



**Proven Techniques To Making Money
As A Professional Freelancer**

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In This E-Book

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Before beginning, there are two terms you will need to differentiate between when discussing freelance writing online.

As a web writer, you will be asked to produce "content" and "sales pages". The first is web content - articles, blog posts and most everything you probably already know enough to write about.

These little gems can bring you between \$2.00 and \$25.00 depending on how well known you are and what your writing ability commands.

The second, sales pages, is a whole horse of another color. It involves a unique brand of web advertising copy. These pages resemble a single sales page and can command anywhere between \$1,000 to \$25,000.

Two terms you need to know as a Web writer are "content" and "Web sales pages". In order to build both experience and confidence, you will want to take things slow.

This may make you want to jump right into the sales page arena; however, walk before you run. Sales pages are works of art, and there is a lot that goes into learning how to write them correctly.

Starting out slow with general web content will get you acclimated to the online freelance market while you learn the ins and outs of sales page copywriting.

Motivation and Desire

Freelance writers just don't realize how much money there is to be made by writing for the Web: many writers use the Web as a research tool, they don't see the Web as a mass of millions of markets. They don't realize that Web sites are STARVED for good writers.

Want to get paid REAL money to write? That's where the motivation and desire comes in.

In order to make more than minimum wage at writing, first you need to find the places that are paying money, hone your skills and buff up your resume and take action. Many new freelance writers read a ton of stuff and get stuck in Analysis Paralysis.

Just like a writer staring at a blank computer screen, a freelance writer is overwhelmed from the moment they come online.

This e-book gets you past all of that giving you a plan to follow that has most of the facts you'll need to get started.

All it will require is that you execute the plan. That's motivation in action; turning dreams and desires into reality.

Overview

This e-book overview is designed to give you the big picture of getting into the online freelance writing business - from soup to nuts.

After reading this overview, you will not only have a good idea of how to get your freelance business rolling, but how to make it a profitable entity.

If you decide to start an in-home freelance business, there are some things you'll need to consider as you get started. This e-book is designed to take you from writing newcomer to freelance profit mode as quickly and easily as possible.

You will be introduced to the basics of running a home business with things like setting up your home based business, how to find a steady stream of work, building your client list, defining a price structure that generates a profit, while not pricing you out of the market, secrets to winning the bidding war for work and how to avoid freelance writing scams.

When you are building a freelance writing career, you want to have everything to proceed in a way that takes you into a legitimate, fully-employed , work-at-home freelancing business that provides steady income from doing something you love - writing.

By following the blueprint in this e-book, you will be well on the way towards having a successful publishing and writing online career in no time at all.

Let's get started!

Setting Up Shop:

Believe it or not, this is where the foundation of your business comes into play. If you overlook this stage of getting your freelance business off the ground, you will suffer all the way down the line.

By setting up shop, I mean that before you write a single word, you will need to plan on paper what your goals are, where you will be working and what you need in terms of supplies, furniture and equipment to make your operation as seamless as possible.

Finding & Securing Work:

There are excellent opportunities online for good freelance writers. However, finding those sources can prove to be frustrating if you don't have a roadmap.

You can come to a site and not be sure whether it's a real freelance opportunity or a scam disguised to take your money and deliver information that's freely available elsewhere online.

By cutting through the fluff, I have listed some of my best sources for sites where you can get going making money right away.

Building Your Client List:

This is the core to your business. Having satisfied clients is what keeps a business growing. In order to build your client list, you will need to use various avenues including online and offline advertising, word of mouth, press releases and assorted other methods to advertise your fees and services. Client building is a step-by-step process and it requires a dedication to customer service excellence and making the each customer feel special.

The effort you put forth with each client will pay off in repeat sales and give you a group of people who trust your judgment on other items available.

Defining Price Structure:

When you set up a pricing structure, you want to take into account a number of things including how many jobs will you be handling personally, if you are going to outsource any jobs and the payments made to your subcontractors, the turnaround time on the web content produced and the amount of research you will need to perform in order to write the article.

Pricing structures must also take into account price versus what the market will bear. If you price your jobs too high, you will not get enough work to sustain your business.

On the flip side, if you price your services too low, you may be inundated with work, but you will be working at a rate where you need to produce 2 to 3 times as much as your competitors in order to make the same amount of money.

All of these factors need to be considered when you are setting out to price jobs. In addition, you will want to do some market testing to see which price structure brings you the best results.

Winning The Bidding War:

When you look for work on the freelance auction sites, you need to know how to win the bidding war without bidding so low that you get the job but lose money on the production of the job.

This takes finesse and know how, but mostly it takes self-confidence in your writing ability and the willingness to stick to your guns. Rest assured that SEO article and copywriters are in high demand and it looks like it will remain that way for years to come.

Avoiding Freelance Scams:

There are scams everywhere online and freelance writing is no exception. There are a number of sites that will charge you \$30 to \$50 just to give you a list of

freelance writing sites that you could have found for nothing by using a simple search query.

If you arrive at a site that charges you upfront for information on how to find freelance writing jobs, read the fine print.

