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HOW TO WORK FROM HOME
AS AN ONLINE WRITER,
FIND PREMIUM CLIENTS,
& MAKE MONEY ONLINE

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***Writerpreneur*: How to Work From
Home as an Online Writer, Find
Premium Clients, & Make Money
Online**

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Writerpreneur

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The Starving Writer?

So, you want to be a writer? And you want to actually make money writing? Enough money to pay all of the bills, and still have some left over for savings, investing, and fun?

Good luck.

That's what my father told me a year ago when I told him my plans to become a freelance writer. He told me that I might as well say I wanted to become an artist. Everyone knows

the stereotype of the starving artist. Dad just extended that stereotype to the starving writer.

I knew that it was possible to earn good wages as an online writer; I had been reading the blogs of online writers for over a year. There was one blog in particular that inspired me: Young Pre Pro. This writer was an eighteen-year-old guy and English was not his first language. You would think this young man wouldn't stand a chance at building a thriving freelance writing career online, and yet he did in less than six months!

I knew that if he could do it, I could do

it, and I would do it. So many times when I felt like throwing in the towel, I thought about this blogger who made it, against all odds.

Why A Freelance Writer?

As more and more entrepreneurs are creating eBooks, blogs and websites for affiliate marketing, and local businesses are creating an online presence, the need for online writing is greater than ever.

A writing career can be done completely from home, and if you position yourself correctly, you can earn a really good wage. If working

for yourself has ever appealed to you, this could be the perfect place to start.

Freelance writing requires no overhead, as long as you already have a computer and an Internet connection.

Even if you are not an amazing writer, you can still excel. Academic-level writing is not necessary, and could actually hold you back.

How Much Money Can I Make?

The answer to this question is entirely dependent on you. I have known plenty of writers who were

willing to settle for less than 1 cent per word. However, a woman who is making an average of 75 cents per word is currently mentoring me. An article order will usually range from 500 to 1000 words, while an eBook order can be 10,000 words and upwards. Your earnings are only limited by the rate you are willing to accept, and the clients that you target.

Earning \$5000 per month is within the grasp of every reasonably good writer with a good marketing plan and a strong desire to succeed. You cannot expect to begin making \$5000

in your first month; it will take you several months to get up to that level. The only thing that stands between you and your goal is you. Stay focused on your goal, don't sell yourself short, and target the right clients, and you can achieve your goal of \$5000 in between 6-12 months.

Read about other freelance writers, how they got started, mistakes they made along the way, and the best strategies that paid off for them.

Let's take a look at my journey into freelance writing.

Chapter 1

Mistakes and Rising Up: How I Started My Freelance Writing Business

I first started my writing business as a knee-jerk reaction to all of the

algorithm changes Google has made over the past year. I have been an affiliate marketer for over three years now, but I was tired of feeling sick to my stomach every time I heard rumblings of a new update.

Passive income is great, and I love it, but I was tired of relying on a gigantic company (in this case Google or Amazon) to nod their heads in my favor, or squash me under their thumb.

I was considered a good writer in school; I've always had a natural talent for putting words on paper and making them flow well. I've never been the best writer in the room, but

I knew that I did not have to be in order to be successful. In order to be a successful writer, being a strong marketer is imperative, and I knew that I had that skill in me.

I set to work trying to figure out how exactly to break into the online writing market. There had to be a way to do this. I knew there were plenty of writers out there, mostly catering to the Internet marketer crowd, who were making several thousand dollars every month (way more than I had ever made as an affiliate marketer!), but how were they doing it?

I did what any self-respecting

Internet marketer would do; I started buying Kindle books and WSO's (Warrior Special Offers) on the topic of freelance writing.

The first book I purchased was an overpriced Kindle guide. The advice was outdated. I signed up for a paid job board, expecting to make my money back within a few days, but never landed one job. I cancelled the membership to the board, and wasted a month trying to decide whether freelance writing was worth pursuing after all.

My second attempt at entering the freelance world, though it got off to a rough start, ended well. I signed up

for one month of coaching with a freelance-writer-turned-business-coach. Although freelance writing coaching was not what this offer was about, I knew it was her background, so I capitalized off of it as much as possible. By the end of that month, I had my first client, and he put a deposit down on several more jobs.

Let's go over the steps I took to land that first client, and then we'll look at the mistakes I made, so that you can avoid them.

The first mistake that I made was initially setting my rate low in order to attract clients. Although this tactic got me my first client, he was not the

type of client that I was hoping to attract. When I first set out to become a freelance writer, I knew that I wanted to attract premium clients at a premium price. Offering your writing for 2 cents per word will get you all kinds of work, but it will not be the kind of work that will turn into high paying projects.

If you are just looking to make a few hundred dollars each month, then this is a great strategy. However, if you are trying to replace a full-time income, you need to go after the big clients from the very beginning.

The second mistake I made with this client was getting myself locked into

that low rate for a huge number of projects. Fifteen to be exact. The client did not want more than 3 projects completed each month, so this project would take a minimum of five months to complete. I am still working on completing these projects at 3 cents a word, even though my current rate is now three times that amount.

