

**HOW TO  
WRITE  
AND GET  
PAID**

**11 CASE STUDIES OF**

**FREELANCE**

**WRITING**

**SUCCESS**

**EDITED  
BY JACOB  
JANS**

# How to Write and Get Paid

11 Case Studies of Freelance  
Writing Success

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## Introduction

Jason Hewett knew he wanted to get paid to write. He was fed-up with his entry level marketing job and wanted to get out. His answer was freelance writing. He had no experience and no portfolio. And yet, he still managed to land a decent writing job.

It was a similar situation for Emily-Jane Hills Orford. She wanted more income as a writer. What did she do? She landed a regular blogging gig that paid \$50 per post. And no, she didn't have a portfolio.

Megan Headly was an experienced writer when she wanted to transition to freelance writing. She started by earning \$60 an hour, right off the bat.

In this book, you'll find eleven examples of successful writers finding new clients and building their income. Not only that, you'll learn how they landed their clients, including the pitches they sent, and the conversations that led to real income.

Why should you read this book? Because, if you take the time to think critically about each story and how to apply the lessons to your unique situation, you will be leagues ahead of where you

started. You'll have a clear vision of how to succeed with your writing career. You'll know exactly how other writers have succeeded, and you will have a path for success laid out before you. A path of your own creation, unique to your own situation.

But *only* if you take the time to think critically about the stories in this book. Read the case studies. Read the analysis at the end of each case study. Do the exercises. Answer the questions. You'll be leagues ahead of where you started. I promise.

If you're like me, you've sat down at your desk, opened your computer, stared at the screen, and thought to yourself: This device I'm staring at can connect to the rest of the world with the mere push of a button. Surely, the opportunities are endless, but where are they? As infinite as these opportunities seem, they can be difficult to find.

This can be quite the frustrating situation.

That's another reason why this book can be so valuable. You'll learn how other writers have found those opportunities, taken advantage of them, and turned them into real income – so that you can too.

It is my hope that this book will not only show you the opportunities that are available, it will also help you develop the tools to find them on your own – and put them to good use.

Sincerely,

Jacob Jans

Freedom With Writing



## How to Use This Book

This book presents a series of case studies, with questions and exercises at the end of each case study. Feel free to start by reading the book quickly, even in one sitting.

*Then*, go back and read the book again, carefully doing each exercise, and answering each question. This time, limit yourself to just one case study per day. This will give you the time to think critically about each case study, and to complete each exercise.

In my experience with students at [Writing Launch](#), the students who succeed are the ones who take their time with each lesson. If you're like me, you're bursting with energy, ready to sprint a marathon right out of the gate. However, like a marathon, you have to pace yourself. You'll go much further.

If you'd like to commit to spending one day on each of these lessons, I encourage you to create a schedule right now. Think about *when* and *where* you'll spend the time studying each of these case studies. Think about the potential obstacles you'll face, and how you'll overcome them. Finally, spend a moment to think about what your life will be like *after* you've reached the next level of

your freelance writing career, whether that means your first paid publication, or your first \$1,000 paycheck from one article.

If you have any questions, feel free to send me an email:  
[jacob@freedomwithwriting.com](mailto:jacob@freedomwithwriting.com)

## Get Your First Gig

The first section of this book presents four case studies from four different writers, showing how each of them landed a gig as a freelance writer.

As you read these case studies, you'll learn the role of a good pitch and a good portfolio.

You'll also begin to get a sense of the work needed to land a freelance writing job with a magazine, blog, or website.

The process can be broken down into two steps:

1. Find an opportunity, such as a magazine that accepts submissions directly, a blog that accepts guest posts, a potential business client, etc.
2. Send a pitch to the publisher or client.

Throughout this book, you'll see quite a variety of ways that writers have found opportunities for sending a pitch.

To get you started though, here are some recommended resources:

1. The Paid Publishing Guidebook lists hundreds of magazines, websites, and blogs that accept submissions directly from freelance writers. It is occasionally given away to free subscribers of [Freedom With Writing](#). It is also available for purchase on [Amazon](#).
2. [Freedom With Writing](#) sends a weekly update of paid writing opportunities.
3. [The Prologger Job Board](#) has a variety of decent jobs for writers. You'll see in the first case study that Jason Hewett used this job board to good effect.

4. Craigslist, surprisingly, has some decent opportunities, but you have to be careful. John Sofen's case study goes into detail, later in this book.

For one more case study, I also recommend reading Zachary Schwartz's story of how he got published in Vice as a teenager. It is the featured case study in [The Paid Publishing Guidebook](#).

# How I Switched from Entry Level 9-5 to Freelance Writing

***By Jason Hewett***

I was 25 years old, working full-time, and very dissatisfied with an entry level marketing job in New York City. Opportunities to grow within the company shrank as positions were eliminated, and I started to sense it wouldn't be long before I would be laid off as well. At that point I knew I wanted to write for a living, ideally as a remote freelancer, but I didn't know how to make that possible.

The main thing that was holding me back, I felt, was that I didn't have enough samples or a portfolio to showcase my talent, so I started scrambling to write spec pieces for imaginary clients before actually pitching.

Then I learned from online classes that although it's certainly useful to have samples, they aren't always necessary. The most important part of the pitch, is the pitch. Sometimes clients will hire you for your ideas alone. So where to find new clients?

Both the classes and my personal experience told me to stay far away from content mill sites like Elance, where almost everything pays \$0.01 per word or less, so I started looking up ads on places like problogger.com and pitching to anything and everything that interested me. One of the most intriguing projects was writing blogs for a movement to plant trees in Israel. It sounded familiar, and like something I could write about. I responded to the ad with this pitch:

“Hello,

I've heard of this movement and would love to provide content for the client. I am Jewish-American myself, my maternal ancestors were from Jerusalem, and I am very familiar with the faith and values of Jewish-Americans as well as environmentalists who are interested in being part of a great movement.

I've taken some time to think of six potential article topics and subjects, if this looks to be on the right track I'd love to take the next steps with you on this project.

[Then I listed 6 possible topics]

Thanks so much for your consideration!

Best,

Jason

Within a few days, I got a response. They asked what my rate would be for an article, to try one of the 6 article topics I suggested.

I did a lot of research to try to come up with a good rate, and looking back I probably could have asked for more. The best copywriters can pull down as much as \$1.00-2.00 per word, and the cheapest rates I've ever seen go for less than one cent per word. I wanted to make more than the minimum wage in New York City (\$13 per hour) but I didn't want to ask for too much, given my lack of experience, and get laughed out of the room. I figured the most I could ask for was around \$0.07 and the least I'd be willing to work for would be \$0.03. So I met myself in the middle and asked for \$0.05 per word.

Deal, they said. For all six articles. Looks like I could have asked for a lot more after all.

In hindsight, I probably should have. Each article took way more research than I had anticipated. That said, I'm relatively new to this type of writing and self-taught, so I can't knock out quality work as quickly as veteran copywriters can. I was able to write the sixth article much faster than the first one.

This was a very professional and trustworthy client, but I also should have gone over revision policies and deadlines--more experienced copywriters always address these matters early on, I'm sure. But everything ended up working out fine. I was able to work at a steady pace on each article during lunch breaks or at home. They liked the first draft, which was close to 1,000 words. There was some feedback and minor revisions, but they were very enthusiastic about the direction I had taken, and the revisions were easy to implement.

The position at my full-time job ended up getting eliminated just before my first article was approved. Once the client announced it was scheduled for publication, I created an invoice based on a free online template which included the word count, rate, and all my billing information. They put me in contact with HR, I signed a W9, and the payment was processed right away--the client offered to mail a check or use ChaseQuickpay and I chose the latter. I sent invoices once the articles were approved and met every deadline



we agreed on--they asked me when I could get the articles done and I'd usually give myself two days to tackle each project (so that I could take on other work and go to interviews) and we've had a wonderful working relationship. For the six articles, I've collected more than \$300 and gained a relationship with a client that will likely lead to more work.

I'm proud of the work I've done for this client and hope to continue working with them in the future, whether I freelance or find a full-time copywriter type position. I'm very grateful to be starting out at \$0.05/word which is a healthy entry-level rate according to most experts and works out to roughly \$15-17 per hour. For future projects I would feel comfortable increasing the rate, but also turn out drafts faster than I would if I were working full time. This opportunity has shed a lot of light on the possibility of an alternative to the office grind; I will miss the salary but with a couple projects like this, I'll be able to support myself while living modestly in Brooklyn.

Jason Hewett is a versatile writer who has found success across many genres; his favorite being comedy. The coolest things he ever wrote were with the thousands of students he met in Florida while on the 2016 Playmakers Tour. The most famous was a documentary for LabTV which became a semi-finalist in Tribeca Film festival 2014.

Jason's work can be found in blogs like Gluten Free Philly, The Black Sheep, LinkedIn, and on his website Jasonhewett.com. Jason graduated from the University of Delaware with a BA in Creative Writing and Spanish. He currently lives in New York City and can be reached at jasonmhewett@gmail.com

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## Analysis

Jason provides a very good example of a pitch for writers without a portfolio. He quickly describes who he is and why he's a good fit for the job, then proves he is a good fit by listing relevant article ideas. It's a formula that works well. He was concerned that he didn't ask for enough money on his first job. However, he kept his eye on the long term, using this job to get a realistic estimate of how much he earns per hour. This experience gave him the information he needs to earn more in the future. New freelance writers often worry about how much to charge; my advice is that the pay is not important for the first job or two. Keep your eye on the long term, and use the first job to get a better sense of fair pay for future work.

### *Questions and Exercises*

- How many pitches do you think Jason sent before his first pitch was accepted?
- Do you think a portfolio would have changed the outcome? How? Why or why not?
- Exercise: Spend ten to fifteen minutes reading job postings on a job board such as Problogger, browse The Paid Publishing Guidebook, search Google for possible opportunities, or browse the listings at Freedom With Writing. Make note of any publishers you may want to write for.