More than likely they are not going to be of any help to you, and will probably supply you with a list that you could compile yourself. The basic search engine query is the best place to start.

Getting Started

The need for online freelance writers is growing greater every day. If you enjoy research, love to write, and think you are good at it; you've got the makings of a successful freelance writer.

Working at home means your overhead will be low, your schedule will be yours to determine, and you will be your own boss. The opportunities for writing online are there; you just need to learn how to find them, snag them, and make your living from them.

Decide first whether you are going to ease into this as a part-time venture or if you can afford to give up your day job and go after this as full-time employment. It is very rare to start off making a bundle from the very first article you write.

Most freelancers start at the bottom and, with diligence, work their way up and establish sound businesses.

As a new writer, you are going to run into plenty of frustration, because there are a lot of you out there, and the competition is tough. This will still be true when you have gained experience and are making money with your writing.

So hang tough; if you are as good as you think you are, it will be well worth it in the long run.

Setting Up Shop

To be your own boss and set up your own business, you need to get up every day, get to your computer, produce some material, respond quickly to emails, and actively pursue new writing opportunities. You need to be self-motivated and disciplined.

You must dependably meet deadlines. Loving what you do and being your own boss isn't enough. You must require as much from yourself as you would from any employee that you would hire to work for you.

In order to set up your new freelance business you will have to have a good, reliable computer, with a lot of memory. A decent printer is a must. Keep a daily planner, and note all jobs and deadlines in it.

You need to keep track of what you write, sell and to whom you sell it. This can be done on a simple Excel sheet, or you can use a submission tracker. There are free ones available online, such as SAMM. Obviously, you need to have an email address.

Fortunately, little is needed in the way of office supplies and writing materials beyond that. You will run into few unusual expenses and overhead costs.

One of the things you may be facing is analysis paralysis where you have a head full of ideas, advice from friends and things that worked in other businesses you may have started. Put all of those aside. Most people when presented with too many choices wind up doing nothing.

So, before you go down that route, sit down and work through a plan as you read this e-book.

If you still can't come up with a plan, rest assured. We explain everything then give you a simple step-by-step plan that you can put into action immediately.

Setting up your office for writing takes dedication and organization.

Dedication and motivation will take you through the turbulent learning curve towards profit and success. Organization will make or break you in the writing profession. So, we will assume you are dedicated and look at organization.

You will need to be organized both online and offline in this profession. You will need to set up bookmarks to sites you visit regularly, a homepage that helps get you going when you first log on, an email or emails that you can use to organize your business under.

You will need a website to advertise your services and to post your portfolio for prospective customers to review.

Offline organization involving having a place where you can work uninterrupted, a connection to the Internet, places to store your materials like a calendar, paper, printer, computer and the like.

Your office can be anywhere, but it should be easy to reach the essentials that you need to produce your work. You should also have a couple of notepads for making notes, outlining your research and so forth.

Writing web content usually involves writing short articles on a wide variety of topics.

In order to be successful at this, you need to set up and print out a template to follow and to focus your research. A simple article template goes something like this:

Your Title:

Summary: Some article directories require a summary of your article.

Introduction: The introduction will usually pose a problem and offer 3 to 4 ways to solve that problem.

Body of the article: This is where you list how the 3 or 4 points will help resolve the problem posed or answer the question posed.

Conclusion: The conclusion sums up what the problem/question is along with the 3 to 4 points to resolve/answer that problem/question.

After that, there should be a Call to Action which invites the reader to do something as a result of the resolution of that problem.

Keywords: Usually the client will ask for keywords or keyphrases to be added into the article X number of times. The standard insertion of keywords for a 500 word article 5 to 6 times in the following fashion:

- Each primary keyword needs to appear in the:
 - o Title
 - o Once in the first paragraph
 - o Once in the last paragraph
 - o 2 more times anywhere in the article

Most web content runs pretty similar to the template shown above and makes it very straight-forward for the freelance writer to work with.

Part of the organization process includes having this template ready for every job that you research. In this

way, it is very easy to produce web content that is keyword-focused, informative and easy to read.

Finding and Securing Work

Websites are growing in numbers daily. They are looking for blogs, articles, copywriting, proofreading, and more. With magazines and newspapers now offering online editions, there are all kinds of places to look for writing jobs. If you pursue this diligently, you should find plenty of steady work.

Content writing will consist of articles that are informative or entertaining.

How-to-articles, interviews, product reviews, restaurant and show reviews will fall in this category. Opinion based blog writing would also qualify as content writing.

Copywriting is more persuasive. It is usually written to convince the reader to buy something, try something, or sign up for something. Ad copy, sales letters, product descriptions, and home page text all are methods of attempting to encourage the reader to take some sort of action.

If you don't want to set up a personal website, you can also use a couple other third-party organizations that

not only allow you to post your articles on their platform, but pay you for using your content.

- Associated Content (www.associatedcontent.com)
- Helium (www.helium.com)
- Article Content King (<http://www.article-content-king.com>)

Other business writing would include things like press releases, business plans, pitch letters, media kits, legal writing, annual reports, newsletters, brochures, etc. As you can see, you have many places that you can find writing assignments.