My plan was to raise my rate by one cent each month until I reached a comfortable rate for my services. After I completed my first project and got some testimonials, I started receiving a steady flow of work to keep me busy. I continued to raise my rate, while also adding in

additional services like proofreading, editing, formatting, and cover design.

All of these extra services brought in a good amount of extra money. At the end of my second month I made \$1500. I knew that I was off to a good start, but I wanted to continue to raise my earnings. I decided to give networking a try to see if I could make some good industry connections that would put me in higher demand with premium clients.

I had an opportunity to introduce myself to a mega blogger at an event that I attended. I ended up making a good impression and this blogger checked out my writing website. The

rest was history. She offered me a ghostwriting and formatting job at double my usual rate. After completing this project for her, everything else fell into place, and my reputation received a huge boost.

I was able to leave behind the tiny projects and tight deadlines and begin working with professionals who were making a ton of money and appreciated the value of my work. I was now able to be extremely choosy about the projects that I accepted, and I no longer needed to cram in as many projects as possible to meet my goals. Life as a freelance writer just got a lot easier.

Chapter 2

The 8th Grade: Do You Have What It Takes?

Writing

In order to be a successful freelance writer you don't have to be a perfect writer. Most writing assignments are aimed towards a general and casual online audience, which means

writing at an 8th grade reading level.

You won't be graded on your writing, and for the most part, college English professors will not read your writing. This is not to say that your writing can be sloppy and full of errors, but you don't have to worry about complex sentence structures.

When you write, use a friendly, conversational tone. Descriptive verbs and adjectives will add style to your writing.

There are many ways to improve your writing, and one of the best and most painless ways is to read

prolifically. Read the writing of top-notch bloggers like Problogger and Copyblogger.

Practice your craft often—write, write, and write some more. Start off with a goal of at least 1000 words per day and slowly move that goal upwards. Use a hobby or a subject you are interested in to start a blog – and use this as a place to practice.

Order a copy of *The Elements of Style* by Strunk and White, read through it and practice, practice, practice.

Time

How much time do you have to dedicate to your new freelance writing career? Are you just writing on the side to try and pay off some debt, or are you hoping to replace your full-time job?

If you can dedicate 2-4 focused hours per day to writing, then you should be able to complete one or two 10,000 word projects per week. Depending on the rate you are charging for these projects, you should be able to start bringing in significant income.

When you are freelancing, you are your own boss, so you have to be accountable to yourself. You will have

to be disciplined to ensure that your time is not frittered away on email, Facebook, and other social media outlets. If you allow yourself to be distracted, you will quickly find that 2-4 hours a day is not going to be enough to get your projects completed.

If you are having trouble focusing, then you may want to try installing software on your computer like Leechblock. This free software will block the websites that you are constantly drawn to during specific times of the day. This is entirely customizable; you choose the websites you want to block, and you

choose the times.

Some writers that I know will use a computer that has no Internet access. This is the ultimate way to prevent distractions. You may not need to go this far, but if you are constantly struggling to stay focused on your work, it may be time to consider a second computer.

Discipline

Discipline and time work hand-in-hand. You can have several hours a day to work on your writing business, but if you don't have the discipline to actually **work** on your writing

business, nothing will be accomplished.

Unfortunately, we live in a world that is filled with distractions, and in order to be a successful freelancer, you will have to develop the discipline necessary to avoid these distractions. When you freelance, you won't have a boss looking over your shoulder, making sure that you aren't emailing on company time. You will have deadlines that you are expected to meet, but somehow, deadlines have become a blurry line.

Over the last few years, freelancers have gotten a bad rap for **never** being

able to meet a deadline. It's gotten so bad that when a freelancer actually does meet a deadline, he or she really stands out as superior. This is the type of freelancer that you want to be: always meet your deadlines, don't use up every excuse in the book to not finish your work. Focus in on your current task, complete the task on time, get paid, and then move on to the next project.

You will begin to build a reputation as being trustworthy, and your reputation is worth more than gold in this industry. You will get repeat clients and tons of referrals if you are trustworthy.

Creativity

Most of the writing assignments that you receive will be non-fiction, but that does not mean that you should leave your creativity at the door.

Express your creativity through the research you do, through verb and adjective choice, as well as in your phrasing.

The research you do can play an important part in making the writing creative and lively. For one book project, on garden lighting, I watch a gazillion Youtube videos and searched through in-print books. I

was prepared to interview a local landscape designer guy, but I ended up finding enough information without having to do that. Clients highly value this level of work, and it's what sets writers apart.

You know the difference between a piece of writing that has been creatively written and a piece that is as dry as roasted bones. The creative piece will leave you eager to read each new paragraph, and leave you slightly miffed that you have reached the end of the page.

On the other hand, when you read a boring piece, your eyes will

automatically start scanning for relevant information, so that you don't have to torture yourself by reading every word on the page.

