

The Well-Fed Writer:

Financial Self-Sufficiency as a Commercial Freelancer in Six Months or Less

Table of Contents

Introduction

- A Comfortable, Not-Unusual Week Nets \$2,000
- From NO Writing Background to Self-Sufficient in Under Four Months
- The Joy of Doing What You Enjoy (Minus the “Finding-Your-Passion” Trap)
- Adios, Online Sites; “UN-Commoditize” Writing, and Watch Income Rise
- A Realistic Biz-Building Guide (i.e., Assumes You’re a Lazy Human Being)
- Two Assumptions: You’re a Decent Writer & You Want to Make a Living at It
- Book Addresses Wildly Different Circumstances, Backgrounds, Realities
- Attn: “Marketing-Phobes”! Entire Chapter Devoted to Developing “Marketing Mindset”
- Free Ezine, Blog and KnowledgeBase Await Those Ready to Get Serious

Chapter One

Why Be a Freelance Commercial Writer (FLCW)?

- High Demand for Writing Talent (i.e., Beaucoup Lousy Writers Out There...)
- Unlimited Work: Businesses Have Extensive, Wide-Ranging, and Ongoing Needs
- Great Time For Freelancers (Courtesy of Downsizing and Outsourcing...)
- Four Economically Sound Reasons Why a Company Would Hire a Freelancer
- Live Life on Your Terms (The “Eating-Breakfast-at-10:00-a.m.” Story)
- Minimal Investment: Have Computer? That’s Basically It... Seriously
- A Huge Variety of Work—ADD’ers Rejoice!
- Healthy Income—No More Ramen Noodles & Dodging the Landlady
- Totally Different Financial Paradigm: ALL Your Time Counts (What a Concept...)
- Be a Hit at Cocktail Parties (No Lampshade Necessary...)
- What’s Your Story? Attn: Journos, At-Home Moms, 55+, Recent Grads, Others!
- Downsides (True for *Any* Writer, Actually...)

Chapter Two

What’s It Take to Be Successful? Healthy Traits and First Steps

- Writing Ability—But Not as Much as You Think (AND You Can Get Better!)
- Graphic Design Experience (NOT! Repeat After Me: “We’re Just Writers...”)
- Ad Agency Experience (Double NOT! Dispelling the Silly Myth, Once and For All...)
- Ability to Market Yourself; And BTW: It’s Nowhere NEAR as Scary as You Imagine
- Discipline—I’m Lazy, Believe It Or Not (Just Like You...)
- Technical Expertise—If I, THE Original Techno-Moron, Can Do It...
- Being a Tenacious, Flexible, Reliable, Curious, Assertive Non-Conformist...
- Being Easy to Get Along With Is Your Secret Weapon
- Ability to Ask Lots of Dumb Questions = Less Work & Happier Clients
- Getting Ready For Self-Employment—It’s All in Your Head!
- Get Mental, Make Money; And Remember: You Give The Raises Around Here
- Getting Your Finances In Order
- Business Names, Business Plans, and Business Cards—Three Ways to Procrastinate
- Creating a Portfolio From Thin Air (AND Buying an Actual Portfolio...)
- The Writer’s Bookshelf: The Books You Need to Sound Brilliant

Chapter Three

Learning to Love S & M (Sales & Marketing...)

- Success is Far More About a *Process* Than a *Personality*
- Marketing: What It Is and What It Isn't
- You're In Control of More Than Enough To Succeed
- The Game Is Already In Progress; Just Learn Your Lines
- That "Icky Sales Thingy": Bad Experiences, Bad Associations
- B2B and B2C: The Definitions and the Differences
- Marketing Lessons From a Former "Love Merchant"
- Eight Sales Tips For *Non-Salespeople* (From Sales Training Firm CEO)
- Real Sales: A Single-Bullet Assassination Story
- All-Star "Sales" Stories: Not What You'd Expect "Sales" to Look Like
- Into the Mind of the Marketer (C'mon In, the Water's Fine...)
- Why Write Anything? (Hint: Think Like a 10-Year-Old)
- Tune Into WIFM ("What's In It For Me?") and You Win
- Sales & Marketing Cornerstones: Learn and Earn
- Who's the Audience? (Still the First Question)
- Features Vs. Benefits (Stop Talking About Yourself...)
- It's Not Just Business, It's Human Nature
- Thoughts of Resumes, Releases, Books, Drill Bits and...Love
- The USP (Every Company Has One...)
- Are You "Branded"?—The Basics of Standing Out

Chapter Four

www.YourWebSite.com

- Tale of Two Writers—One With Web Site, One Without. Guess Who Wins?
- Writer Reluctantly Builds Site, Business Soars, Leaves Crummy Job
- Web Site Goals: Marketing Simplified, Credibility Enhanced
- The Point: Instant Access to Your Samples
- What Yours Should Include (Less Is More...)
- (Don't) Show Them the Money
- Three Best Ways to Display Samples Online (Including MY Favorite...)
- Sample-Posting Etiquette (i.e., Do You Need Permission?)
- The \$75 DIY Website: No Catch, No Kidding
- Dozens of Commercial Writers Show Off Their Sites

Chapter Five

Where's the Business?