# How I Landed a Gig Writing Youtube Scripts for \$200 Each

***By Emma Valentine***

Landing the first pitch can be difficult.

That first e-mail is vital – it sets up who you are, what you're about, and how capable you are of getting the job done. It sounds obvious, but a well-constructed first e-mail is the only way to put your best foot forward.

As a recent graduate, I was unemployed and curious about whether or not I could translate all that practice writing essays into some actual income. Freelance writing had crossed my mind, and I thought my stuff was worth reading, so I decided to make some inquiries.

My first client was a company that focused on educational content. I'd been a fan of theirs for a while and, seeing themes in their Youtube channel that needed expansion, thought I'd try to pitch them a script idea. In these initial stages, having an idea of what they wanted to publish, and any gaps in their content, was really

instrumental in being able to grab their attention with an appealing pitch.

After hunting down their company contact info, I e-mailed the editor directly.

This first contact can be scary. You're putting yourself, and your work, into the unknown. But, there are a few steps you can take to make your pitch stand out, and more likely to be taken up. Be sure to check if your client has a standard procedure for accepting pitches - such as a form that you should fill out, or a particular format. If not, an opening e-mail is your best bet.

Imagine yourself on the receiving end of this email. Your recipient might have seen thirty of these emails this morning, and be having a terrible day where they just don't feel like reading. Make it easy for them. You can do this by following a predictable pattern for pitches:

1. Introduce yourself with an elevator pitch. (Hi there, My name is... I'm a freelance writer from... I write mainly...) If you have a particular qualification or knowledge relevant to what you're about to pitch, mention it here.

2. State why you're getting in touch with them specifically. (I saw your call for pitches on Twitter/I've been a fan of your publication for a while)
3. Nudge the door open for your idea. (I was wondering if you might be interested in an article on...)

By this point, typically you've either gotten their attention or they've seen enough to pass. If you've gotten this far though, make sure to nail the landing:

4. Briefly outline what your piece would cover. Imagine subheadings through the article you want to write, and tell your recipient about those. Be concise, but informative. This is where you really sell the piece.
5. Metaphorically hand them your business card. They've got a sense of you and your ideas, so now's the time to let them think, and get back to you when they're ready. Leaving them with a couple of links to your work, so they can get a better sense of how you structure pieces, is also very important to assist their considerations, so be sure to include that.

Here's an (anonymised) example of one of my successful pitches that puts these points into practice.

*“Hi there,*

*My name is Emma Valentine, I’m a freelance writer from Cardiff, Wales specialising in psychology. I’ve been a viewer of your show for a while, and wondered if you might be interested in a piece on Alien Hand Syndrome?*

*Alien Hand Syndrome is one of the stranger conditions that can arise from brain damage to the corpus callosum. Those who have it often find one of their hands completely out of their control, to the point it might start undoing their shirts in public, or taking strangers’ coffee without their consent. It sounds almost like sci-fi, I know, but this article would give us a great jumping off point to talk about the history of neurosurgery, as the condition was often caused by a common epilepsy procedure back in the day.*

*Hope that sounds like something you might be into. I’m happy to hear any counter pitches you might have, and hoping we can talk about this further soon. Here is a link to a couple of my previous pieces for your reference: [\[link\]](#)*

*Have a great weekend!*

Emma”

With an opening email like this, you come across as professional, confident and organized. Also, it’s clear that you value their time and, vitally, don’t waste it with swathes of text. This email resulted in me landing a pitch for a 900 word script, paying around \$200.

I’m still working with this client, writing around two scripts per month as a Science Writer. It’s a nice baseline, and gives me a solid portfolio to offer to other prospective clients when seeking new contracts.

The first contact will always be a bit of an unknown, so it’s natural to be nervous. But try to remember, it’s all business. If they take you up on your offer, that’s fantastic. If not, that’s nothing out of the ordinary, and it probably doesn’t speak to your writing abilities. Just keep trying, and know that even if your pitch is unsuccessful, you’ve made a good first effort at opening future lines for communication with the client.

Based in the UK, Emma is a freelance Science Writer for a popular Youtube channel. Alongside an international team, she regularly creates educational scripts focusing around her specialty, abnormal psychology.



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## Analysis

Right at the beginning of Emma's case study she makes a very important point. She knew the publication quite well. She knew what they published, as well as what they didn't publish, but would likely want to. This made her pitch much more effective, and was a key factor in landing her the job.

In her pitch, you'll also see that she included a link to sample articles. Note that this was at the end of the pitch; and not at the beginning. The job of the portfolio here is to reinforce the credibility of the author. Ideally, you've won them over with the right idea, presented clearly and succinctly. The portfolio serves to further reinforce your credibility.

## *Questions & Exercises*

- Exercise: Find a magazine or a website and spend ten to fifteen minutes studying what they publish. What is their writing style? What types of topics do they cover? Do they have regular columns?
- Exercise: Revise Emma's sample pitch. Cut the word count in half, while still including as many specifics as possible. Then, revise it again, increasing the word count

back to the original. (Because you're not Emma, feel free to invent biographical details. Have fun with it.)

# How I Found a Blogging Gig Via Freedom With Writing

## **Emily-Jane Hills Orford**

Where should I start? A notice on the *Freedom With Writing* website mentioned a gardening blog that paid. *Nifty Homesteader* (now called *Insteading*) was seeking writers with a knack for quirky pieces about living in the country, country life and the lure of gardens. For a newly located country woman with a passion for gardening, this appealed to me. There was no query required, just an application to fill in. It was more of a questionnaire than an application form. I answered the questions and submitted it, fully expecting another rejection:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Emily-Jane Hills Orford</b>
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://emilyjanebooks.ca">http://emilyjanebooks.ca</a>

<b>Select The Writer Type That Best Fits You:</b>	I love homesteading & just want to write (paid)
<b>How Often Are You Interested In Contributing?</b>	Monthly, or more
<b>What Are You Looking To Write About?</b>	Wildflower gardens, English gardens, woodsy gardens, veggie gardens

And the correspondence that followed, however, not only caught me with surprise, it opened a whole new publishing niche for my writing. And, a means to share some of my passions.

*Hey Emily-Jane,*

*Thanks for your application to write for Nifty Homestead!*

**Your Topics:**

*All of the topics you mentioned are on track. We don't always approve broader topics like these with writers we're working with for the first time, but I'd be willing to try out Wildflower Gardens, English Gardens, or Woodsy Gardens. If you have photos of your own that you're able to share that would*

*probably help, but we may be able to supplement from a few Creative Commons sources.*

*Beyond those posts, we're usually able to approve more specific titles more quickly. These past community submissions are good examples:*

[\*Companion Plants for Tomatoes\*](#)

[\*Growing Hops\*](#)

[\*Best Chicken Breeds For The City\*](#)

[\*How To Make Goat Cheese\*](#)

***Payments / Promotion / Frequency:***

*We typically pay \$50 for occasional contributions, which we pay after your submission is approved. Please let us know the best Paypal email address to send payment to when you submit your post.*

*We're currently accepting up to 1 submission per month per writer.*

### **How To Submit Your Post:**

*Once we have an approved topic, you can submit your post at <https://www.niftyhomestead.com/write-for-us/submissions/> (password protected page - the password is notarealpassword). Once you hit submit we'll review, make any edits (or send over requests if we need you to make those edits), and then schedule for publishing. We do our best to alert you when the post will go live so that you can share on your social media profiles or your website.*

*Please read through our [Writer's Guidelines](#) before submitting. The top 2 reasons we reject posts are (1) poor writing and (2) failure to write for our audience. If you follow the writer's guidelines you should be able to avoid both.*

*Posts are typically published as quickly as 1 week or as long as 1 month from submission depending on how busy we are. If you haven't heard back within 3-4 week days then please feel free to check in with us.*

*Thanks - please let me know if you have any questions!*

I submitted my first story on English gardens. And the bond was made. I was in. I had a new market for my work and a regular publication schedule.

*Hi Emily -- Thanks for that submission -- just wanted to let you know it will publish on Monday, July 3. If you have any friends/family you want to share it with over social networks, we'd love that!*

*We'd also love to hear any more submission ideas you have -- specific challenges (or triumphs) you've had as you've created and maintained your garden? Specific plants and how they've worked out for you? Those are just a couple of ideas that come to mind.*

The correspondence continued, back and forth, the rapport between author and publisher had been established.

*Hello - That's good to know. I'll certainly share the post. Here's another post you might be interested in. Thanks again.*

*Emily-Jane*

## THE BRAMBLE INVASION

By

*Emily-Jane Hills Orford*

*What is a bramble? It's that spikey, thorny annoyance that scratches your arms, or grabs your pant legs unexpectedly when you're trying to weed your garden, or take a walk through the woods. It's prickly, invasive and it quickly takes root anywhere, making it almost impossible to eradicate. Impossible? Well almost. It was certainly a battle I was not willing to lose.*

*Ugh! They were everywhere! I slowly ventured into the woodsy section of our one-acre property and let out a deep-throated groan. Oh no! Where do I start? We had moved in back in the spring. The summer had been a shambles for gardening as we just tried to settle into the new home and endure the lengthy drought that hit our area. I wanted something more for my yard, though. So, once the temperatures started to drop and the bugs decided to leave (a really important issue for someone living near woods and*



*swamps and we lived surrounded by both), it was time to take action; time to prepare the land for the following spring. ...*

With some advice from the editor, I was onto my second piece:

*Hi Emily -- This is good -- Our audience is pretty practical and solution-oriented, so if you could include a paragraph about what tools you used, specifically, and what your process was?*

*Maybe somewhere in this section?*

*But brambles! They were so invasive. Nothing to do, really, except start digging and start reclaiming the land. I made sure I always dressed in long pants, tall boots and a long sleeved shirt or pullover and, of course, I wore gloves.*

*Irregardless, I always ended up with scratch marks on my arms and legs to attest to my daily activity.*

*I raked and dug and pulled up bramble after bramble after bramble, adding it to my growing garden waste pile, the stuff*

*that I couldn't and wouldn't recycle. It was better burned. Total elimination. At least, that was the plan.*

*And, if you're able to do that, if you could please submit it through the same form you did last time (when you do that, it auto-generates a bunch of info and tasks that help us publish it faster). ...*

*If you're able to do those two things, this should work for us!*

I still have my work cut out for me. I may have landed a lucrative publisher, but I had to do the work and deliver the product in a timely manner. And, considering the fact that gardening, though my passion, was not my area of expertise, I had to do the research as well. *Not a problem*, I told myself. *It'll be fun. And I can weave in my other passions with my garden stories.*

It is fun and rewarding, too. In just half a year, I have published a couple of dozen stories on Insteading, with more in the works. I may not be bringing in the big bucks, but I am writing, publishing and getting paid. I am being recognized and, with this publisher appreciating my work, I have already landed a big writing gig with

a big-name glossy print magazine, with the hopes of more to come. It's a start.