You want to be the creative writer, and you want for your clients and your readers to enjoy reading your work. How do you accomplish this? Read in your spare time. Read popular authors (fiction and non-fiction) and pay close attention to their style and word choices. You are not doing this so that you can copy their style, but so you can get a better idea of what makes their writing interesting. Then translate what you have learned into your own style.

Asking questions throughout your article or book will automatically make your reader pay attention. Can you think of different bloggers who use questions a lot in their writing? Do you realize I just asked you a question? Did it draw you back in? (That's three in a row.)

You want to set yourself apart from other freelance writers, and the way to do this is through dependability, creativity and passion. Clients want to hire the passionate writer every single time. Your passion will translate into additional earnings for yourself and for your clients. Be the

passionate writer who finishes projects early, and you will never lack for jobs.

Chapter 3

Developing Your Writing Niche

Let's take a minute and put yourself in your potential client's shoes. If you were going to spend your hard-earned money to pay a freelance writer, would you prefer to hire a writer who was an expert on the subject, or would you want to hire someone who didn't have a clue, but was going to research and then write? You would hire the expert.

Save Time and Make More Money —Write What You Know

If you only write about topics that you know intimately, you will be able to write faster, more accurately, and with passion. Your writing will automatically be better than the average freelance writer who is researching, then writing.

This type of writing commands a premium price as well. You are not only offering your writing skills, but also your expertise in your niche. You will find, however, that you need to have credentials to back up your

expertise.

For example, if you are claiming to be an expert on early childhood education, then you should ideally be a kindergarten or elementary school teacher. You could also use credentials like day care worker, teacher's aide, or even homeschooling mother. Or if you have a portfolio of past work on the subject, you could show that.

Let's look at another example. Let's say that you want to write in the pet niche. You could be a vet tech, dog trainer, pet store worker, have taken a course, or even have a pet sitting

service. The key is to have something that sets you apart from the average freelance writer who will just be doing Internet searches and rehashing the information that has already been written.

If you have personal experiences that you can weave into your writing, you will be worth the extra money that a niche expert commands.

If you are a quilting expert, you would not just market yourself as a quilter, but rather, as an **expert in crafts**. Your experience with quilting will give you an excellent grasp of crafting lingo, and you will also know exactly

where to look for more information on other crafts. There is good demand for craft writers, especially for paid blogging.

If you have a lot of SEO experience, then market yourself as an Internet Marketing expert. If you know a lot about furniture, market yourself as an interior design expert. If you are a runner, then market yourself as a fitness writer.

If you as a writer are writing what you know, it is going to be quick, fun, painless, and you will be able to add in life stories which always makes the writing more interesting to your

readers.

Subject Matter Expert

In the freelance writing industry, if you are an expert in a niche, then you are considered a **Subject Matter Expert**. For the most part, unless you have credentials like we just discussed, you can't just label yourself a subject matter expert.

For example, just because you read a book about how to teach five year olds to read, that does not make you an early education subject matter expert. If, on the other hand, you are a homeschooling mother, and you have

taught six five year olds how to read, then you could consider yourself a subject matter expert.

One word of caution: there are a few industries that are highly technical like information technology and investing, and unless you actively work in those industries, you really should not consider yourself an expert.

Just because you have been investing with your 401K for the past twenty years, that does not mean that you should be writing content on investing. This is a highly technical field that is best left to experts, and

I'm speaking from experience on this one.

Broadening Your Knowledge Base

Just because you are a subject matter expert in your niche that does not mean that you do not need continue to expand your knowledge. It is imperative that you continue to research, experiment, and continue your education in your chosen niche.

You will be marketing your expertise. Your status as an expert will not become well known unless you truly are an expert. An expert consistently stays at the top of his or her chosen

field, and never sits back and decides there is nothing more to learn.

If you are a subject matter expert on running, then you have an obligation to learn and try every single technique that is currently popular so that you can write persuasively and intelligently on the subject. A true loyal hobbyist in a niche will be able to tell who is a true expert and who is the imposter.

If you want your freelance writing business to stand the test of time then you must be able to write authoritatively on your subjects.

Some of the best ways to keep your skills and knowledge up to date will not occur online. Read books that are in print, as well as magazines. Take local classes, even consider attending trade shows.

While attending trade shows may be considered expensive, can you think of a better place to land new business? Write it off as an expense on your taxes, and enjoy the steady flow of new clients you will receive from properly introducing and marketing yourself to the vendors.

Finding Your Niche Specific Customers

So once you have decided on your niche, how do you go about finding the customers who are looking for a niche specific writer? You are going to use a lot of the same tactics that you would use for promoting any other business or website.

Go where your clients hang out. Frequent the blogs where your potential clients read, make long, thoughtful, helpful comments on blog posts. Make sure to have your writer's website link in your profile.

Become a member of relevant forums and post often. Be helpful, don't be

spammy. One or two well-thought-out helpful posts per day will go much further in promoting your writing skills than ten quick posts that say nothing more than the equivalent of 'ditto.'

Seek out guest posting opportunities with the top blogs in your niche.

Whenever you guest post, you will receive a link to your site. However, that link will not be the most important prize for your efforts.

