

barefootWriter

Celebrating 14 Years of Helping People Find Freedom Through Well-Paid Writing



Entrepreneur Holly Reisem Hanna turned a simple blog into a flexible, multi-stream online business helping women find legit remote careers.

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ABOUT OUR COVER:

Holly Reisem Hanna is the founder of The Work at Home Woman, the award-winning site that helps women find legitimate, flexible remote careers. In this issue, Holly shares how she grew a simple blog into a multi-stream business, her smartest monetization moves, and lessons she wishes every new online entrepreneur knew.

The Slog Flip That Leads to More Wins and Paid Work

When you first start making progress in the writing world, there's often a small stretch of confusion. On one hand, you've read that paid writing is Easy! Fun! Attainable!

On the other hand, nobody's knocking down your door in their hurry to pay you large sums...

Yet there are *loads* of Barefoot Writers who make those large sums *and* talk about their writing being easy, fun, and attainable.

What gives?

Friends, I call it the Slog Flip. Simply put, the slog is the art of working hard over a period of time. The flip is where you find joy in the work and fulfillment in the time spent. Put in enough of the two — the work and the time — and you get to the payoff.

Of course, you don't have to take my word for it. Holly Reism Hanna knocked it out of the park on this one, building an influential online business one post at a time (p. 9). Tim O'Leary and Lindsay Alexander paid attention to what was authentic to them and are both sitting happy in their writing work (p. 5).

Will the down days come? Yes! And right there is another opportunity for a flip. Preparing for the unexpected (because, um, that's life) is a must (p. 30). Rejection also happens, but there's a clever way to turn it around (p. 33). And in this age of digital disconnection... you can still forge ahead as a caring, feeling human who builds genuine networks that lead to satisfying work (p. 27).

Speaking of connection, this month we highlight a very cool and connected way to land steady, ongoing writing work that gives back to the people you write for. It makes my heart happy just to know this opportunity exists (p. 21).

So if you find yourself in the Slog, I hope you can acknowledge your own effort and keep trucking forward. The Flip is likely right around the corner.

You were born for this work,



Mindy McHorse
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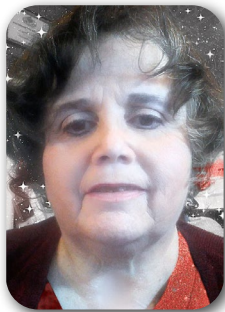
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Challenge Prompt: What are the top two or three non-negotiable goals you want to achieve next year?



Jen Phillips April (“7 Non-Cringey Ways to Build Your Network”) was a museum educator at Pennsylvania’s historic sites for seven years. When budget cuts ended her role, she launched her copywriting business in 2011. Her portable income inspired her to move to Mexico’s Caribbean in 2017, where she runs her freelance writing business steps from the Caribbean Sea. When not writing for her B2B SaaS clients, she’s usually relaxing with a novel or exploring the area’s beach clubs.

(1) Work with two or more education-focused clients on their strategy and brand story. (2) Build my Substack into a profitable income path.



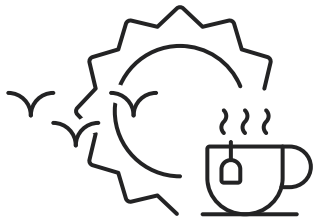
Rebecca Griffin (“The Reputation-Saving System Every Freelancer Needs”) is a copywriter and optimization coach who teaches small businesses how to attract more leads and traffic with simple, compelling content and SEO frameworks. Through her agency, SEO Web Copy, and her growing Substack and Skool communities, she shows writers and entrepreneurs how strategic content can open doors to growth, confidence, and real results.

In the coming year, I’m focused on expanding my agency, SEO Web Copy, and building vibrant, engaged communities on both Substack and Skool. My goal is to help more small businesses grow through optimized content while giving writers and entrepreneurs a place to learn, grow, and gain confidence. I’m committed to creating systems and content that fuel long-term success for everyone I serve.



A few years ago, **Ron Craig** (“The Good News Strategy: How to Turn Rejection into Writing Income”) decided to pursue a career as a full-time writer, and enrolled in AWAI courses. He owns a cabin on an idyllic lake, and wrote an article for a major cottage magazine. He translated this published success into writing newsletters and online articles, and creating podcasts for a variety of corporate clients. Ron loves the challenge of meeting with clients and creating copy that helps them achieve their corporate goals. He still gets a thrill from seeing his magazine articles, illustrated with his photographs, published in major magazines.

My goal for next year is to become an AWAI-verified copywriter, complete my book on creativity, and expand my corporate client base. I also intend to spend more time enjoying my rural lifestyle.



Mindy McHorse Talks to **Barefoot Writers** From All Walks Of Life

She Couldn't Write for Just Anybody...

Lindsay Alexander was bubbling with enthusiasm the day I spoke to her, and it was no small wonder — her first book came out that day. But her journey to writing and finding her focus was anything but direct or easy. Discover how she navigated the twists and turns and how a “brain curveball” upended all her plans, but in the best of ways.

Where did your writing journey begin?

I was writing fiction in my mid-teens, but it was focused on crushes on pop stars. Unfortunately, I got caught doing that, so my parents and the school slapped me down very hard, and I didn't write for a number of years. Also, I always heard that if you're an author, you don't earn any money unless you're massive like Jeffrey Archer or J.K. Rowling. I didn't feel like I could measure up to them, so I went into full-time office admin. Writing went to the back burner.

What brought it to the forefront?

I had an intense spiritual connection with somebody that led me to start writing stories. But before all that kicked off, I was already looking at the copywriting side of things back in 2019 and thinking, *Well, maybe I could do this.* That was how I came across AWAI. I didn't expect to struggle, but I did. And I'm like, *Why? I want to do this. Why can't I find anyone that I want to write for?*

So I really had to evaluate what I was doing with my life. It took another two and a half years and an ADHD diagnosis and a certification in reading Angel Tarot by Radleigh Valentine, plus a vision board workshop, before everything suddenly went fire hose. That was the beginning of this year. What I discovered was that I wanted to write for myself.



Lindsay “on location” at Littlehampton Pier in England, where her novel is based.

And now you've written four books in a year, and the first one came out in November.

Yes! It's called *Tarot for Two, Book One — Alone*, and people can find it on Amazon under a pen name, Ella Hamilton. It's the first book in a series of five. So in terms of total words this year, I'm already over 425,000. They're all full-length novels.

Impressive! How have you used copywriting to promote yourself or build an author platform?

I've struggled with a lot of the copywriting programs because my brain works differently and is not linear. So I've picked out a bit here and there, and managed to use things like The 4 P's and The 4 U's. So, Promise, Picture, Proof, and Push, and Useful, Unique, Ultra-Specific, and Urgent. I use those elements when I promote my book.

You mentioned your diagnosis of ADHD. How has that affected your writing?

The easiest way to explain it is that I have very different wiring to the majority of people. I go everywhere with a notebook because I can't hold an idea in my head if I'm out and about.

There are other things that I fully acknowledge work for people like supplements and breathing and meditation and stuff. I'm one of the lucky ones for whom medication works. So I actually have a window of about five hours of concentration, which kicks in about an hour and a half after I take my medication.

Managing your time used to be a struggle for you, and now you're able to meet deadlines regularly. How?

I think what really helped with that was knowing that I had to have this first book out by the end of the year, by whatever means. So yeah, I have several alarms set on my phone that go off to remind me when I'm supposed to be doing something.

But it's very much a trial-and-error thing. Some people will find Pomodoro works, some people will find that meditating works. I think really it just comes down to the fact that this was so important to me that I was able to make myself manage my time. Because nobody else can.

