

Words Matter Yearbook 2009

Peter Bowerman

Janice Campbell

Ed Gandia

Linda Leigh Hargrove

Michael Hyatt

John Kremer

Susan Spann

Ruth Thaler-Carter



National Association of
**Independent
Writers and Editors**

Words Matter 2009 Yearbook

(Beta edition: Proofreading is not yet complete. If you spot a typo or other error, please e-mail editor@naiwe.com with the page and paragraph number. Thank you.)

Janice Campbell, Editor
director@naiwe.com

Published by:
National Association of Independent Writers and Editors
P.O. Box 549
Ashland, VA 23005
www.NAIWE.com
M-F 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. EST /GMT-5

© 2009 by the National Association of Independent Writers and Editors. Individual articles remain the intellectual property of their respective creators, and permission to reprint an article should be sought from each author. Additional copies of this book may be obtained from www.NAIWE.com.

Freedom is not in doing what you want to do, but in becoming what you want to be.

Ardis Whitman

Contents

The \$100,000 Writing Career	5
<i>Peter Bowerman</i>	
Advice to First-Time Authors	19
<i>Michael Hyatt, President and CEO at Thomas Nelson Publishers</i>	
Eight Options in Book Publishing	23
<i>John Kremer</i>	
Land More Work With Smarter Follow Up	33
<i>Ed Gandia, “The Profitable Freelancer”</i>	
One More Time, Without the Oops: Avoiding Accidental Copyright Infringement	37
<i>Susan Spann, Attorney</i>	
Foundations for Creative Story Writing	41
<i>Linda Leigh Hargrove</i>	
Tips for Success in Freelance Editing	49
<i>Ruth E. Thaler-Carter</i>	
Five Ways to Boost Professional Credibility	57
<i>Janice Campbell</i>	
About the Association	61
Membership Application	64

Introduction

March 2009

Dear Reader,

Words matter. That is the central theme of our annual celebration of **Words Matter Week**, as well as the central idea behind the National Association of Independent Writers and Editors. We believe that the written word is essential to civilization, and most of us have dedicated a good portion of our lives to the craft of words.

Thank you for joining us for the celebration. We enthusiastically look forward to helping you move forward in your word-centered career. If you aren't signed up for the twice-monthly e-zine, "The Edge: Success Strategies for People Who Work With Words," we invite you to sign up at the website, www.NAIWE.com.

We hope you'll consider becoming a member of the Association. We value each of our members and will continue to do our best to provide benefits that will help you succeed. NAIWE is the professional association with the business-building difference!

To your growing success,

Janice Campbell

Director

The \$100,000 Writing Career

Peter Bowerman

"Commercial" Freelancing Offers Freedom, Flexibility and Great Income

Imagine This: The editor of a magazine you've written several pieces for says yes to a recent query. You outline the parameters of the piece and the conversation turns to money. He says, "Let's try something a little different this time. Figure out how many hours you think it'll take to do the piece. Factor in time for research, background reading, travel to and from appointments, brainstorming, interviewing, writing, and editing. Then multiply the hours by \$75 and give me a figure." You return with a number, he says "fine" and you get to work.

Has he lost his mind? Is this a freelancer's wistful fantasy? In some writing arenas, maybe. But in freelance "commercial" writing, the above-described scenario is pretty much right on the money. And speaking of money, instead of flat fees with potentially vast and open-ended investments of time, here's a field where fees are based on hourly rates of \$50-125 or more, and all time counts.

Why Be a "FLCW"?

While the above scenario is reason enough to take a closer look being a freelance commercial writer (or "FLCW" – a term I coined), let's go a little deeper and explore the many reasons why this field makes a lot of sense if you're a decent writer...

1) You Like To Write And Are Good At It

Just making sure...

2) High Demand For Talent

If you're a good writer, a quick study, can think strategically about a business (more on this later), and are willing to let the world know you're out there, you'll find a receptive marketplace. But, don't believe me. Check out the quotes below.

Wanted: Good Writers! Will Pay Handsomely.

I solicited input from a number of commercial writing buyers in Atlanta and elsewhere, asking them to share their thoughts on finding good writing talent in this field. As you'll see from their comments, there's plenty of room for you if you're a good writer. See a longer list under the first link on the "Testimonials" page at www.wellfedwriter.com.

"Without question, it is hard to find a good freelance writer. We're not lacking for choices, but really good ones are rare. It's taken us several years to build up a stable of writers spread out over the country who are talented and reliable. There are probably currently 7 or 8 freelancers on our 'A list' and we keep them very busy."

*Ken Sternad, Vice-President, Public Relations
UPS*

"Finding good copywriters is probably one of the toughest challenges we have. We're a small agency, but I bet we try 3-4 new writers a year. Most experiences are very disappointing—for many different reasons. So we usually end up rewriting most copy in-house."

*Doug Warner, CEO, Fountainhead Advertising
Atlanta, Georgia*

"Once you find a copywriter who is talented, strategic, creative and reliable—hold on to them for dear life! The demand for these individuals is extremely high in the fast-paced world of corporate marketing and advertising. A writer who takes the time and initiative to really get to know your business becomes a valuable asset that you just can't afford to live without."

*Kristi Sumner, Marketing Director - Creative Development
Mercedes-Benz Credit Corporation*

Enough Bad Writers

One final note. You'd be amazed at how many really bad writers there are out there working in this field. I hear about them all the time. That's bad news and good news. Any incompetent, unreliable writer makes the next one guilty until proven innocent as well. But prove you're one of the good guys, and you'll do well.

That said, you don't have to be brilliant to do well. There are plenty of industries – health care, high-tech, telecommunications, financial services, and others – that just want good clear coherent communication that doesn't have to be a work of art.

3) Unlimited Work

Marketing brochures, corporate image pieces, advertisements, newsletters, direct mail campaigns, industrial video/CD-ROM scripts, trade articles, press releases, radio spots, TV commercials, event scripting, business letters, sales sheets, sales promotions, marketing manuals, technical manuals, corporate/executive profiles, case studies, annual reports, product documentation, product spec sheets, proposals—shall I go on?

And remember, most of what we see as consumers (i.e., ads, direct (okay, junk) mail, the occasional brochure) is B2C (business-to-consumer). That's dwarfed by B2B (business-to-business) marketing materials, all the materials created by businesses to market to other businesses. Finally, and huge as well, is internal communications – the mountain of projects created by companies “for their eyes only.” More on all these later.

Every one of these – and tons more – have to be written by someone. The sheer volume of work in a good-sized metro is staggering (later, we'll discuss how even Smalltown, USA-dwellers can thrive). As a good writer, if I'm not eating well, it's my fault.

4) The Time Is Right For Freelancers

Why don't companies do the work themselves? Well, many do have in-house creative departments. But the last few decades have been all about downsizing and outsourcing. Fewer people, less resources, smaller budgets. And it's the creative, marketing and communications departments that are often the first to get whacked.

The result? Many organizations rely on freelancers heavily – and not just because they have to. While earlier lean economic times forced companies to hire outside contractors, they quickly realized the solid economic and creative advantages of the freelance model:

- No salaries, vacation time, sick days, health insurance or benefits to pay.
- They buy only what they need, only when they need it.
- Fresh “outsider” perspectives combat insular mindsets.
- Companies get access to a wide range of talent.

A manager in a large telecommunications firm in Atlanta noted, “Most people would assume that a company of our size would do the bulk of our writing in-house and they’d be wrong. It’s amazing how much writing we outsource.” Even companies with in-house “creative” have crunch times. Enter a competent freelancer, and both sides win.

As we’ll discover later, big corporations are just one place to find work. When I released the original TFWF in 2000, I was doing a lot more work with the big boys. These days, I work with a lot of smaller firms (more respect and the same money), which, by definition, are far less likely to have in-house creative resources. Sure, many handle their writing themselves, kinda sorta, and it shows. But you know why most do so? Because they’re simply unaware that folks like us exist. So, we have our work cut out for us.

By the way, by small, we’re talking 20-50 employees and up (forget the five-or-fewer shops; they’re good for portfolio-building when starting out, but, as a rule, they can’t afford our market rates). Just remember: for every multi-billion dollar behemoth, there are scores of \$25-, \$50-, and \$100-million companies.

A few years back, I landed a \$5,000 gig from a company with less than 20 employees and annual sales of barely \$1 million. But, when it came to doing their first catalog – their MAIN marketing tool – in six years, they knew they needed to get it right. I’ve since been hired repeatedly to edit this or that web page or sales letter for \$125 an hour.

The Other Side of “Downsizing” Freelancing since 1994 has given me a different perspective on corporate downsizing. Historically, the media has highlighted this

trend with one-sided screeds about Big Bad Greedy corporations, more concerned about their own selfish profiteering than their own employees.

Certainly, profits are paramount, but what gets lost in these emotional discussions are the inevitable opportunities created for the entrepreneurially-minded out there. A whole freelance segment of the population out there, sizable and growing, is richly benefiting from all this “Bad News.” Bottom line: the economy taketh away, the economy giveth.

Competence = Security Perhaps you’re one of those displaced souls looking to carve out your own niche. Well, the time is right. If you’re good, and you work hard for a few years, get your name out there, and build something solid, you’ll experience true “job security” – and that security will be in your hands, not someone else’s.

6) Be Your Own Boss

I don’t do well with someone else telling me where to be every day, and when. If you’re a morning person by edict, trapped in a night owl’s body, your time has come. Sure, there are times when I feel I really should get up early and blend in with the rest of the world, but I get over it. If that sounds like you, check out the sidebar below.