When you write your guest posts, give your very best writing. Do NOT do this halfway. This will be an example of your work that thousands

of potential clients will read. You need to make a great impression.

If you do this right, your guest post will lead interested potential clients directly to your 'Hire Me' page on your website, and each guest post will land you several new clients.

Not a Niche Expert?

So, what do you do if you are not an expert in anything, do you just give up? Nope!

You will market yourself as a generalist writer while steering clear of the highly technical projects that

will take you 20 hours to research. I do not want you spending all of your time researching boring projects, because then your profits margins will go down and you will feel cheated.

So instead, accept the projects that will be easier to write and that you are interested in studying up on. If you have always wanted to learn more about gardening, then actively seek out those projects; **your enthusiasm will help you to land the job**, and you will learn while you work.

Chapter 4

“We’re Open” Find Your First Client and Pricing Your Work

One of the best ways to find that first elusive client is to have a writer’s website. This site should advertise who you are, and your services. Some people choose to have a simple static

site, with an About Page, Services Page, Rates Page, and a Testimonials Page.

This is the type of site that I started off with, and it served me very well. Take the time to set up your site correctly in the beginning before you are inundated with writing assignments. You will find it hard to tear yourself away from paying work in order to tweak your website, so do it right the first time.

Anatomy of a Writer's Website

Testimonials Page

When you are first starting out, you won't have testimonials. This can be a problem. Are you are part of any internet marketing forums? This is the best place to grab a few testimonials. Figure out who the major players are on the forum, and then contact a few of them via private message.

Offer to write a 500-word article free of charge in exchange for a testimonial. This is what I did starting out, and it worked really well. If you do stellar work, these testimonials might even turn into more work for you. So really put 110% effort into these testimonial

articles.

I started off with three testimonials for my page, and as I finished each writing assignment, I asked the client if they would mind giving me a short testimonial if they were pleased with my work. I also offered to link back to one of their websites.

Before you know it, your testimonial page will be jam-packed and potential clients won't feel the need to read through them. The sheer number of testimonials will speak more than the words.

About Page

Every website should have an About Page, but this page needs to be more about what you can do for your client and less about how great you are.

When you are writing your About Page, concentrate on how your writing will **benefit** your client. So, instead of writing *I am an awesome writer and I specialize in persuasive copy*, write something along the lines of *My writing averages a 10% conversion rate, and leaves buyers informed, amused, and coming back for more.*

Do you see the difference in those

two sentences? Use quantifiable data, not just general statements.

Services Page

Some people like to combine their Services and Rates page, but I prefer to keep them separate. I like to write persuasive copy (focusing on benefits, not features) for each service that I offer.

Think outside of the box here: don't just offer writing, offer complementary services including proofreading, rewrites, formatting for Kindle, formatting for pdf's, graphic design if you are talented,

virtual assistant work, etc.

Rates Page

For simplicity's sake, I prefer to not put my rates on my website, but I do explain how I charge. Some writers charge by the word (this is what I do), others prefer to charge by the page.

I also explain the way that my writing queue is set up, expected time to completion, and payment procedures (I require a 50% down payment on the project prior to starting, and then the rest of the payment once all revisions have been made and my customer is 100% satisfied.)

Some writers go ahead and publish their rate on the site, and that is fine, too. You may want to test this and see which way results in more clients. For me, my rate changes about every month, sometimes more, and not having to go onto the website and make a revision saves me time.

Extras

As long as you have the basics on your website, you really don't **need** to have any extras. But extras are always nice, and if you have the time, go for it. Some writers like to have a blog on their site. You can discuss

topics related to your niche, or talk about what is currently hot in the way of site building or SEO.

Having a blog may help bring in more traffic, and it's a great way to display your writing skills.

In my opinion it's crucial to have an auto-responder set up to capture the email address of the people who visit your site. If you are having a dry spell in your writing and really need to drum up business, sending out a message to people interested in working with you is a great way to get extra projects.

Promoting Your Site

So now that you have your website set up with killer, persuasive content, it's time to get it seen! Put a link to your website in your email signature, as well as forum signatures. This will be most effective if the forums are specific to your niche.

The single most important thing that I did while trying to drum up business was to join a small, paid internet marketing forum. Actually, I was already a member there, but I used the connections that I made in the forum to catapult my business to success.

I would not recommend trying to get started in a large internet marketing forum like the Warrior Forum. You will most likely attract the wrong kind of client there, the one who wants the very best quality writing for dirt cheap. You can always go over to the Warrior Forum once you have an established client list and are looking to add a few more high rollers to your stable of clients.

You could also join websites like elance.com, oDesk.com, thecontentauthority.com or guru.com. These sites let you set up a profile, and search through job listings. The job listings can range

from low paying 2 cent a word, to much higher. There is a lot of competition for each job. Be careful to not get stuck in a rut with low paying and bad clients. I would recommend starting your own site and go out looking for your own clients. This way you are in more control of your rates, and the quality of clients you work with.

As mentioned earlier, guest posting on blogs in your niche is another great way to get your first clients. Guest posts should always be some of your best work, and should link back to your writing website.

