

Find the RIGHT AGENT for YOU

by Chazda Albright -

<http://greatstorybook.com/find-the-right-agent-for-you-tips-resources/>

How do you find the right agent for you and your work?

This isn't about how to get *any* agent. It's about getting the *right* agent - for you. That's an important distinction!

Includes 18 top agencies *currently* accepting queries.

If you want your books traditionally published, you need an agent. That's the trend - and with indie publishing becoming such an integral aspect of the publishing industry, it's necessary.

But how do you even find an agent who really *suits* you? This is an important question, because this particular kind of working relationship can only happen if you and the agent are a good match.

You only get one agent, so you've got to make it a good one.

To be clear: I'm not trying to suggest that you as the writer should only bother with the crème de la crème agents – not really (a new agent won't yet be known as the crème de la crème). I'm saying that you will save yourself a lot of time and effort if you search for an agent correctly.

What you'll get here:

- 7 important things to know about agents.
- How to track down quality agents.
- How to determine whether to pursue an agent or not (various ways).
- List of the top agencies currently accepting queries.

So how do I search for an agent *correctly*?

Many writers don't know what an agent's workday is like, and so they submit and query inappropriately. If you understand agents better (enough to search for the right ones), then your chances of a successful query will go up.

If you know certain details about agents, then those details translate directly into smarter ways to search and research agents. There are 7 major things to know.

7 things to know about agents

1. Agents love to read, but...

A person who loves to read *everything* is a rare bird indeed, and I've not once found an agent who represents all genres and all demographics. (And unless they have a magic wand, it wouldn't even be possible for an agent to represent all that with any success!)

Make sure your potential agent would actually enjoy the type of manuscript you've written. How to do that?

- Follow their Twitter account (almost all literary agents use Twitter),
- read their Blog (if they have one), and
- read any interviews they've given (just Google their name and see what comes up on the first 3 pages).

Give the Audience What They Want

An agent who loves thrillers in space probably won't want your magic princess fairytale. Find the agent who would **love** what you've written.

This isn't just about genre, it's really about personal taste. The details of what you can find out about a person's interests are deep and wide. Social media makes that possible, and agents are making use of that. They want you to know what they like!

When to PASS: If you've stumbled on an agent's name and cannot find anything at all about them or what they represent, don't pursue further. Find another agent. Agents who are looking for new authors to represent make themselves available. Those who don't, don't.

2. The agent is interested in the age group(s) you're targeting.

If you write illustrated storybooks and the agent is looking for Middle Grade Novels, that isn't a match. That's a miss.

It isn't enough to "write for kids" – you've got to search more thoroughly than that. Be as specific as possible. I've come to find that most agents are [very particular indeed about age groups](#). If you've written a YA novel, be sure that the agent is interested in that.

Many agents will also explain what they don't want. Most don't want poetry or short stories, for example. That's something you should take to heart.

When to PASS: If your manuscript is everything the agent specifically (writ in black and white) does *not* want, then look for someone else, someone who will think you brilliant.

3. Make sure the agent is interested in your genre(s).

Being an agent very often means finding a specific niche. Some agents only deal with cookbooks. Nothing else. Some agents only deal with YA Urban Fantasy. Make sure the agent represents what you write.

NOTE: It isn't enough to know what the *agency* generally represents (some larger firms represent everything, while the individual agents represent specific niches). You'll need to search *each agent's profile* at the agency, and by process of elimination, determine who would not be a good fit for you. Write down the names you think *could* work, and then read more about them (their Wish List, their Blog, etc.) to find out if they would be a smart fit.

4. The Agent's Submission Requirements should fit your needs.

Some agencies only accept submissions through the mail. I live in Europe, so that means shipping costs to the US are exorbitant. It also means I'm unable to send a SASE, because US postage or the equivalent is no longer sold in Europe. (This used to be possible, but ceased about 10 years ago.)

For me, this means I can only work with an agency that accepts emails. It's that simple. I used to send materials to my parents in the US and ask them to mail submissions (to publishers) for me, but I've long ago given that up. It just isn't worth it.

You Decide What Works for You

I'm sure many writers are able to print and pay with every submission, but I'm not. That's both a personal and practical decision that each writer has to decide.