Night Owls Unite!

10:06 a.m. The phone rings. It’s one of my clients getting back to me on some ad copy I faxed them late the night before. My spoon is poised over my just-poured-the-milk-in bowl of cereal as she asks if I can go over a few revisions. Getting up from dining room table and heading north to my upstairs office, I hedge briefly, even letting a tiny whine escape my white-mustachioed lips.

Should I come out of the closet finally? Living this lie has become unbearable. After all, they like my work and aren’t too likely to replace me just because I’m living an “alternative” lifestyle. Taking a deep breath, I begin. “Um, I’m sort of a night person; I stay up late and get up late and (I’m picking up steam now) I’m actually right in the middle of breakfast.”

There. It’s out. Gotta train em’ sometime. “Oh,” she replies, caught off guard. Pause. I can see her checking her watch. “Wanna call me back?”

Fifteen minutes later, we're chatting again, and happily, she understands completely, especially when I tell her that cold cereal was on the menu. Corn flakes. "And with cereal," she commiserates, "every second counts."

You got that right. In fact, in the time it took me to walk halfway upstairs, turn around, and dig back in, I experienced an estimated 25–30% breakdown factor in my cereal bowl. Welcome to Sog City. I hate that.

Just my luck. The present work day was obviously conceived by a morning person. No one in his right mind would have everyone getting up and hitting the highways all at the same time. Hello? No wonder so many people are grumpy in the mornings and have pathological caffeine addictions. HELLO?

I recall a conversation with a former colleague—and fellow night owl—who was recounting the unpleasant and short-lived experience of a 7 a.m. college French class. After several weeks of somnambulistic agony, he finally went to the professor and dropped the course, explaining that at 7 a.m., English was as much a foreign language to him as French would ever be.

Remember: To rise with the sun is human, but to dance with the moon is divine.

Bottom line, an 8:30 a.m. meeting is rarely necessary. People may suggest it, but I'll cheerfully lie through my teeth, invoking "prior appointments" (with my pillow and blankets). Of course, if that's the only time the client can meet, then do what you've got to do. In the early start-up days, meet clients when and where they want. Once they realize that they can't live without your awesome talents, then start making a few of your own scheduling preferences known.

7) Minimal Investment/low Overhead

Here's all you need to get started and be successful: A small office. A phone with voice mail capability. Computer. E-mail. Fax. Printer. Business card. Seriously, that's about it. Once you get a few bucks rolling in, spring for some nice letterhead and envelopes. Put it all together, and it's one of the lowest business start-up investments going.

As Atlanta FLCW Ed Gandia reminds, “When it comes to a traditional business, no one has a problem borrowing a lot of money or investing their savings to get it off the ground. But, when it comes to a FLCW business, for some reason, nobody wants to spend any money. People need to start looking at this as a traditional business. The thought of being able to start a very profitable business with only \$1000 or \$2000 is pretty remarkable.” By the way, Ed built a \$3-4K/month PT writing biz while working a FT job, and earned over \$163K his first full year in the biz; see more on Ed in Chapter Eleven.

8) Sheer Variety Of Work

In this business, every day is different and interesting, full of opportunities to learn something. Love that. Over the years, I’ve written brochures, ads, newsletters, direct mail, web site content, case studies and more, about telecommunications, overnight shipping, soft drinks, artificial turf, supermarkets, baggage handling, charitable activities, building materials, special needs athletic facilities, data capture technology, mortgages, bio-energy processes, security systems, and a major metro’s biggest arts center.

And mountain property, apartment buildings, beer packaging, an inner-city dance troupe, the “green” initiatives of a carpet manufacturer, specialty medical apparel, executive search, fiber optics, financial planning, online high schools, family therapy, chocolate chip cookies, credit cards, accounting software, high-end interior design, printing processes, college recruitment, and about a thousand other things.

In talks I give, people often whine, “I don’t want to write about soft drinks, mortgages, or security systems.” My reply: “What if someone were paying you \$75, \$85, \$100 an hour to learn and write about their business?” Pause. Um, yeah, okay, sure. I thought so. Another serious plus to the variety? You never have to deal with any particular set of office politics for very long. You get in, get it done and get out.

9) Healthy Income

I say a reasonably intelligent person with moderate writing ability and drive can sleepwalk their way to \$30K annually. If you’re good and reasonably aggressive about getting the word out, you should easily hit \$50-60K. And once you get a good

reputation, and the referrals start coming in, who knows? There are a pretty healthy number of writers in this business grossing \$100K or more.

Maybe you're a purist and writing for Corporate America just feels so mercenary. Well, it's about trade-offs. Living the "starving artist" lifestyle does have its advantages: you get to live this romantic, angst-ridden existence, and feel vastly superior to all the "sellouts."

Of course, there is the "starving" part. Call me crazy, but I like decent clothes, nice digs, a good meal out, and a couple of nice vacations a year. I'm funny that way.

Some interesting (and lucrative!) gigs over the years: week-long on-site gigs crafting snappy headlines/tags for supermarket signage (~\$5,000). Non-technical web content for a specialty medical site (\$125 an hour; 100+ hours). Broad marketing campaign for an international charity (~\$12,000 for 100 hours). 1500-word music CD-liner overview piece (\$2400). 12-page, image-heavy brochure for artificial turf manufacturer (\$3700). Monthly six-page newsletter for telecom giant (\$4500 monthly).

Some years back, I landed a pile of work with a global staffing company through an interesting "middleman" client: an internal marketing communications firm, hired by the staffing giant to execute a bunch of projects, and in turn, choosing to outsource the writing to a freelancer.

Over six weeks, I did three web articles (~\$2700); two simple one-sided sales sheets (\$850); two 30- to 40-page benefits guides (~\$6500); two newsletter articles (\$1800); and various flyers, letters, and posters (~\$2100). Roughly \$14K. Oh, and another \$1700 from another client I'd "high-balled" to discourage him, since I didn't need the work. Please proceed, he said. Sheesh.

Once established, streaks like this just aren't that rare. For a longer piece on the juicy run with the global staffing client, visit www.wellfedwriter.com/sidedishes.html, and look for "A Savory 'Well-Fed Writing' Scenario."

Finance Your Dreams Go the "purist" route (i.e., writing only articles and books), and you could easily end up moonlighting to make ends meet. If writing's the goal, doesn't it make more sense to write for a good living, even if it's not your choice of subjects, than stay in some job you hate? I'm just sayin'... Then,

with the bills paid, you've got the time and space to pursue your "bliss writing": that future Oscar, Pulitzer, Emmy, or Tony-award-winning screenplay, novel, TV series, or Broadway play.

10) Totally Different Financial Paradigm

Compared to most "freelance writing," commercial writing enjoys a very different financial paradigm: you're paid for all your time. Compare that to, say magazine writing. In that world, writers query an editor with a story idea, and if accepted, are told what they'll be paid – a flat fee. Time – as in, how many hours it'll take them to complete an assignment – is never discussed. The understanding is, whether the job takes them 15 or 50 hours, they'll make the same (and often low) fee.

If you have magazine experience, imagine this scenario: the editor of a publication for which you've written several pieces responds positively to a recent query. Once on the phone, the conversation turns to money. He says, "Let's try something a little different this time. Figure out how many hours you think it'll take to do the piece. Factor in time for research, background reading, travel, meetings, brainstorming, interviewing, writing, and editing. Then multiply the hours by \$75 and give me a figure."

After you picked your jaw up off the floor, and stopped pinching yourself, imagine you did just that, returned with a number, and he said, "Fine." Welcome to Fantasy Island, right? Yet, in commercial writing, that description is pretty much right on the money.

11) The Opportunity To Leverage What You Know

Few working commercial freelancers started in this field without leveraging some past career or professional experience. I put my sales background to work. Over the years, I've talked to attorneys, engineers, scientists, health care administrators, medical researchers, non-profit executives, university professors, software specialists, teachers, accountants and many others who got tired of working in their field but didn't mind working with their field. If that's you, and you don't mind writing about that field, that's a huge plus.

And that experience can often be an adequate substitute for a big writing portfolio. Think about it from the client side. If you need some writing projects done, and

you've got this person knocking on your door who knows your industry, its corporate culture and its vernacular, and can write about it well, you just basically eliminated the learning curve. Many folks solicit work from their own former companies for these very reasons.

You may eventually transition into writing for other fields, but at the outset, why not establish a solid business base writing about what you already know, using years of established contacts?

12) Impress People At Cocktail Parties

A writer is very interesting to people. I've joked about this with a friend of mine whose profession seems to have the opposite effect on people. When she tells people she sells ear plugs for a living, well ... where do you go from there? "How interesting. I need to get a refill."

The Downsides

Reality Check This business is no cakewalk. It's a business like any other business. Don't expect to make 10 or 15 calls and have \$5,000 jobs falling in your lap. You need a good portfolio of "commercial" samples (which you can build your "book" through pro bono work, discounted work, and even making them up from scratch!). Don't count on making \$100K your first or even second year. But know, that as writing careers go, commercial freelancing is one of the most lucrative and accessible ones out there.

The Client Is The Boss Clients may want to change what you think is good into something awful. While they have final say, don't be afraid to challenge them if you feel they're making a mistake. Smart clients expect and appreciate your input. Got some good creative suggestions – even non-writing related ones? Speak up. Recommend a direction different from their original vision that they end up using effectively, and you'll go from copywriter to valued consultant. Which, in turn, can lead to repeat gigs and higher fees.