Promotional Pricing

When I first started out, I made the mistake of pricing myself super low in an effort to try to get business. I was working for 2 cents a word, and I quickly felt underpaid and overworked. So, instead of marking my writing up to a good level, I went for the slow, painful route, and only marked my writing up 1 cent per month.

I also made the stupid mistake to take a deposit on 15 books to lock in the rate of 3 cents per word. That was not smart of me. I am still writing those books, even though my rate for

everyone else is now more than three times that original rate.

So, let's learn from my mistakes with promotional pricing, shall we?

One basic rule of business that I completely ignored was to set your price, and then keep it there.

Determine what you want your final rate to be, and then set it there. You can figure out what your rate should be by working backwards. How much do you want to make each month?

Let's say your answer is \$5000. How many hours per week are you going to work? Let's say your answer is 20. \$5000 divided by 80 (20 hours per

week x 4 weeks) is \$62.50. So your hourly rate needs to be \$62.50.

How does this translate into a per word rate? Determine how long it will take you to write a 1000 word article in your niche. Remember, you should not have to do much additional research to write this article if it is within your subject matter sphere. Let's say that it takes you one hour to write and proofread a 1000 word article. Your per word rate needs to be at least .0625 cents per word.

This rate is very reasonable if you are going after the right type of customer. What I would suggest that

you do is to have your final rate be somewhat higher than the rate that you need. In our example, that rate is .0625. So, if this were me, doing it all over again, I would set my final rate at around 8 cents per word.

Now, how does a brand new writer break into the market with an 8 cents per word rate? You offer a big discount!

Either on your website, or in your forum sales thread, or wherever you decide to advertise your services, you are going to mention that your rate is 8 cents per word, but you are having a big sale right now, and are offering

your services for 4 cents per word.

Offer this rate for 5-10 customers (enough to build up more testimonials), and then take away the discount. If your business starts to slow down a bit, go ahead and offer another discount to get work coming back in. Play around with your discounted rate to see how low you have to take it to get a big rush of business.

Step-By-Step, Get Your First Client

1. Create a writer's website with the relevant pages: About, Services, Rates, and

Testimonials

2. Join a small internet marketing forum and start posting, get your post count up to around 100 before you make a move towards offering your services. Be helpful, and be friendly.
3. Contact three of the more successful marketers in the forum and offer a free article in exchange for a testimonial.
4. Write the best articles of your life and collect your testimonials.
5. Put up a thread advertising your services in the forum.
(Most forums have a special

sub-forum for these kinds of threads. Check with the owner of the forum first so that you are sure not to break any rules. Sometimes there is a fee for services for hire threads. Pay the fee, it's worth it.)

6. Ask your three testimonials clients to post in your thread endorsing your services.
7. As long as your prices are right (your normal rate, but with a big discount), you should have your first paying client by the end of the week.
8. Ask every single client for a testimonial. Post the testimonial on your writer's

website, and in your forum thread.

Chapter 5

Fighting The Internet: Working Smart and Efficiently

In the previous chapter we discussed what your per word rate would need to be in order to make \$5000 per month, and how many hours you would have to write each week to

make it happen.

The problem, as I am sure you are already aware, is that those figures require 20 **solid** hours of work. How much solid work are you putting in right now? Are you able to laser focus in on writing for a full hour, or do you flit like a butterfly from Word over to your email, over to your favorite forum, and then over to Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest, and then after you have wasted an hour, you go back over to Word, write for five minutes, and then start the whole cycle over again?

This is how I used to work, and I

could not understand why I wasn't hitting my goal each month, even though it **seemed** as though I was spending way more than 20 hours working each week.

So let's go over some of the ways that I have found to get my writing done quickly and efficiently while avoiding time traps.

Outlining Your Work

It doesn't matter how long your writing assignment is, it could be a 500 word article, or a 10,000 word e-book, you need to work off of an outline. An outline is the only way to

take a project and break it up into manageable chunks, while keeping everything organized.

I outline everything, and I'm confident that this step helps me fly through work that might otherwise take forever.

When I make my outlines, first I break a big assignment into chapters. Then before I start writing chapter 1, I will break up the chapter into three or four sections. Depending on my final word count, I will then estimate how many words each section needs to be.

Generally speaking, a chapter for me

is approximately 1,000 words, unless the final word count is over 10,000 words, or the subject matter for a specific chapter requires more in-depth writing.

So if I have a 1,000 word chapter broken down into four sections, then each section will need to be 250 words, which is not a whole lot. It is so much easier to focus on writing 250 words than it is to look at 1,000 words. Breaking each chapter down into manageable chunks will help you to fly quickly through your work and not get off track.

Research First, Then Write

When you start on your writing assignment, you will discover that you get into a flow. Whatever you do, don't break the flow! One of the biggest ways to get derailed from writing is research.

It all starts out innocently enough: you hop onto Google to look something up, then realize you just got an email, then someone gets you on chat. You know the drill.

I prefer to do most of my research via hard copy books. That way I am not writing what is already easily available on the internet. However,

there are times when I just need to look something up.