**Emily-Jane Hills Orford** is a published food writer, gardening blogger, novelist and writer of creative nonfiction books and stories. She has received numerous awards for her writing. Her passion for Scottish history shines through in her latest novel, "Queen Mary's Daughter" (2018: Clean Reads Publishing). Perhaps not the 'write what you know' that started her writing career, but certainly the passion that allowed it to evolve. For more information on the author, check out her website at: <http://emilyjanebooks.ca> or connect with her on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn. She also has a blog: <http://beyondtheordinaryincanadianstories.blogspot.ca/>

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## Analysis

This case study starts by talking about rejection. Not surprisingly, Emily-Jane was expecting rejection. Why? Because that is a normal part of the process for getting freelance writing jobs. This should be emphasized: if you're not used to rejection, then you're probably not earning as much as you could with your freelance writing career. From this case study, it is clear that Emily-Jane is used to submitting pitches, querying potential publishers, and

getting rejected. And that means she is doing something right. The conversation between her and the publisher that follows is also a normal part of the process. One thing to keep in mind: Once you've been published by a blog, it is almost always worth sending them more ideas, even if they don't ask for them. You've already started the relationship with them, and they know you as a writer, so they are more likely to give your queries consideration.

### *Questions & Exercises*

- Is it better to get a direct rejection, or to get no response at all? Why?
- How many publishers can you imagine contacting per week?
- How does expecting rejection change how you think about the process of getting published?
- Exercise: Send a pitch to a publisher with the explicit goal of getting rejected.

# How I Started Writing Five Articles a Month for *Dogster* Online

***By Stephanie Osmanski***

When I decided to quit my full-time job in an office in New York City and freelance full-time instead, I had worked for two big digital publishing companies and interned for three. I had the promise of a bare minimum of \$1,000 per month, thanks to a contract with the entertainment division of the first digital publishing company I ever worked for. It was enough to get by but that's about it. Everything else I was doing at the time was abysmal: \$30 here, \$20 for a slideshow, one \$200-per-month contract that required me to write four articles a month.

I knew that in order to take my freelancing career to the next level, I couldn't continue to rely on the contacts I already had (nor could I rely on these small, just-getting-started bites). It wouldn't be enough—my freelancing career would not grow and my income

would stay the same. Instead, I had to expand my contact list by making an effort to establish new contacts. So I began cold-emailing brands I admired that I thought aligned with the kind of work I wanted to do.

Perusing Ed2010.com, I noticed *Dogster* and *Catster Magazine* were looking to hire an intern. Now, with five years' work in writing and building editorial content and social media marketing under my belt, I was overqualified for an intern position. But I saw it as an in. I cold-emailed the contact listed on the site and explained to her that although she was looking for an intern, a criteria I did not fit, I would appreciate keeping in touch should any freelance writer positions crop up.

Below is the original pitch I sent:

*I'm writing because I am a huge fan of Dogster, saw that you were hiring on Ed2010.com, and believe I could be a valuable freelance contributor to your team! I live in New York with my 15-month-old pomsky, Koda. We are big fans of Dogster,*

*holistic dog care, dog park-ing it up, and more. I'm a very hands-on dog mama. I make her treats from scratch and enjoy sharing our travels and other dog mama tips on my blog and to our Instagram followers. If Dogster has any openings or opportunities for freelance writers, I would love to be considered. I saw that you're currently hiring an intern but as I'm in grad school, I'm not sure that's a position that would work for me. I'd be more interested in contributing print and online content remotely, if possible.*

Then I launched a bit into my professional background regarding education and editorial experience. To prove my passion and fit for their site, I added one more cheeky line for good measure: “I’ve also attached a pic of Koda because, you know: dog mom. Thanks for your time and consideration.”

I then proceeded to include an adorable photo (I know, I know—I’m biased) of my dog and I’m pretty sure it’s the cute snapshot that sealed the deal. (I kid, I kid; hopefully my background,

education, and unbridled enthusiasm contributed, too). But eventually, I was hired.

An editor from *Dogster* got back to me super quickly explaining that yes, *Dogster* is always looking for freelancers to contribute online. Next, the editor talked logistics: pay rate, word count, etc. *Dogster* pays \$75 per post (please note that this is their online rate; I am unsure what they pay for print contributions) for about 500-800 words. All articles for *Dogster* are to consult at least one “expert” source for quotes (I usually reach out to veterinarians exclusively, unless I’m writing about something that is not medical-related). Additionally, the editor also let me know that they work with editorial content two ways. While they are happy to assign articles, editors are also open to receiving and accepting pitches.

Oh, and she even opened with: “Koda is so cute!”

I responded to the *Dogster* editor, letting her know the workload I was able to take on, and encouraged her to send over any pitches



she may have for me. This email exchange had occurred toward the end of April, so April assignments had already been doled out. By May, I had an email in my inbox from the *Dogster* editor: Would I be willing to take on one article for May? It would be \$75 for anywhere from 500-800 words.

Of course, I graciously and enthusiastically accepted. Ever since adopting my puppy, I've wanted to make a contribution to the pet wellness community, ideally by aligning my love for pups and ability to write. Up until I booked this gig, I was doing so just on my blog, but now, with a widespread and well-respected platform like *Dogster*, I was beyond thrilled to write about something (and share something) I'm passionate about.

For the month of May, I was assigned that first article. Because writing within the pet wellness sphere was new to me and I didn't have many veterinarian contacts established (except Koda's!), I took it upon myself to make some contacts by befriending vets on social media. To do this, I began following the #veterinarian hashtag and reaching out to vets based in the US. If I learned one thing from writing for *Dogster*, it's that professionals in their field want to establish relationships with journalists. Especially veterinarians!

Many of the vets I reached out to were so wonderfully accommodating and game to do an interview whether over the phone or via email. For my first initial article, I cited several veterinarians as “experts” because so many of the ones I direct messaged on Instagram were interested in participating.

By the time June assignments rolled around, *Dogster* offered me two. I went through the same process of going through my newly-established veterinarian contacts and wrote both of the articles that month for a total of \$125.

In July, I took on three assignments. I was happy with the steady increase of monthly work by July, but then came the point when I knew I was doing something right. My contact at *Dogster* reached out to me in the middle of the month even though my three assignments were already completed and handed-in. They needed an article rush-updated; an already existing online piece contained information that needed to be brought up to date to suit the most recent medical perspective. For this piece, I would share a byline with the original author, add a total of 2-4 paragraphs reflecting the new information, and would be paid \$50. In July, I made \$275.

When it was time for August assignments, I agreed to take on four articles. With articles at \$75 a pop, that means I took home \$300 from *Dogster* for the month of August. Additionally, an editor

from *Dogster*'s sister website *Whole Dog Journal* reached out to me. I ended up writing an article for *Whole Dog Journal* too, also for \$75. That puts me at \$375 for the month of August.

Considering this is a gig I only nabbed a few months ago—that first month totaling out to \$75—I am happy with where I'm at now. In the four months since I first cold-emailed *Dogster*, I have had close to 10 articles published and I nabbed a separate contract with another pet-oriented site, *Whole Dog Journal*. The work is exciting, engaging, and always keeps me on my toes, especially because it strikes a personal chord with me as Koda's owner (cough, mom). Through this experience I learned to never underestimate the power of an enthusiastic cold-email and I also saw the value of establishing quality connections and doing good work play out. Because of the quality, thought-out work I was producing for *Dogster*, my editor thought highly enough of my work to recommend me to a colleague. As a freelance writer always looking to extend her contact list, that is by far the greatest reward.

Stephanie Osmanski is a freelance writer and brand consultant (@stephosmanski) who specializes in writing health and wellness content, covering everything from eating healthfully to zero waste in the home. She has written for Seventeen, Life & Style, In Touch Weekly,

Darling Magazine, and more. You can learn more about her at her [website](#).

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## Analysis

I hope by this point in the book, you're beginning to get a clear idea of how to land a writing gig. As I said before, the process is simple: Find a publisher and send them a pitch.

One thing stands out in her pitch – and answers a question many writers have. How do you make it clear that you are expecting payment? In this pitch, she made it clear by identifying as a freelance writer. A simple solution.

## *Questions & Exercises*

- Do you think the conversational style of her pitch helped Stephanie land the gig? Why or why not?
- Exercise: Imagine you just got an email from a publisher, accepting your pitch. Write a follow-up email that is both concise, but also starts a conversation that could possibly lead to future work.



## Choose Your Specialty, Maximize Your Income

What if you want to earn a full time living as a freelance writer? Many writers, when confronted with the need to make a living, find themselves facing a wall of low-paying work from content mills and job boards such as Upwork. They see competition from writers in low-income countries – competitors who post very low bids for jobs that aren't even appealing.

For writers who want to earn good money the question becomes this: How do you stand out in a crowd full of eager writers from around the world?