When to PASS: If their requirements are too expensive for you, or the time required is too long for you, or you just don't like their website's font, move on. This is business, but it's based on personal decisions. There's nothing wrong with following your gut here!

5. We live on a small planet, but not small enough.

Make sure your submission is a good match for the agent's cultural origin. Publishing and words – it's all about culture. If the agent is in England and you live and write in Texas, then that might cause some disassociations in terms of where you can connect in the publishing world.

Why? A British agent (that sounds so cool) will have primarily European business connections. They will expect King's English (not American Standard) in your manuscript, and for kids' books, they won't be much interested in anything that is specifically of the American culture.

Be Culturally Aware

I don't mean to suggest that you shouldn't branch out beyond borders (absolutely do that if it makes sense to you); just be aware that if you've written a storybook about Thanksgiving, only an American readership will be interested. Querying a British agent with a manuscript like that will not get you anywhere.

When to PASS: Some agents are really only interested in regional authors (regional to *their* address!), so look for that. If they're only interested in Canadian writers and you're not Canadian, don't query them.

6. Agents love to read, they really do, but they don't have time to read your loooong query.

It should never be more than 5-6 paragraphs MAX. Make every word count in that query, and make sure it's focused.

Remember: Agents need to represent your work to publishers, who also love to read but don't like reading queries. What you've got to keep in mind is that your query needs to demonstrate to the agent that you have a manuscript *they can sell*.

Agents cannot represent what they don't understand. If you can't represent and ultimately "sell" your manuscript to the agent with your query, you're only showing the agent that they won't be able to sell it either.

Make your query shine, make every sentence have more than one meaning or purpose (double-duty!), and you will wake up that agent's assistant and get your query actually in front of the agent's eyes.

Also: Don't be gimmicky. Be authentic. We're moving books here, not cars.

7. Real agents are free. Always! No exceptions.

Agents worth your time do not charge you editing fees or copying fees or printing fees or phoning fees or any kind of fee whatsoever to get your book in print. If they do, RUN away. Real agents charge 15% (and up to 25% for certain special types of deals). That means they only make money if they close a deal for you.

If the agent claims that for just a few thousand dollars your book can be internationally published, this is a scam. It's a legal scam, but it's still a scam.

When to PASS: Don't touch them if they want to charge you any kind of fees. You need to pay a reader's fee or submittal fee or administrative fee - to submit a manuscript? Forget it. Agents do not do that.

Track Down Quality Agents

This is time-consuming work, but I've tracked down [the top selling agents of 2015 for children's books. You can access that list HERE](#). Also, I've tracked down *the most respected and reputed literary agencies (who do represent kid's books), and have listed those for you here, just below*. That isn't to say there aren't other great agencies out there, but I need to end the list somewhere!

To get on this list the agency:

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- must have a stellar reputation
- must be internationally respected
- must represent kid's books (though perhaps not all ages, you'll need to check)
- must be accepting submissions Right Now.

NOTE: Any agency listed on the [Top 20 2015 seller's list](#) would also automatically be added to this list, though you'll need to check and see if they're currently accepting queries. I do know that about 3 from that list are not currently accepting (though not forever, just for now).

Get to know these agency names (as well as those on the Top 20 List), and you will have a solid grasp of what's out there. (Listed alphabetically.)

1. [BookEnds](#)
2. [Conville & Walsh](#)
3. [Curtis Brown Ltd.](#)
4. [DeFiore and Company](#)
5. [Dunow, Carlson & Lerner](#)
6. [Dystel & Goderich Literary Management](#)
7. [Folio Lit. Jr.](#) (Just for illustrated books!)
8. [Folio Literary Management](#)
9. [Harvey Klinger](#)
10. [Inkwell Management](#)
11. [Janklow & Nesbit](#)
12. [Jean V. Naggar Literary Agency](#)
13. [Joelle Delbourgo Associates](#)
14. [Lippincott Massie McQuilkin](#)
15. [Sanford J. Greenburger Associates](#)
16. [Sterling Lord Literistic](#)
17. [Trident Media Group](#)
18. [Transatlantic Literary Agency](#)

Getting an Agent Takes Time

Are you looking for an agent right now? How much time do you spend researching agents on a weekly basis? Write below, let me know – or as ever, just send me an email. I love getting those.

Keep creating, no matter what.