Do all of your research before you begin writing. This will help you save time, as well as offer a huge protection against plagiarism. Read about your topic, **take notes**, and then close the book or browser. Write from what you remember, and from your notes.

Start writing, and do not stop until you have completely fleshed out a chapter. If you have a fact that you need to check, make a notation in your writing and just keep going. When you research for the next

chapter, you can quickly verify your facts, and then go back into your writing and do a quick fix.

Research while you research, write while you write. Nothing more, nothing less. If you follow this advice, you will be amazed by how quickly everything comes together.

Timing Techniques

When I write, I use a combination of timing techniques to keep me on track. I use a ticking timer from the Pomodoro technique, but I set it for one straight hour, as opposed to the 25-minute blocks of working

followed by 5 minute rests the Pomodoro technique suggests.

I love using Pomodoro techniques for other types of tasks, but for writing, I don't like to break the flow. I know, for me that writing and proofreading 1000 words takes me approximately 1 hour, so that is what I set my timer for.

One word of advice: get a timer that ticks. There is something about the sound that will help to keep you on task and working as efficiently as possible. You can find an egg timer at Wal-Mart for less than \$5.

After my one hour I will set the timer for 10 minutes and take a break. Do something that will invigorate you. Get a glass of ice water, a small snack, do some jumping jacks, step outside for some fresh air. Once the timer dings sit back down and write for another hour.

Now, if you are like me, you do not have a huge time block to sit down and crank out all of your work. I have children at home, so I wake up early in the morning and work for two hours, and then I work during naptime.

I can count on my morning writing

time not getting interrupted, but I cannot count on naptime. So usually naptime is when I do research and marketing tasks like answering emails. These tasks do not require me to be in a zone, so if there is an interruption, my productivity is not upset.

Leech Block

If you are still having a hard time keeping yourself focused when you should be writing, then I would really recommend installing [LeechBlock](#) on your computer.

LeechBlock is a free add-on that you

install on your computer that will block the websites that you specify during the times that you indicate. So if you are having trouble avoiding social media, then block your email, twitter, Facebook, Pinterest, and any forums that suck you in during the hours that you should be working.

You may find that after a few weeks of using LeechBlock, you will have the discipline to work without it. Then again, you may always need it, and that's okay too, as long as you get your work done efficiently.

Chapter 6

Polishing Your Online Writing Skills

Online writing requires a different style than writing for print materials. The differences are subtle, but your clients will expect for you to be an expert in this area.

Paragraphs

Paragraphs are one of the most important elements of online writing. The average paragraph length for printed writing is 3-5 sentences. For online writing, your paragraphs should be between 1-3 sentences.

Rarely should you have a paragraph that contains more than three sentences.

Shorter paragraphs break up the information better, and keep your readers engaged in the writing. You want your readers' eyes to constantly be moving down the page, and short paragraphs accomplish this.

Use white space to emphasize important sentences. If you are writing a sentence that you want to be sure is seen, place it in a paragraph of its own. You may even want to bold the sentence, or use an H1 or H2 tag.

Tone

When you sit down to complete an assignment, write like you would to a friend. You do not want to sound stiff, uptight, or like an academic. Friendly, conversational writing is more interesting, and easier to read.

After you have written a paragraph or two, stop and read it out loud. If it doesn't sound like a conversation you would have with a friend, change it. There is a huge difference. Let's look at an example.

Stuff, uptight writing:

When trying to lose weight, it is imperative that you remain on a low carb diet, drink sufficient water, and engage in vigorous exercise five times per week.

Friendly, conversational writing:

When you are trying to lose weight, remember that going low carb, drinking plenty of water, and

exercising five times a week will get you to your goal quickly.

Do you see the difference between the two examples? While the first example may have more elegant words, the second example is easier to read and will keep your reader engaged.

Sentence Structure

Sentence structure may seem technical, but there are a few quick basics to keep in mind to keep your writing easier to read. You always want to write in active voice, as opposed to passive voice. Let me give

you an example of each.

Passive Voice:

The cupcake was made by Susan.

Active Voice:

Susan made the cupcake.

When you write in active voice, the subject comes first in the sentence. The subject was Susan and she made the cupcake.

So when you are writing, just remember: Subject then Verb.

Keywords

Some of your clients may want you to use certain keywords or keyword phrases for SEO (Search Engine Optimization) purposes. The main thing to remember when using keywords is that the keyword or keyword phrase must be used exactly in the order specified.

If your client asks you to write an article for the keyword phrase “dog training tips” then use that exact phrase. Don’t change it to “dog training tip” or “tips for dog training”.

Some clients will tell you exactly how many times they want the phrase included in the article (this is called

keyword density), some will ask you to use the specific phrase along with a few variations of the phrase.

If a client does not give specific instructions for the keyword density, then follow these guidelines:

1. Always put the keyword in the first sentence.
2. Use the keyword 1-2 times in the body of the article, unless the article is 1,000 words or more, and then use it once more.
3. Use the keyword in your closing sentence.