Suzanne Ryan, www.thegourmetcopywriter.com, sent this some time back:

I'd handed in a draft to a client two weeks earlier. No word, even after a follow-up e-mail. I felt I "got" the company and their message. I called, prepared to hear I'd missed the mark, but found out my copy was spot on. Turns

out my Q&A session, coupled with other questions I posed in the draft made them rethink their positioning and services. I'd proved to be a catalyst and more of an asset than I intended. Given this "added value," they thought I was undercharging!

Also, here's the trade-off in our field: You write what others want, not what you want. If I get a column published, I'll be lucky to earn \$100. Yet, a simple tri-fold brochure could easily make me \$600-\$1000+. I don't romanticize the field and won't promise you total creative fulfillment from it. But, fact is, as mentioned, I've had plenty of fun, interesting, and yes, creative projects over the years. That also happened to pay very well.

Many newcomers (especially those hailing from the media or academia) will grandly sniff, "Well, I couldn't write about anything I didn't believe in." Sigh. Could you believe in mortgages? Artificial turf? Fiber optics? Tea bags? I mean, c'mon.

The Limits Of Compensation

As a commercial freelancer, you're paid for your time, period. Once a project is done, you don't hold the rights to it, nor can you "repurpose" it in any other venue for additional income. But, what would you do with brochure copy for a certain industry? You're certainly not going to sell the same thing to a competitor. And when you're likely being paid many times what you'd make for a straight article, it's not really an issue anyway.

Get Out!

This business, if done from home, can significantly reduce human contact – leading to loneliness, isolation, and slow creep of social atrophy? In these amazingly high-tech times, once you've secured new clients, you'll be able to do most of the work by phone and e-mail. Fewer meetings, minimal running around.

While that probably sounds pretty fabulous to commuter slaves, solitary days followed by solitary nights aren't healthy. So get out: take a class, take up kick-boxing, volunteer, have dinner with friends, etc. And keep an eye out for other freelancers. Make friends, swap cards, grab lunch. They'd welcome the opportunity to expand their social circle.

What's Your Story?

Staff Writer? Maybe you're writing for a company but looking to go solo. Given your grasp of the commercial writing milieu, while you definitely have an advantage over those who've never written in this field, you're still looking for a road map to self-sufficiency. This can get you there.

Journalist? Love the business of writing but long to make more money and enjoy better working conditions? A former journalist turned business owner shared this:

Thanks to low pay and often lousy working conditions, most journalists seek a career change within a few years. With their experience at expressing ideas in a clear, concise, logical manner and working on deadline, they're positioned to do well in the commercial writing market, where there's a huge demand for good, solid, coherent writing skills."

Restless Mom? Maybe you're an at-home mom seeking a flexible, lucrative side business that meshes with motherhood. Capitalizing on your past career experience and perhaps seeking writing projects in your former field – a common success strategy – can make this a perfect fit. (Check out the at-home-Mom profiles in Appendix B)

New College Grad? Just graduated, but not at all sure that working for The Man works for you? Having little professional experience will make it tougher, but low "right-out-of-college" overhead will dramatically hasten the ramp-up to profitability.

55+? Taken voluntary (or involuntary!) early retirement? Looking for your next career adventure, and always enjoyed writing. Healthy income potential and "on-my-own-terms" lifestyle flexibility makes this field an appealing draw for those either nearing or smack dab in the midst of "retirement." Check out the "Attn: 55+" link at www.wellfedwriter.com.

Whatever your goals or circumstances, the commercial writing field offers a lucrative and growing opportunity for even those with less-than-brilliant writing talent. Isn't it time for a raise?

Peter Bowerman, a veteran commercial freelancer and business coach is the author of the award-winning Book-of-the-Month Club selection, The Well-Fed Writer, and its

companion, TFWW: Back For Seconds (both self-published). His books have become how-to “standards” on lucrative commercial freelancing: writing for businesses, and for rates of \$50-125+ an hour. Sign up for his complimentary monthly newsletter on commercial freelancing, The Well-Fed E-PUB, along with his blog, at www.wellfed-writer.com.

Advice to First-Time Authors

Michael Hyatt, President and CEO at Thomas Nelson Publishers

As you might imagine, I receive a lot of e-mail from would-be authors who are trying to get published. Because I make my e-mail address public, it's pretty easy to get to me.

However, by the time I hear from people, they are usually frustrated. They can't get anyone in the book publishing world to respond, and they are convinced that they have a killer-idea. "If only someone would just read my manuscript," they plead.

The problem is that most publishers will not review unsolicited proposals or manuscripts. I personally receive hundreds every year; our staff receives thousands. We simply don't have the resources to review these. It's like looking for a needle in a haystack.

So as an author, what do you do? Here's what I recommend:

1. **Educate yourself.** If you want to publish with a general market publisher, read *2008 Writer's Market* by Robert Brewer. If you want to write for the Christian Market, read *Christian Writers' Market Guide 2008* by Sally Stuart. Both books include writer's guidelines and submission procedures for publishing houses. These books will give you a good overview of the literary marketplace.

2. **Read blogs written by agents.** You can get some incredibly helpful advice and straight-talk from people who pitch proposals for a living. I recommend three: Terry Whalin (<http://terrywhalin.blogspot.com/>), Chip MacGregor (<http://chip-macgregor.typepad.com>), and Rachelle Gardner (<http://cba-ramblings.blogspot.com>). There are other blogs, but I have found these to be the most useful.
3. **Write a killer book proposal.** If you want to write (or have written) a non-fiction book, I recommend my article, *Writing a Winning Book Proposal* (this is a PDF file- <http://bit.ly/wiIoB>). It will tell you exactly what publishers want in a proposal. I wrote this years ago, and it is still used by numerous literary agents and publishers. If you intend to write a novel, you can modify my format or search for another. (Just Google “fiction book proposal” and you will come up with several great resources.)
4. **Have someone review your proposal.** If you have a friend who teaches English or is a professional editor, ask them to review your proposal. You might even barter something with them. In addition, the Editorial Services section of *Literary Market Place, 2008*, lists over 500 entries, many of which provide some kind of critique service. (This is a very expensive book, so you may want to try and find it in your local library.)
5. **Find a literary agent to represent you.** This is usually the only way to get in the door with a publishing company. Most publishers do not accept unsolicited proposals or manuscripts. Instead, publishers let the literary agents do the filtering. If you want a list of general market agents, you can buy *2008 Guide to Literary Agents*. I have also compiled a list of agents who represent Christian authors. This is the only list of Christian agents I have been able to find. <http://www.michaelhyatt.com/fromwhereisit/2007/11/literary-agents.html>
6. **Consider submitting your proposal to Christian Manuscript Submissions.** This is a site sponsored by the Evangelical Christian Publishers Association (ECPA), an industry trade organization. It provides an opportunity to get your work in front of Christian publishers who use the site to discover new authors. I don't know of a similar service for the general market. <http://christianmanuscriptsubmissions.com/>

Finally, don't lose heart. This is probably the most important thing I can say to you. Yes, you will be rejected. I had over 30 publishers reject my first book proposal. However, it went on to be a New York Times bestseller. I know scores of authors with similar stories.

Like many things in life, nothing worthwhile comes easily. But if you have a great idea and are persistent, you will eventually succeed.



Michael Hyatt is the President and Chief Executive Officer of Thomas Nelson Publishers, the largest Christian publishing company in the world and the seventh largest trade book publishing company in the U.S.. I have worked at the company for a total of thirteen years.

He began his publishing career at Word Publishing while a student at Baylor University. In addition to serving as Vice President of Marketing at Thomas Nelson in the mid-80s, Hyatt started a publishing company, Wolgemuth & Hyatt, with a partner, Robert Wolgemuth, in 1986. Word acquired the company in 1992.

Hyatt was a successful literary agent from 1992 until early 1998. He has written four books, one of which spent seven months on the New York Times bestseller list., and is currently working on his fifth book, *The How of Wow*. It is scheduled for publication in the fall of 2009.

Hyatt joined Thomas Nelson for the second time in 1998. He has worked in a variety of roles in both divisional and corporate management, and was promoted to President in February 2004 and CEO in August 2005. He also serves as Chairman of the Evangelical Christian Publishers Association (ECPA).

He writes, "While I love my work, it is not the most important thing in my life. That position belongs to my family. I have been married to my wife, Gail for thirty years. We have five daughters, a grandson, and three granddaughters. In my free time, I enjoy writing, running, golfing, playing music, and photography. I am a member of St. Ignatius Orthodox Church in Franklin, Tennessee, where I have served as a deacon for twenty-two years."

You may read his blog at www.michaelhyatt.com.

Eight Options in Book Publishing

John Kremer

You don't have to sell the rights to your book to a big New York publisher who will ignore it to death. You don't need an agent. You don't have to self-publish. As a book author, you have options. Here are eight options I know of and have used.

You have eight options in publishing a book:

1. Self-publishing. Getting your own printer, publishing your book, and marketing it. That's how I've published six editions of *1001 Ways to Market Your Books*.
2. Set up your own publishing company and self-publishing your own books (plus, perhaps, publishing other books as well). For example, my company: Open Horizons.
3. Print-on-demand printer. You self-publish but you use a POD printer to produce copies 1 to 100 copies at a time. For example, Lightning Source or *AdiBooks*. In this case, you act as the self-publisher or publisher of your book and use POD as a printing option.
4. Print-on-demand publisher. You pay a POD publisher to publish your book. For example, *iUniverse*, *Lulu*, *Xlibris*, *Infinity Publishing*, etc. For example, *Infinity* publishes John Kremer's *Self-Publishing Hall of Fame* (also available as an e-book download from *BookMarket.com*).