The answer that Megan Headley found was specialization. She chose to focus her efforts on a specific niche that had high-paying opportunities, as well as limited competition.

Hana Larock made a similar choice. She specialized. And, in doing so, earned the ability to negotiate higher pay.

But what if you don't want to just write specific technical documents? The last case study in this section shows you how one writer chose a relatively broad niche — the outdoors industry — and leveraged her specialization to the point where opportunities

were coming to her. Something that would have been much more difficult without choosing a specialty.

# How I Launched My Freelance Writing Career With a \$60/Hour Blogging Job

***By Megan Headley***

Three letters leapt out at me when I read the job ad posted on the weekly newsletter of writing opportunities, and it was an acronym I hoped would mean little to other writers perusing the listings: BIM.

To me, BIM meant building information modeling, a new type of technology taking over the architecture industry. Several years earlier, I had studied the new technology closely to make sense of it and how it might someday change the landscape for my audience of construction subcontractors. The resulting article was in fact co-written with the magazine editor I assisted at that time. In the grand scheme of things, it was a small piece in a writing portfolio I was now looking to push in new directions.

After eight years of writing for a niche B2B publisher focused on subcontractors in manufacturing and construction, I had recently set out to pursue freelance writing fulltime. I was ready to learn new things and to expand my voice to cover fresh topics.



Unfortunately, it didn't take long as a freelancer to realize I didn't know exactly how to make the leap from my niche construction knowledge to those broader topics I was hungry to tackle.

When I saw that ad, seeking a technical writer preferably with familiarity with BIM, I was still struggling to find my place as a freelancer. I was paying bills from jobs proofreading resumes and writing product descriptions about air-conditioning systems, among other one-off opportunities for which I was regularly scrambling. This was the first inkling I had that I could leverage my construction knowledge as the foundation of a fruitful career.

### **A Focus on Specifics**

I was far from a BIM expert, but I was hoping that my basic understanding of the term might get me a foot in the door with this client. I crafted a brief cover letter to the hiring manager that emphasized and linked to the single article I had co-written three years earlier. I explained my expertise in writing for niche construction audiences and highlighted that my previous experience demanded expertise translating technical jargon into material that was easily accessible by entry-level professionals while also proving useful to company CEOs. I sent the cover letter out with my resume and crossed my fingers.

Barely a week had gone by before I received an email reply asking to schedule a time to talk via Skype. I hurriedly set up a Skype account under my professional email and nervously prepared for the discussion by studying up on BIM basics.

As it turns out, the basics were more than enough. The interview was with the owner of a boutique marketing firm who had landed a major international client. Her Japan-based client wanted help ghostwriting a blog that focused on how the company's software offering stood poised to transform the architecture and construction industries. The woman with whom I spoke knew how to create a solid marketing plan, but was fuzzy on the details of how to use BIM tools to improve construction project scheduling and reduce contractor errors.

I tried to ignore the fact that I was fuzzy on some of those details as well, and focused on explaining my understanding of how this tool was being used in the construction industry.

We agreed on a trial blog, and I was thrilled to find out that the client wanted to provide me with a recorded interview from which I was to craft the blog. It seemed too good to be true that all of the information would be provided, and all I had to do was untangle the pieces of the story. Unweaving jargon to tell a story was one area where I knew I excelled.

As luck would have it, my client and her contact in Japan agreed with me that the case study I produced exceeded their expectations. At a rate of \$60/hour, I agreed to serve as technical consultant for future blogs, white papers and the occasional article. The education I would gain in producing those pieces ultimately served as the stepping stone for a writing career focused on the architecture, engineering and construction industries—and beyond.

### **The Value of a Good Keyword**

If I had ignored my initial instinct to doubt myself—to believe that my paltry knowledge of BIM wouldn't warrant an interview—I'd have missed a major opportunity. Ultimately, I needed only a passing familiarity with BIM because I gained greater understanding of the software in listening to the source material I was provided with. Most of these articles actually focused more broadly on challenges in the construction industry, and changing expectations from building owners and developers. The technical knowledge I needed, I gained largely on the job.

This experience also taught me to focus on specific keywords as I targeted future jobs. When I peruse ads seeking writers, I tend to ignore any ad that seeks someone with an eye for detail and a passion for writing. After all, isn't that all of us? I focus instead on highly specific keywords that match a sample from my portfolio,

no matter how briefly I covered that specific topic. Like a trail of breadcrumbs, these keywords have led me from writing about BIM to writing about BIM for hospital operations to writing about quality of care in hospitals, and a plethora of other trails in similar fashion.

It's been four years since I responded to this wanted ad, and the company remains one of my favorite clients with which to work. The work is engaging, the pay has continued to rise, and I've learned more than I'd ever have imagined from listening in on these interviews with leading architectural firms from around the world. But more than that, this job helped me learn how to better market myself. The niche knowledge I've gained in 14 years of writing is incredibly valuable, and I have this work in my portfolio to remind me of just that fact.

Megan Headley is the owner of ClearStory Publications LLC, and a freelance writer based in Fredericksburg, Va. She has written about every aspect of the built environment for more than a decade. Megan can be reached via [clearstorypublications.com](http://clearstorypublications.com).

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## Analysis

Many writers often ask what types of writing should be included in their portfolio. This case study makes it clear that the portfolio should be closely related to the type of writing you're pursuing. It serves to reinforce your portfolio, adding an additional layer of credibility. Many writers also ask about their level of expertise on a topic. Megan demonstrates that you don't need to be a true expert; the skill that let her succeed was the ability to translate technical jargon for a non-technical audience. This is often the value a writer provides. Approaching the writing from a "beginner's mindset" can, in fact, make this an easier task.

## Questions & Exercises:

- Exercise: List all of your hobbies, interests, training, and specialized areas of knowledge – even if they're not obvious.
- Is a portfolio necessary, in order to prove your ability to write about a topic? Why or why not?

# How I Negotiated \$700 for Ghost Writing 6 Short Blog Posts

***By Hannah Larock***

I've been a writer for five years now, and although I got my start in the travel industry, I learned that sometimes you need to broaden your horizons in order to increase the amount of money in your bank account. While travel writers have certainly found ways to earn more, I found that getting experience in trending fields was the way to go.

This is how I ended up writing about technology, cybersecurity, IT, cloud infrastructure, and everything in between. Because there are so many companies in this industry -- companies that generally have a lot of money -- I knew I'd have more leverage as I got more experience. Slowly but surely, I started to work my way up in the industry, having references and samples to showcase my work.

Eventually, I also had negotiating power, and I was able to negotiate \$700 for 6 one-page articles.

And, you can, too, if you follow some of this advice:

## **I Got Into an Industry with Many Sub-Categories**

My experience has always been in writing -- not IT. Of course, this goes both ways, as you won't find too many software developers who would say content writing is their forte, either. But, like with anything, the more you're exposed to it, the better you can understand it. This is what happened for me. I had one client who had a marketing automation business, and after I began writing for him, he introduced me to some of his friends who were also in need of a content writer.

Little by little, I wrote diverse blog articles for a managed service provider. Then, that same original client, because he worked in a B2B company, knew other clients that needed similar work. Soon enough, I was covering a wide range of topics, which all seemed to fall beneath this IT umbrella in some way. This gave me a chance to have samples on all kinds of topics, which meant I could pitch to companies and websites far and wide.

## **I Keep My Work and My Expertise Organized**

When you start to write on so many different topics, it's important to keep a list of what you know. That list started to grow -- SaaS, Cloud Computing, Compliance, Artificial Intelligence, Biometrics, Marketing Automation Software, etc. I was able to target

companies who focused on just one of these topics, or a combination of several of them.

In addition to a list, I kept every article I've ever written organized and displayed on my website. This proved to be one of the easiest and most reliable ways to get jobs. Everything the potential client needed to see was there in a click of a button. Because of this, I also started to refuse writing unpaid sample articles.

### **I Made Meaningful Connections**

Even though the internet may have changed the way we look for jobs, it's still very true that it's "*who you know.*" By getting to know other writers as well as maintaining strong relationships with previous clients, I always had opportunities available. I wasn't afraid to reach out to others to ask for help or information on job opportunities. When I saw a job posting, call for pitches, or a person looking for help with writing articles for their company, I jumped on it right away. I made sure to emphasize my expertise in those areas that I had on my list, and direct the hiring person to my site.

Over time, I went from getting paid \$20 an article to at least \$50. A lot of this was merely due to supply and demand. I had many clients with a lot of work they needed done, so if they wanted me



to prioritize their work, they'd have to pay me more. Most of the time, this worked, and for clients who could no longer afford me, I was happy to move on. I knew that my time was valuable, and that I could charge more due to my experience and wide range of knowledge on very specific topics.

### **I Wasn't Afraid to Shoot High**

As a writer, it's so important to know what you're worth. When I first started out, I would take any job (even unpaid jobs) to gain experience. This is necessary for a beginner in any line of work, but eventually, it's time to recognize that what you're offering has a price tag. Sometimes, you'll need to bite the bullet and take a job for less in order to pay the bills. But, by being confident in what you're charging, you'll lead the client to trust that you know what you're doing. Think about it -- would you rather go with the person charging \$100 or \$5? Depending on what it is, your first reaction will be that \$5 seems too good to be true, and you'd rather go with better quality.

Too many writers are afraid to ask for more, whereas I felt that I had nothing to lose.

At a certain point, I became firm. I had a starting price of \$75 for a very standard 500-800 word article. Since most clients in this

industry want more text than that, it was easy for me to charge at least \$100. Even that was great money for me, so if they would offer me a bit less, I was content.

So, when I came across a company looking to contract writers in the areas of my personal expertise, I knew that the ball was in my court. There were factors involved that assured me I could ask this company for more and have those terms met. It was a ghostwriting job. It was outsourced, so I knew the company was taking a commission. There was a lot of research involved. It was for a top-name company in the industry known as Okta, who had a lot of money (Obama is going to be speaking at one of their events!) On the other side, I had the experience, the writing skills, the quick turnaround rate, as well as the SEO proficiency.

