

Increasingly, writers have opportunities at conferences, via phone interviews, and Skype to verbally present their ideas. However, the amount of time to pitch an idea is often brief. Here are some tips to help you master the verbal pitch:

Be informed. If you're pitching an article, study the magazine or website content. Make sure your idea hasn't already been done with a similar angle. If you're pitching a book to editors or agents, verify your genre is something they publish or represent.

Present concise information about yourself. Your name, your niches, and a few publishing credits is enough information about your qualifications. You can give additional information in a follow-up email.

Determine your article slant or what makes your book unique before you pitch. Often pitches sound like the writer expects the editors to provide the best approach for the article or book. Go ahead and commit to a direction. If editors don't like your approach, you can re-slant.

Practice your pitch. Write your pitch and then practice in front of a mirror. Time your pitch. However, don't memorize to the point you can't be flexible with your delivery if editors stop you with questions.

Prepare more than one pitch. Hone several pitches so you don't waste the opportunity if there is no interest in your first idea. (This applies primarily to articles.)

Give the editor or agent a chance to talk. If your pitch takes the entire time, you don't leave opportunity for feedback. Allow the editor or agent to talk. Pay attention. Don't be so intent on formulating a response that you don't listen.

Boost your confidence prior to the pitch. Most writers lack confidence with verbal pitches, but you miss great opportunities to break into new markets when you allow fear to prevent you from taking advantage of verbal pitch sessions. You are capable, so be confident.

Remember editors and agents are just everyday folks. Sometimes, we view editors and agents as lofty figures with a giant "rejected" stamp poised to veto our ideas. Instead, they are looking for good writers with great ideas and are hoping to say yes.

Additional pitching pointers from successful verbal pitcher @Dawn Reiss

Be confident even if you're terrified.

Research and know your subject matter and your angle.

Follow the editor on social media before pitching.

Don't be afraid to verbally pitch on the fly. You can hear the inflection in an editor's voice, see the reaction, and quickly pivot to a new angle if you aren't quite hitting the mark.

If pitching in a big group, go first. Editors will give you greater latitude if you are first.

Listen to instructions before you go to the microphone so you don't do something you were just asked not to do.

Show that you know the publication and audience in your pitch.

Match the editor's verbal speed.

Prepare 3 pitches in case there is no interest in your first pitch, but be mindful of the time and other pitchers.

If asked a question you can't answer, tell the editor you can easily find out and then follow up via email.

Don't be afraid of rejection.