What's your advice for someone with different neurotyping who wants to do something big, like launch a writing career?

If you're doing any kind of project that really involves your heart, then it's a little easier. If you're doing it because somebody else thinks you should, it probably won't work.



Lindsay celebrated the launch of her e-book at a bar in Canary Wharf, London, hence the Kindle in one hand and a Shade Shifter nonalcoholic cocktail in the other.

For those of us whose brains are wired differently, you have to find what works for yourself. And if it doesn't light you up, you won't stick with it. It's not enough just to think that it's your why, because it can be your why, but you still might not be able to see a path to get there. Give yourself permission to do it differently. Be authentically yourself.

DISCLAIMER: All writers featured in *Barefoot Writer* and the results are real but do not claim to represent typical results. Any success depends on many variables which are unique to each individual, including commitment and effort. Testimonial results are meant to demonstrate what the most dedicated students have done and should not be considered average. AWAI.com makes no guarantee of any financial gain from the use of its products.

'The Reverse of Catching the Acting Bug'

Tim O'Leary was a self-described ham, a theater kid who dreamed of being on stage. But when a fortuitous contest led him to the writing side of play production, he was hooked. From there, he followed one opportunity after another until he found his way into a lucrative and steady writing career. Read on to discover where he landed.

Was life as a writer always on your radar?

I have written throughout my life, but I was really an actor. I always wanted to be on stage. I moved to New York City and pursued theater acting. While there — I think I was 25 — I saw an advertisement for a playwriting contest. And if you were one of the five winners, this company would put on a professional Equity production of the show that you wrote. (Equity is the stage actors' union.) I was lucky enough to be picked. So I sat in the audience and watched something that I had written unfold on stage. And that was the real light bulb moment where I realized *this* is actually what I'm supposed to do with my life. It was like the reverse of catching the acting bug.

After that, I pursued writing and moved to LA, went to UCLA for television writing because I've always loved TV. And eventually got into ghostwriting.

How did that come into the picture?

After I moved to LA, from the place where everybody reads to the place where nobody reads, I got an email from a friend of mine who worked as a proofreader for a ghostwriting firm. The CEO at her firm had said they wanted new ghostwriters. So she asked if I had any writing samples. And I did — some blogs and novels I'd tinkered with. Ultimately, I was offered a job, and the next day was given my first client.

What types of ghostwriting projects have you done?



Tim (left) and husband Robert Rice, longtime writer for AWAI and *Barefoot Writer* magazine.

I did write one business book, which was a very pleasant experience. I had a lovely client. But because my bosses knew what my lane is, so to speak, as a writer, they mostly gave me novels. And I did get to write a graphic novel one time, which was really fun, and also a business book.

What led you to leave the agency and go freelance?

I've been freelancing for five years now. I started with the firm, which was a great experience. But to be honest, without throwing anybody under the bus, I knew I could make a lot more money working for myself than working for a firm.

How do you land new ghostwriting projects?

Almost exclusively through referrals. I really don't pay for advertising. It's mostly just word of mouth. I like keeping it that way because I'm more inclined to work with a client who is a referral from a client that I've had before. I also have repeat clients, which is nice.

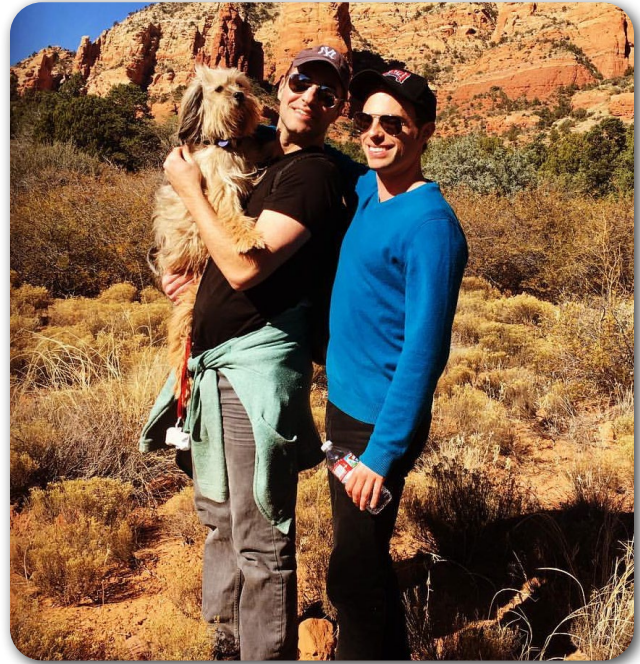
What do you enjoy most about ghostwriting?

When someone who's been dying to tell a story for years, sometimes decades, starts to see words on the page that is their story, that sense of elation... It gives me goose bumps just talking about it. It's my favorite part of the job, because you get to give this great gift to other people while also working for a living. It's such a magnificent feeling.

What advice can you share for moving into life as a professional ghostwriter?

It's great to have samples. Pick something that you've always wanted to write and write it, because your passion will be visible on the page, and people will be excited to read your writing. The more of you that you put into whatever you write, the more people are going to connect to it, which is an ironic thing for a ghostwriter to say, because a lot of times I'm not putting myself on the page at all; I'm putting somebody else on the page. But for my own work, it is absolutely vital.

Also, find what your brand is as a writer. When I was working at the ghostwriting firm, they knew I was a big genre guy, and I love horror and action and mystery and sci-fi and all that stuff. And I can talk about that and be excited about it. So when they would get a request from a client who wanted to write a book in those genres, I was usually the first person they thought of because that was my lane, so to speak. That was my brand. And then finally, really work on your technique to be as quick as you can. ■



Tim and Robert with their dog, Dexter, explore Sedona, Arizona.



“Everyone has to start somewhere, and you may as well start today, rather than tomorrow.”

— Holly Reitem Hanna, Writer, Entrepreneur,
Owner of The Work at Home Woman

By Mindy McHorse

I had the pleasure of meeting Holly Reitem Hanna 10 years ago at an in-person AWAI Bootcamp. At that time, she was just getting her online business started. So it's a real joy to get to connect with her now that she's established herself as the creator of one of the top job resource websites — which is no small feat!

As founder of The Work at Home Woman, Holly is one of the early pioneers in the remote work movement. After initially launching it as a blog in 2009 born out of her own work-from-home challenges, her site has won multiple awards and received accolades from outlets like Forbes. Holly's mission is to help women find legitimate work-from-home opportunities that give them income and flexibility.

Today, the site has empowered millions of readers and is a trusted voice in the world of women's entrepreneurship. Holly is also the author of *Time Management in 20 Minutes a Day* and appears as a frequent guest in national media. Her message advocates for the freedom to design one's life and work on one's own terms (something Barefoot Writers understand well!).

I connected with Holly from her home in Austin, Texas. Pay close attention to her advice on the power of connecting with others on the same journey, as well as how to shift with the changes in the digital landscape and come out on top.

interview with a barefoot writer (continued...)

What inspired you to start The Work at Home Woman?

I always knew I wanted to be a mom, so when I got pregnant with my daughter, I immediately started planning my transition out of nursing and into being a full-time stay-at-home mom. I had worked in several different nursing roles, but none of them ever felt like the perfect fit. My husband and I agreed that I'd stay home with our daughter until she started school, and then I'd figure out my next step.

And how did you first get it off the ground?

During those early months at home, I started diving into work-from-home career options. The only problem? I had no idea what I actually wanted to do next. Through my research and a little nudge from a friend who suggested I start a blog, the idea slowly started taking shape. I spent months researching and writing content, and eventually hired a graphic designer to help bring the website to life.

In March 2009, I officially launched The Work at Home Woman. Over time, it grew, and then it grew some more. Eventually, it became my full-time gig.

