

ROBERT BILLEAUD

Developmental Editor

The Traditional Publishing Path

Traditional publishing follows a predictable sequence. My role as a developmental editor is to help you create the strongest possible manuscript; once you're ready, these are the steps you'll take to pursue an agent and, ultimately, a publisher.

1. Complete and refine your manuscript or proposal

- Fiction requires a finished, polished manuscript.
- Nonfiction requires a book proposal and sample chapters.
- This is where developmental editing has the greatest impact.

2. Clarify your book's category and audience

- Agents need to know where your book fits on a shelf.
- You'll want clarity on your genre or category, comparable titles, and your target readership.

3. Research agents who represent your category

- Writers typically use QueryTracker, Manuscript Wish List (MSWL), agency websites, and acknowledgments pages in similar books.
- Your goal is to build a list of agents who actively represent books like yours.

4. Prepare your submission materials

- Most agents request a query letter, a synopsis, and sample pages.
- Each agent's website will specify exactly what they want.

5. Follow each agent's submission guidelines

- Every agent has their own requirements.
- Always follow the guidelines on the agent's website. They override everything else.

6. Submit, track, and wait

- Rejections are normal. Silence is normal.
- The process can take months. Agents may request a full manuscript, revisions, or a revise-and-resubmit (R&R).
- All of these are signs of progress.

How I support you in this process

My focus is on helping you create a manuscript that's strong enough to compete in the traditional publishing landscape. I can also help you clarify your category and audience, strengthen your pitch materials, and understand what agents look for in a manuscript.

Once your manuscript is ready, the next step is connecting with agents who specialize in your genre.