciting.

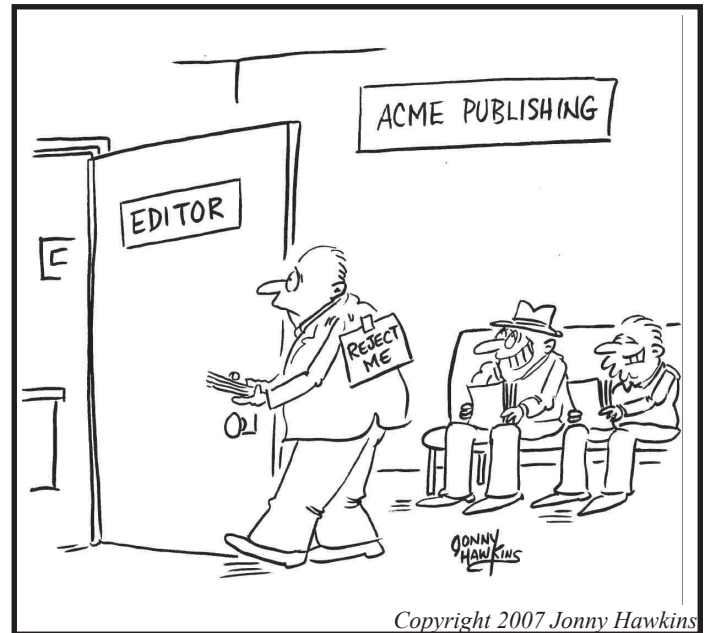
How important are query letters?

They are critical, especially if you are a new writer and wish to obtain writing assignments. If you are an experienced, much-published writer, you may be able to pick up the phone and successfully pitch your story and book ideas to an editor. If you don't have the experience or the personal contacts, your query letter or e-mail will be your calling card.

What makes a good query letter?

Good writing! And that includes being organized, succinct—and spelling everything correctly. It also includes knowing how to follow directions. Every book publisher, magazine editor and literary agent is looking for specific things, be they your article or book's theme, length, genre, a brief outline, a specific

Continue on page 2...



Copyright 2007 Jonny Hawkins

P . S .

Published by *Publishing Syndicate*
Editor: Ken McKowen
info@PublishingSyndicate.com
Copyright 2007
All Rights Reserved

The Importance of First Impressions

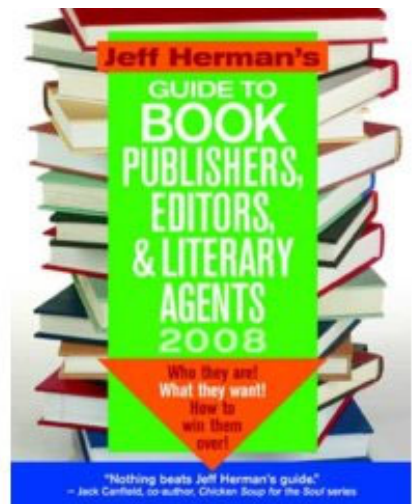
Continued from page 1...

number of pages or chapters to review, and your writing bio/credits should you have any. It's imperative that you read and heed your prospective publisher, magazine editor or agent's requirements on their websites or in their listings in such valuable resource books as *Writer's Market* or Jeff Herman's *Guide to Book Publishers, Editors, & Literary Agents 2008*.



CHECK IT OUT!

Both of these must-have writing reference books can be purchased via the Amazon link found at the Publishing Syndicate bookstore, (www.PublishingSyndicate.com) or via any national book seller or on-line book retailer. You can also order Herman's *Guide* directly through him at www.jeffherman.com



Either guide will provide you with valuable insights into what editors, publishers and agents require from you for you and your work to be considered. We lean toward Herman's *Guide* book, especially for novice writers looking for an agent or book publisher. It offers significantly more information about various book publishers, from the independent U.S. and Canadian presses to the huge conglomerates such as Simon & Schuster and all of their affiliated imprints (for more info, visit www.jeffherman.com/guide).

For those of you looking for a literary agent, Herman's *Guide* book has tons of listings, most of which offer personal insights on how to get the attention of those agents, primarily through his interview-style approach. An example of some of the agents' advice: "Send only e-mail queries that include the first five pages pasted into the e-mail," send only a "well written and compelling one-page query letter and SASE," "Do not send scripts or fantasy proposals," "No fiction!" "By mail: Detailed query letter, bio, and about 50 pages. By e-mail: Query and proposal for non-fiction, synopsis and bio for fiction." As you can see from these few excerpts, each literary agent wants to see something different. Query with what YOU want to


Continue on page 3...

The Importance of First Impressions

Continued from page 2...

send them instead of what THEY need to see and most likely the only thing your errant and offending query will see is the inside of a trash can.

For those of you wishing to sell articles to magazines, go with *Writer's Market*. It provides hundreds of magazine listings and their needs. But the same holds true here as well: send only what the editors are looking for in a query, and send it how they request (e-mail, phone call, or query letter). Also be sure to study the magazines before querying, and double-check the contact info in the book before sending a query.

Both books offer great advice to writers about everything from how to become a published writer to what to look for in a good editor. *Writer's Market* offers examples of good and bad query letters, while Jeff Herman's *Guide* provides an extensive list of other resources ranging from "How-To" guides and writing industry contacts to self-publishing resources. Both books are, by far, must-have resources for writers navigating the sometimes confusing publishing world. 

Deep into the darkness peering, long I stood there, wondering, fearing, doubting, dreaming dreams no mortal ever dared to dream before. -- Edgar Allan Poe, *The Raven*



One more thing...

There are some publications that don't require a query letter to submit work, such as *Chicken Soup for the Soul* books. While we love working with experienced writers because it makes our editing jobs easier, many of our really great stories have come from previously unpublished writers. In fact many of Chicken's best stories have come from people who don't consider themselves writers and really don't want to be writers—they simply have great stories to tell.

It doesn't matter whether you're a best-selling author or a beginning writer; stories aren't accepted for publication based on whether you have an extensive writing bio, but rather on the stories themselves and how they move, inspire or make us laugh. To learn about upcoming Chicken and *A Cup of Comfort* books in need of stories, check out page four of this e-newsletter.

HOT STUFF! HOT STUFF!

The *A Cup of Comfort* series needs stories!

Our friends at the *A Cup of Comfort* series have posted several new “Call for Submissions” entries. To learn more, go to www.cupofcomfort.com, click on “Share Your Story” in the left-hand margin and you’ll find detailed information for each of the books below. If you submit a story for consideration, please let them know that you learned of their story call-out from **PUBLISHING SYNDICATE**. Thanks!

A Cup of Comfort for Breast Cancer Survivors: Deadline: Dec. 31, 2007

A Cup of Comfort for Military Families: Deadline: March 1, 2008

A Cup of Comfort for New Mothers: Deadline: April 1, 2008

A Cup of Comfort for Adoptive Families: Deadline June 15, 2008



The following Chicken Soup books need stories from you!

IMPORTANT: Submit stories for the following books to www.ChickenSoup.com.

Stay-At-Home Mom’s Soul: Being a stay-at-home mom is one of the most difficult jobs, but is also one of the most rewarding jobs!
Deadline: February 29, 2008



Christmas Pet Book: Share your special holiday pet stories! Deadline: March 31, 2008

Catholic Soul: An affirming collection of powerful and heartwarming stories and poems full of faith and inspiration. Deadline: May 30, 2008



Go for it! Get published! 