5. Sell rights to a small publisher and let them publish and promote your book. For example, New World Library, Santa Monica Press, etc. I sold the rights to High-Impact Marketing on a Low-Impact Budget to Prima Publishing (now part of Random House).

6. Sell rights to a large publisher and let them publish and promote your book. For example, Simon & Schuster, Random House, etc. I sold rights to The Complete Direct Marketing Sourcebook to John Wiley.

7. Self-publish your book only as an e-book. For example, my new ebook on distribution: *Book Marketing 105: Choosing a Book Distribution System* — This vital mini-guide includes criteria for deciding how you will distribute your books. Also includes complete information on 30 book distributors, 4 library distributors, 89 book publishers who also distribute for other publishers, 3 sales representatives to the chains, 27 bookstore wholesalers, 34 library wholesalers, and 23 Spanish-language wholesalers. Plus a sample book distribution contract. Ebook download, \$30.00.

8. Blog your book. Rather than publishing your book on paper, you could simply blog it using a free or paid online blogging service. I'll be doing several books like this in the coming months.

I could easily write a book on these eight options. In fact, if I were to write the book, I'm sure I'd come up with three or four more options.

The option I have always liked the best is forming a publishing company and self-publishing books. Most of my books have been done that way and that option has clearly been the most profitable for me.

“Each has pros and cons, and apart from major strokes of luck each option needs some (actually, quite a lot of) knowledge to get the best result for you. The option you choose will depend on your objectives, your personality and the book(s) you want to publish.” — Arabella McIntyre-Brown, <http://publishersangst.blogspot.com>

Publishing Unwrapped Interview

The following interview was done to uncover publishing options for authors, so I thought I'd include it here as well.

What is self publishing?

Publishing a book on your own.

What is vanity publishing?

Paying someone else to publish your book.

What is Print-on-Demand publishing (POD)?

A tool that anyone can use to publish books one at a time or in small quantities. Authors might use POD to self-publish a book. Publishers use POD for galley copies, to keep older titles in print, and to experiment with new titles.

What is subsidy publishing?

A form of vanity publishing, but where you might have a greater stake and responsibility in publishing the book.

How do the above models compare to traditional publishing?

For authors, all of the above models involve paying to have your book published while in traditional publishing, the publisher pays you for the rights to publish your book.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of each?

- Vanity publishing has no advantages. Lots of disadvantages, too numerous to mention.
- Subsidy publishing, if done with a good company and for good reasons, might pay off.
- Self-publishing, whether via POD or regular offset printing, is a good option.
- Traditional publishing is, however, often the best option.
- Self-Publishing advantages: Control over content and packaging, fast turnaround, control of all subsidiary rights, opportunity to sell reprint rights to traditional publisher for more money if book is successful as a self-published venture
- POD versus Offset advantage: less money commitment up-front

- POD versus Offset disadvantage: much higher cost per book sold
- Self-Publishing disadvantages: Costs money, takes commitment of time and resources, not as good bookstore distribution as traditional publishing, not the same reputation as traditional publishing, publicity may be harder to get.
- Traditional Publishing advantages: they pay you, better bookstore distribution, better reputation builder, more publicity opportunities
- Traditional Publishing disadvantages: takes a year or two to publish, loss of control over content and packaging, give up more of the subsidiary rights income

How long does it take to get a final product out to the reading public in these various options?

- Vanity Publishing: 3 months to 2 years
- Subsidy Publishing: 3 months to 2 years
- Self-Publishing, Offset: 3 months or more
- Self-Publishing, POD: 2 days or much more time (generally depending on the POD service used and the author's turnaround time and cooperation)
- Traditional Publishing: 6 months to 2 years

How does the quality of the output compare?

- Vanity Publishing: poor
- Subsidy Publishing: can be equivalent to traditional publishing
- Self-Publishing: variable, totally dependent on editorial, design, and printing choices
- Traditional Publishing: generally good, sometimes great

How does a writer check the reputation, legitimacy or quality of a publishing company?

Ask booksellers and librarians. Consult with me (John Kremer).

What are the pros and cons of e-books vs. paper-based “tree-books”?

E-book pros: fast production, low or no cost, downloadable sales, opportunity to change content continuously and rapidly

E-book cons: nothing to hold on to, hard to give as a gift, no retail store exposure, generally harder to read for long periods of time, not collectible, not as likely to get reviewed by major media.

Tree book pros: nice feel, great tradition, holds value longer, collectible, re-viewable, signable, giftable, retail sales, reputation builder in a way no e-book can match

Tree book cons: longer production time, higher cost, must be shipped, shipping costs, not amenable to fast or frequent changes

Why has the publishing world changed over the years, and how do you expect it to change further in the future?

Changes in past 35 years that make self-publishing economically possible:

1. Better distribution, more distributors servicing the market
2. Better knowledge and support via publishing associations, books like mine, consultants and publicity services, web sites, etc.
3. Short-run printing. More printers have opened to serve the needs of shorter runs. And now, with POD, the costs to self-publish are even lower.
4. Computers have made it possible to design and typeset your books at little or no cost compared to \$12 to \$20 per page former cost. Computers also make it a lot easier to track and handle direct sales and customers, with specialized software being developed for the needs of smaller publishers.
5. The Internet has opened up the world to smaller publishers and self-publishers. It has made it possible to sell foreign rights economically, sell books to overseas customers direct, and develop promotional campaigns that cost little money.

What kind of stigma is attached to self-published books vs. those published by a major publishing house?

Some media still ban self-published books, equating them with vanity presses. Very little other stigma applies as long as the books are well edited and well designed. There have been many, many self-published bestsellers. See John Kremer's Self-Publishing Hall of Fame at <http://www.selfpublishinghalloffame.com> and <http://www.bookmarket.com/selfpublish.htm>.

Earning Potentials

How much money involved in each publishing model, both in terms of what is spent and what is potentially earned?

Vanity Publishing: Spend: \$3,000 to \$25,000. Earn: very little.

Subsidy Publishing: Spend: \$1,000 to \$75,000. Earn: variable.

Self-Publishing: Spend: \$95 to \$80,000, but generally around \$5,000 to begin with.
Earn: From \$10.00 to millions. But the typical self-publisher does not make his or her money back. I would guess (this is an informed and reliable estimate) that 70 to 80% of self-publishers lose money on self-publishing when printing via offset and spending money on promotion. 50% of those who self-publish via POD probably break even or make some money.

Traditional Publishing: If the author is paid an advance and spends no money on promotion, the typical author probably makes \$10 to \$15 thousand.

If an author is accepted by a major publisher, should they still consider self-publishing?

Yes. There are good reasons to self-publish. The most important ones being greater control over content and faster turnaround. If the book is timely and needs to get out right away, traditional publishing will rarely work. If your market is very specialized and you know it well, then self-publishing also makes more sense.

Who holds the rights to the content in the various publishing options, and why should the writer care?

Vanity Publishing: Generally the vanity press holds the rights and shares income (if any, which is rare) with the author.

Subsidy Publishing: Negotiable, but generally shared.

Self-Publishing: The author holds all rights unless really stupid.

Traditional Publishing: The author grants most or all rights to the publisher and shares in the income, which can sometimes be substantial.

The author should care because subsidiary rights can bring in significant income. Even if going with a traditional publisher, the author should negotiate to retain as many rights as possible.

Personal Experience for Writers

As a writer, which publishing models have you used (and why)?

Self-Publishing: Because I wanted books published and couldn't wait for a publisher to make a decision. Because I knew the market better than any publisher.

Traditional Publishing: Because I wanted better distribution or was through doing the self-promotion for the book.

Which publishing model would you choose for your next book (and why)?

Which model I would choose would totally depend on the book, its need for wide distribution, its content, its audience, and how much the publisher would be willing to pay me for the rights.

What kind of earnings have you been able to make from various books?

From several million dollars to \$5,000.

Writing

How does someone know if they really should embark on writing a book?

Do they have passion for the subject? Do they have time and commitment to write a book? Can they go on living without writing the book?

How does a writer know if they've chosen a good topic?

If they can't sleep at night because their book is always on their mind. If they wake up in the morning raring to write. In general, the writer does not choose the topic; the topic chooses the writer.

What style should modern books be written in?

Short and sweet is the key nowadays. Shorter sentences, shorter paragraphs, shorter books. As for style, keep your own voice. If you don't have one, develop one by writing a journal every day.

Formatting and Printing

How should the manuscript be formatted for self-publishing?

In self-publishing, you format so the book is camera-ready or PDF ready. That means typeset at some point, with an appropriate choice of type fonts. If using a typesetter, then formatted double-spaced in any type font.

What software is required (word processor, MS Publisher, PageMaker, Quark, PDF writer)?

I currently use Ventura Publisher, but if I were to make a choice today, I'd use Adobe's InDesign software for typesetting. If you are going to hire a typesetter or type designer, then you can use any word processing program for input.

How does an author choose a service provider (publisher, printer, etc), when there are so many options available?

