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GUIDE TO DEVELOPING THE MANUSCRIPT PROSPECTUS

The most effective proposal for a new textbook answers the question, “Why this book? Why one more book in this field?” Another way to put it is: “What is the story of your book that makes it different from competing texts?” The single most important question is: *How will your book fill needs not currently being met by existing texts?* To be fully effective, a good prospectus contains a clear and concise description of the market for your book; information about your background; an overview of the book's coverage together with the notable features; specific book-by-book comparisons with current leading texts; description of any supplements to accompany the text; and *benefits* of your texts to both instructors and students alike. How will your book ease instruction? This could be crucial for a beginning instructor, for instance.

A detailed table of contents or an outline of the topics to be covered should accompany your prospectus. At least one or two sample chapters may be included, so that your writing style, the accuracy of the material, and the level of the presentation can be reviewed. Otherwise a writing sample will suffice.

These guidelines may not be all-inclusive, depending on the particular subject matter at hand, so please include any additional appropriate information which you believe will help us in assisting your proposal.

**The
Primary
Market**

It is essential to indicate the size and requirements of the market and to state the ways that your book will fit needs not met by other major books already published. What is the main course for which your book is intended? Please give the course length and level; size of enrollment at your school (and approximate total enrollment, all schools, if you have that information); and prerequisites. Is it a required or elective course? Is there a division in which the course is taught? If so, for which segment is your course intended? What are the theoretical framework and approach of the course?

**Leading
Texts**

It is imperative to list the other leading, competing books in the field. It is equally important to provide the author's name, copyright year of the most recent edition, and the name of the publisher.

Your Book—Competing Books Provide a short description of your book, taking the position of a sales representative making a brief presentation to an instructor. This is a vital part of your proposal that some authors overlook. Touch on the nature, purpose, and approach, and bring out two or three special features that make the book different—and better—than the competition.

It is important to *systematically* compare your project with the leading texts for the course, *book by book*. You may wish to reference the following points (and any others you feel are important): (1) Level and style of presentation (in approach, writing style). (2) Pedagogical apparatus (chapter objectives, outlines, summaries, discussion questions, problems, suggested readings, glossary, cases, boxed appendix materials, worked-out examples, etc.) (3) Approximate number of pages and illustrations. (To estimate page count, assume that three typed, double-spaced pages are equivalent to two book pages; count illustrations as a half page each.) (4) Be entirely frank in pointing out how your book will be an improvement on existing texts.

Supplements If there will be any ancillaries to your text, briefly describe them in your prospectus and list the ancillaries of the leading competing texts. Examples: instructor's manual/testing program, student study guide, website, and PowerPoint CD of overheads from the book.

Status of Project Here are essential questions to answer in the prospectus: (1) How far have you progressed in writing your book? (2) When did you begin? (3) When is your scheduled completion date? (4) Do you plan to have co-authors? (5) If you are unable to send sample chapters with your proposal, how soon will they be ready to submit? In the meantime, if you have previously been published, may we have a sample of your work? (6) If the table of contents or outline is still highly tentative, how soon will a final draft be ready? (7) Has the proposal, or any earlier form of the proposal, been shown to other publishers?

Background Here is a checklist of biographical items of particular interest to the publisher. Please make sure to include them on your curriculum vita: (1) Degrees and where obtained. (2) Present and past academic affiliations and titles. (3) Research and other professional experience. (4) Other books and articles written (with publisher and copyright year). (5) Awards or other professional recognition. (6) Notable programs in progress. Also, do you, yourself, teach the course for which your book is intended? If so, for how long have you taught it? Would you adopt the book for your own course?