Your client also may ask you to use the keyword in H1 tags. This simply means Heading 1 sized font, and you will use this to begin a section of your article, as opposed to bolding and changing the size of the font.

Chapter 7

Building an Empire: Scale Your Business Up To Full Time Income

You only have so many hours in a day, and freelance writing is not a form of passive income—it is active in every sense of the word. But that does not necessarily mean that you will always

be trading time for dollars. There are a few tactics that you can employ that will help you to extend your reach in the market and earn more.

Hire More Writers

If you have more customers than you know what to do with and a wait list that is longer than one month, it is time to consider hiring a few writers on an independent contractor basis.

Only hire writers that can deliver the goods. Otherwise you will find yourself spending just as much time editing their work as you would have spent writing the piece yourself, and

you will also owe them money.

You will have to decide for yourself how much you want to pay your writers; however, I have found that half the rate I charge my clients is a fair rate for them, and still allows me to make a profit. Now, if you are only charging 3 or 4 cents per word, you are going to have trouble finding good writers, and you will not have a very high margin of profit.

Make sure that you edit every single piece of content that you hire out; do not trust the writer to turn out perfect content. You will also want to add your own voice to the writing,

not so that you can fool your clients, but because it is still coming out of your company, and your brand.

Be upfront with your clients and let them know that one of your writers will be writing the piece, but that you will be editing and adding in your own personality.

Start out small with just one writer, show them the ropes, and don't be timid about sharing with the writer what he or she needs to improve. Communication is the key for both of you. Encourage the writer to ask any questions that may come up, and also clearly communicate your

expectations.

Hire Complementary Freelancers

Once you have a few writers on your team and assignments are going well, it's time to consider adding a few more services. If you can become a "one-stop shop" you will save your customers time and the frustration of having to deal with multiple outsourcers.

One of the worst parts of freelancing for a lot of people is having to go out and find customers. If you already have a group of customers who are pleased with your writing services, it

should not be a huge obstacle to get those same customers interested in other services that are managed by you.

What are some other jobs that internet marketers regularly outsource? Design. You can hire a graphic designer who is well versed in header creation, e-book design, and site design.

How about back linking services like article submission, blog commenting and forum commenting?

Social media account creation and management is another in-demand

service.

There are numerous possibilities for add-on services, but proceed with caution. Only add one additional service at a time. Get a good system in place with a good freelancer, and then add the next service.

Slow and steady growth will create a solid business.

Use Referrals To Add More Customers

Once you get all of your freelancers in place, be sure to supply everyone with enough business! I always have

a standing referral reward policy for my clients, and I let each client know up front. My personal policy is to give a \$50 discount off of the next order for each referral.

I like to do this instead of offering a percentage discount because a dollar amount is generally perceived as a better bargain. This may even encourage your current customers to try out new services.

If you charge \$35 for an e-book cover, then they could try you out for free if they refer a client, so you win twice. You could get your current client excited about your covers, and also

land a new client.

Referral rewards make everyone happy. Institute a rewards policy from day one.

If you start to go through a dry spell and need to drum up some additional business, then consider running a weekend referral sale. Offer your current clients \$100 off their next order of \$200 or more for every referral they send you way. \$100 is a lot of money, and it will attract a lot of attention.

Remember as you are growing your business, quality is more important

than speed. You don't want to have so many customers that your quality begins to suffer. Quote generous completion times and stay in communication with your clients. If a project begins taking longer than expected, but the next person on the list is waiting, let them know what is going on. But whatever you do, keep your quality levels up; you are, after all, a premium service provider!

If you hope to continue to grow your business and establish a full time income, every single customer experience needs to be excellent!

Chapter 8

Providing the Ultimate Customer Experience

There are a few things that I routinely do that keep my customers coming back time and again. You don't want to have a carbon copy of my business; you want to figure out what fits best with your goals. However, there are a few business courtesies that anyone

can work into their business that will result in happy customers who spread the word and come back for more.

Updates

I try to keep my customers updated from the time I put their name on my queue. I will give each customer on my queue a weekly update so that they know about how long it will be before I am working on their project.

So many of my customers have told me how much they appreciate these updates. Apparently, some freelancers have given outsourcing a

bad name by constantly being late with work and never updating. Don't be that type of outsourcer.

While you are working on the project, get in touch every 3-4 days just to give an update on your progress. This will help to reassure your client that you are in fact completing the work that they put a 50% down payment on. A little reassurance goes a long way.

If you run into delays, notify your customer immediately. Don't wait around until the day the project is due to let them know you will be late.

These are all common courtesies, but you would be surprised how few freelancers are professional enough to follow through. If you make a point to keep your customers updated during every part of the transaction you will most likely earn a lifetime customer.

Be On Time

This is another point that should be obvious. Quote your client a reasonable amount of time, and then get the project finished within that timeframe. Unfortunately, finishing projects on time is not the norm.

Don't be like that! Finish on time, or even early! This is one area where you can pull away from the pack. If you build a reputation for finishing projects early, you will have so many clients, you might be knocking them away with a stick.