What kinds of challenges came up in the early days?

While I had done some freelancing, I had never started a business before. Everything was new to me, so I tried to educate myself and figure out everything along the way. However, you don't know what you don't know, so I made quite a few mistakes. Some were not that big of a deal, and others were more significant, like not paying quarterly self-employment taxes.

How did you overcome all of that?

Finding a group of like-minded business owners was one of the things that really helped out. Having a sounding board and a safe place to ask questions and get support has been invaluable.

Tell us about your monetization strategy. How did you decide what offers to create?

Years before I had my daughter, I was fascinated with blogging and how bloggers earned money. It seemed like such a fun career, so I dug into how bloggers made money. With this knowledge, I knew from the start that I wanted to monetize through ad revenue, affiliate marketing, and brand sponsorships. Over the years, I also sold an e-book, printables, freelancing services, and templates. My newest project is starting a monthly membership with vetted remote job leads, information, and advice.



What started as a simple blog experiment in 2009 has grown into Holly's full-time business, helping women find legitimate, flexible work-from-home opportunities.

interview with a barefoot writer (continued...)

What primary income streams drive revenue for Work at Home Woman?

Ad revenue, affiliate marketing, brand sponsorships, creator funds, and digital product sales.

How has your approach to monetization evolved since you first launched?

I've always had a diversified approach to monetization and traffic, because what's hot one day may dry up the next. The one constant is that things are constantly evolving, and if you resist change, you'll be left behind.

Are there any lessons you've learned now that you wish you had known before starting your online business?

When I started, I focused most of my effort on social media and SEO, when I should have focused on building my email list. Search and social media algorithms are constantly changing, and even when using the best practices, these sources can dry up without any warning. With email, you own your list and can use it at any time to reach your audience. While social and SEO are essential, email should be at the top of your list.

How do you decide which job opportunities or resources to recommend for your audience?

I conduct thorough vetting of resources, advertisers, and job leads. I use a variety of websites, like Glassdoor.com, Trustpilot, Indeed, and Reddit, to read reviews and gather information.

What specific marketing tactics have been highly successful for scaling your business?

As an introvert, I've always shied away from doing video. But in 2020, an online colleague (who is also an introvert) and I decided to challenge each other to each create two TikTok videos a week.

I jumped headfirst into TikTok and started recording short videos. I had no idea how to edit them, so I asked my daughter for help. In a very short period, my friend and I both had videos go viral. It was very exciting and fun, and it drove a ton of traffic to my website.

Now, video marketing is a staple of my marketing plan, as I can repurpose my TikTok videos for YouTube, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram. However, had I not had a colleague to hold me accountable, I doubt I would have ever started.



An introvert who once avoided video, Holly leaned into TikTok, went viral, and transformed short-form video into a core traffic engine for her business.

interview with a barefoot writer (continued...)

How do you balance free content with paid offerings?

Sadly, the work-from-home niche is littered with employment scams, so I offer a lot of value and freebies to my audience. I want to nurture the relationship and build trust first and foremost. While I do offer premium products for sale, my goal is to help all job seekers, whether or not they can purchase a product from me. This is one reason I chose the advertising monetization model: to help everyone, regardless of their ability to pay.

What about social media — what role does that play in your business?

Social media helps me gain new followers, build trust, distribute information and content, and get people to sign up for my free newsletter. I'm currently active on Facebook, YouTube, Pinterest, TikTok, LinkedIn, and Instagram.

How has your business changed in the past one to two years, especially with shifts in the online business landscape and AI?

For years, Google was my primary source of traffic. These days, things are much more balanced; my audience now comes from social, search, email, and even ChatGPT.

With all the changes happening in AI, I've shifted my focus away from strict SEO and more toward building genuine connections with my audience and creating the content they truly want.



From obsessively vetting remote job leads to prioritizing email over algorithms, Holly has built a business rooted in trust, long-term relationships, and real opportunities for job seekers.

Are there things you are doing differently now compared with when you first started?

Definitely when I began, it was just me doing everything. Now, I have a team of writers, a web programmer for tech issues, and an assistant who helps with administrative, marketing, and editing tasks. Besides having a team of fabulous freelancers who help me run The Work at Home Woman, I am also much more strategic about ROI and how I spend my time.

What metrics or indicators do you focus most on to measure your success and growth?

Of course, I look at stats like income, website traffic, and overall growth, but what's

interview with a barefoot writer (continued...)

always been most important is my satisfaction in what I'm doing and how much free time I'm able to spend with family and friends.

What long-term goals do you have for The Work at Home Woman?

I'm launching my Remote Job Membership in January 2026, and I'm really excited to help job seekers on a deeper level.

I'll likely retire in seven years, so [I want to find] a suitable buyer who will continue with The Work at Home Woman's mission to help job seekers find legitimate work-from-home jobs.

Let's talk about motivation. How do you stay inspired as an entrepreneur?

I genuinely love what I do! From learning new marketing techniques and writing to helping individuals find work, it's just so darn rewarding. When you enjoy what you do, it's easy to stay motivated.

What tools, platforms, or resources have been game changers for your business growth?

There are three tools I could not do without: WordPress (the platform I use for blogging), Kit (the service I use for email marketing), and ThriveCart (the e-commerce tool I use to sell printables and my membership).

Say you were talking to someone just starting to build an online business in today's environment... What advice would you give them?

Don't be afraid to try new things. Everyone has to start somewhere, and you may as well start today, rather than tomorrow. The sooner you can start, the sooner you can achieve your goals and success. ■



Holly in Kobe, Japan (2025), with the master chef of Steak & Grill Kobe Meriken Hatoba.



HUGE List of **Free** Business Resources for Your Small Business

By Holly Reisem Hanna

Leaving the security of a steady-paying job to launch a new business can be a scary endeavor. Even if you've planned and saved six months' worth of living expenses, it often takes months to generate income from your business.

And guess what?

Even if you don't have money coming in, your business still incurs expenses to run smoothly. But don't despair; there are tons of free tools, resources, guides, and printables, so you don't have to break the bank.

Here is a massive list of free resources for small-business owners so you can focus on business growth and making money instead of spending it.

Free Resources and Tools

1. Free Websites and Platforms

Since you won't have a brick-and-mortar location, the heart of your home-based business is your website. Having a site allows people to window-shop your services and products; it helps them find you online and conveys valuable information. Personally, I think it's in your best interest to own your website (that is, to purchase your domain name and hosting), but if you can't afford a website right off the bat, I suggest using a free option until you can afford to switch to a more robust platform.

A few things to note about free platforms. Usually, you'll be limited to a small number of webpages, you'll have limited bandwidth and storage, and often, you'll have a sub-domain. If you can spare \$2.95 a month, I highly recommend setting up your own website with WordPress. Not only is it affordable, but it's also extremely simple to set up and use, and it will give you a professional-looking website that you own.

Here are free options for setting up your company's website:

[Blogger](#) — Blog

[Google Sites](#) — Website

[Jimdo](#) — Website

[Medium](#) — Blog

[Patreon](#) — Membership platform

[Shopify](#) — Free for three days, then \$1 for three months (e-commerce platform)

[Strikingly](#) — Website

[Substack](#) — Membership platform

[Webflow](#) — Website

[Weebly](#) — Website

[WordPress.com](#) — Blog

[Yola](#) — Website and e-commerce sites

2. Free Online Productivity Tools

You'd think, as much as I'm online, that I'd rely heavily on online productivity tools, but I don't. As you'll see below, I like to use real-world tools to help me stay organized. But if you prefer online time management tools, here's a great list to keep you on track.