Some are never even advertised. You can go to publications on the Web that allows freelance submissions. These sites are called "writers markets." Some of them will even pitch your ideas for you before you have actually written the articles.

Starting Your Own Website or Blog

By starting your own website or blog, and writing about topics that you are passionate about, you are creating samples of your skills that can be used to procure writing jobs. When you are answering ads for work, you can include a link to your site and the relevant articles you have written.

Setting up a website that is a contact point and portfolio of your work is easy to do.

You can do it for free using places like Wordpress.com which will allow you to set up a blog with your information as well as any writing samples you want to provide.

While it is always better to have your own domain name, for newcomers this may not be something they want to tackle right away.

There are a number of good, free sites where you can be sub domain of the main site and use their templates to get up and running with no technical knowledge at all.

These sites include:

- www.blogger.com
- www.wordpress.com
- www.typepad.com
- www.squarespace.com
- www.synthasite.com -

Here is a free step-by-step guide to creating a site with SynthaSite -

<http://www.box.net/shared/i3l1gpfcww>

Creating a website is relatively easy to accomplish. On these free sites, you will become a sub-domain as I stated earlier. A sub-domain would be something like `yourname.typepad.com` or `you.wordpress.com`.

These are good places to begin setting up your initial portfolio, pricing and the like because the main site is so heavily trafficked and the search engines love them.

Another great place to set up is on Squidoo lenses, Hubpages and Google Knols. All of these are one page mini-sites that focus on one thing only.

You can set up any of these pages and by creatively using their linking structure, you can set up a total portfolio and make money monthly from the articles you're displaying.

- Squidoo - www.squidoo.com
- Hubpages - www.hubpages.com
- Google Knols - <http://knol.google.com>

Once you have a good understanding of how websites work and how easy it is to set up your own website, it will be time to branch out and make a website for yourself.

By this point, you should be ready to set up your site on your own with your own domain name, web hosting and

blog template customized to you. Here are some things you will need to do in order to take orders.

- **Get a Paypal account.** It should be at least a Premier account and you should take the time to get it verified. In this way, you will be able to take orders from your website for writing jobs.

Here is a quick video on how to set up a PayPal button - <http://reallysimplemethod.com/videos/>.

- **Godaddy.com** is a great place to get your domain name. A domain name is a recognizable name that takes the place of numerically addressed Internet addresses. For instance, it's a lot easier to remember www.mydomain.com rather than <http://70.54.99.105>.
- **Hostgator.com** provides excellent cheap web hosting. This is where you point your domain name. Pointing means that you direct people to your site. When they type your domain name, the web browser takes them to your site.
- **Pick which blogging platform you are going to use.** By far, the easiest platform to start on is Blogger. It allows you to use their templates as well as their blogging platform to post to your domain. It takes care of all of the HTML and other programming issues for you, leaving you

free to simply provide the web content, samples and pricing you want. While you may not want to stay with Blogger, if you're frightened of jumping into the Wordpress world, blogger is your best bet.

If you do decide to go with Wordpress, there is a wealth of information in the form of articles, e-books and videos to help you get set up and going.

There are thousands of free templates to choose from for all different types of websites, and with the addition of various, free plug-ins, which are tiny programs, you can customize your template to reflect what you are about.

Understanding search engine optimization (SEO) is definitely an advantage when you are seeking jobs. Many clients want their writers to know how to use the keywords that bring attention to their sites.

While this may sound easy, it can be really tricky to work those phrases into your writing and make it sound reasonable. It won't hurt to practice that skill a few times on your own site!

Don't be a quitter; part of becoming a writer is the rejection. Don't be discouraged and do not give up.

Avoiding Freelance Scams

Unfortunately, when you are out there looking for work, you will run into dozens of freelance writing scams. One of the most common scams is the one that asks you to write for free.

They offer all kinds of experience and exposure for the new freelance writer, but, let's face it.

What they want is something for nothing. Period.

Writing for free makes you look so unprofessional.

And these articles aren't being shown in successful, professional online publications. They are beginners, just like you. And they are willing to publish almost anything.

It would be far more impressive on your resume, if you volunteered to do some free articles for a charity that gives you your byline.

Another scam is one that offers you a percentage of advertising revenue.

They do this because they haven't got the money to pay you for the job, which probably means that they are running a new, as yet unsuccessful site, and can't afford advertising either.

Without the ads, and without the traffic to their site, no ad revenue will be earned. You will be wasting your time. It would be easier to earn ad revenue dollars on your own, by signing up with Google AdSense and running some ads on your own website!

No real freelance writing job offer is going to ask you to spend any of your own money.

And, never accept a job and write a single word until you know exactly how and when you are going to be paid for it.

The moment that you read a job ad that promises you thousands of dollars per month, run, don't walk, away from it. You may be lucky enough to find a job like that some day, but it won't be through that sort of an ad. It will come through networking and contacts.

If a job ad isn't willing to state who the client is and how to contact him, be suspicious. You should be able to research a company that you are going to work for.

It boils down to this...before you jump in, check your source. Some sites are less prone to scamming than others.

Are they sharing any of their company information? If not, why not?