While it may seem bold to express your knowledge about these things, it prevents the client from underpaying you or avoiding transparency. When the conversations started, I immediately asked for \$150 per article.

They had asked for my rates; and this is what I sent them in response:

| *Hey [EDITOR],*

*Same to you! So, for this kind of job I generally charge \$150 per article. These articles would include SEO strategies like keywords, headlines, subtitles, attractive formatting, and images if the client so chooses. I will also make sure to have a quick turnaround with these articles.*

*As a published writer who has covered countless niches over the years, I believe that my rate is quite competitive compared to other writers who have similar experience.*

*So, with that in mind, if I write six articles a month, this would come out to \$900, of course. But, if that number is an absolute no-can-do, then just let me know and we can discuss what you had in mind. How do you normally send payment?*

*Just two questions:*

*1) Do you have any testimonials from other writers that have worked with Quietly? If so, that'd be great!*

*2) Would I receive a byline on these articles or are they all essentially ghostwriting jobs?*

*Hope to hear from you soon,*

*Hana*

Note that I was clear about my desired rate. I was also clear that I was easy to work with; and strongly implied that I expected them to be easy to work with as well.

As a contracting company, Quiet.ly told me they usually pay \$100 an article, but that they might have some "wiggle room." They also complimented the testimonials on my website, and asked for a writing sample.

Shortly after, they offered me \$700 for six articles total, which was an excellent deal for me.

After the first round of articles, I continued to do some more jobs for this company. This experience taught me that I could continue asking for more money without being afraid. It's generally easy to tell which companies are able to afford you, and which ones aren't.

Be bold. Be brave. Let yourself get what you're worth, because you deserve it! Writing is a job just like any other, and should be

treated as such. The more that writers demand higher pay, the more respect we'll earn in this industry.

**Hannah Larock:** I have been a content writer for the last five years and I enjoy covering a wide array of topics, whether it be for clients with small businesses or online magazines with large followings. My website is [www.hanalarockwriting.com](http://www.hanalarockwriting.com) if you'd like to see some of my work.

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## Analysis

Jacob Jans: In Jason Hewett's earlier example, we learned that a portfolio is not necessary, in order to get a paid writing job. You won't need a published writing sample. A good pitch and a good idea is often all you need to secure the job. However, a good pitch clearly demonstrates credibility; the person reading the pitch should quickly get the sense that the author is capable of doing the work. A portfolio is a way to reinforce your credibility. Hana focused on building a portfolio that matched her chosen niche. By showing samples of writing closely related to the types of writing she was proposing, she gained a powerful tool.

She also chose a niche that had potential for high-paying work, with many subniches available. While staying within the broad

niche, she built her portfolio to showcase work in many subniches. Choosing a relatively broad niche made it easier to build a portfolio of relevant examples; however, with the many subniches, she was able to slowly build an even more useful portfolio, by further demonstrating more and more specialized knowledge.

### *Questions and Exercises*

- Question: Should you “shoot high” with payment for your first gig, or wait until you have more experience. Why or why not?
- Exercise: Email, or mail, a note to someone you’ve worked with in the past, with the goal of nurturing the relationship, whether or not you worked for them as a writer. Send them a thank you note, simply check in with them, or even send them a small gift. If you have a writer’s website, be sure to insert a link to it in your “email signature.” If you don’t, at least include “freelance writer” in your email signature.
- Exercise: Analyze the income potential for one of your areas of knowledge or expertise. How many publications, potential clients, or general opportunities can you find? What payment rates can you expect? How many other writers are vying for the same types of writing jobs in this area?



## How I Found a \$150 Writing Gig Via Social Media

***By Morgan Garcia***

Social media has become one of the main ways that people earn a living these days. Whether it's through advertising, product placements, influencer marketing, writing, etc. Social media is a great place to find opportunities to work with others and actually get paid.

The main thing about social media that we need to keep in mind is that you need to make yourself known. Whether it's through a specific niche or just by being a freelance writer or whatever the case may be, you need to make yourself known as an expert in your field. The more you can show off your expertise, the more you'll be recognized and eventually, someone might offer you a gig.

I've been an outdoor enthusiast for a long time. I'm also a writer. I have a blog of my own and I also vlog. Over the past several years I've built up my brand to the point where I am becoming an influencer in my field.



I follow all of the major companies within the outdoors industry on social media. I interact with them outside of just liking their content; I leave relevant comment on posts, share their posts, etc. I also tag them in posts that I feel are relevant to them in the hopes of getting a re-post or maybe just a like on my photo or whatever. The point is, I am not just trying to share great content, but also trying to be recognized by the big companies by showing them that I'm a relevant influencer.

It's worked quite well. I have gained the attention of many well respected brands and have worked with them on various non-writing projects. One publisher in particular recently hired me to work with them to write monthly articles for their website.

Our interactions happened mainly through Instagram. The first couple of interactions were from them asking permission to share a couple photos of mine, of course I said yes. A couple months later, they sent me a DM:

| *"Hey. Do you do any freelance writing?"*

Again, I said yes. They asked for samples of past work so I sent them an email with links to my website and articles from other websites that I had written for within the outdoor industry.

They replied with:

*“These examples are so impressive. Well done. I can see that you understand how to communicate in the digital world, and I suspected as much from following your interesting and informative Instagram feed.”*

That reply came in June of 2017. It wasn't until November of 2017 that I was offered a contract to write for their website. Even though it seemed like a “slow” process, that's how freelance writing can go sometimes; everything needs to be timed perfectly.

Now I get paid \$150 a month to write one article per month for their website.

From this has come many other discussions about writing even more for their website. Once you get your foot in the door, many more opportunities can arise. I write for a well-respected publication and not only is my brand being recognized even more so because of my connection with them, but so is the opportunity to write for other outdoor industry publications.

Do opportunities arise like this every single day? No. But finding opportunities like this through social media shouldn't be ignored.

What I have learned from this experience is that I shouldn't wait for others to contact me. As a freelance writer we're always writing pitches and queries and by proving ourselves through social media, we actually have a bit of an upper hand.

After you've spent some time interacting with their social media profiles, find their website and see if they're accepting submissions from freelance writers. If they are, send them a pitch and also mention your social media profiles. It couldn't hurt, maybe they'll recognize you from your amazing comments and sharing their content. You never know.

Even if you don't get the opportunity to work with them right away, it may just not be the right time to add you to their editorial calendar. Keep being top-of-mind by liking, commenting and sharing their content. One day, they may approach you.

If you dedicate yourself to becoming an influencer in your field and interacting with publications that you'd like to work with, you may one day be writing for them all because of social media.

Morgan resides in Texas with her husband, 20 month old daughter and two dogs on their little homestead. She is a freelance writer for the outdoor industry, she also teaches people how to be prepared for emergencies and disasters

and everyday life. Morgan's writing and preparedness tips can be found at: <http://roquepreparedness.com>

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## Analysis

Morgan demonstrates a strategy for building relationships with potential clients – a strategy that was only possible because of her focus on a specific niche. Even though her niche is relatively broad (outdoors), she was able to find an audience of potential clients and connections, and build relationships with those companies and individuals.

This gets to a more specific point about choosing a niche. Many people assume a niche is a specific topic. In fact, a “niche” is better thought of in terms of potential opportunities. Instead of just asking what type of writing you can do, you should also be asking who could publish your writing. While Morgan’s niche is the “outdoors”, she focused more specifically on companies that develop products for outdoor sports. This gave her social media efforts focus, and ultimately led to profitable relationships.

## *Questions & Exercises*

- Exercise: Choose a niche you may want to specialize in. Make a list of ways you can establish your credibility in that niche. Possibilities include getting a published article with a byline, public speaking on the topic, building an authoritative blog, previous professional experience, etc.
- Think about the idea of “specialization” for a moment. How does this concept change when you think about the types of publishers/clients you specialize in working for, versus the subject that you specialize in? For example, outdoor sports versus regional magazines that cover local hiking opportunities. Or, another example: theoretical physics, versus newspapers that cover scientific research.

# How I Earn \$1 a Word as a Travel Writer

*By Elen Turner*

While I've been traveling my whole life and writing almost as long, it has only been in the last few years that I have started to make money as a 'travel writer'. Copywriting for tour companies and hotels, writing itineraries, branded content for travel-related companies, literary travel essays, memoir-style pieces, listicles, travel advice... if it's travel-related, I've written it.

I'm not exactly what you'd call a 'seasoned pro' of the travel writing world, in that I haven't been doing this very long, I haven't written any major guidebooks, and I'm not on the road full-time. But, I have been paid that magic number--\$1 per word--for my work. Not all of my work by any means, but enough to know that well-paying jobs are out there for writers with the right skills, experience and networking prowess. Here's how I got there.

## **First, I identified my niche...**

While I've traveled all over the world (40 countries) and have written about destinations from North America to Europe to East Asia, I have a more specific niche. I divide my time between Nepal

and New Zealand, so these two places are where I focus my travel writing energy.

It's somewhat of a misconception that travel writers spend their whole lives jet-setting around the world to new destinations. A few operate that way, but they're the definite minority. Most travel writers focus on places a bit closer to home, wherever that may be. While choosing a tiny niche can be limiting (both Nepal and New Zealand are small countries), it has also put me in an excellent position to claim all the work that comes along on these places.

Focusing on a niche near where you live is not only a way to develop expertise (because you're bound to know more about a place that you're close to than one you only visit for a week)--it's also cheaper. Most writers can't afford to be traveling internationally all the time, and press trips that cover expenses are not that easy for beginner writers to get in on. Hence the importance of specializing in a convenient region if you want to make any money from your travel writing.