[ClickBook](#) — Offers online appointment scheduling

[Cozi](#) — Simple family organizer

[Doodle](#) — Scheduling application that will sync all of your calendars — free for 14 days

[Evernote](#) — Virtual to-do list

[Google Calendar](#) — Online calendar

[SavvyCal](#) — One scheduling tool

[Todoist](#) — Task manager

[Zapier](#) — Automation tool

3. Free Printables

I'm old school when it comes to planning and organizing. For all of my personal and business activities, I use a physical planner, calendar, notebook, and tons of printables. From grocery and daily to-dos to packing lists, chore charts, and business goals. If

you're looking for free printables to organize your business and life, this list has you covered.

[Dave Seah](#) — Productivity tools

[Frugal Fanatic](#) — Budgeting, debt reduction, worksheets

[momAgenda](#) — Planning, checklists, and tracking sheets

[Money Saving Mom](#) — Meal planning, household management, and weekly goals

[Productive Flourishing](#) — Planners and productivity worksheets

[The Work at Home Woman](#) — Planners and income trackers

[Thirty Handmade Days](#) — Downloadable budget binder

[Travels Between](#) — Packing lists

4. Free Finance Tools

When I first started my business, I used a spreadsheet for all of my income and expenses. Not only was the process manually intensive, but it also made tax time a nightmare. Save yourself the frustration and use a professional platform. The resources listed below offer [free invoicing](#), budgeting, planning, bookkeeping, and accounting solutions.

[Intuit QuickBooks](#) — Free 30-day trial

[Mint](#)

[PearBudget](#) — Free 30-day trial

[Wave](#)

[Xero](#) — Free 30-day trial

5. Free Business Templates

When you're running a business, you'll find yourself searching for all types of forms and templates that you don't even know you need until a particular situation arises. When the time comes, here are some great resources to have bookmarked.

[LivePlan](#) — Business plans, proposal templates, startup checklists, and more

[Ryan Robinson](#) — Freelance proposal template

[SCORE](#) — Business planning, financial, marketing, and management templates

[The Work at Home Woman](#) — Business plan template

6. Free Content and Project Management Systems

When you're a service provider (for example, a virtual assistant, freelance writer, or graphic designer), you're going to have multiple projects and clients to manage. The best way to stay on top of everything is by using a content or project management system to keep you organized.

[Airtable](#) — Spreadsheet and data table management tool

[Asana](#) — Project management platform

[Basecamp](#) — Project management tool; free 30-day trial

[FreedCamp](#) — Project management platform

[Trello](#) — Online collaboration and management tool

[Wrike](#) — Task and project management platform

7. Free Marketing Tools and Platforms

It's been said that you should spend at least 20–25% of your time marketing your business. With hundreds of ways to market your business, you should be able to find a formula that works for you. Here are several free platforms and resources worth checking out.

[Clearstream](#) — SMS marketing for nonprofits and churches (25 messages per month)

[Constant Contact](#) — 60-day email newsletter trial (no credit card required)

[Kit](#) — Email marketing, up to 10,000 subscribers

[Craigslist](#) — Online advertising

[EZ Texting](#) — Free 30-day trial

[Facebook](#) — Social media marketing platform

[HubSpot](#) — Email signature

[Instagram](#) — Photo-sharing media platform

[LinkedIn](#) — Professional social networking website

[Loom](#) — Video marketing platform

[OneSignal](#) — Send out push notifications to 10,000 subscribers

[Pinterest](#) — Visual marketing platform

[Post Planner](#) — Social media scheduling tool, free seven-day trial

[SocialBee](#) — Social media scheduling tool, free 14-day trial

[SurveyMonkey](#) — Allows you to gather feedback, collect data, and analyze survey results

[TikTok](#) — Video social media platform

[Webpushr](#) — Push notifications to 10,000 subscribers

[YouTube](#) — Video marketing platform

8. Free Administrative and Writing Tools

You may already have Microsoft Office on your computer, but if you don't, the yearly subscription can be pricey. Here are some other options that work great, and they're free.

[Capitalize My Title](#) — Capitalization and sentence case converter

[ChatGPT](#) — AI writing and research tool

[CutePDF](#) — PDF conversion tool

[Dropbox](#) — 2 GB of online storage

[Google Drive and Docs](#) — Word processing, spreadsheets, forms, slides, storage, and more

[Grammarly](#) — Editing software

[PrimoPDF](#) — Create PDFs

9. Free Communication Tools

It's funny when you work in an office setting; you don't even think about all the different methods you use daily to communicate with others — the technology and systems are already in place. However, when you run your own business, you'll quickly learn that you need a whole host of tools. Luckily, there are lots of free and reliable options.

[FaxZERO](#) — Fax documents, up to three pages, twice per day

[FreeConferenceCall.com](#) — Conference and video calls, up to 1,000 people

[Google Chat](#) — Talk to other people over the internet

[Google Meet](#) — Video conference calls

[IFTTT](#) — Tool to get all of your apps and devices communicating effectively with each other

[Signal](#) — Messaging app

[Telegram](#) — Desktop and mobile messaging app

[TextNow](#) — Text and call app

[WebEx](#) — Video conferencing for up to three people

[WhatsApp](#) — Private messaging and calling tool

[Zoom](#) — Video and web conferencing service (for up to 100 individuals)

10. Free Design Tools and Stock Images

As an entrepreneur, you'll take on many roles. Quite frequently, that role is a graphic designer. But no worries — you don't need any special training to create professional-looking images, presentations, and marketing materials; these tools are both free and easy to use.

[Burst](#) — Stock photos

[Canva](#) — Simple design platform and photo editor

[CapCut](#) — Video editor

[COLOURlovers](#) — Color ideas, palettes, patterns, and trends

[Dreamstime](#) — Stock photos and images

[Easil](#) — Drag and drop editor, free for 30 days

[FlexClip](#) — Video editor

[FontSquirrel](#) — Fonts for commercial usage

[FreePhotos.cc](#) — Stock photos

[Image Resizer](#) — Resize images without losing quality

[Morguefile.com](#) — Stock photos for commercial use

[Pexels](#) — Stock photos

[Photopea](#) — Photo editor

[Pixabay](#) — Images and videos

[Remove.bg](#) — Remove background from images

[SVG to PNG](#) — Converts SVG files to PNGs

[Unsplash](#) — Stock photos

[Wix](#) — Logo maker

11. Free Online Courses, Workshops, and Guidance

As an entrepreneur, you need to stay current on best business practices, technology and innovation, marketing strategies, and other business topics. Things change so quickly that if you don't stay on top of industry trends and new technology, you'll be left behind. That's why investing in your self-development is so crucial.

Here are some places to find free business guides, mentors, advisers, webinars, and advice from industry experts.

[Alison](#) — Business courses

[Coursera](#) — Courses

[Grow with Google](#) — Training, tools, and resources to grow your career, skills, and business

[IRS Small Business Center](#) — Information and online training tools

[SCORE](#) — Business mentorship

[Small Business Development Centers](#) — Counseling and training programs for small businesses

[The Work at Home Woman](#) — List of best podcasts for growing your business

[United States Small Business Administration](#) — Counseling and training

[Women's Business Centers](#) — Free and low-cost training for woman-owned businesses

12. Free Resources and Tools for Bloggers

If you run a blog, no doubt you'll need some specialized tools to make your blogging efforts easier.

Here are some that I use and recommend:

[AdRotate](#) — Plug-in to serve image ads on your blog

[Blogging Success](#) — My 28-page e-book that covers writing, getting traffic, and monetization

[CoSchedule](#) — Headline analyzer

[Google Analytics](#) — Website traffic stats

[Gravatar](#) — Create a globally recognized avatar that helps brand your blog identity.