If the pay scale they promise you is "hundreds of dollars per week," walk away from it. If it sounds too good to be true, it almost always is.

Don't be afraid to look them up with the Better Business Bureau. Don't ever send them money for any reason. You do not have to pay to work at a legitimate job.

Discuss in detail the financial arrangements. How you are being paid, whether or not they take out withholding, if you are considered to be an independent contractor, and any other questions should be answered willingly and freely.

Building Your Client List

It is most important to set your targets. What strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats do you need to deal with? It is a waste of time to covet a company that uses internal resources for their writing.

Your plan should include key information about your targets, such as organization overview, key contacts, potential proposal/grant writing opportunities, etc.

There are several ways to meet people that will be helpful to your networking. There are writers' forums and groups online, as well as industry-related forums and groups. Even if the industry itself doesn't hire writers, it may recommend you when they meet someone who does.

Joining professional organizations, such as a writers club or organization online can benefit you. Also, don't overlook offline resources like the Greater Chamber of Commerce in your city or town. Members often recommend others in their group for jobs they are unable to do.

Promote yourself for free through article directories. In order to let people know what types of writing you can write, you need to do some free promotion through using the Top 10 article directories which get tons of

traffic from the search engines and lots of visitors looking for writing.

If you make a compelling Author's Resource Box, you will garner a lot of free traffic to your website where you can further sell prospective clients on your services.

Top 5 Article Directories

1. **Ezine Articles** - www.ezinearticles.com - Expert Authors & Writers are able to post their articles to be featured within the site. Through a searchable database of hundreds of thousands of quality original articles, email newsletter publishers hungry for fresh content can find articles that they can use for inclusion within their next newsletter.

This has also expanded to website owners who use the content for on-site content that is niche specific. Ezine articles is one of the oldest, biggest and most well known of all of the directories.

2. **Buzzle** - www.buzzle.com - Buzzle.com is a thorough online resource promoting understanding on subjects covering everything under the Sun and beyond. Enthusiastic writers, in a creative fashion, ensure readers are well informed as well as entertained.

At Buzzle.com, they work towards giving the reader informative self help guides with a touch of creativity to make an entertaining read, helping people learn new things, solve problems, make decisions, get things done, and much more.

3. **GoArticles** - www.goarticles.com - GoArticles is a free content article directory. Writers gain exposure by posting their articles to the site. Publishers are free to pick up the articles and post them As Is which includes a link back to your website.

4. **Isnare** - www.isnare.com - This is another very good site for both webmasters to find writers and for writers to post their content for review allowing webmasters to find their main site through the link provided in the Resource Box.

5. **Articlebase** - www.articlebase.info - Articles for webmasters, readers and ezine editors.

Here are 5 more that are good but not spectacular.

- Article Alley - www.articlealley.com
- Search Warp - www.searchwarp.com
- Ideamarketers - www.ideamarketers.com
- Amazines - www.amazines.com

- Article Dashboard - www.articledashboard.com

Introduce Yourself in The Right Places

You can introduce yourself to editors and owners of the larger websites. This can give you an in when something comes up.

Direct contact and taking the time to familiarize them with you and your skills, may well be remembered for later recommendations.

You will want to seek out membership sites where they are selling PLR content. PLR content is Private Label Content provided on a monthly basis by membership site owners to buyers. Example <http://www.ContentGrab.com>

The buyers can be website owners or ezine publishers looking for specific niche topics and don't want to spend a lot to have the content produced.

Average PLR articles sell for pennies versus the dollars it would take to write an original article.

**Find out who is running the membership site,
send them an email and see if they are**

**amenable to taking you on as one of their
ghostwriters.**

It is best to have a site when trying this and remember that it is a numbers game. You need to hit a minimum of 40 to 50 sites before you even think about giving up. If you reach that number, then rework your email, look at your pricing and go at it again.

You can even offer a rewriting service to the people who buy the PLR content, and give them cut rate pricing for rewriting services on the PLR content that the site provides.

As you build your freelance business, you simply need to keep thinking outside of the box.

Look at the services provided and see where you can upgrade or tie in your writing with what's already working. If a PLR site is very popular, being able to rewrite for webmasters is always a good way to get your foot in the door.

Forums Are Your New Best Friend

Below is a list of the top Internet marketing sites that you will want to join. Now, when you join a forum, the object of the game is to add value to the forum through your posts and comments. It is not to sell your

writing or your business. This should happen naturally over the course of time as you participate in the forum discussions.

As a result, you will not want to join every forum you find simply for the purpose of starting to post advertising about your business. You will get "flamed" and possible tossed out faster than it took for you to sign up.

You want to add your business and website URL just like you make a resource box for your articles. Add this to your Signature file and let it sell you while you post topics and reply to topics in the forum. This is called good forum etiquette and is used by marketers in every forum out there.

You want your Signature to be your silent salesman, and not you blasting advertising at a startled and horrified mass of forum goers. If you start blasting, you will find that the forum participants, normally a fairly a laid-back bunch of people, will become quickly enraged and hand you your virtual head on a platter.