Make use of the many listings at <http://www.bookmarket.com/101des.htm> for book cover designers, layout professionals, and typesetters; <http://www.bookmarket.com/101print.htm> for book printers; <http://www.bookmarket.com/101edit.htm> for editors, proofreaders, and ghostwriters; and <http://www.bookmarket.com/on-demand.htm> for print-on-demand printers and publishers. Then query them with requests for quotations. Also do your due diligence and check out their references.

What is the editor's role, and how does a writer find an editor (or proofreader)?

Almost every self-publisher needs a substantive editor, a copy editor, and a proofreader.

A substantive editor edits the book for clarity, structure, style, etc. A copy editor checks for spelling, sentence structure, grammar, etc. A proofreader reads the typeset copy to make sure no errors have slipped through the process of editing and typesetting. [Editor's note: You may search for editors at www.NAIWE.com.]

After Publishing

Where should books be marketed and sold?

They should be sold wherever the audience buys books. That might be bookstores, but it might also be other retail outlets, the Internet, direct sales, book clubs, catalogs, TV, etc. It really depends on the book. There are *1001 Ways to Market Your Books*.

How important is it for books to be found in major bookstores?

Depends on the book. If it is a gift book or novel, very important. If it is nonfiction how-to, much less important.

How important is it for books to be found at online retailers like Amazon?

Absolutely imperative. Also easy for anyone to set up.

Why is there a trend of moving away from bookstores towards alternate niche-market outlets (like a flower shop for a flower-arranging book)?

Because bookstores can't begin to stock the number of books available. The largest physical bookstore stocks 150,000 titles. There are 6 million titles in print. It's not hard to do the math.

How does a writer get their book into various outlets, including bookstores?

Persistence. Good cover and interior design. Lots of publicity. Read chapters 13, 14, and 15 of *1001 Ways to Market Your Books*.

What are some of the best methods an author can use to sell books direct to customers?

The Internet, e-mail newsletters, blogging, direct mail, publicity, radio interviews. There are *1001 Ways to Market Your Books*.

What kind of promotion is the author responsible for?

These days, if the author wants her book to sell, she needs to get out and do a lot of promotion. She should take complete responsibility while still making use of whatever resources her publisher offers her. For more options, read Chapter 8 of *1001 Ways to Market Your Books*.



John Kremer is an expert on book publishing and marketing. Besides being the owner of a publishing company (Open Horizons in Taos, New Mexico), he is the editor of the "Book Marketing Tip of the Week" newsletter. As a book promotion expert, John is the author of a number of books on publishing and marketing, including *1001 Ways to Market Your Books: For Authors and Publishers* (6th Edition), *The Complete Direct Marketing Sourcebook*, *High Impact Marketing on a Low Impact Budget*, and *Celebrate Today*. He has also designed the *Do-It-Yourself Book Publicity Kit*, Book Publishing Reports on CD-Rom, and Book Marketing Mini-Book series.

John's website is www.bookmarket.com.

Land More Work With Smarter Follow Up

Ed Gandia, "The Profitable Freelancer"

You've prepared a solid proposal for a new prospect. You've covered all your bases and made a convincing case for why you're the ideal person for the project.

Now the waiting begins.

A day goes by without a call back. Then another. And another. You're beginning to wonder if the prospect received your e-mail. Maybe she went with someone else?

Should you call? Should you wait another day or two? Will following up make her think you're desperate for work? But what if you don't call? Will she think you're not interested?

While there's no one right approach to following up on proposals, the key to any follow-up process is to strike a balance. Sure, you want the project. But you don't want to turn off the prospect or client with too many follow-up calls and e-mails.

The process that follows is based on principles I learned during my years in sales, combined with some of the realities of a freelance business. Not only has it enabled me to increase my success rate, but I no longer get anxious or wonder if I tried hard enough to land the job.

Here's the process in a nutshell (Note: for the sake of convenience, I'll be referring to the prospect as "she," rather than "he or she."):

Step 1

Let the prospect know when she can expect your proposal. Also, let her know that you'll be calling shortly after sending the proposal, just to make sure it went through and to address any questions.

Step 2

Call her within 2 to 4 hours after e-mailing your proposal. In most cases, 2 to 4 hours will give her enough time to open your e-mail and glance at your proposal and fee. It's not so soon that it will make you look desperate. But it's also not so late that you'll lose momentum. The idea is to strike while the iron is hot, keeping in mind that there's a fine balance at play.

Now, for the most important part: when you call, ask for the work. Don't be shy about this. You're not selling encyclopedias or newspaper subscriptions. Your prospect has a defined need. She has contacted you and is going to do the work with someone. Why not you?

Whatever you do, don't ask her if she has had a chance to review the proposal. And don't bring up your fee! Those questions will only take the focus away from moving the project forward. (Thanks to copywriting coach Steve Slaunwhite for this sound piece of advice.)

Step 3

If you get voice mail, leave a message. Let her know that you're calling because you mailed the proposal earlier and you want to know if you can get started on the project (see step 2 above). Make sure to come across as enthusiastic, confident and ready to move forward on the work. Skip to step 5 from here.

Step 4

If she can't make a decision yet, ask her when you can check back. Take on the responsibility for subsequent follow-up calls.

Step 5: Call back the day she suggested (or 3 business days later, if you still haven't connected). If you get her on the phone, ask her if you can get started on the work (see step 2). If you get voicemail, leave a message that covers the following points:

- Remind her that she suggested you call then (if you've connected previously).
- Let her know that you're very interested in the project.
- Describe in 1 or 2 sentences why you're the ideal person for the project.
- Leave your phone number and e-mail address.
- Smile while you talk; you want to come across as friendly and relaxed.

Step 6

No response after 3 business days? E-mail a quick follow-up note, focusing on the same points as step 5.

Step 7

Still no response after 3 to 5 business days? Stop the follow up—for now. That doesn't mean you give up. It just means that additional follow up will do you little to no good. It may even turn her off at this point. Instead, put her in your "nurturing" list and move on (more on nurturing in the next issue of "The Profitable Freelancer").

If you're not happy with your current approach, I encourage you to give this a try. Is this process perfect? No. But it beats winging it. And you'll feel better knowing that you tried your hardest—without going overboard and scaring the prospect away.



About the author: Ed Gandia is a successful freelance copywriter and the publisher of the "The Profitable Freelancer," biweekly e-newsletter with tips, insights and habits to help freelancers launch, run and grow profitable freelance businesses. To get a free copy of his audio recording, "10 Smart Ways to Grow Your Freelance Income in a Recession," visit www.TheProfitableFreelancer.com.

One More Time, Without the Oops: Avoiding Accidental Copyright Infringement

Susan Spann, Attorney

Infringement, the legal term for violating the rights of a copyright holder, is a form of theft. Unlike other forms of theft, such as burglary and embezzlement, many people tolerate and even practice infringement despite an otherwise moral worldview.

Many people have recently learned about copyright infringement through the popular media. The Napster and Grokster cases made infringement a household term and sparked debate on the subject of peer-to-peer (P2P) file sharing and other forms of “sharing” copyrighted materials. Unfortunately, many media sources did a poor job explaining exactly what constitutes infringement as opposed to “fair use.”

The most common forms of infringement include improper copying, distribution, performance and display of copyrighted works. “Copying” and “use” need not rise to the level of plagiarism or complete reproduction to qualify as infringement.

Infringement does not require criminal intent. “I didn’t mean to” provides no defense. Knowing what constitutes infringement – and fair use – of copyrighted ma-

terial provides the best defense and arms writers, artists and others with the ability to avoid infringing someone else's copyright.

Under U.S. law, “infringement” includes:

- Copying (or, in many cases, even paraphrasing) all of a copyrighted work. For example: copying a CD or downloading protected music belonging to someone else.

- Copying (or paraphrasing) a significant portion of a copyrighted work. For example: photocopying a chapter from a History textbook in order to “share” someone else's book or avoid purchasing additional copies.

- Reading or otherwise gaining access to a copyrighted work and subsequently “creating” an illegally similar work. For example: writing a story in which a young man named Lukas Moonrunner and his long-lost sister, Queen Leeka, fight the evil King of the Universe named Dark Raider.

Whether or not a specific action rises to the level of infringement depends upon the specific “facts and circumstances” of each individual situation, the actions of the people involved and whether or not one of several “legal defenses” apply. Permission or “license” from the copyright owner constitutes a complete defense. Another common defense, “fair use,” permits even complete copying for certain specific purposes (such as “backup” or archival copies of previously purchased works).

Questions to ask when attempting to evaluate your own actions and those of others

1. Is the original work protected by a valid copyright? Copyright infringement involves illegal copying or use of a copyrighted work. No valid copyright means no infringement, although legal liability may still arise from improper use of another person's work.

2. Am I literally copying or paraphrasing a significant portion the copyrighted work? A “significant portion” can be as little as a paragraph, depending upon the nature and length of the original. Remember that copying differs from quoting, and that proper attribution matters. Some forms of copying are protected as “fair use” but the decision to copy should never be made lightly.

3. Did I help or encourage someone else to infringe a copyrighted work? Contributory infringement – helping or encouraging someone else to infringe a copyrighted work – also creates legal liability. You cannot legally help or encourage someone else to commit an illegal act.

4. Did the amount of work copied, paraphrased or used rise to the level of “improper appropriation”? In other words: did you take enough, or a significant enough portion, of the original work for a court to decide you took something of value which belonged to the copyright holder? If the copied sections are recognizable (meaning a third-party viewer would recognize them as part of the original) you probably took too much. This doesn’t mean you cannot quote or reference others’ works in a professional and appropriate manner. ‘Copying’ refers primarily to “cutting and pasting” or paraphrasing without attribution.

