

S E C O N D E D I T I O N

Starting
Your Career
as a
Freelance
Writer

BY MOIRA
ANDERSON ALLEN

Contents

Introduction 1

PART I: GETTING STARTED 3

CHAPTER 1

So You Want to Be a Freelance Writer 5

What Is a Freelancer? 6

How Much Can You Earn? 7

What Does It Take to Become a Freelancer? 9

CHAPTER 2

Getting Started 13

The Necessities 13

Optional Extras 17

CHAPTER 3

Making Time to Write 21

Treat Time as an Investment 21

Examine Your “Time Budget” 21

Examine Your Priorities 22

Eliminate Time-Wasters 23

Teach Others to Respect Your Time 24

CHAPTER 4

Setting Goals 25

Defining Effective Writing Goals 25

Short-Term vs. Long-Term Goals 26

Review Your Progress 27

CHAPTER 5

Coping with Rejection 29

But why? 29

“Good” Rejection Slips 30

Self-Honesty 30

It Sank. Get Over It. 31

PART II: STARTING YOUR ARTICLE 33

CHAPTER 6

Finding Ideas 35

What Do Editors Want? 35

Digging for Ideas 36

Brainstorming Ideas 37

- Focus and Expand* 38
- Don't Eliminate the Negative* 40

CHAPTER 7

- Categories, Subjects, Topics, and Slants 41
 - Category* 41
 - Subject* 42
 - Topic* 42
 - Slant* 42

CHAPTER 8

- The Outline Demystified 45
 - Five Ways to Approach the Outline* 46
 - Working Within a Word Budget* 48

CHAPTER 9

- Conducting Research on the Web 51
 - Defining Effective Search Terms* 51
 - Is It Accurate?* 52
 - Using Published Sources* 54

CHAPTER 10

- Conducting Interviews 57
 - Making Contact* 57
 - Before the Interview* 59
 - During the Interview* 60
 - After the Interview* 62
 - E-mail Interviews* 62
 - E-mail Surveys* 64
 - Using Interview Material* 65

CHAPTER 11

- Starting Your First Draft 67
 - Step One: Identify Your Subject* 67
 - Step Two: Identify Your Subtopics* 68
 - Step Three: Identify Your Audience* 69
 - Step Four: Identify Your Limits* 69
 - Step Five: Identify Your Structure* 69
 - Style and Presentation* 70
 - Beginnings, Middles, and Ends* 71
 - Sidebars* 72
 - Five Flaws that Can Lead to Rejection* 73

CHAPTER 12

- Personal Experience Articles 75
 - Experiences to Share* 75
 - Experiences that Enrich* 76

<i>Experiences to Avoid</i>	77
<i>Experiences to Endure</i>	77
<i>First Experiences</i>	78
<i>Experience as Expertise</i>	79
<i>Using Experiences Wisely</i>	80
<i>Getting the “I” Out</i>	80
<i>Some Final Tips</i>	81

PART III: FINDING THE RIGHT MARKETS 83

CHAPTER 13

Exploring the Markets	85
<i>Finding Free (and Almost Free) Magazines</i>	87
<i>Evaluating a Market: Is it Right for You?</i>	88
<i>Should You Write for Free?</i>	94

CHAPTER 14

Writing for Special-Interest Publications	97
<i>“But I’m Not an Expert”</i>	97
<i>Understanding the Markets</i>	98
<i>Magazine “Must-Haves”</i>	98
<i>Should You Specialize or Generalize?</i>	100

CHAPTER 15

Writing for Newspapers (by Sue Fagalde Lick)	103
<i>How Do Magazine and Newspaper Writing Differ?</i>	104
<i>Finding Freelance Opportunities</i>	105
<i>Types of Newspaper Articles</i>	106
<i>Do You Need Pictures?</i>	107
<i>Querying a Newspaper</i>	107
<i>Writing the Article</i>	109
<i>Don’t Overlook the Internet</i>	112
<i>Once You Have Your Foot in the Door...</i>	112

PART IV: QUERIES AND SUBMISSIONS 113

CHAPTER 16

The Submission Process	115
<i>Whom to Contact</i>	115
<i>What to Send</i>	116
<i>Simultaneous and Multiple Submissions</i>	118
<i>Waiting for an Answer</i>	119
<i>The Editor Responds...</i>	120
<i>After the Acceptance</i>	121
<i>Tracking Submissions</i>	122
<i>Will an Editor Steal Your Ideas?</i>	124