Simply set up your Signature and forget about it. People will see and click on it, coming to your website out of curiosity and not a desire to find out where you live and come chop your computer into little itty-bitty pieces.

Signatures are usually allowed after a certain number of posts are made. The forum wants to see if you are a serious, interested participant or if you simply signed up to try and sell something, spam something and disappear.

So, just put in your posts, add to the conversation and wait for your Signature to go live. Then check in your profile and add a line or two that talks about all the benefits people will receive by visiting your site.

Below is a list of the top Internet Marketing forums worth signing up with:

- Allan Gardyne, [Associate Programs](#)
- Allen Says, [Warrior Forum](#)
- Anthony Blake, [Anthony Blake Online](#)
- Dien Rice, [Seeds of Wisdom](#)
- Doug Heil, [Ihelp You \(Search Engine Discussion\)](#)
- Harvey Segal, Adrian Ling, [ClickBank Success Forum](#)
- Jim Daniels, [CyberMarketing InfoBoard](#)
- John Calder, [IMF \(Internet Marketing Forum\)](#)
- Ken Silver, [Ken Silver Online](#)
- Lesley Fountain, [Friends in Business](#)

- Martin Avis, [Kickstart Today](#)
- Michael Green, [How To - Internet Marketing](#)
- Steve MacLellan, [Home Business Web Site Forum](#)
- Willie Crawford, [Willie Crawford Marketing Forum](#)

Get Ideas from Other Writers

You can send email messages to successful online writers and ask them for tips. They may remember you and pass your name to others. Always sign up for free "anything" from other writers' sites so that you can learn what you need to do.

Writers are full of great ideas, and usually share them freely in exchange you're your email address and first name. There is also so much writing work available online that most freelancers don't mind passing on a few tips for success in the trade.

To find out what other article writers are doing, search on Google for "article writers".

Use the quotes around the term "article writers". You will find a lot of writers promoting themselves through

their blogs, the article directories and blog posts outlining their writing ability, styles and pricing.

Your blog site doesn't need to be massive prior to promoting yourself. Simply start out with a one-page or multi-page site where people can contact you.

If you're using Wordpress, there is a plug-in that will allow people to contact you via the web. Most other platforms have a similar plug-in or small program that will allow you to do the same.

Keep It Simple, Sweetie

This applies to setting up a website to building a client list. Think about the amount of time you have in a day, week or month.

There are only so many clients you can take on at any given time and still have time left over to live your life.

As you learn more about the freelance writing business and add on more services like copywriting, press releases, SEO and LSI optimization, your cost per unit of web content will rise.

However, you are still only one person, and unless you are looking to take on partners, you will only need to

do just so much promotion to get a steady stream of jobs and clients who ask for your services.

You should keep client lists, information on your past performance, recommendations and financial records at all times.

- Follow this simple outline as you go through the process of building a list of clients:
- Take action and start promoting yourself
- Take Action and build a website, Squidoo lens, Hubpage - anything that will allow you to present yourself as a writer ready to take on clients.
- Take action and create products that can be sold right away. This includes things like PLR articles which sell again and again. Go to eBay's pulse page to find out what's hot in the world of Used and slightly dented items
- Take action and post some advertising on Craigslist.org for your writing services as well as USAFreeAds.com Both are major draws and your advertising will get a great return on investment. They are both free or inexpensive, so you can't beat those prices.
- Take action and write articles for Associated Content (www.associatedcontent.com), Helium

(www.helium.com) and Content King (www.article-content-king.com).

- Take action and post some articles at Constant Content (www.constant-content.com), Need Some Content (www.needsomecontent.com) or
- Take action and join the forums and use the power of your Signature to silently sell your services.

The freelance writing business is one of the easiest businesses you can start online besides the affiliate marketing business. The reason for this is that you are literally offering a service that answers a gigantic need online.

Everyone needs good, unique content. If you are a good writer, willing to learn and expand your writing horizons, you will never be at a loss for work. You simply need to Take Action and throw your work out there. It is just that simple.

Now that you know where to look for clients, how to get some fast money flowing and how to build a client list simply and effectively, there's no reason not to get started.

So, now you need to develop a pricing structure that will get you a steadily growing set of clients who will stay with you for as long as you can write an article.

Defining Price Structure

There are many things to be considered when pricing out a job.

- Will your client require personal meetings, phone calls, or online communications?
- Will there be any sort of travel involved in this on your part?
- Is this going to be a one-time job or will it lead to regular work and bigger and better jobs?
- Is it a rush job or are the deadlines and time commitments reasonable and easily met?
- What's the word count?
- How much research is necessary to product the product?

Does this client have prestige and influence? Is it a large industry that you want to win favor with?

Or conversely, is the client needy and you want to do him a favor on a more personal level. Perhaps you want

to make an investment of your time to develop a more lucrative relationship in the future.

Depending on how you feel about the above questions, you can turn a moderate pay assignment into a volunteer job or make a bundle on it. In other words, both price AND value matter in your decision. Under any circumstance, be realistic.

Most freelance jobs are going to pay you for the completed project, either so much per word, or at a per page rate. Make the basis of your evaluation and your conclusion as thorough as possible.

