

# Tips for Hiring and Working With Freelance Writers



*By Petr Kratochvil (Public Domain)*

Freelance writers vary on experience, professionalism, expertise and quality. Finding one who will truly meet an organization's needs requires a lot of consideration.

A quality writer can help boost your content marketing efforts and search engine optimization. As promised in an earlier [blog](#), I am offering my thoughts on hiring freelance writers. This perspective is based on my experience as a paid writer and public relations professional for more than 40 clients during the past 25 years.

Here's what you need to know:

- **Be clear about business objectives.** I've had potential clients who wanted an article, a blog or web text, but could not identify the ultimate goals. As a result, I worked with some of them on business plans, marketing plans and value propositions so they could re-think what they really need. Be wary of writers who will do a job without understanding the purpose or desired results.
- **Finding the best freelance writers requires some research.** If you enter "freelance writers" on a search engine also add the desired subject expertise.
- **Look for writers with proven publishing success.** Always examine the writer's content, which should be easily available online. Here are some questions to ask yourself:
  - Do I like the writer's style?
  - Is there evidence of quality content that will draw readers to your business?
  - Where has the writer been published?
  - Are there online references? If so, are they specific about what they like about the writer?
  - Can the writer show evidence he or she can handle the assignment? Writing news releases is easy. Producing magazine features, booklets or annual reports requires specialized experience.
- **Only hire freelance writers who express interest in your audience.** If writers do not ask

about the intended audience, they have missed the most important element of effective communication. It shows their priorities are more focused on producing work and being paid than meeting their clients' needs. For some clients, I have provided some informal market research and customer interviews to better identify the audience and their needs.

- **Check out the writer's LinkedIn profile.** Does the writer's network include an impressive array of professionals? Are any of them in your network?
- **Know the assignment details ahead of time.** Can you provide subject matter experts or will you also be paying for research? When is the assignment due? How long is it? What's the repurposing plan? How about corporate style? Is this a one-time only project? Know this ahead of time instead of making vague inquiries.
- **Do not expect writers to start work immediately.** The best writers are busy. Ask when they can be reasonably available to start and finish the project.
- **Be sure you can be available to answer questions and help the project move forward.** Often, writers will not realize the full scope of a project until they are fully engaged in it. They will likely have follow-up questions necessary to complete their assignment. Quality writers will also offer advice on editorial packaging.
- **Ask how they want to be compensated.** By the word? By the hour? By the project? There are pros and cons to these approaches for both the writer and the customer. Some writers will even barter for products or services.
- **Compensate fairly.** I remember one potential client who wanted to pay me \$10 per hour. I declined. Not only was that less than the minimum wage after I pay taxes, but I had not worked for so little (practically free) since I was in college writing articles to build my portfolio! Proven publishing experience and expertise should translate into a better product that is less hassle to produce. Reliable, quality freelance writers that make your life easier are worth their weight in gold.
- **Pay in a timely fashion.** Payment in full within 30 days is customary, but everyone appreciates being paid sooner.
- **When the project is over, ask the writer how it went.** Finding a writer you enjoy working with is not just a matter of professionalism but personality. Ask the writer for feedback on their experience can help you decide to hire them again or clue you into internal issues that hampered progress. Offer them the same courtesy. Let the writer know if you intend to hire again and explain why.

What other tips would you offer to someone looking to hire a writer? Please share in the comments section below.