CHAPTER 17

How to Write a Successful Query 125

Elements of a Query 126

Hooks to Avoid 127

Format 129

Multiple-Pitch Queries 130

Common Query Problems 131

CHAPTER 18

E-mail Queries 135

Elements of the E-mail Query 136

CHAPTER 19

Formatting Your Manuscript 141

Print Manuscripts: The Basics 141

Fonts and Format 142

Electronic Submissions 142

Counting the Words 142

Other Format Issues 143

CHAPTER 20

Do You Need a Cover Letter? 145

When to Use a Cover Letter 145

Ten Things to Leave Out of Your Letter 147

PART V: RIGHTS AND CONTRACTS 149

CHAPTER 21

Understanding Rights and Copyright 151

A Writer's Rights 152

Electronic Rights 154

Use vs. Payment 156

Protecting Your Rights 156

CHAPTER 22

Understanding Contracts 159

Understanding Terms 160

Negotiating Contracts 161

Understanding Your Position 161

What Isn't a Contract 162

Making Your Own Contract 163

Some Tricky Contract Issues 163

CHAPTER 23

Setting Fees and Getting Paid 167

By the Word vs. by the Hour 167

When Time Isn't the Only Factor 168

Handling "Pay on Publication" Markets 169

Asking for More Money 170
Getting Paid 172

CHAPTER 24

Handling Income and Expenses 175
Tracking Your Business 176
Why All This Trouble? 178
Preparing Your Taxes 179
Deducting Expenses 179
Estimated Taxes 182
Surviving an Audit 183
Get an Accountant! 183

CHAPTER 25

Keeping Records 187
Contracts and Letters of Agreement 187
Correspondence 187
Invoices 188
Clips 188
Manuscripts 189
Keeping Electronic Records 189

PART VI: THE ONLINE WRITER 193

CHAPTER 26

The Writer and the Internet 195

CHAPTER 27

Creating a Writer's Web Site 199
Five Great Reasons for a Web Site 199
Elements of a Successful Web Site 206
Making Money from Your Site 208
Three Things Your Web Site Can Do Without 209
The Greatest Danger of All... 209

CHAPTER 28

How Social Networking Sites Help Writers (by Penny J. Leisch) 211
Facebook 211
Linkedin 212
Twitter 212
Using Social Network Sites 213
Getting Started 214
Beyond the Basics 216
More Information 217

CHAPTER 29

To Blog or Not to Blog 219
Why Blog? 220

- Speaking of Numbers...* 222
- Blogging vs. "Writing"* 223
- Taking the Plunge* 225
- Tools for the Blogger* 226

PART VII: EXPANDING YOUR WRITING BUSINESS 229

CHAPTER 30

- Selling Reprints 231

CHAPTER 31

- Writing for International Publications 237

CHAPTER 32

- Selling Photos 241
 - Photo "Ops"* 241
 - Basic Equipment* 242
 - Submitting Photos* 244
 - Obtaining Photos from Other Sources* 246
 - Submitting Photos Without Manuscripts* 247

CHAPTER 33

- Selling (and Syndicating) a Column 249
 - Choosing a Column Topic* 250
 - Pitching Your Column* 251
 - Self-Syndicating Your Column* 254

CHAPTER 34

- Writing (and Selling) a Nonfiction Book 259
 - Why Write a Book?* 260
 - Getting Started* 261
 - Finding a Publisher* 262
 - Preparing a Proposal* 264
 - The Publishing Process* 267

CHAPTER 35

- Do-It-Yourself Publishing 269
 - Self-Publishing* 269
 - Subsidy Publishing* 270
 - Subsidy Print-on-Demand Publishing* 271
 - Electronic Publishing* 272

PART VIII: COMMERCIAL FREELANCING 275

CHAPTER 36

- Writing for Businesses (by Dawn Copeman) 277
 - What Does a Copywriter Do?* 278
 - What Do You Need to be a Copywriter?* 279

Getting the Work 282
SIDEBAR: The Cold Call, by Peter Bowerman 282

CHAPTER 37

Becoming a Successful Copywriter (by Dawn Copeman) 285
Writing Copy 287
Direct Sales Letters 289
Press Releases 290
Writing Web Content 292

CHAPTER 38

Commercial Freelancing: Where's the Money? 293
Defining the Project 293
Determining a Timeline 294
Setting Fees 294
Get It in Writing 295
Follow up! 298

PART IX: CONCLUSION: TAKING THE PLUNGE 299

CHAPTER 39

Full-Time Freelancing: Taking the Plunge 301
When to Plunge—and When Not To 301
A Writer's Checklist 302
Making a Plan 303

About the Author 307
About the Contributors 309