Sometimes getting paid isn't even a concern. Other times, only a very big fee could make a job worth doing at all.

Now with that said, you should establish a standard pricing schedule that you can offer across the board. This does not include the occasional job that you do because the person is desperate for work and has no money. I've often found that if you help out someone, it comes back to you in spades.

Standardized pricing should be something that you can quote with no twinge of conscience, nor should you feel like you are working for peanuts.

That means that you should first look at the work and time that you need to put in on a job and convert that to cost per word. If it's a standard piece of web content, then you should have retail pricing in place to handle that job with an option for discounts on larger orders.

The easiest way to find out what the market will currently bear is to Google on "article writers", "freelance services", ghostwriters and the like, visit the sites, look at their pricing for services and bring yours inline with those prices.

This may seem like a bit of work, but if you want to be fair to both your client and yourself, you need to take the time to find out what the going rates are at the time.

**If you are new to the freelancing business,
you will want to price yourself slightly
lower than the going rate until you get
established.**

You will also want to have special pricing for your long-term clients, because they gave you a shot when no one else did so you should give them a loyalty discount. This is also called grandfathered in when you raise the pricing on new clients. Remember, you need to

treat each client like they are your best friend and act accordingly. In that way, you will have an on-going, good relationship with all of your clients over the long term.

When Should You Negotiate Your Price

- **Your current and upcoming workload.** If you are swamped, busy as heck, up to your neck - whatever, you want to call it - you shouldn't lower your prices. In fact, you may consider redoing your standard pricing because you're being over run. Remember the grandfather clause for your existing clients, which you shouldn't change unless you are completely underwater.
- **Name recognition of the client.** If the client you are working with is willing to give you a recommendation or referral, and they are a known person in a niche that you would like to get more clients from, then lowering the price is a logical choice.

Having the client on your client list is a real win. And truth be told, big companies negotiate just as hard as small companies on price, even if they have the budget - they also have the power. There is something to be said for name recognition, but don't

sink your boat on it. Be willing to go so far and then stop.

- **Profile of the project.** A high profile project that will generate a lot of buzz could be valuable, but make sure the project will be high profile amongst your targeted prospects. Otherwise, your return on investment (i.e. taking a lower price) will be minimal.
- **The "fun" factor.** No one wants to work on boring projects, but freelancers do it all the time to pay the bills. Some freelancers even call that work their "bread and butter." If you see a fun project you might want to slash your prices just to take on something that isn't a B&B Yawner. I must admit, out of the many reasons given to lower your price, this is by far one of the better ones.
- **The "cause" factor.** If the project presented is going to make a real difference in your community, state, country or the world, you should consider lowering your price. Unfortunately, most of these types of projects are run by non-profit organizations that are dependent upon the good hearts of those in the community to stay afloat.

If you feel passionately about the project and feel that it will enrich the community, you might take it on at lesser prices than your standard. There's something to be said for being part of history.

Beware the Bad Clients

As you build your client list, you will invariably run into the "Bad Client". Believe it or not, there are some distinct warning signs that will appear as you work up a price for them..

The RED FLAG warning signs of a **potentially** bad client include:

- Wishy-washy requirements.
- **Communicates poorly** or presents job requirements then changes them midstream.
- Unwillingness to follow **any** early recommendations you have. While this is not engraved in granite, it usually means that the end product will not be to their liking either.
- **Always trying to undercut.** The price and not the quality of the end piece is at the forefront of their conversation or email. This is not to be confused with a person who is on a budget and

wants to get the best they can for the money they have.

There is no real way to explain this except that you will get a feeling about a person trying to undercut you. It makes the hair on the back of your neck stand up and your eyes begin to squint.

Listen to your feelings, and you'll easily tell the difference between a person on a budget and a person out to undercut your pricing.

- **Unwillingness to pay anything upfront.** Always ask for a 50% deposit on the first and second job you take on from one person. If the first job is a large job (say, over \$200), and the person gives you an upfront payment of \$100 then pays at the conclusion of the job, you can feel comfortable that their next job doesn't require an upfront payment.
- **Constantly promising bigger and better.** If a prospective client tells you that if you give them a discount for doing 100 articles, but are only delivering and paying for 20 articles right now, back up, take a breath and quote the 20 article price. This can happen over a series of emails where they bombard you with multiple questions, promise that 80 articles are coming in

a week, and then you are out of the money for doing 20 articles at a discount rate.

- **Dating and job quoting is similar.** These are both establishing a relationship. My mom always told me that if the guy can't pay on the first date or at least pay his half of the meal, there should probably not be a second date.

This is a similar situation. I realize that nowadays everything is half and half on a date; however, if my date comes up short, I'm figuring I'll be paying for the rest of the relationship.

- When it comes to freelance writing and clients, it's the same thing. If you are taken over the coals on the first job, chances are that client will continue to fleece and flim-flam you as the relationship continues. Get out before it starts and stick to your guns . . . nicely.
- **Always get money upfront.** Especially from new clients. Stick with a simple structure: 50% upfront, 50% upon completion of the project, or 33% upfront, 33% midway (agree on this point in the project beforehand), and 33% at the end.
- **Be wary when clients promise lots and lots of future work.** I realize this sounds very pessimistic on my part. I am a huge fan of

building long-term relationships with clients (one off clients aren't the most rewarding or profitable!) But, if a client is "bribing" you to lower your price because they've got "tons of work in the pipeline" be very, very careful.