### **...and set up a website**

I have an author website, which started off life more as a blog while I was honing my niche. After a while I decided I didn't want to be a blogger per se. This was largely because I didn't want to be

giving away all of my good ideas and advice for free on my blog! I wanted other publications to pay me for my work. It's true that some bloggers make money from their blogs, but they tend to be all-round business people who are good at everything from social media to photography. I was really only interested in writing.

All writers should have a website that showcases their niche and their work. I can't stress that enough. *All writers should have a website that showcases their niche and their work.*

Once I'd identified my niche, had a few articles published with low-paying publications and set up a blog/website, word seemed to get out that I was a travel writing professional. I started to get offers of work through my website. *Legitimate* offers of work, with clients all over the world. Some have been ongoing, others one-off jobs, but all (that I have accepted) have been interesting and worthwhile.

But none of them have offered me \$1 per word (yet)....

### **The step up to \$0.50 per word**

After I'd been at it for a couple of years, a large travel insurance company who were growing their travel information pages put out a call across social media for Nepal specialists to write content for their site. As well as seeing this call myself and deciding to apply,



at least half a dozen friends and acquaintances forwarded it to me, as they knew of my specialization.

I applied and was (one of several) people selected to do that work. The editor I worked with acknowledged that I was an expert on travel in Nepal. This probably wouldn't have happened if I'd tried to stay broad in my career as a travel writer, rather than choose a niche.

The short articles I wrote for them paid 50 cents (Australian) per word, which was the highest per-word fee I'd received for any writing at that time. I made around AU\$2000 for that job. Further, when opportunities arose to write further guides to India and New Zealand a few months later, I was already on the editor's radar and I picked up more work on those projects.

This was awesome, but it wasn't yet \$1 per word. So how did I hit that next target?

### **Hitting \$1 per word**

Earning \$1 per word certainly isn't the highest fee in the travel writing world—I've heard rumors of \$1.50-2 per word, but have yet to see them. \$1 per word is a figure that newer writers are thrilled to receive, and veteran writers will comfortably accept. It's a very respectable rate.

I broke through this barrier with a short 250-word piece on travel in New Zealand for an Australian airline magazine (so, you guessed it, I was paid AU\$250). Airline magazines tend to pay very well, so most travel writers aim to be published in them. They can, however, be pretty hard nuts to crack. They have high standards, very specific requirements, and plenty of people vying to write for them.

There's a travel media website that many travel writers and industry professionals sign up to, called TravMedia. It's sort of like LinkedIn for travel media people; it sends out bulletins once a day, and alerts when editors post calls for pitches. I had heard mixed things about its usefulness, but as it's easy to sign up and be sent updates, I thought it would be worth sticking with.

It was. My \$1 per word assignment came from answering a call relating to a very specific topic about travel in New Zealand, which I happened to know about. I responded to the call saying that I had first-hand knowledge of the topic and included links to a selection of my previous articles that were on a similar topic, to show my style and experience.

I can't be certain what my role my travel writing experience played in being commissioned this, as I think having first-hand experience with the topic was more useful. But still, the fact that I could point

to my articles in numerous places must have helped and made me seem more professional.

So far, this has been my only assignment that has paid so well. But as I said, I haven't been in this field all that long, so I'm sure it won't be the last.

### **Summary of tips:**

- Identify a niche, and make sure everyone you know is aware of your niche. You will get so many referrals this way.
- Don't be afraid to write a few pieces for a low rate when trying to build up your body of work on your niche. But don't do this for long.
- Publish an author website that showcases your best work, lists how potential clients can contact you, and mentions what kind of work you're available for. Not all travel writing is first-person travelogues. Much of it is marketing-related, and these jobs pay the bills.
- Sign up to mailing lists and newsletters, and actually read them. You never know when someone will need a writer with precisely your experience.

- Understand that not all—in fact, not even most—travel writing jobs will pay \$1 per word. And those that do may not add up to very much (mine was a \$250 job). But they do exist, and they are a good goal. Once you’ve hit this, you may feel more confident negotiating for higher rates with new clients. I know I did.

**Elen Turner** is a freelance travel writer and editor who divides her time between Nepal and New Zealand. Read more of her work at [www.elenturner.com](http://www.elenturner.com)

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## Analysis

Elen was able to earn this rate of pay because she had both established her credibility as an author in her niche, and chose a niche that allowed her to stand out. As was clear from her case study, because her friends and family knew her specialty, they were able to send this opportunity to her. If she hadn’t specialized, and simply called herself a “writer”, her friends would not have known to forward the opportunity to her. Choosing a specialty, and learning to effectively communicate that specialty, effectively “branding” yourself, can open doors that wouldn’t otherwise be available to you.

### *Questions & Exercises*

- Exercise: Write a short paragraph that describes the types of clients or publishers you would like to work with. Then write a second paragraph that describes how you would like them to perceive you. What should be the first thing that comes to their mind, when thinking about you and your writing? What else should they think, when they spend more time learning about you?
- What are your income goals? What types of clients and/or publications do you need in order to reach those goals?

## The Life of a Freelance Writer

As you've seen in this book so far, there are many ways to be a writer. We've just begun to scratch the surface, focusing primarily on freelance writing for magazines, websites, and business clients.

Whichever path you end up taking, there will surely be ups and downs, opportunities won and lost.

Angela Brown encountered a tough situation right at the start of her freelancing career. Not only was her grandmother in the hospital, a new freelancing client was rather difficult to work with. Things then went downhill. The client ended up not paying her, *and* plagiarizing her work.

While rare, that kind of thing does happen.

Fortunately, it didn't stop Angela, who now earns \$100 an hour as a writer.

Not every writer is as outgoing as Dana J. Sartell. However, she shows how being comfortable talking about your professional skill as a writer can lead to profitable opportunities in unexpected places.

# How I Turned a Simple Conversation Into a \$1,800 Writing Job

***Dana J. Sartell***

As freelance authors, sometimes we struggle to land new clients, especially if money is tight or new opportunities aren't panning out as planned. Pitching our writing skills, posting resumes online and reaching out to positions available on the internet can be rewarding, but these submissions can be buried with dozens, hundreds or even thousands of other proposals.

Let's see how to promote and sell our valuable writing skills while we're simply going about our everyday lives. It might sound a little weird or even far-fetched, but it can work as long as we have a positive attitude and a friendly demeanor.

## **Cashing In On Consignment**

When a new consignment store opened near our suburban neighborhood, I took this as an opportunity to make a little extra cash on the side. I got all the information I needed from their



website and took in an old writing desk to put up for sale on this shared auction block.

After arriving at the shop, I unexpectedly ran into the owner, complimented her on an attractive website and Facebook page. A light-hearted conversation ensued. “You should blog!” I offered while we were chatting. The owner was very curious about this notion.

### **A Budding Author**

“I’ve always been interested in writing,” the owner replied, “But I don’t know the first thing about blogging.” Lucky for us, we know plenty and first I explained a few basic, but important facts about formatting, how a blog “works” and why, explaining the following:

- Use a brief intro, an interesting “body” about the topic and a short conclusion.
- Typically, a blog post is around 500-800 words, too little and you won’t get your point across, while too much is reserved for more in-depth articles.

- A catchy title grabs a reader's attention and the content should be "scannable" with bold headers and bulleted lists, again just like this one.
- Posting (actually linking) blogs on the shop's Facebook page will build social media followers and move the shop up in search engine rankings.
- Hyperlinks placed inside the blog will grab the attention of Google.
- Putting in a picture or two, especially of merchandise, is important.

Meanwhile, customers needing assistance were fluttering in and out of the store, so I suggested we meet up after hours so I could explain everything in more detail. She happily agreed. I'll expand on the selling points I used during our meeting a little bit later on.

Note that I didn't push for "the sale" during our first encounter. I spent my time sharing my knowledge about blogging -- and proposed another meeting, where we would eventually get down to the nuts and bolts of business.

### **One Thing Leads To Another**

After selling the desk and writing for this local business owner, I stopped by the store to pick up my check. I ran into the owner once again and she mentioned one of her favorite customers who was starting a small business.

“You should blog for her too,” the owner advised and gave me the number of a woman who was launching an all-natural beauty line out of her garage. I was hesitant to contact a complete stranger with a blind business proposal, but the shop owner had already spoken with her about the whole concept, so all I had to do was make a friendly phone call and set up a meeting.

Again, note that I didn't immediately ask the referral for the sale. It is much better to establish the relationship first. By setting up a meeting, they are already making a commitment to move forward; but it's not uncomfortable or salesy. It simply gives us the opportunity to figure out if we're a good match for working together.

### **Gratitude Goes A Long Way**

Sure enough, I hooked up with this rookie entrepreneur and got another paying client in the process. Shortly after these encounters came to fruition, the three of us went out for a celebratory,

“business lunch.” They were both very friendly with the waitress at a small, local restaurant they had highly recommended.

Long story short, I got more leads during this casual lunch: One from the waitress who referred me to her husband, an independent insurance agent, another from the manager of the restaurant suggesting I contact the owner and still another from a patron who overheard our conversations. But let’s deal with the business at hand.

### **Show Me The Money**

Okay, that was a pretty good story, but what was I really able to accomplish from those first two encounters when it came down to actual dollars and “sense?” I was actually a little surprised at what I pocketed from my labors. So here’s some practical advice ...

Never sell yourself short. When offering our valuable writing skills, casually or otherwise, charge a fair price for your hard-earned experience, advice and time. We’re delivering quality advertising and marketing techniques at a fraction of what other so-called professionals are receiving for similar results.

So here’s what I charged and was ultimately paid for my services:

### **Consignment Store Invoice:**

\$200 for setting up a basic WordPress account as a blogging platform

\$100 for two introductory blog articles at \$50 each (500-800 words each)

\$100 marketing/consultant fee the owner insisted on paying for my time and advice

### **Cosmetic Invoice (very similar):**

\$100 marketing/consultant fee - apparently I set a precedent

\$200 for setting up another basic WordPress account

\$100 for two introductory blog articles at \$50 each (again 500-800 words)

I also constructed a simple, “rush,” website for the cosmetic client on one of those free web hosting sites over the course of a weekend. Honestly, it only took me the better part of a day to complete, but I still made another \$1,000, which included writing some website content.