5. Do I have a defense? Not all copying constitutes infringement. The “fair use doctrine” and various other defenses permit certain uses of copyrighted material, particularly with proper citation and attribution to the original source.

Like other “facts and circumstances” tests in the law, there is no magic formula to tell an author how many words or which copyrighted elements of a protected work he or she can legally use. Writers must evaluate every use independently, on its own terms, to ensure proper treatment and attribution. But like so many other legal issues, a few minutes’ extra caution at the beginning saves time, money and reputation down the line. So take another look at that article, manuscript or treatment. Just one more time ... without the “oops.”

© Susan L. Spann, 2005-2009

Susan Spann is a practicing attorney and a partner in the Sacramento law firm of Llewellyn † Spann, where she represents clients in the areas of publishing/copyright, trademark, and contract, as well as other types of business and intellectual property law. She has also been a Professor of Law at Trinity Law School, an adjunct Professor of Business Law at William Jessup University, and formerly served as in-house counsel for Nextel Communications, and she provides legal information services to NAIWE members. susanspann.naiwe.com

Foundations for Creative Story Writing

Linda Leigh Hargrove

Elements of story

Every story is made up of certain key elements, upon which the core of story hangs. Below are a few of the basic elements.

- Characters: the people, places or things that populate your story
- Point of view: the vantage point from which the story is told
 - *1st person, a story told by “I”
 - *2nd person, a story told by “you”
 - *3rd person, a story told by “he” or “she” (the narrator is not typically a character)
- Setting: where the story takes place.
- Plot: the sequence in which the story plays out; the connected events of the story

Simple plot structure:

Exposition: characters, setting, and conflict are introduced

Rising Action: where the majority of the action takes place, contains character interactions, descriptions, building tension, and plot complications

Climax: most exciting part of the story, usually when the conflict is resolved

Falling Action: the aftermath of the climax, when several story questions begin to fall into place

Resolution: all loose ends are resolved once and for all

Dialogue: conversation between two or more characters

Protagonist: the main characters in the story, aka the hero

Antagonist: the character that opposes the main character, sometimes the villain

Getting Started

- Writing environment and tools
- Setting and keeping routines
- Generating ideas
- Getting good feedback and learning from it

Environment/Tools

To establish a good writing foundation, you'll first need a place to write and some good tools. Your 'writing place' can be the corner of your kitchen, a desk in your room, or a well-appointed office with an antique oak desk. Whatever the case, make sure it is your place. Let your loved ones know that it is your place. Keep it sacred. Don't clutter it with non-writing things. Find another place for the Sudoku and the knitting bag. The fewer distractions, the better in your writing spot.

Populate your spot with the right writing tools. You'll need a computer with word processing software (or a good old-fashioned typewriter), paper for notes and such, and pens and pencils. For some writers it helps to set the mood by putting on a special CD, lighting candles, or by even putting on a special hat. The proverbial thinking cap.

Writing Habits

Make writing a habit. You brush your teeth regularly and always turn out the lights when you leave a room (hopefully). Those are habits. You do them without a second thought. That's the way you want your writing to be. Not forced or contrived

but certainly habitual. Personally, I don't have time to recline on the couch of inspiration, waiting for my muse. I've found that if I'm in place, writing every day—something, anything—then the good stuff will eventually come. It will get stronger and more predictable as I use my writing muscle. If I don't exercise it regularly it won't be very strong. So no pain, no gain applies to writing too.

So how do you form a writing habit? Go to your writing spot often. And stay there. When you're there, only do writing stuff. It's that simple. Okay, maybe it's a little more complicated. Writing is fun but it can also be a chore. It can be maddening and disheartening at times, but the moments of joy and 'ah ha' are worth it.

Some tools to help you strengthen your writing habit (in no particular order):

A calendar or chart

Write down when you plan to write, how long, and even how many words or pages you will write in that time slot. If this is a first for you, start by committing to only 15 minutes a day or a page a day. Build on that slowly. Record your progress.

A kitchen timer

Set the timer for 15 minutes (or whatever your time commitment) and write. Don't stop writing until the time is up. Don't answer the phone. Ignore e-mails. Only take a break when absolutely necessary. A coffee break is not absolutely necessary.

A writing book (or Web site)

There are tons of books on how to write. Choosing just one can be difficult. You might find it helpful to start with a writing site like *Writer's Digest* (<http://writersdigest.com/>). *Writer's Digest* has an online community forum that is ideal for novices and pros. Groups like this are great resources for tips and advice on the right books and Web links. Join and group and grow your craft.

A friend

A true writing friend is a friend that know when to leave you to your writing, how to tell you when your writing stinks, and when to stand up and applaud. A true writing friend can do all this and know nothing about writing. But it certainly helps is he does. Go out and find a writing friend.

A goal

To me, there are two kinds of writing goals. The goal to write for yourself, as in keeping a writing journal or creating a personal blog. Or the goal to publish an article in a national magazine or a book for your family. Both goals are good. One is not better than the other. They're just writing goals. It's good to have goals. Even better to reach them. Meeting your goals takes time. So if you're starting out, be patient with yourself. When you reach your goal celebrate by making another one and take yourself out for a treat. You deserve it.

Writing Ideas

An idea is like a seed. And ideas, much like seeds, come in all sizes and produce different results. Thankfully, ideas can be found almost everywhere. The challenge (and joy) is finding the seeds that will grow for you. How do you find the seeds just right for you?

Here are a few ways to generate ideas

Write what you know

Write about the things you already know about. Write about it in the form that you most like reading. If you like riding your motorcycle and reading poetry, try your hand at writing a poem about cruising open road. The key is to write your passion.

Read. Read. Read.

Read outside the box. If your thing is mysteries, read action adventure instead. If you like Popular Science, pick up a copy of Good Housekeeping. The object is to find new ways of thinking, experience other views and news. Take notes as you read. Using the things you've learned about craft, analyze the things you read. This is reading for ideas, not pleasure. You may be surprised the ideas that come. And of course, don't forget the Internet. There's so many sources of good reading material online.

Research

Research. That's a dry sounding word. But it doesn't have to be. Research can be talking to the elderly in the neighborhood or taking a group of dogs for a walk. Taking up a new hobby can also be research, not to mention relaxing. Document your findings. You may find that some of your research generates ideas for anything from articles to short stories.

Hit the road

Travel is a great way to shake ideas loose. The great thing about this kind of travel is that it doesn't have to be complicated or expensive. Walk around the mall for a couple hours. Hang out at the museum or train station. Watch people. Soak in the smells and sounds. Listen to conversations. Record them, but do so surreptitiously. The more you experience, the more you'll know firsthand and the more things you'll have to write about. Travel is a good way to tune your sense to detail, and your ear to the use of language.

Learning from Feedback

Writing is hard work. You put countless hours into each project. A whole lot of blood, sweat, and tears. When someone makes a negative comment it's like a knife to the gut. As a writer aiming for publication, you crave feedback but it scares you to death. Learning from feedback is crucial to your growth as a writer.

How to learn from feedback

Ask the right questions

Befriend some like-minded folks that like to write. Form a writer's group. Support each other in your writing journey. Learn how to proofread and critique. Critique each others writing.

Buck up

Every writer needs to develop a thick skin. Feedback isn't a personal attack. So just relax.

Use it, don't lose it

When you get negative criticism, don't freak out. Remember, it comes with the territory. What you write is not for everybody. Learn to recognize the constructive feedback. Take a few deep breaths then get back to work on your project. The feedback was meant to make it shine. It's up to you to apply it.



In keeping with the Words Matter theme, Linda also shared the following blog post on the importance of choosing words wisely.

Monkey is the Word

Note to all the men and women working in board rooms and back rooms of the American book publishing houses: In America, a monkey is not always a monkey.

The words we use in communicating cross-culturally matter today like never before. One recent example, the New York Post February 16 “shoot the monkey cartoon,” is an excellent example. In the cartoon we see a chimpanzee lying dead before two white policemen holding smoking guns. The caption reads: “They’ll have to find someone else to write the next stimulus bill.”

The cartoon, meant to be benign according to the Post, caused many African Americans to take offense, citing the negative racial [read: Obama] connotations the cartoon invoked.

Many would say America is ‘post-racial.’ Meaning ‘past race.’ That may be so, but post-racial shouldn’t mean we can start jabbing a stick at all the racial epithets like they mean nothing to our readership.

Seeing this recent example from the media fuels my notion that it’s time to start some active listening and talking about race in America. Not the name slinging and hand wringing that makes for ‘good’ ratings or sales. Not the retreating to stale race talk—the ‘us’, the ‘them’, the ‘Sharptonisms.’

And in Christendom particularly, this dialogue shouldn’t involve the usual suspects. Those who subscribe to the so-called ‘social gospel.’ But those employed by the monocultural Christian news room and board rooms and publishers as well. Not for the sake of being culturally in tune or politically correct but for the sake of the Gospel, for the case of Christ.

In his article on UrbanFaith.com, Melvin Bray uses a quote that Baratunde Thurston, comedian and guest on MSNBC’s 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue made reference to: “the image of black people being equated with apes makes people more tolerant of abuse.”

Images like this, intentional or not, continue to erode the fabric of American existence and does nothing but reinforce the tendency of many blacks to self-segregate.