Even if they do have a lot of upcoming work, once you've set a price for the first project it's going to be hard to raise that price later on.

Winning the Bidding War

The first thing you need to do is to explore the various bidding sites, find out if they have a good reputation, how much they cost, their features, and how easy they are to access and use.

How many posted projects do they have, and are they of decent quality? You need to know in advance if there are writers that avoid these sites completely. Once you have chosen a site and become a member, you need to do the following:

- **Upgrade from a basic membership to a higher level.** It will give you the opportunity to bid on more projects that may also have higher budgets. In addition, you may gain storage space for your clips or even have your bid proposals highlighted.
- When you build your profile; clips, resumes, bios, photos and samples ought to be included within it. Project managers are going to click on this when they are choosing the winners of their projects.

Hint: if you have a website, link it to your profiles, and then back to the website. Increased traffic to your site is always a good thing.

- Projects will be listed on most sites including their descriptions, parameters, and budget. Become familiar with the site so that you can navigate smoothly, bid, ask for clarification when necessary, or send private and public messages. Look at the employer's past projects and check out his reputation.
- If you have the appropriated skills and the job listed interests you, bid on it. If they request resumes or other documents, upload them promptly.
- You should base your bid on the size and difficulty of the job. Be fair; not greedy. Include why you are the best writer for the job with your bid. Respond rapidly to any requests for more information.
- Once you have the job, stay in touch with the project creator. Discuss style, tone, format and deadlines in detail. How you impress him with this job will determine whether you ever get more jobs from him.
- Deliver your completed job in the required format, to the exact specifications, and on time.

Some of the bidding sites include:

- **Rentacoder** - www.rentacoder.com - This is one of the oldest of the auction or bidding sites around. While you have writing jobs that you can bid on, there are also a ton of other types of jobs there.

These include programming, graphic design, coding and software development and more. There is a large section for freelance writing projects that range from article rewriting jobs up to large copywriting jobs.

- **Elance** - www.elance.com - Elance is the leading site for online work where businesses connect with independent professionals to get work done. On Elance, businesses find the experts they need plus the tools to manage online work from hiring to collaboration to making payment.
- **GetAFreelancer** - www.getafreelancer.com - They offer freelance programmers, interpreters and graphic designers who work independently. As a freelancer you can choose among hundreds of outsourced projects, bid on them and take on as much work as you like.

Doing the job well will help you get more jobs later. Most of these sites have a place for feedback, where

the client can critique your work. If he is well satisfied with you, ask him if he would consider putting a testimonial on your website.

You now have an impressive item to add to your resume! If all went as planned, you will be ready for your next bid.

In conclusion, let's review some of the things we went over to get you started on your way to becoming a freelance writer:

- Figure out what kind of writing you want to do. Most of freelance writing is non-fiction, so what topics do you feel passionate about, that is where you want to start.
- Schedule your time even though you are working at home. This is a real job, so treat it like one.
- Write a paragraph or two about yourself and the work you are best at. Paste it as needed on websites you visit.
- Familiarize yourself with search engine optimization and use it. Get subscriptions to several ezines and forums. Get involved with a writing club or online community. All of this networking should be able to be accomplished at no cost to you. Newsletters are a good source of information.

- Go through the market listings and submit articles to them.
- Keep track of your work and your interests and expand on them whenever possible.
- Keep careful records of your articles, income, and expenses. You will be totally responsible for your own taxes at year's end.
- Your portfolio should have a copy of every piece you publish online, including the URL and the date.
- Do research before you quote a price on a job. Take into consideration the time, length, and difficulty of the project, as well as the client you are doing it for. Always arrange for method of payment in advance.
- Before you get into a bidding war, familiarize yourself with the site, the process, as well as the client and job you are bidding on. Complete projects exactly as requested and in a timely manner.
- Don't be afraid to contact the Better Business Bureau to check out a questionable job offer.

When using sites like Craigslist for locating jobs, remember that they have no good filtering system. Many of their job listings are scams.

Learn how to recognize and avoid the scams. Never put out money to get a small article assignment or some such project. And don't be willing to work for free unless it is for a charity.

There are jobs everywhere, if you know where to look.

Below is a sample listing of jobs and links so that you can find all the places where freelance writing jobs hide:

- Freelance Article Writer
<http://www.opendoorjobs.com/jobDetail.faces?jobId=10482>
- Parenting Magazine Seeks Freelance Writers
<http://philadelphia.craigslist.org/wri/550470747.html>
- Software Development Blogger
<http://performancing.com/bloggerjobs/blogger-software-developmentwanted>
- Freelance Writer on Men's Fashion
<http://austin.craigslist.org/wri/550765152.html>

- Freelance Writer/Researcher
http://www.journalismjobs.com/Job_Listing.cfm?JobID=875419
- Part Time Editor for Productivity Blog
<http://jobs.problogger.net/view/1033>
- Freelance Ghostwriter for Book on Child Behavior Problems
<http://www.jobsinme.com/seek/resultdetail.aspx?jobnum=365752>
- Freelance Editors/Proofreaders
<http://jobs.phds.org/job/7378/nativespeaker-com/freelance-editorproofreader>
- Freelance Writer/Contributor
<http://www.linkedin.com/jobs?viewJob=&jobId=462866>

These are just some of the sites you can find simply by using search engines. Play around with the various keywords you put in, and don't overlook the obvious.