**A BIG BONUS** and both of these businesses paid almost immediately, the latter in cash, along with an accompanying invoice, of course. They happily paid their bills in full and I'm still blogging for them twice a month since they're both busy with their growing businesses.

So, not only did I earn \$1,800 in income during this first week of work, I now have \$200 a month in recurring income by writing blog posts for these clients. That adds up to \$2,400 a year, which is a very nice addition to my business.

### **Turning It Around In A Conversation**

As freelance authors, often we're told exactly what to write about, how to complete a contracted piece, geared towards a specific target audience, how to research appropriate material and the manner in which we'll deliver this task. Turn it around, and we're sharing these learned concepts with a potential paying client ... only in reverse.

Think of it this way, we have the ability to offer our writing skills, SEO knowledge and expertise to neighborhood businesses during impromptu conversations. These are examples of some simple ways to land paying clients in a casual and friendly manner.

Sometimes I've done the same with people I meet at parties, around the neighborhood, even at the grocery store.

"I'm a freelance, online author," the conversation often begins and then they wonder how that works, "Mostly I write blogs to help companies grow their businesses online ..." Again, I'll expand more on these topics in the next section.

### **Sales, Tips & Tricks**

You may encounter some resistance, confusion or outright opposition when pitching a blog. At times, people are disillusioned with the concept of how blogging will benefit them ... what, when, where, why and how to post this type of content.

This is where we chime in with our working knowledge as experienced, professional authors in these internet endeavors. While we may know nothing about how they successfully run their business, we know plenty about how we operate ours.

Be honest and admit this type of marketing process may seem a little intimidating, somewhat complex or overwhelming, but it really isn't. Don't overwhelm them with these skills, our knowledge and information all at once, but here's a few key selling points to consider using:

Agree that SEO methods are really complicated and how Google owns, and Facebook controls, much of today's internet activity, especially from a marketing standpoint.

In order to move up search engine rankings, Google uses complex algorithms to recognize and reward businesses that are creating and sharing new, quality content. One of the easiest, least expensive ways to accomplish this task is by blogging and sharing these articles on social media and vice versa.

You might want to mention an old, often recognized, but misunderstood term known as "Black Hat" tactics. In short, shoddy SEO techniques were utilized by "bad guys" who were charging thousands to clients and using garbage content and bad links to artificially inflate a web presence, which only worked short term.

Google caught on to their devious ways, made appropriate changes and now we're now the "good guys," wearing the White Hat and playing by the rules.

This is one of my favorite selling points, even if no one reads said blog in the beginning, the fact you'll be setting one into motion, matters in the short and long term. Again, Google picks up on these practices even if the blog doesn't generate traffic ... yet.



As we know, a blog should contain at least one interior (back to the client source) hyperlink and several exterior (outbound to reputable websites) weblinks. Google picks up on these clickable entries, and pushes them up through their ranking system.

Do your best in getting a business person to understand how posting on social media platforms, linking back to blog posts and vice versa, isn't that complicated or time consuming. Getting started is the biggest stumbling block many businesses face.

Remember business owners are very busy people so don't be too intrusive with all this information during an initial encounter. After you've gained a little interest, tell them you don't want to take up too much of their time, but would love to meet with them over coffee or after hours to expand on these topics just as I did with the consignment shop owner.

**“Intelligence is not the ability to store information, but to know where to find it” - Albert Einstein**

As freelance writers, many of us maintain at least one free blog, social media account, perhaps a website and they're not that difficult to maintain. Although we understand these concepts like second nature, small businesses often don't know where to locate

and implement this type of vital information as Professor Einstein stated.

In closing, remember always be honest and inform potential clients of this extremely important fact. Visible results with search engine rankings, getting more followers on social media and building a blog audience takes time, it doesn't happen overnight. It's not uncommon for this process to take several months and in some cases a year or more to see big results.

But it's worth a small upfront investment, some time, energy and a little bit of effort to achieve long-lasting and lucrative online results. Antiquated and expensive marketing practices like the "yellow pages" are literally dying off with today's consumers ... another valuable selling point!

Dana J. Sartell is a freelance author and content creator who specializes mostly in blogs, articles, website work, social media posts and other online endeavors.

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## Analysis

For many writers, it can seem intimidating to sell your services directly to other people through a conversation. This case study

shows that it doesn't have to be intimidating. In fact, you can get started by simply telling the people you meet that you're a freelance writer. If you can do that, then you're halfway there. Once you start the conversation, it continues by simply educating people about your expertise. If the person is a likely customer, the more you share your knowledge, the more they'll be interested in hiring you. Why? Because you're not only proving your expertise, you're developing a relationship. As Dana learned, the value of a relationship can be so powerful that people will sometimes insist on giving you money you don't even ask for. (That \$100 consulting fee.) If you're interested in learning more about SEO and setting up basic websites, there are many free resources available. [This guide](#) from MOZ is a good place to start.

### *Questions & Exercises*

- What types of local businesses can you imagine writing for?
- Exercise: Tell 5 people this week that you are a freelance writer. See where the conversation leads or doesn't lead.

## How I Find \$500 Writing Gigs via Craigslist

***By Jon Sofen***

I know what you're thinking. Craigslist is a feeding ground for men looking for a casual hookup and consumers seeking a bargain. That is correct, but it's also a place where, if you know what to look for, you can find quality writing clients.

If you've spent more than two minutes sifting through writing gigs on Craigslist, you know there is an abundance of scammers and cheapskates looking for a sucker who will work for free until the client's website becomes the next Facebook, which of course never happens because no serious business owner would hire unpaid contractors.

So, while most writing gigs on Craigslist aren't worth your time, there actually are some hidden gems out there if you're persistent and patient. I know this to be true because I've found a handful of high-paying permanent freelance jobs on Craigslist over the past eight years, along with 10-12 other one-off gigs. And I'm going to show you exactly how you can do the same.

## **Weeding Out the Duds**

Think of searching for a writing job on Craigslist like finding a future spouse on a dating site. Immediately upon viewing a dater's profile, you know if that person is someone you'd be interested in contacting based on his or her pictures, interests, etc. The same can be said of a job posting.

Much like you wouldn't bother messaging someone on Match.com that you find unattractive, uninteresting, or admits to still living at home at age 40, you shouldn't even waste your time responding to job ads that:

- Don't offer pay or pay based on number of article views
- Include a link to a website that directs to Hires.today
- Are so vague that it's unclear what the potential client is seeking
- Require content in an unfamiliar niche

Unfortunately, a majority of the listings will fit into one of the above categories.

## **Finding the Hidden Gems**

The cool thing about Craigslist, for writers, is you can find writing gigs for free that can be done from anywhere in the world. But you must know how to spot the ones that are worth your time.

Living in Las Vegas, there aren't many local writing gig ads, so I search other cities. I mostly look for work in the "gigs" section of major cities such as Los Angeles, Chicago, Dallas, New York, and Miami.

When I need work, I take a quick peak at Craigslist posts each day. It may seem like an arduous task trying to find a hidden gem among the hundreds of fakes. But I rarely spend more than 10-15 minutes per day looking for work, and usually less. Once you get the hang of it, you'll know instantly which ads are useless without batting an eye.

The first sign I've found a potential fit is if the subject line is clear and concise. For example, "Seeking Sports Writer to Produce Daily Blog Posts," would be a header that catches my attention. The subject line clearly indicates the client is hiring a sports blogger, which is right up my alley.

This is only a start, however. Oftentimes, after finding an enticing headline such as the one above, I click on the post only to discover

it's a scam or a cheapskate hoping to find a sucker who will work for free.

## **How I Know When to Respond**

Applying for a writing gig involves sending a resume, creating a cover letter, and finding relevant samples to send the client. That can be time consuming, so I don't waste my valuable time responding to every post. I only apply to jobs that meet the following criteria:

- Topic(s) are interesting and I have relevant writing samples to send the client
- Client put effort into the post
- If budget is listed, it is an acceptable wage
- Post specifically mentions project is for ongoing work or hints that additional work will be available following the completion of the initial project

My very first writing gig was for a funeral planning blog, and I absolutely hated it. I would have rather watched cheesy romantic comedies on repeat. The funeral planning topic interested me about as much as a bad Adam Sandler movie.

I learned quickly that if I find the subject matter boring, I won't put effort into the job, so I thanked my client for the opportunity a few weeks into the project and moved on to something more interesting.

Whether it's on Craigslist, Upwork, or any other freelance job board, I'm always focused on seeking out clients that want a permanent writer. Sure, the occasional side job is nice, but I need consistent work to pay my bills, which is why I mostly seek out clients who make it clear the gig is long-term.

### **How I Respond to Ads**

Applying for a freelance writing gig is similar to applying for a 9-5 job. You need a professional resume and to write each potential client a cover letter that stands out.

Since Craigslist is free to use, the individuals you email will receive dozens, if not hundreds, of responses. Therefore, your email absolutely must stand out, be personalized, and get straight to the point. Don't beat around the bush.

Tell the client, within the first two sentences, why you're sending the email and why you're qualified for the position. Then, detail how your qualifications are pertinent to the job, include some links



to your previous work, and wrap it up by thanking the recipient for their time.

### **There's Something Else I Should Tell You...**

Finding reliable work on Craigslist isn't difficult. But you need to understand there aren't a ton of decent paying gigs out there. You will often go days, even weeks, without finding a single project worth a lick.

So, if you aren't the patient type, I'd suggest using other means to get your writing career rolling. I only get a response to approximately 10 percent of the jobs I apply for and, of those, maybe one in four works out. And, remember, most days I search Craigslist for gigs I don't even respond to any ads. So, you'll be lucky to close one good deal a month.