[Making Sense of Affiliate Marketing](#) — 36-page e-book on making money with affiliate marketing

[Random.org](#) — Randomly choose winners for your giveaways and contests.

[Rank Math](#) — SEO optimization plugin for your blog

[SmallSEOTools](#) — Plagiarism checker for guest blog posts

Free Small-Business Resources Wrap-Up

Whether you're new to entrepreneurship or an established business owner who wants to invest in your small-business growth, this list of free business resources has something for everybody.

One last note about business freebies. There will come a point where your time becomes more valuable than saving a few bucks. So, as you grow, invest in the proper tools that will ultimately save you time and money, because freebies often have limitations.

Good luck with your new business! ■

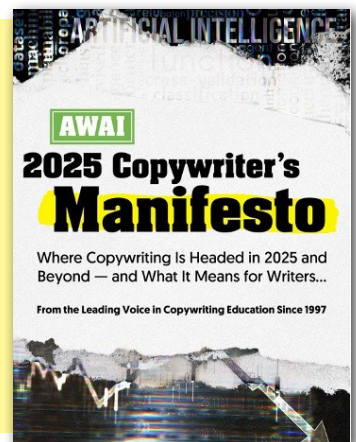
Editor's Note: Reprinted with permission from [The Work at Home Woman](#); lightly edited for clarity and style.

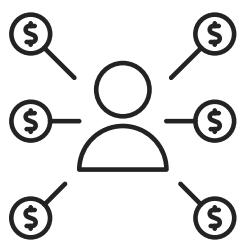
Claim Your Blueprint for the “New” Writer’s Life

Inside, you’ll discover the new skills, mindsets, and strategies needed to build a writing career that’s...

- resilient in the face of AI;
- relevant to real business needs; and
- flexible, well paid, and fully yours.

You’ll see how to start strong, avoid costly missteps, and build a writing career the right way from Day 1.





This 'TLC' Opportunity Could Be the Secret to Your Dream *Writer's* Life

By Mindy McHorse

Have you ever taken an online class you truly enjoyed? Maybe it was a course on productivity, a writing program, or a wellness challenge you joined on a whim. You signed up because something about it spoke to you, but what kept you going was the way the community made you feel.

Whether it was daily thoughtful messages that made it easier to stay on track...

A welcome email in your inbox that was genuinely welcoming...

Or a private group where the coach or host shared encouragement, celebrated member wins, and gave gentle nudges to keep everyone engaged...

Before long, you felt like you belonged. And chances are, it made you want to stay part of the community.

Well, that feeling was no accident. In fact, that sense of belonging leads me to one of the most rewarding opportunities out there for writers.

Really, it's a way for you to work with a tight-knit group (or two!), helping people achieve their dreams. All while getting paid well, because when they win, you win, too!

It's called content marketing for "**trusted, loyal communities.**" And the writers behind the scenes of these communities — the ones creating that magical, welcoming feeling — can absolutely fast-track themselves to their dream life and beyond.

Build Income by Building Connection

When you think of a business, you might picture a traditional company selling a product, like Coca-Cola or Kleenex. They have products that appear in stores, they have huge amounts of competition, and they're always looking to sell as much as possible.

barefoot writing opportunity (continued...)

Trusted, loyal communities are different. No matter the industry or the approach, what unites them is intention. They revolve around a shared interest or mission: helping people achieve a specific goal. And they depend on *lots* of communication to make it all happen.

Now, it may seem like business owners write all the messaging you receive, but the truth is, they often have whole teams helping with their marketing. It's simply too much for one person to handle!

That's why they need professional writers. A skilled professional who understands them, their missions, and their audience can help them help more people and make more money. All of which leads to growing a successful business.

And boy, you'd be surprised how much writing it takes to cultivate these kinds of communities. So much that a writer could fill their schedule (and their bank account) with just one or two clients.



Become the “Go-To” Writer in Your Community

Think of writers for community-based businesses as “architects.”

You're not really a typical work-for-hire writer who jumps from client to client. You help create and/or execute the communication system that keeps the whole community running smoothly.

For example, you might write onboarding emails that greet new members and help them feel at home... or weekly newsletters that keep them informed and inspired... or you could potentially even draft the educational content lessons, guides, and email courses for the members to work through on their own time.

Beyond that, there are the “smaller” projects like short follow-ups that bring people back when they've drifted away, or community posts that celebrate milestones and spark engagement. Of course, this list is not even close to exhaustive.

Think of it like this: A great community is powered by consistent, meaningful connections. And you, the writer, are the voice of that connection. With your writing skills and the business owner's expertise, you have the power to build an extremely successful and empowering business.

The best part? Becoming the go-to content writer is quite lucrative. All without the hassle of having to chase after countless clients.

Enjoy a Hustle-Free Career

One of the biggest challenges new freelancers face is the constant search for new clients. You finish one gig... and then it's back to the drawing board.

barefoot writing opportunity (continued...)

Working with community-driven businesses is different.

These businesses don't just want a one-off blog post or a social media caption. They want a writer who understands their voice and can help them deliver consistent, quality content to their members over time.

That means fewer clients, deeper relationships, and steadier income.

Imagine working with a coach in your favorite industry who pays you monthly to write their members-only newsletter. And to get subscribers for their newsletter, they'll also need an email onboarding series. You could write that, too.

Once that's established, they'll probably want emails promoting their free coaching session for prospective students. The list goes on and on.

One business could give you more than enough work to fill your plate for a whole year. And if that's not enough, you can always take on more. Even better, the more you work with someone, the better you get at capturing their voice, the faster the writing gets, and the more trust you build.

All of that makes it easier to offer even more high-value services they're excited to pay for.

Design the Life You Want

A lot of content architect work falls under what's often called "retainer contracts," which are recurring projects usually paid monthly. Retainers are the *holy grail* of writing opportunities, because they guarantee income every single month.

Now, *rates* vary depending on your experience and the scope of work, but here's a general breakdown of what you stand to earn. All rates are based on reports from Content Marketing Institute.

Using the example in the previous section, you can make anywhere from \$300 to \$1,200 per month for a newsletter, depending on its size and scope. Add in the onboarding email sequence and you're looking at \$500–\$1,500. Last, weekly engagement posts or emails to keep the community engaged might run \$800 to \$2,500 for the month.

So, on the low end, you're looking at \$1,600 for a month's work with \$1,100 per month after that as your retainer. High end is \$5,200 in a single month, with \$3,700 as your monthly retainer.

Not only are these numbers decent to start with, but once you've done a few and have a routine down, many of these projects can be completed quickly. That means you can choose to keep this as a nice part-time gig or add more to the mix to boost your monthly rate.



barefoot writing opportunity (continued...)

If you land just two to three consistent clients paying \$1,500–\$3,500/month each, you've got the foundation of a stable, full-time income.

And again, all of this is possible while working wherever you want, whenever you want, and not having to chase a ton of new clients each month.

Now, you may be thinking that you need loads of experience to be considered for this kind of work. However, it's likely you already have most of the skills you need.

The 4 Key Characteristics of Successful "TLC" Writers

Here are a few questions to test whether you're ready to be a "content architect":

1. Do you enjoy learning about what makes people tick?

Community writing is all about making people feel inspired and motivated. If you're curious about human behavior, motivations, and what makes a reader engage, you're already thinking like a content architect.

2. Can you explain ideas in a simple, step-by-step way?

A huge part of this work consists of making things easier to understand — whether it's how to use a product, follow a process, or learn a new concept. If you're the kind of person who enjoys breaking things down so others can "get it," you're a natural fit.

3. Are you comfortable writing short pieces like emails or blog posts?

Most of the writing in community-focused businesses is short-form: Think welcome emails, weekly newsletters, 500-word articles, or simple announcements. If you've written a Facebook post, an email, or an article before, you can handle these assignments!