Prologger's job board (jobs.problogger.com) is an excellent place to start. Most, if not all jobs are online, and it's a quick, easy way to build your portfolio.

Putting It All Together

Starting your business will require next to no money, and you will need a plan to follow. First, get the following:

- Website or free site through one of the listed companies.
- Setup as a sub-domain or get your own domain from Godaddy.com
- Start a blog and setup your writing samples, pricing and bulk discounts so that when people come to your site, you can present a buyer's package
- Promote your site through various paid and unpaid sites as well as forums.
- Continue to build a writing portfolio and learn more about the higher paying web content jobs like press releases and sales pages.
- Find online jobs through various sites including auction/bidding sites, job boards and other places where writers work.
- Keep accurate notes on where you go, and where you've been so that you can find your way back to good resources that you find online.

- Set a pricing structure for your articles and web content.
- Avoid freelance scams and scammers who will try to undercut you at every turn.
- Build a client list, but keep it simple. You don't need 100 clients to have a freelance career. 10 good clients may be enough.
- Stick to the basics and avoid being distracted.
- Get a blog. With your blog/website, you're the boss. You can build up quite a following with your blog/website as you update it with helpful information that will build your credibility.
- Build a portfolio on paying sites like Associated Content so that you can earn while you learn.
- Network with other writers as you work, including signing up for as many newsletters and e-zines as you can around the subject of freelance writing.

Join Freelance Writing Newsletters and Mailing Lists

A somewhat passive way to find freelance writing jobs on the Internet is to subscribe to writing newsletters and mailing lists or forums.

Many writing sites offer free subscriptions to their newsletters that feature job openings and projects, along with tips and articles about the writing life.

Subscribing to online mailing lists and message forums will help you get involved with co-writers, editors, and publishers -- the exchange of information often leads to job opportunities.

- AbsoluteWrite.com - subscribe to their Writer's Markets Newsletter
- EWriteLife.com
- FreelanceWorkExchange.com - has a free and a paid "Professional Edition" list.
- FreelanceWriting.com
- WritersWeekly.com [Freelance Jobs and Paying Markets](http://FreelanceJobsandPayingMarkets.com)
- [Writing For Dollars](http://WritingForDollars.com)
- YahooGroups.com: Search for writing groups like Work For Writers, PROSwrite, etc.

Don't Forget Those Discussion Groups

You may be the type of writing professional who loves to interact with others in your field. Some of the ways

to "mingle" with co-writers is through chats, message boards, or forums:

Message Boards/Forums

- [Absolute Write Water Cooler](http://pub43.ezboard.com/babsolutewrite) -
<http://pub43.ezboard.com/babsolutewrite>
- [Writers Write Forums](http://wwforums.com/6/ubb.x?a=cfrm&s=6636029721) -
<http://wwforums.com/6/ubb.x?a=cfrm&s=6636029721>
- [WritersWeekly Forums](http://forums.writersweekly.com/index.php) -
<http://forums.writersweekly.com/index.php>

Virtual communities

This is another way to get into writing projects. The community work itself doesn't usually pay much but you can get a lot of free exposure simply by joining and participating in the community.

- Suite101.com
- iVillage.com
- About.com
- ThirdAge.com

Conclusion

Well, we've finally come to the end of this e-book. For me, this was one fun piece of writing. This e-book is packed with information and links to get you started.

Now all that's left is for you to get out there and throw your hat into the freelance writing ring. Don't hesitate, and don't worry about the rejections. Simply say this quiet litany when faced with rejection -

- Some will -
- Some won't -
- So what - NEXT!

Writing is about passion, commitment and the development of a Rhino skin. Don't let the rejections stop you and on the flipside, don't rest on your laurels.

One more place where you can find a hidden treasure - [About.com](#). They hire [Guides](#) who are freelance writers who are expert in a wide variety of fields.

They're starting pay is \$750 per month as of this writing, and the topics are wide ranging and ever changing.

Share Your Passion

[About.com](#) is an online neighborhood of hundreds of helpful experts that are called Guides.

<http://beaguide.about.com/index.htm>

Here's what they have to say:

Every month, millions visit us for help with everything from health care and parenting issues to advice on travel, cooking, technology, and hobbies.

We offer them solutions in the form of over two million hand-crafted, original articles, all created by our exclusive network of over 750 Guides; real people who, like all good neighbors, help others so that everyone's life gets just a little better.

We're looking for passionate, experienced writers to join this group of Guides, covering on of our available topics in depth.

[Try it.](#) What have you got to lose!

To your freelance success,

Freelance Mastery