

## Top Agent Diana Beaumont's Tips For Getting Signed

- ✚ Make sure you have edited, spell-checked and honed your work as much as possible. And address it to the right person. It's incredibly annoying to have an email addressed to 'Dear Sir'. Please check up what the submission guidelines are for any agents you approach.
- ✚ Try to target agents who are actively searching for new clients in the area in which you write. It's easy to do some research on this online or in The Writer's and Artist's Yearbook.
- ✚ A good way to meet agents is at literary festivals and they often give talks/workshops. They tend to be the younger, hungrier agents who are looking to build their lists and if you flag up that you've met them you usually end up higher up their (significant) reading pile.
- ✚ It's fine to send to a number of agents at the same time and don't let anyone tell you otherwise. Just keep them informed if someone asks to read the entire manuscript or offers you representation. If you are in the fortunate position of having more than one agent offer try to go for the person you feel you click with best and will help you work to the best of your ability.
- ✚ It's important to have a strong covering letter and a clear pitch for your novel, a brief, compelling precis of the book plus a short biography that relates to you as a writer. Keep it to the equivalent of one page with the first three chapters (10,000 words max).

- ✚ Make sure that you are thoughtful and selective about the readers you decide to share your work in progress with. Too much advice can be confusing, as you have to decide what to take note of and what to discard.
  
- ✚ It is useful to have an awareness of the market, but write what you are passionate about as in the end I'm looking for books that only you could write rather than clones of whatever happens to be on the bestseller lists.
  
- ✚ Your submission doesn't have to be perfect but does need to show significant potential. I have an editorial background from my days as a commissioning editor and enjoy that process of working with authors and helping them to develop their ideas.
  
- ✚ I would also like to stress that I am actively looking for new voices from those currently under represented in the current publishing biosphere.
  
- ✚ Don't be too discouraged if an agent doesn't offer representation. It is very competitive but also a subjective response in the end. It may well be that they have other authors writing in a similar area, or they admire your writing but don't love it enough in the end to go through all the hurdles it can take to get published. Keep writing.

Diana started agenting with Rupert Heath Literary Agency in 2011 before moving to UTA in 2015. She has just joined the team at Marjacq Scripts. Prior to this she was a senior commissioning editor at Transworld where she published numerous bestselling authors after

studying English at Oxford. Diana was chosen as one of The Bookseller's Rising Stars of 2012. She represents a wide range of commercial fiction and non-fiction including contemporary women's fiction from rom coms to reading group, crime and thrillers, lifestyle, cookery and anything else that takes her fancy.