4. Are you comfortable writing for someone else?

Every business has its own tone and personality. If you're willing to study how someone naturally communicates and then write in a way that reflects their voice (even loosely), you're already doing the most important part of brand writing.

I should add that nowadays, every single online business has a distinct voice. You absolutely can find business owners who approach things *like you* rather than trying to create a voice to sound like them.

For example, if you're more of a dry, sardonic person, you can connect with coaches who use that style in their communications. Same if you're bubbly, positive, or a tough-love type... You name it!

It is easier than ever for writers with any voice to find a business match. And you can even establish yourself as "the go-to" for that style.

So, if you nodded along to even a few of these, take it as a sign: The leap from "interested writer" to "paid content architect" might be smaller than you imagined.

It is easier than ever for writers with any voice to find a business match.

barefoot writing opportunity (continued...)

Get Started in 3 Simple Steps

Breaking into the world of community-based businesses takes a little bit of working smarter, not harder. Remember, you do not need a huge portfolio to get your first client. You simply need to know *who you want to work with* and be ready to show them what you can do!

Here's how to do that in three easy steps:

1. Pick a Business You Already Like

This could be a fitness coach you follow, a course creator you admire, a parenting community you're part of, or a nonprofit doing work you care about. Choose a space you're familiar with, because that familiarity makes writing easier.

You'll get bonus points if this is a community you're already a part of. You never know when your own coach might need your services as a writer. (Here at Barefoot Writer, we hire our community members all the time!)



2. Study How They Welcome and Engage Their Audience

Sign up for their email list and join their community if possible. What do their welcome emails say? How do they keep people engaged? Keep an eye out for the tone and the kind of language they use with their clients.

As an extra goal, look for gaps you might be able to help fill, like a dated email sequence or newsletter that hasn't been sent in weeks. If you sign up for an email list and don't get an email, that's a sign they need to hire you!

You'd be surprised how often these types of things pop up.

3. Write a Sample Sequence or Newsletter

Pick something simple, like a welcome email or a newsletter, and draft a piece as a sample. Focus on how *you* would write it and present the information to your audience. This may end up being a sample *for them*, but it just as likely could be a sample for other coaches in their field.

The idea is to show your writing and your knowledge in this field. That's why it's wise to choose something you already know and enjoy!

Once you've done this, you have your first portfolio piece, and you absolutely can present yourself to business owners as a potential content writer!

Best of All — You're Already at the Starting Line!

If you've ever stayed subscribed to a newsletter just because it made you feel good...

barefoot writing opportunity (continued...)

read an email that made you feel seen... or been part of a community that helped you grow... then you already know how important trusted, loyal communities are.

Now it's your turn to be the one behind their messaging.

You can build a calm, creative freelance career writing for people who care deeply about their communities and want to keep them engaged. You already have all the tools you need to get started. However, if you want an extra boost and a step-by-step blueprint for success, take a look at [*The AWAI Method™ for Becoming a Skilled, In-Demand Copywriter*](#). It gives you the foundation for all content writing projects along with additional guidance on finding and reaching out to prospective clients. ■

Want to write for *Barefoot Writer Magazine*... or any other publication? Here's what you need to know...

1. Follow Directions.

It might seem obvious, but it's not uncommon to skip details in the excitement of submitting work to a publication or writing contest. Before you submit your final copy, always go back and check for submission guidelines. Pay close attention to word count limits and formatting requirements.



2. Submit Your Copy as an Attachment in Microsoft Word.

Unless otherwise specified, this is the industry standard.

3. Name Your File Appropriately.

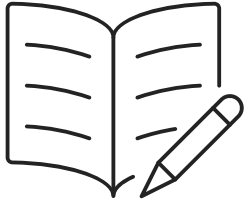
Include the name of the publication or contest in your file name, and include your own name as well. If you're short on space, at least include your last name.

4. Put Your Name and Contact Information on Your Actual Copy Submission.

Even if you're submitting by email, where your name and contact information are obvious, you can't assume your copy submission will stay linked to your email. Staff members for a magazine may save your Word attachment to a separate folder for the editor to review at a later date. If your name and contact information aren't on that Word document, you might be sacrificing your shot at getting published.

5. Review Your Submission for Typos and Errors — at Least Twice!

Even the most glaring typos sneak by the best writers. Here are two tips to avoid embarrassing typos: Read your submission aloud, slowly. This is a great way to pick up errors your eyes otherwise miss while reading. Or, try reading your submission one sentence at a time, starting at the end. By reading "backwards," you're more likely to notice errors that otherwise sneak by when read normally.



7 Non-Cringey Ways to Build Your Network

By Jen Philips April

You know the old saying, “It’s not what you know, it’s *who* you know.” And when it comes to growing your career, it’s true. Especially for writers. The solitary nature of our work means we spend more time at a keyboard than interacting with others in real time.

Many of us prefer it that way. The idea of “networking” sends even the most outgoing introvert scurrying to hide behind a coffee cup. Fortunately, today’s networking looks very different from how it did a few years ago. These days, you don’t have to show up at a zillion events, make small talk over bad coffee, and hand out business cards as though you’re behind on meeting quota.

Instead, you can meet interesting people and make new friends online, leading to new opportunities. Best of all, the internet makes it easy to do this on your schedule, leaning into your naturally introverted ways and still building career-changing relationships.

Unexpected Ways to Network as a Writer Online

Networking doesn’t have to feel awkward or salesy. In fact, some of the best connections come from small, kind actions that don’t scream “networking.” Try these approaches:

1. Reframe Networking as Making Friends.

Do you remember when social media was called social “networking”? Back then, it was all about sharing ideas and interests through web forums and chat rooms instead of follower counts. When you reframe “networking” as making friends, it truly flips the concept. Think connection, not over-pitching.

2. Comment Like You Care.

You've heard this before, but it's worth repeating: Comment like you mean it. Most people are lazy. They say, "great post," "good job," or "interested," or they just drop a link.

This is your chance to stand out. Ask yourself, if you saw your comment, would you care? You don't need to write *War and Peace*. Instead, drop a real comment that shows you actually read the post and it made you think or feel something. That will stand out more than a thousand throwaway comments.

3. Attend Events and Follow Up.

You probably attend webinars, workshops, and maybe even the occasional in-person event. But what happens afterward?

If you liked the event, send an honest "thank you" email. Even better, share something specific you got from it and how you used it. People love to know their work made a difference. Plus, it opens the door to further discussion.

4. Compliment in Public.

Enjoyed an article or post? Share it online and tag the writer. Tell people what you loved about it. Everyone likes being recognized, and this is an easy way to create goodwill and build connections.

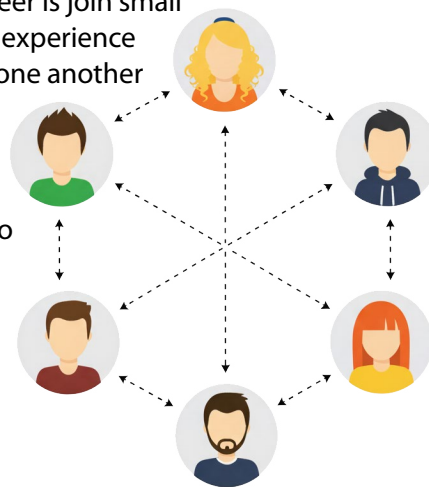
5. Join (or Start) a Small Peer Group.

One of the best things I've done for my writing career is join small peer groups. With four to six people all at a similar experience level, we trade ideas and stories, and recommend one another to clients.

One such group has put thousands of dollars in my pocket over the years. Recently, I was able to recommend one of my longtime writing buddies to a client looking for additional writers.