- B2B, B2C, and "Internal" Communications: Enough Work to Last Forever
- End Users (EU's) and Middlemen (MM's): Pros and Cons of Both
- The BIG Small- to Medium-Sized Business Market: Upsides/Downsides
- Corporate Roads Less Traveled: Hidden Pockets of Work in Big Firms
- Proven "Drill-Down" Prospecting Techniques to Land the Big One
- The Not-For-Profits: Where, Why, Who & How Much
- Success "By Association": Writing for the Association Market
- Back to School: Landing Work with Universities
- Middlemen (MM's): As They Find Work, They Find Work for You
- Graphic Design Firms: The Gift That Keeps On Giving
- Other MM's: Ad Agencies, Marketing Firms, PR Firms, Event Production Companies
- Creative Temp Agencies & Technical Staffing Companies: Writing Gigs, for a Cut
- Where and How to Find These Lovely Bill-Payers

- Potent List-Builders: Online Phone Directories, Library Databases, & *The Book of Lists*
- Leverage Any Career/Educational Background for Instant Competitive Edge
- Sixty Potential Writing Clients (Most You'd Never Imagine...)
- "Event-Full" Marketing: Big Events = Lots of Potential Copywriting Gigs
- Online Job Sites: Definite Waste or Decent Wage? Depends...

Chapter Six

Cold Calling: No Cold Sweat, Just Cold Cash

- Is Cold Calling Dead? (You Should Be So Lucky...)
- Cold Calling Isn't the ONLY Way, But Get Comfy With It...
- You're Selling a Professional Service, NOT Aluminum Siding...
- Take the Quiz: "You Might Be an Annoying Telemarketer If..."
- You Care + They Don't = Phone Phobia
- Lessons from a Ballsy Door-to-Door Book Salesman
- "Why Is It So Hard at First?" Here's the Surprising Answer...
- Understand This and You'll Lose Most of the Anxiety
- Become One With the Law of Averages...
- "Everyone I Call Already Has a Freelancer" and Other Silly Excuses
- The Nitty-Gritty, Cold-Calling How-To Details
- Your Cold-Calling Script: Focus, Don't Freak
- Crash Course: Dealing With Barbed-Wire Secretaries
- Turning Voice Mails into Productive Feelers
- Strategies For Maximizing Calling Success
- The Critical Importance of Critical Mass
- The Super-Duper Expanded Cold-Calling Script

Chapter Seven

Nuts 'N Bolts: Letters, Meetings, Follow-Up,

Phone Interviewing, Client Types and More

- Six Snail-Mail Follow-up Letters Right at Your Fingertips
- The Sample Copywriter's Résumé—Not Your Standard Format
- The "No-Web-Site-Prospecting" Primer (Not Ideal, But If You Must...)
- Client Meetings: Biz-Builders or Time-Wasters? Different Takes...
- Different Types of Meetings: Preparation and Objectives
- "The Discovery Questionnaire" (Or How to Look Really Good, Really Easily...)
- Talk Money Before Meetings! (And Avoid \$150-Brochure Clients...)
- Showtime! Actual Meeting Dress, Agenda, Process, Do's and Don'ts
- Ten Ways to Stay in Touch with Clients (Without Asking for Work!)
- Google Alerts—Go From Basic Vendor to Valued Partner to Your Clients
- Phone Interviewing Fundamentals—From Set-Up to Sign-Off
- Crafting Testimonials That Make Clients Sound Fabulous
- The Nuts 'n Bolts of Content-Gathering Interviews
- One Simple Tip to Ensure Your Copy Hits the Mark Every Time
- Working Smarter with Interns and Offshore Outsourcing (No Kidding!)
- The Ebb and Flow of Work & Learning Your Work Rhythms
- Three Cool Tips For Dramatically Maximizing Work Efficiency
- Clients and Other Fascinating Species: From the Perfect to the Not-So

Chapter Eight

Touching Your Market—By Direct Mail and Email

- Direct Mail (DM): Proven Strategy and Resources
- DM Tips From Industry Pro Avoids Common Mistakes
- DM Postcard Houses: Fast, Easy, High Quality, Economical
- The “Free Report” Direct Mail Strategy: Powerful and Proven
- One Mailing to 77 Clients Yields \$80K+ in New Business
- A Novel (and Highly Effective) Direct Mail Approach
- Is it a DM Postcard? A Case Study? Both!
- FREE Direct Mail Through the USPS?
- The ABC’s of Email Marketing
- How a Florida Freelancer Made Email Her Marketing Centerpiece