But that's okay because, if you play your cards right, that will become a long-term gig, and then a month or two later, you'll have additional permanent work.

Craigslist shouldn't be your main source of income. It's a great platform for someone new to writing or struggling to find work elsewhere.

Since 2010, I've found five clients on Craigslist that paid me over \$500 per month for an extended period of time, along with some other short-term gigs. This has supplemented income I earned from Elance (I really miss that job board, by the way), referrals, and elsewhere.

If you have the patience to find a needle in a haystack, Craigslist can, surprisingly, help you launch your writing career.

Jon Sofen is a freelance writer residing in Las Vegas, who has written for numerous blogs and websites. He specializes in gambling, sports, insurance, and travel content. You can visit his listicle blog at [JonSofen.com](http://JonSofen.com)

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## Analysis

One thing is clear from Jon's case study: He's careful about the types of clients he works with, and has developed a clear set of criteria for choosing potential clients. He also makes it clear that sending queries and/or applications is a regular part of his life as a freelance writer, a familiar theme. His advice for responding to ads is also on point: always be clear and concise.

## Questions & Exercises:

- What are some red flags that could indicate a client is not worth working for?
- What are your personal criteria for choosing a potential client/publication?

# How I Earn \$100 an Hour, Despite Being Plagiarized

***By Angela Brown***

The year was 2012. I was barely three months into my foray into the freelance world, and I was doing okay (or so I thought.) I hadn't done much research before signing up to take on clients through a job board to bring in a little extra cash. As a stay-at-home mom of two girls, I wanted work I could do from home. I earned a bachelor's degree in communications (journalism) and worked as a reporter before stepping down and staying home with my girls, so it seemed a natural fit.

My going rate at the time was \$9 an hour.

When I was approached by a client who wanted a few health and fitness articles written for his company, I sent my proposal, and we agreed that I'd write a few blog posts for \$50.

The same week the contract came in, we received a phone call that my husband's grandmother had fallen and hit her head. She was being rushed to a nearby hospital, and things weren't looking

favorable. We packed up our two toddlers (and my laptop) and met up with family in the hospital waiting room. We came to the hospital for hours at a time over the next few days. My husband watched the girls and talked with his family while I pounded away at the keyboard, trying to get the articles to my client by the deadline.

There was this pit in my stomach every time I worked on my article. I knew I should be focusing on my husband and his family, but I was trying to build a freelance career so that we could support our little family. I pushed my guilt aside long enough to get the articles finished. My husband's grandmother passed away a few days later.

The situation itself was frustrating. Instead of being able to provide emotional and physical support during an emotional time, I was cranking out articles for practically nothing, but what happened next made the whole thing 10-times worse.

Shortly after I submitted the articles, my client ghosted. Poof. There was no response to my article submissions, no payment. Nothing. I kept sending friendly reminders (and then not-so-friendly reminders). Still nothing.

After chatting with some other writers who had also had a client vanish on them, I looked for my articles online. I found them. This client stole all my work and posted them on multiple websites under his name. The client paid a total of \$5 (I had at least some foresight to request a partial payment upfront). Unfortunately, this was not the only (or most expensive) loss I've had in the last six years. It was, however, the trigger that pushed me into being more selective with the clients I add to my roster.

I reported the client (to oDesk, now Upwork) and showed proof that this client had stolen my work. As far as I know, the company deleted his account. I also took the time to contact the websites where my article was posted and asked them to remove the posts. I didn't waste too much time or energy after that because I felt my time was better spent moving on to new projects.

Now, six years (and hundreds of jobs) later, I average between \$75 and \$100 per hour. I even landed a client that pays me more than \$600 per article.

Here's what I learned:

**Create a basement price, then ask for more:** What's the least amount of money you're willing to earn for a project? Know what you can accept, and then ask for a little more in the

bidding/negotiating process. Some clients may have a pre-determined price point (usually publications), but you may be able to arrange a later deadline or faster payment. It usually doesn't hurt to ask, just be professional in your approach.

As an additional thought: when a client asks for your rates, ask for more than you think you should. I had a client ask my rate for blog posts last month, I gave him a number that's twice what I usually charge, and he said yes, without hesitation. Even if he'd countered with a number that was lower than my initial offer, it probably would have been higher than my lowest price point. Don't rip off your clients, but don't be afraid to charge a fair rate either.

**Say no:** It may seem counterintuitive, but you don't have to say yes to every single project that comes your way. Saying no to a client that offers a rate that's too low, frees you up to work on better-paying projects.

At first, turning down projects was hard for me. I worried that saying no meant I wouldn't be able to find more work. However, saying no actually gave me more motivation to go out and get better clients. I've gotten comfortable with asking for higher rates after I've worked with a client for a while. I even stepped away from work with an on-going client because they refused to budge on my rate after three years.

**Find a niche:** I don't write for every type of client anymore. I specialize in real estate and personal finance topics, and I target those type of clients and publications. Because I have many samples in both industries, it's easier to justify my higher rates, and clients are more willing to pay them. I still take on some work that's outside of those areas, but not as often as I used to.

**Master your pitch:** This is one of the most important things you can do to land more clients. Spend time working your pitch letters. Your pitch letters should feel personalized (though having some templates to make the process quicker is a great idea too), but they shouldn't take forever to write because:

**Pitch, pitch, pitch:** I try to send out at least 2 to 5 LOIs per day (about 10 to 20 per week). I don't hear back from most of them. Half of those who do respond can't afford my rates. Sometimes, people, I've sent pitches to don't respond for weeks or months, so it's vital to keep pitching if you want steady work.

These pitches don't have to be complicated, but they should be personal. Here is a sample of a pitch I sent that landed me a repeat contract with a real estate agent. (It took me less than five minutes to type this up). I found this client from a job listing and this letter led to a \$2,200 job.



*Bob,*

*Hi! My name is Angela Brown and I'm a freelance real estate and finance writer with 13 years of professional writing and editing experience.*

*Adding a community page to your real estate website is an excellent way to add SEO organically, it's also a great freebie tool you can offer people that will make them more likely to bookmark your page. When I was checking out your notes about what you were looking for, I got the idea of a page with different headers and paragraphs about each topic. This would also be a great place to add links (to schools, utility companies etc.), which your readers would appreciate (and search engines too!).*

*I have worked with clients like Wasatch Home and Estates (see sample here:*

*<https://www.wasatchhomesandestates.com/category/blog/>).*

*I've also written for FinanceBuzz (sample:*

*<https://financebuzz.com/mortgage-questions-to-ask-your-lender>).*

*I think this sample, which I ghostwrote for a client might give you the best idea for the tone and type of writing that would work for your community pages:*

*(<https://nebula.wsimg.com/4ff34a609b7cbeef3479ec8f2eb0e0e9?AccessKeyId=DAF2EC90865FCE4DD457&disposition=0&alloworigin=1>).*

*I'd love to chat with you a little more about your content needs.*

*Would you be interested in jumping on a call?*

*Angela*

**Have a contract:** I almost NEVER work without a contract. I did, technically, have an agreement with the client that ripped me off, but now I'm even more vigilant creating one that offers more protection. Your contract details the type of work you will send, the deadline, and when your client must pay. Having a detailed contract also prevents your client from changing the scope of the project at the last minute.

The most important thing I've learned: The value of my work. There are plenty of clients that want to pay bargain basement rates,

but you don't have to work for them. It took me far too long to realize that writing is a skill and a talent, one that deserves fair pay. Protect yourself from slug clients, and don't let setbacks stop you from pursuing a freelancing career if it's what you want to do.

Angela Brown is a real estate and finance writer based in Salt Lake City Utah. She has been freelancing since 2012. Learn more about her at her [website](#).

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## Analysis

Failure happens. But if we let it stop us, it is all we end up with. Angela encountered a major failure early in her career. It happens. However, she persisted. And ended up with a successful writing career.

Her advice, in terms of being picky about clients, finding a niche, and spending a lot of time pitching is spot on. These three elements work together to support a successful writing career.

## Questions & Exercises

- What are your three biggest reasons for overcoming the roadblocks you will encounter on your freelance writing

journey?

- Exercise: Spend some time writing down what your life would be like as a successful freelance writer. What types of daily, weekly, and monthly actions would you be taking? What types of clients would you be working with?
- Exercise: Using the previous exercise as a guide, write an action plan to help you get there. What are three steps you can take to make it a reality? Think small. The outcome is the “big idea.” These three steps are the tiny incremental actions you can take on your journey.

## Conclusion

Just before I sat down to write this conclusion, I got an email from a subscriber to Freedom With Writing. They just got their first pay check as a writer, sent to them by Reader's Digest, for an article about to be published in Country Magazine.

Another writer, Susan, a member of [Writing Launch](#), just got published in Sasee. She had completely forgotten about the pitch she sent them, yet a couple months later, they accepted her pitch. She wrote the article, and payment is on the way.

And just yesterday, I got an email from a long-time subscriber to Freedom With Writing. Every year, since 2014, she's gotten published, and paid, from a lead we sent her in our weekly newsletter.

As you've learned in this book, writers get paid all the time. They send out pitches, publish their writing, and get paid for their hard work.

If you're like me, all of the stories in this book have started to swirl around in your head. You've started to generate ideas, figuring out how to apply the lessons learned to your own life.

If you're like me, you probably just glanced over the exercises and questions on the first read, giving each a few moments. I encourage you to give each exercise just five to ten minutes a day for the next two weeks, so that you can turn the ideas in this book into a concrete plan of action – one that will help you achieve your goals as a freelance writer.

I have one more request to you. Once you create a plan of action – put it to use. Then tell me about it. I would love to publish your case study. (Just send me an email: [submissions@freedomwithwriting.com](mailto:submissions@freedomwithwriting.com) with CASE STUDY in the subject line.)