These pictures make people not only tolerant of abuse but also comfortable with not including ‘them’ in the conversation, the board rooms, the news rooms, and publishing circles.

Will the word monkey ever be just a word in America? Only time will tell. In the meantime, choose let us choose our words carefully.



- Linda Leigh Hargrove is a native of the Blacklands of North Carolina, a farm-rich portion of the northeastern corner of the state. Linda uses her southern roots as a springboard for many of her writings. She enjoys writing essays and fiction that include the personality of the state she loves.

Never one to let words like ‘underprivileged black girl’ define her, young Linda read constantly. That is, when she wasn’t exploring the backwoods of Creswell, North Carolina with her two older sisters, lots of cousins, and a’ plenty other animals. Creswell, dubbed a quaint farming village in the lower Dismal swamp, made her into a lover of words and color. One of many creative Leigh women, Linda also knits, crochets, and paints.

After graduating from North Carolina State University with a Masters in Biological and Agricultural Engineering, she worked for over four years as an environmental engineer for the State of North Carolina. That position gave her the chance to experience the character, humor, and bigness of the nation, but especially that of her favorite state.

Her fiction blends suspense, humor, and faith into compelling stories about race and class in America. Her published writings include two novels: The Making of Isaac Hunt (June 2007) and Loving Cee Cee Johnson (September 2008). In her spare time, she is a operates a Web and print design company. Linda currently resides in North Carolina with her husband and three sons. She blogs at 17seeds.com and UrbanFaith.com about her three favorite topics—biblical racial reconciliation, adoption, and fiction.

Tips for Success in Freelance Editing

Ruth E. Thaler-Carter

Freelancing is a wonderfully liberating, empowering lifestyle—but it isn't easy. Being a freelance editor (or writer, proofreader, indexer, graphic artist, etc.) is hard work and constant work. You have to market yourself, find clients and projects, price and sell your services, cope with isolation, meet deadlines on your own, manage your own recordkeeping and filing, pay quarterly taxes, and more. Perhaps most important, you have to have the skills to do the work.

Before you think about becoming a freelance editor, make sure you have the skills and tools you will need.

The essential basic editing skills include:

Excellent knowledge of spelling, grammar, punctuation and usage

A sharp eye for consistency and accuracy

A detail-oriented personality—what many would call being a nitpicker

Being well-organized

Being self-effacing and tactful, because the author's voice rules; if your ego needs a lot of visibility, you won't be happy as an editor

A tolerance for jargon in many instances

A good memory

Ability to use the editing, Track Changes and other aspects of Microsoft Word and the mark-up tools of Adobe Acrobat

Clear printing/handwriting

The essential tools of an editor today include:

Knowledge of standard proofreading marks

A recent version (although not necessarily the most current) version of Microsoft Word (Mac or PC); Adobe Acrobat (Reader is usually sufficient, but Pro is best) or another "PDF"-maker and program

Internet access

At least one current dictionary (Merriam-Webster seems to be the preferred version)

Style manuals—Associated Press (AP), for journalism work; *Chicago Manual of Style* (Chicago), for books and most general and academic publishing; American Psychological Association (APA), for many academic journals and dissertations/theses; Government Printing Office (GPO), for government agency projects, etc.

Grammar guides (see below)

Professional memberships (see below)

Connections with colleagues

Fax capability

Col-erase pencils, for the occasional client who prefers mark-ups done by hand

Before you launch your editing business, be sure you are clear on what you will do for your clients. Be aware that there are several different levels of editing, and a significant difference between editing and proofreading.

The purpose of editing is to improve and enhance the author's material by making it more clear, better organized, consistent and accurate while retaining the author's voice and style. The goal of proofreading is to ensure that the finished document incorporates all accepted editing revisions and is technically accurate in terms of punctuation, spelling, grammar and usage. Be sure you know what you're expected to do if you're asked to provide:

- Editing
- Copyediting
- Substantive editing
- Developmental editing
- Project editing
- Production editing
- Proofreading

These resources should be of value in establishing the scope of your editing business and understanding what clients might want you to do.

www.kokedit.com, website and "Knowledge Base" of a copyeditor

www.jeanweber.com/howto/substant.htm, website with definitions of editing levels

www.editorium.com, for tools, add-ons and other services from Jack Lyon

Other key resources for building your freelance editorial business include the following.

Organizations:

Be visible and active in, not just a "checkbook member" of (and be extra-professional in messages!), such groups, because their members can be valuable sources of advice, assistance and referrals. Most have member directories where clients can find you, and job lists as well; several have subgroups for freelancers:

National Association of Independent Writers and Editors (NAIWE), www.naiwe.com

Editorial Freelancers Association (EFA), www.the-efa.org

American Copy Editors Society (ACES), www.copydesk.org

Council of Science Editors, www.councilscienceeditors.org
American Medical Writers Association, www.amwa.org
American Indexers Society, www.asindexing.org
American Society of Journalists and Authors, www.asja.org
American Society of Travel Writers, www.astw.org
Association for Women in Communications, www.womcom.org
Society for Technical Communication, www.stc.org
World Association of Medical Editors, www.wame.org
National Association of Science Writers, www.nasw.org
Professional Editors Network, www.pensite.org. www.sdpen.com
Bay Area Editors Forum, www.editorsforum.org
E-mail discussion lists:
Copy Editing List, www.Copyediting-L.info
www.theslot.com (Bill Walsh of the Washington Post)
EFAlist (members only), www.the-efa.org

Social networking sites, for visibility to potential clients:

LinkedIn. com
Twitter/Tweet
Facebook.com, MySpace.com

Books

Elements of Style, Strunk & White
Mark My Words, Peggy Smith
Woe Is I, Patricia T. O’Conner
Proofreading Plain & Simple, Debra Hart May
Copy Editing, Karen Judd

Copyeditor's Handbook: A Guide for Book Publishing and Corporate Communications, Amy Einsohn

The Copyeditor's Guide to Substance & Style, EEI

Stet! and Stet Again!, Priscilla Taylor

Lapsing into a Comma and *Elephants of Style*, Bill Walsh

Eats, Shoots and Leaves: The Zero Tolerance Approach to Punctuation, Lynne Truss

Writer's Digest Books

Newsletters

The Edge: Success Strategies for People Who Work With Words, www.naiwe.com

Copyediting, www.macmurry.com

Editors Only, www.publishinghelp.com

Courses and workshops:

NAIWE

EFA

EEI, www.eeicommunications.com

"The ABCs of Copyediting," Amy Einsohn; amyandchris@igc.org

"The Keys to Effective Editing," Jacquelyn Landis;

www.ed2go.com/eitc.edu (Eastern Idaho Technical College)

Copyediting

Editcetera course(s)

USDA Grad School

Local and online colleges

Local writers' centers

As with any kind of freelancing, finding work is the biggest challenge for editors. Start out by looking for opportunities in the workplace if you are currently employed,

perhaps in departments or on projects other than your own. Consider donating your services to a nonprofit organization or cause you believe in to build up experience and a portfolio.

To train your editorial eye and add samples to your portfolio, mark up the daily paper, magazines you read, even books (as long as they aren't from the library!). Tell everyone you know that you're looking for assignments. Be prepared to take skills tests for any publishers you might contact or hear from about editing opportunities. And remember that your presence in discussion lists and professional organizations is your public face to colleagues who might be sources of work and referrals.

Among the resources to keep in mind are:

- Former employers, colleagues
- Friends, family
- Professional groups
- Hobby groups
- Volunteering
- Convert want ads (offer to take on full-time listings on a consulting basis)
- Send out queries to publishers and publications
- Websites/e-services
- Professional organizations

To find work locally, check the Yellow Pages for publications, tech services companies, publishers, colleges and universities, associations and nonprofit organizations, and temporary agencies—but keep in mind that, again as with most forms of freelancing nowadays, much of your editing work can and will be done remotely and electronically. Join organizations that offer job services and others ways of helping members find projects, such as directory listings. Be active and visible, with well-written and self-proofed messages, in the e-mail lists or forums of those groups, because that is where colleagues will get to know you and judge whether they might refer clients or subcontract projects to you.

Sign up with social networking sites such as LinkedIn.com and, in addition to crafting a detailed profile there, find and participate in some of the editing groups to help get your name out and keep track of trends and opportunities. Give some of the job-finding services a try (elance.com, craigslist.com, guru.com, etc.), but don't expect very much from them—their clients tend to choose freelancers based on price rather than quality, which means fees are often, if not usually, very low.

However you launch and manage your freelance editing efforts, be persistent and professional in all your activities and interactions. Best of luck!

Ruth E. Thaler-Carter (www.writerruth.com) is an award-winning freelance writer, editor, proofreader, desktop publisher and presenter. She is the author/publisher of "Get Paid to Write! Getting Started as a Freelance Writer" and has written a soon-to-be-released booklet for the Editorial Freelancers Association (EFA) entitled "Freelancing 101: Launching Your Freelance Editorial Business." Thaler-Carter will be making presentations on the latter topic in 2009 for the Society for Technical Communication (STC) in Rochester, NY, April 6–7, and Atlanta, May 3–6; Society for Professional Journalists in Philadelphia, April 23–24; and EFA in Washington, DC, on May 14 and New York City on June 18 (www.the-efa.org).