To start your own peer group...

- ask in online writing groups,
- look for others at a similar level,
- pick a time that works for everyone, and
- commit to attending and share your updates.



It's simple, yet powerful.

6. Schedule Virtual Coffees.

One professional group I'm in matches members up one-to-one for a monthly chat. We introduce ourselves, chat a little about business, and stay in touch afterward. At least one of these calls has led to a client relationship that is still going strong three years later.

7. Be Human.

The best networking isn't transactional, it's genuine. If you're forcing it, the other person can tell. We've all been on the receiving end of a message that felt forced. Instead, offer curiosity and patience, like you would to a close friend.

Yes, building real relationships takes time. But real comments, messages, and conversations plant seeds. Over time, some of them bloom.

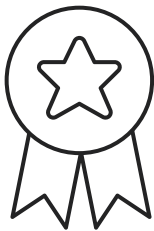
Start Today with a Tiny Step

- Leave a thoughtful comment on someone's post.
- Like and share an article from a company you'd like to work with.
- Say thank you.

Give positive attention without expectation. It's more about thinking like a writer and being generous, and less about trying to finagle business.

The more you do this, the easier it'll become. You'll start expanding your professional connections naturally and effortlessly. You'll look forward to trading messages with so-and-so because they're someone you know a little about, someone whose ideas you respect.

All without ever having to show up somewhere to "work the room." ■



the barefoot writing challenge

What are the top two or three non-negotiable goals you want to achieve next year?

A check for \$100 will be awarded for the winning essay!

Send entries to contest@barefootwriter.com by midnight ET on **December 15**.

Please submit entries as a **Microsoft Word attachment** and limit your essay to **500 words or fewer**.

Congratulations to **Barry Roach** for winning the November Barefoot Writing Challenge! Here's a glimpse at his essay:

Maybe that's why Thanksgiving has always felt different to me. It's not just about the food — it's about the rhythm of it all. The predictability. The way every year, no matter what changes around us, those same dishes bring everyone back to center.

There's one thing I never seem to finish. My days move fast, and my mind rarely shuts off. I run an accounting firm, which means there's always another email to answer, another number to check, another project that "just needs five more minutes." Those five minutes often turn into five hours. I haven't taken a real vacation in over five years — and before that, it had been almost eight. There are only two days each year when I completely stop.



Click [here](#) to go to the Barefoot Writing Winners Page and read his inspiring copy.



The Reputation-Saving System Every Freelancer Needs

By **Rebecca Griffin**

Here's the truth: I thought I could muscle through anything... until a stroke stopped my business in its tracks.

One morning, I was a writer on deadline. That afternoon, I was in a hospital bed without my laptop, with two-factor authentication codes on a phone I couldn't access, and an editor waiting on a piece I'd promised. It became the first deadline I ever missed. Worse yet, the article was finished but not sent. I couldn't even send a quick "I'm in the hospital — here's the plan." The silence wasn't intentional; it was the price of not having a backup system.

I've since rebuilt my health — and my safety net. If you're a freelancer, I hope you'll build yours now, while you're healthy and clear-headed, because emergencies don't book calendar slots. Here's what I changed and exactly how you can copy it.

1. Create a One-Page "In Case of Emergency" Plan.

Mine sits at the front of a binder and in a pinned note on my phone. It lists...

- primary contacts (clients, a trusted colleague, and a family member);
- how to reach me (all channels), plus a message that can be sent on my behalf;
- current projects with due dates and status; and
- where files live (cloud folders) and the names of any subcontractors.

If you do nothing else, write this page today and tell one person where it is.

2. Give a Trusted Person Limited Access to Essentials.

Set up emergency access in your password manager so a partner, friend, or adult child can get to your calendar, email, and cloud drive if you're incapacitated. Protect it with time-delay approval and keep it specific.

The goal isn't open season on your accounts; it's permission to send messages to your clients and your collaborators.

3. Build a "Client Lifeline Sheet."

For each active client, maintain names, emails, phone numbers, deliverables, and what to do if you're out unexpectedly. I include a simple script:

"Hi [Name]— this is Rebecca's [relation]. She's had a medical emergency. She asked me to let you know your project is safe. Here are your options: (1) pause with a revised date, (2) hand off to her vetted colleague, or (3) partial refund for undelivered work. Please reply with your preference."

It's calm, professional, and gives clients control.

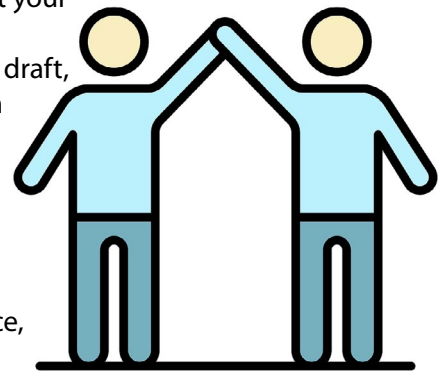
4. Set Up a Buddy System.

Trade "coverage agreements" with another freelancer who works at your level and shares your standards. You don't need them to write your entire project. Sometimes you just need someone to send the final draft, or to assemble drafts you've already outlined, or facilitate a smooth pause. [Editor's Note: To find a copywriting buddy, look to our "networking clubhouse" [found here](#).]

Agree on rates, scope, and boundaries before you ever need them.

5. Keep Templates for Crisis Communication.

I now have three canned notes: a same-day emergency out-of-office, a handoff email, and a "returning to work" update with next steps. When you're hurting or groggy on meds, you won't write your best email. Let your past self do the heavy lifting.



6. Work Cloud-First and Name Files Like a Pro.

Everything lives in clearly labeled folders (Client > Project > Date > Version). My buddy could find a ready-to-send draft without asking me a single question. If you're still saving final docs as "Article-FINAL-final2," today is a good day to stop.

7. Add Buffers and Clauses to Your Contracts.

Emergencies happen. Give yourself breathing room in timelines and include a short clause that allows for reasonable extensions because of illness or emergencies. Most clients are kind; the clause simply sets expectations.

8. Run a Five-Minute Fire Drill.

Once a quarter, pretend you're out of commission. Could someone else notify clients?

Find the files? See the schedule? You'll discover gaps quickly — and you'll sleep better once they're closed.

What happened after my stroke? I apologized to the client, owned the miss, and offered a plan: a new delivery date or a handoff. I sent in the finished project, and that client still refers work to me. Not because I'm invincible, but because I'm prepared and honest.

A backup system isn't morbid. It's love — for your clients, your craft, and your future self. It says, "I take my commitments seriously, even when life swerves." Build yours now. May you never need it. But if you do, you'll be grateful it's there. ■

What We Believe

From the AWAI team — proudly training the world's copywriters and changing lives since 1997...
And never wavering in our commitment to help you succeed.

☑ **We believe writing is a skill — not a gift.**

Anyone who loves to write and is willing to learn can build a professional writing life with freedom, purpose, and income.

☑ **We believe great copywriters are made, not born.** Training, guidance, and feedback matter far more than natural talent.

☑ **We believe your time is valuable.** That's why we focus on helping writers land their first paid assignments as quickly as possible — without gatekeepers or years of "paying dues."

☑ **We believe in being paid well for work that matters.** Persuasive writing is one of the most valuable skills in business — and writers deserve to be paid accordingly.

☑ **We believe in the power of choosing your own path.** Whether part time or full time, freelance or fractional, your writing career should fit your life — not the other way around.

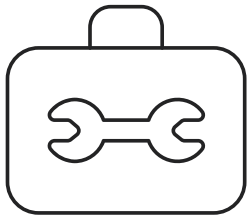
☑ **We believe your writing life should fit the**

life you want — whether that means working from the road, being home for dinner, diving deep into a niche you love, or writing just a few hours a day. The beauty of this career is that you get to decide.