Chapter Nine

Money Matters: How Much to Charge and How to Get Paid

- Only Talk Flat Rates With Clients & Hourly Rates With Yourself
- Debunking the Myth of “Standard” Writers Rates...
- The Commercial Writing Field Just Pays Better. Period.
- Basics of Project Estimating (Hint: It’s All About Time...)
- Get Them to Talk First and Make More Money
- Find a Mentor for Pricing and Other Mysteries
- Laughably Simple, Anxiety-Free Ways to Raise Rates
- Be a Pro, Not a Doormat
- Got “Aggravation Fees”? The Red Flags That Warrant Them...
- Discounted Meeting/Research Time? NO!
- Need Contracts? Try the Simple, Adequate “Bid Letter” Instead
- Don’t Write That Proposal Until You Ask the ‘Magic Question’!
- “Spec” Work: Your Game, Your Call
- A Neat Trick For Turning Invoices into Soft Selling Tools
- Getting Upfront Deposits and Invoicing in Stages
- Tracking Deadbeats: Getting Your Money the Nice Way

Chapter Ten

The Well-Networked Writer

- Keeping the Radar Up (Politely) Over Chips and Dip
- Everyone You Know Works for Some Company Needing Writing
- From Volunteer Work to Paying Work (and Barter, Too!)
- Crafting “Elevator Speeches” and “Verbal Taglines”
- The Curious Psychology of Self-Employment
- Getting the Most From Your Chamber of Commerce
- Smart Networking—Going Where You’re the Only Writer
- A SERIOUS Networking Organization (Check It Out...)
- Got Facebook, LinkedIn, Plaxo? The Basics of Social Networking...
- Starting Your Own Writers Group (AND Taking the Idea to New Heights...)

Chapter Eleven

Full-Time Dream, Part-Time Reality

- PT Biz-Building: How to Do It When You're a "9–5, M–F" Employee
- Kansas City FLCW Still Holds FT Job and PT Writing Biz
- FT Software Salesman Builds PT Writing Biz, Makes \$163K in First FT Year
- Tips For "Ethical Juggling" of Job and Part-Time Careers
- Working Nights and Weekends Might Just Be What It Takes...

Chapter Twelve

Eating Well in Smaller Markets & Rural Areas (Bonus: Subcontracting!)

- Seven Strategies for Thriving in Smaller Markets & Rural Areas
- Geography Is Irrelevant; Prospecting Anywhere and Getting the Best of All Worlds
- Gulf Coast Gumption: African-American Woman Flourishes in Florida
- Heartland Harvest: Iowa Woman Makes It Happen
- Minnesota Moxie: Using Creativity, Resourcefulness, and Partnership
- Subcontracting: Small-Town Success By Managing A Writing "Stable"

Chapter Thirteen

"How Do I Make \$125 an Hour?" (or More!)

- The Three Big Shortcuts: Talent, Marketing Chops, and Specialized Expertise
- "Spot Specializing": How a FT Generalist Profited from a PT Specialty
- Demonstrating P-C-O to Clients: Professionalism/Competence/Ownership
- Speed Boosts Rates: How One Fast Writer Regularly Earns \$375 an Hour!
- Take-No-Prisoners Attitude + Competence = One Lethally Profitable Combo
- Six "Best-Bet Backgrounds" to Make \$125 an Hour and Beyond
- If \$125 Isn't in the Cards, Would \$60–75 (+ Great Lifestyle Bennies) Work?
- The Great Debate: Generalist vs. Specialist—The Pros & Cons

Chapter Fourteen

What Will We Be Writing?

- Endless Work in Three Main Arenas: B2B, B2C, and "Internal"
- "Who's The Audience?"—The First Question for Any Project
- Got the Commercial Writing Chops? Surf 'n See...
- Marketing Brochures/Corporate Identity Pieces
- Crash Course: Creating a Simple Tri-Fold Brochure
- Advertising Copy, Newsletters, and Direct Mail
- (Guest) Bob Bly: Getting Started in Direct Response Copywriting
- Press Releases, Web Site Copy
- (Guest) Casey Hibbard: Knack for Storytelling? Give Case Studies a Try!
- (Guest) Michael Stelzner: White Papers 101
- Business Letters (*Bonus*: Three Attention-Getting Openings)
- Marketing Emails & Landing Pages (With Input from a Pro)
- Speeches: Speechwriter for 56 CEO's Offers Up the 411
- Ghostwriting & Trade Articles
- DVD/Video/CD Scripting (25-year Video Vet Offers "State of the Field")
- Event Scripting, Hi-Level Proposals, Blog Writing
- Technical Writing (vs. High-Tech Marketing Writing—BIG Difference)

Chapter Fifteen

Final Words

- “The 5% Rule: Why Success Is Easy”
- No, the Market is NOT Saturated with Writers
- Reality Check: It’ll Be Easier for Some, Harder for Others. Like Life...
- Bad Days in This Business Are Like Bad Days at the Beach
- Take the First Step, and Watch What Happens...

Appendix A

Well-Fed Writing Resources

Books, Web Sites, Ezines, Blogs, Writing Groups, National Organizations, and More...

Appendix B

Well-Fed Success Stories

- General Success Stories
- Niche Practitioners
- At-Home Moms (AND Dads!)

Appendix C

The Deluxe Well-Fed Tool Box (You’re Going to Want This...)

Index