5 Ways to Boost Professional Credibility

Janice Campbell

Credibility Tops Freelance Writer and Editor Wish List

A recent survey of over 300 freelance writers and editors discovered that while freelance workers join professional associations for benefits such as networking, professional development, access to industry news, and other support services, the desire to establish a significant level of professional credibility trumps all.

In an online survey of freelance writers and editors, conducted in January 2009, 86% of respondents rated “Credibility as a committed professional” as “Extremely Important” or “Important,” outranking everything from networking to skill-building. The three-part survey, commissioned by the National Association of Independent Writers and Editors (www.NAIWE.com), provides an overview of the priorities and concerns of freelance workers. One experienced writer wrote of the frustration of trying to stand apart from the crowd, noting “These days everyone is a “writer” -- but I have 30 years of experience and I’m not a twenty-something blogger. I need to know how to react to this huge shift in our industry...”

Because credibility is tied to everything-- getting work, setting rates, and presenting a freelance enterprise as a viable business, the surveyed writers and editors are right to value it highly. Factors that influence credibility often have less to do with the freelancer's skill than the client's perception. To build credibility, the National Association of Independent Writers and Editors offers five tips:

1- Write with professional care: Always be completely professional in your communications with clients and others. Use a business-like tone and style, and even after a friendly working relationship is established, maintain proper spelling, punctuation, and grammar. Typos will slip by the most careful writer, but strive to make them the exception, and not the rule.

2- Behave with integrity: Do what you have promised, in the way that you promised, in the time you have promised. If a circumstance arises when you may not be able to meet a deadline, notify your client immediately and work out a new agreement. If you find that you've accepted a project that is beyond your skill level or out of your area of expertise, don't do a bad job. Go to the client and explain that you need to refer the work to a colleague who is better qualified. The client will respect you, and your colleague will thank you.

3- Join and network: Join one or more professional associations for networking and skill building. Get familiar with other members of your association so that you can refer work to one another when you have an overabundance, or are faced with a project that is outside your expertise. If you're a well-established freelancer, be willing to share your expertise with less-experienced members. This is networking at its best, and it can all happen online.

4- Learn, grow, and share: Continue your professional development, and let your clients know what you are doing. If you attend teleseminars or classes sponsored by your professional association, be sure to mention it in your client newsletter (you do send one, don't you?) so that your clients will be reminded that you maintain your skills and are constantly working to provide them with the best possible service.

5- Never complain: When you talk on the phone or meet in person, present yourself as a professional. Never be tempted to complain about an another client or assignment, because the person you're talking to will inevitably wonder what you say

about him or her to other clients. You can't lose when you keep a pleasant, positive, professional attitude.

For additional information on the survey of freelance writers and editors, contact Janice Campbell or visit <http://www.naiwe.com/about/survey-09.php>. You may view complete survey results at Survey Monkey using the following link and password:

Link: <http://bit.ly/naiwe-survey>

Password: naiwe0109surveyx

About the Organization: The National Association of Independent Writers and Editors (<http://www.NAIWE.com>) is a business-building professional association that provides many benefits for literary and commercial freelancers, including individual member websites linked to a searchable database, access to legal information, a free e-zine, and more. NAIWE also sponsors the annual Words Matter Week, with free online seminars, a free e-book, a dues discount and more during the first full week in March. Learn more about the March 2-6, 2009 event at <http://naiwe.com/words-matter/week.php>.



The NAIWE Mission

- We will regard commercial and literary freelance writers and editors with equal respect. Freelance writer or editor
- We will be open to emerging trends and technologies in order to help members meet the goal of earning a living as a wordsmith.
- We will provide encouragement, information, and an Internet presence for members in transition from employment to freelancing.
- We will encourage professional growth by providing information, industry news, and special resources for writers and editors.
- We will be responsive to the needs of members and will continue to add benefits as the Association grows.
- We will support and supplement the marketing efforts of each member by collective marketing of the Association.
- We will advocate for the written word through the national annual celebration of Words Matter Week during the first week in March.

- We will affirm our commitment to literacy through ongoing support of First Book, a charity that provides new books to children in need.



NAIWE Code of Ethics

Members of the National Association of Independent Writers and Editors (NAIWE) agree to adhere to the highest standards of ethical behavior in all business transactions.

NAIWE members will:

Be honest: We pledge to provide writing services and evaluations that are fair and unbiased, based upon our knowledge and understanding of the subject as well as our professional expertise.

Be loyal: We will support our client's artistic, academic, and business goals by providing clear, objective evaluations that meet the client's stated goals. We will treat each client's creative works as private and confidential, and protect the integrity of information or documents entrusted to us for writing or evaluation.

Be competent: We will accept no job that we will be unable to perform in a professional manner. This includes jobs that are outside the scope of the writer or editor's skills, or jobs that are presented with an inadequate time for satisfactory completion.

In addition, NAIWE members will also:

Continue professional development: Members will maintain, improve, and update their knowledge and skills through reading, classes, and networking with others.

Communicate promptly and courteously, using the preferred method agreed upon with the client.

About the Association

(And an Invitation)

The National Association of Independent Writers and Editors is dedicated to the proposition that writers and editors, both commercial and literary, are worthy of respect, support, and success. In the fast-paced, shrinking world of the twenty-first century, with geographical boundaries rendered porous by technology, our members and their clients are able to form working relationships across the globe.

As “the professional association with the business-building difference,” NAIWE provides an international platform through which writers and editors can connect with potential clients worldwide. We welcome members who:

- Earn a living by working with words
- Are serious about building a profitable writing or editing business
- Value networking and referrals
- Would like to eliminate the “feast or famine” business cycle
- Welcome opportunities for professional development
- Appreciate the credibility that comes from membership in a professional association

If this sounds like you, and you are...

- Committed to the highest ethical standards of business conduct

- Serious about using technology and best practices to build your business
- Committed to ongoing professional development
- Serious about being the best at what you do

You belong in the National Association of Independent Writers and Editors!

We'd like to invite you to join NAIWE, a fresh new organization for freelance writers and editors, both literary and commercial. We realize that freelance professionals wear many hats. Most of us don't have the luxury of writing only fiction, or editing only academic monographs. In addition to our primary job description, we may write articles, evaluate manuscripts, offer writer workshops, or teach classes in grammar or copyediting. In short, we are versatile and focused on success.

Why Join a Professional Association?

Membership in a professional group is an investment in credibility, professional development, business growth that will reap benefits far beyond the yearly dues. In addition to member benefits such as a free website and blog, free access to basic legal advice, and much more, NAIWE offers larger benefits such as group marketing, a searchable database, and the SEO advantages of a large, content-rich website. Membership in a professional association conveys credibility, commitment, and professionalism in a way that few other things can.

Why Choose NAIWE?

There are many groups for writers and editors on the Internet. The National Association of Independent Writers and Editors isn't the largest or oldest...yet. However, membership gives you specific advantages. When you join NAIWE:

- You have an immediate Internet presence, even if you're not a technical wizard
- You are included in a database that is searchable by skills and experience
- You are welcome here, even if you are a writer or editor who doesn't fit neatly into a genre or specialty
- The sooner you join, the more impact you can have on the direction of association development

- Your business will benefit from our commitment to research, ongoing professional development, and marketing

Other Benefits

Free Legal Information Service

You will have access to a law firm which has agreed to provide free, industry-related legal information and responses to individual questions concerning business law, intellectual property (including without limitation copyright and trademark issues), and business or publishing contracts.*

*Availability of legal information services and attorney responses, without more, do not constitute legal representation of NAIWE members, either by NAIWE or affiliated attorneys.

Discounts

The Association seeks to establish relationships with relevant companies in order to provide discounts on goods and services you can use. We are currently negotiating with a potential source for certifications, and with other helpful resources. Current discounts include:

Novel Planner Software

NovelPlanner takes the pain out of planning your stories. It allows you to plan ahead, creating and describing your characters, scenes, and other information in the amount of detail that works for you. While you're planning your scenes, you can also create the structure of your story within NovelPlanner. You create chapters or sections, then drag and drop your scenes, characters and notes into them to lay out exactly how your story will flow. Once you've laid out your story, go to Reference mode and NovelPlanner will float above your favorite word processor, so you can refer back to your notes to see exactly what to write next. www.tc7software.com

Technical Support

If you've ever experienced a computer crash, you know that it's likely to happen right before an important deadline. NAIWE has negotiated a very reasonable flat rate for unlimited tech support from UltimIT Solutions (www.ultimitsolutions.com).

Join us today, and let's work together to meet your goals!

Membership Application

If you are an active writer or editor, fill out the simple form below so you can start enjoying the many benefits of membership in the National Association of Independent Writers and Editors. As soon as your membership is processed, you'll receive an e-mail with log-in information and a link to the Quick Start Guide so that you can easily post your professional profile on your new website. We'll be happy to welcome you! Please send the completed application and dues to NAIWE; PO Box 549; Ashland, VA 23005.



Name _____

Street Address _____

City, State or Province _____

Country, Postal Code (Zip) _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

Skills/Experience

You will use check-boxes and your professional profile to share this information on the website once you receive your log-in information. Please write a brief paragraph below, describing your experience and skill areas. You may attach an additional sheet if necessary.

____ By completing this application, I agree to adhere to the NAIWE Code of Ethics and Terms of Use (you may view these online at www.NAIWE.com).

Signature _____

Dues are \$149 for one year. Here is my credit or debit card information:

Card # _____ Exp. date: _____

By providing my card number and signature above, I authorize NAIWE to charge my account for \$149 in association dues, renewable annually. _____ (Initials)