Being on time is really more a matter of self-discipline than anything else. It does not require any special talent, it just requires you to put your nose down, get to work, and finish what you started.

Proofed

You may not be charging enough

initially, but as soon as you are charging over 4 cents a word, I would get an editor on your team. Freelance editors can charge anywhere from .005 cents per word, up to 1 cent per word. There are plenty available for the lower rates, and they do a bang-up job.

This is one more area that will set your writing apart. There are many times when, as a writer, you don't see your own mistakes in spelling, punctuation, phrasing, etc. You could proof your own article four different times, but an editor could read over it once and fix everything quickly, including the mistakes that you never

caught.

Save yourself several hours of time, and spend a little portion of the money you make on a good editor.

This is also a benefit that you can advertise on your website. A lot of clients will feel the need to edit your writing themselves, but if you have hired an editor already, you just saved them several hours. Make sure they know it!

Upsells

We covered complementary services in the previous chapter, but let's go

over a few more ways that you could make your client's life easier, while increasing your own bottom line. When you are implementing these upsells into your business, just remember, anything that you can do to make your client's life easier, offer it as a service.

Blog Posting

If your client hires you to write ten blog posts, then offer to upload and format those posts to his blog for an additional charge.

Scheduled Ongoing Blog Posting

Take the previous upsell one step further: get your client on a monthly hands-off blog plan. Ten blog posts per month, edited, formatted, and uploaded. A totally hands-off system, set and forget!

Rewriting Service

You can offer a rewriting service to give your client several versions of your article to use for back linking purposes.

Editing

You may find that if you advertise editing services, you can bring in new

customers that way. Hand off the work to your editor, and charge enough to make a profit. Everyone wins.

There are countless other ways that you can upsell in your own business. Use your creativity and your strengths. Don't offer an upsell that you hate. Only keep the upsells that you love. You don't want your business to turn into drudgery.

Listen to what your clients are asking for. Give them what they want. If a client mentions that he has no idea how to format his Kindle e-book, learn how to do it for him. Ask your

clients what their biggest business frustrations are, and then come up with a creative way to fix them.

This is how you make yourself an invaluable part of someone else's business, and provide them with the ultimate customer experience.

Chapter 9

Adding Passive Income Streams to Freelancing

Once you get your business running like a well-oiled machine, you have your productivity pumping, and a waiting list of clients, it's time to start thinking about earning money while you sleep.

Passive income is not entirely out of your grasp as a freelance writer—you will just structure your offers differently.

PLR

PLR is Private Label Rights content and can be anything from articles, to e-books, to webinars, to videos. You create it, and then offer it for sale, usually at a discount. The catch is, you don't just offer it to one customer, and you offer it to whoever wants to make the purchase.

PLR buyers know that they will not be the only person owning the content,

and that is why they are getting it at such a great deal. For example, a typical 400 word article which would normally sell for between \$20 and \$50, would sell for \$1-\$3. Articles usually come in packs of 5-15.

One dollar per page is pretty much the industry standard. So, if you have a 50 page e-book that you are offering as PLR, you would price it at \$50. But you can sell multiple copies.

Some PLR sellers will limit the amount that they sell to, say, 50 copies; others will make the sale unlimited. So let's say that you put a 50-copy limit on your 50-page e-

book. Instead of making \$1000 (5 cents per word), you would make \$2500. And you would only have to write the book one time.

Once you have several PLR offerings, it's time to open your PLR store and start marketing.

Royalties

I am cautiously offering up royalties as a way to earn passive income as a writer. I have never personally received royalties on writing, although I have received royalties on book promotions that I have coordinated.

Most of your clients will not be interested in participating in a royalties program. They will want full rights to the writing. The clients who may be interested in a royalties program would be the client who really wants to use your services (because he has heard how awesome you are!), but he cannot afford your rates.

When you are putting together your royalty package, you would have him pay a discounted per word rate, discounted by at least half, and then you would receive royalties on the sales from the book for a lifetime.

If you pursue the royalties option, you must purchase a royalties tracking software, otherwise you will be relying on the honesty and the accounting skills of your client, which is obviously not a good idea.

There are several royalties software options available, including Royalty Tracker. I have never purchased this software, so I cannot give an endorsement. You will need to conduct careful research.

Conclusion

The First 25 Days

We've gone over everything you will need in order to get your freelance writing business started. But I cannot emphasize enough the importance of a good marketing plan.

You cannot expect to create a Writer's Website, and then just magically attract clients. Whether your marketing strategy involves forums, guest posting, cold calling/emailing, or a combination of

all three, you must market yourself.

Your first month as a freelance writer may be spent doing nothing more than marketing. When I first got started, and I hired a coach for 30 days, **I spent my first 25 days marketing** with absolutely no results. And then, all of a sudden, the marketing gods smiled on me, turned on the client faucet, and the rest is history.

In your first month or two you have to be the one to go out and find your clients. Once you have a few clients, most of your new clients will come via referrals. But without those initial

clients, you're stuck. Your first client will always be the toughest to find, after that, marketing will get easier.

For any questions: email me here
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