☑ **We believe writers need community.** That's why we create spaces where writers support each other, grow together, and celebrate the wins — big and small.

☑ **We believe you have the right to learn on terms that work for you.** That's why we offer flexible programs for every kind of learner... from self-paced courses you can explore on your own, to live online events, to guided training with coaches and mentors by your side — and more.

☑ **We believe deciding to write is more than a career choice — it's a bold step toward a better, freer life.** That's why we're here to support, encourage, and inspire you to keep going... so you don't lose momentum on the path you were meant to follow.



The Good News Strategy: **How to Turn Rejection into Writing Income**

By Ron Craig

Often, the most challenging part of freelance writing is finding clients. But an even more difficult problem is turning rejection into paid work.

Most times, you have no idea why a business has rejected your offer to provide writing services. In some cases, it may be financial; the owner doesn't want to spend money. Maybe they can't see the value of a newsletter, blog, or any other kind of copy written by a professional writer. Or perhaps they need to consult a partner before making a decision.

No matter the reason, the key to turning rejection into a paid writing assignment is convincing them you can help their business grow. I've found this strategy to be very successful at turning no's into income. I call it the Good News Strategy, and it has resulted in a high success rate. Here's how it works...

What Does the Client *Really* Want?

Let's say you pitch a project idea, and the business owner says they're not interested. Using the Good News Strategy, the first thing you'll do is add them to a follow-up list. But here's the catch: You don't contact the owner again until you have a positive outcome to share, such as how your writing services helped another business achieve its business goals.

Then, once you've achieved a positive outcome with a client, you'll write an email sharing that success story to show how your writing has increased revenue or had a positive impact on a business.

Of course, if you can use a client quote that describes how your copy has helped them, that is gold!

Keep in mind that the goal of every business is to increase sales. When you send an example of how your writing has helped a company achieve its business goals, you demonstrate how professional writing can positively impact business growth.

When I do this, I start by writing an email using the principles I learned in my AWAI courses and send it to every business that rejected my services. However, it's a "boiler-plate" response — I send the same email to each one of them. Then I simply reach out again with an email whenever I have good news to share.

But, does a follow-up strategy that requires such minimal time and effort even work?

From Rejection to \$12,000

I recently met with the executive director of a large retail business association and showed her samples of my work. She didn't commit to using my writing services. So, I added her to my follow-up list and sent her the same good news email I sent to several other businesses.

A few weeks later, I received a call asking me to meet with her. When we met, she told me her board members had commented that they should improve the association's monthly newsletter, which they send to 3,000 members. "I know a writer who has helped other companies with writing material," she told them.

We met, and the executive director hired me to write content for the association's newsletter and revise the format. I used the information I learned from my AWAI course [How to Write for Professional Service Providers](#) to produce a quality newsletter for her association. This led to additional work, including writing a training plan and, eventually, writing the scripts for video podcasts.

The result? I turned an initial rejection into \$12,000 in new writing business.

Tap Into Specificity and Proof

The key to maximizing the effectiveness of this Good News Strategy lies in keeping track of the initial contact with a prospective client and relevant details. After my first contact, I write the company name in a notebook along with the following:

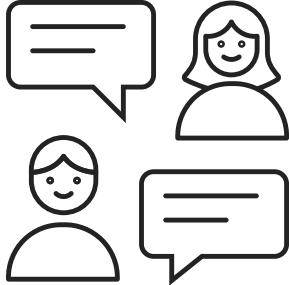
- The business name and contact information, as well as who I spoke to and when
- Any comments from the client during this first contact
- Other similar businesses in the area

I also analyze the client's website, social media presence, and any customer reviews, which I add to my notes. Then, if the client reconnects with me, I can review my notes beforehand and provide specific recommendations. This was a key factor in getting the writing assignment from the business association.

The real secret behind the Good News Strategy is the power of leverage: using a client success story to secure more paid assignments. It works because it clearly shows business owners the value of professionally written material and how it can help their business.

For writers, it is a winning strategy that can turn rejections into income. ■





Here at **Barefoot Writer**, we place a high value on the wide variety of opportunities and opinions in the paid writing world. In this newest feature, we bring you different perspectives from some of the writers in AWAI's **200,000+ community**.

Ask a Fellow Copywriter: Straight from the Club

How do you plan ahead before taking time off for holidays? What tools or resources or backup methods do you use while you're away from your computer or office? Or DO you take real time off for holidays? Every writer is different. What's your take?

➤ **Elizabeth Woodiwiss**

As a writer... this is my first holiday season primarily focusing on writing! However, I've spent eight years in digital marketing, and in previous years, the only "days off" I truly got were the actual holiday dates (Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, etc.). I'm being a lot more mindful this year and planning to mostly unplug for a day or two before and after. I do always take Sundays off (and Saturdays are typically quiet for me, too), but that is because I've become very intentional about keeping my weekends and not engaging in client communication on those days.

It didn't used to be that way. For years, I was at the beck and call of demanding clients 24/7. And while the pay was good, my adrenals paid the price. Now, I choose my clients with care and set boundaries around when they send work and how quickly I get that work done. I do check in weeks before and set a plan in place, scheduling everything possible.

➤ **Rachael L. Kraft**

If I have to work over the holidays, I usually PRINT out a paper list of what I need to do and when. Then, I'll put it in a folder with my laptop so I can easily check things off while I'm traveling.

ask the barefoot writer club (continued...)

➤ **Mara Jacobs Horner**

I have three clients I'm working with at various points in the process. I have set up my holiday schedule in TidyCal. If anyone wants a call before I close down for the holidays, they can use my TidyCal link. I am closing my writing business on December 12 at 5 p.m. for 2025. I will reopen on January 5, 2026.

I've been in the hospital 15 times this year. I need a break to finish recovering. There are several undone house projects. Mental health has been neglected. Over my "holiday break," I'll be deep cleaning, wrapping gifts, sending cards, messaging loved ones, going out for dinner and treats, and doing crafts. I also have physical therapy exercises for my back and neck. I must do those four to five times a week, for an hour each. I go for walks four to five times a week as well.

If time permits, I'll work on my Upwork profile and website. If not, that's fine. I have a few digital products in the works, too. I need a clean home, a sound mind, and a healthy body to kick off 2026.

➤ **Toju Omatete**

Thank you, Mindy and everyone else who commented, this is all VERY HELPFUL to me moving forward... For context, I just posted/announced a few days earlier that I was FINALLY making a real decision to complete my AWAI Method program and become an AWAI "trained & certified" copywriter... only 20 years (of "distractions, diversions, and delay") after I got my 1st "welcome to AWAI" email!! And now I look up and it's Thanksgiving, the holiday season. Friends & family all around, love it — not the most ideal starting point for "buckling down and writing every day." But that is what I intend to do moving forward. So thanks for all your perspectives on keeping "Work/Life/Holiday cheer" balance — much appreciated!



➤ **Joyce Morse**

I usually work ahead for any time I need off during the holiday. I also plan time during the holiday week to do some writing. For instance, I might work on an article while something is cooking or as a break from the celebration.

➤ **Mindy McHorse**

I'll be honest — I still struggle with this. Part of it has everything to do with really enjoying my work. It's hard to stop when it's fun! But over the years, I've made a hard and fast rule that I'm not allowed to work on Saturdays; that day goes to my kids. And when it comes to taking off holidays, it's really just a matter of hitting those deadlines ahead of time and then setting an out-of-office message. If I have that OOO message turned on, I can relax and enjoy my time away. ■

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– Michele Peterson



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