

The **12** Best Things I Did To Get My Freelance Health Writing Business Going

By Sarah Clachar

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The 12 Best Things I Did To Become A Successful Freelance Health Writer

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Introduction:

Right now as I'm writing this to you, I'm working at my desk, looking out over the garden in my backyard.

It's a foggy, overcast day, the dew thick on the grass. The leeks and remnant corn stalks have a sheen of silver on them.

Nearby, I can hear the chickens in the mobile coop under the pear trees shifting and murmuring as they wait to be released.

In an hour or so, everyone else in the house will be up. We'll go on a morning bike ride. Then home to a nice family farm breakfast.

This is my life: I can work looking out onto my beautiful yard. When I need to I can take breaks to do farm chores like weeding the garden or feeding the animals. Sometimes I simply leave my keyboard and sit on the front steps, letting the sun warm my back as I look out over to the pond.

If the weather cooperates, my husband and I might just jump on our bikes and hit some off-road trails near here. During the summer, when the kids are home from school, I frequently take a midday break when the sun is scorching to hit the nearby lake.

And all the time, while I'm living my life in the way I choose, I'm earning money. In fact, my freelance health writing business is doing so well, that when my husband lost his job a couple years ago, we saw it as an opportunity – not a problem. He could come home to work on the farm and make his own business plans at his leisure.

No financial pressures. No worries about bills. Just more family time. More choice in how we live our lives.

It's a wonderful life.

Over the years, I've had dozens of aspiring freelance health writers contact me requesting advice on how to get started so they can enjoy the same freedom and security working at home as a writer.

Each time I respond because I remember how it felt to get started. I remember the rejections and the empty bank account. I remember the doubts. And I remember the determination it took to keep that voice inside of me going that said, "I've just got to break through some time!"

There were days when my doubts and frustrations almost got the best of me.

But within a few years I managed to turn this initial vision into a concrete business. It took hard work . . . and it took some strategy.

In this report you're going to find out the key moves I attribute my business's success. I urge you to read through this and try these tactics in building your own writing business.

Not everyone's situation is the same. Not every business will develop in the same way. So I can't guarantee that what worked for me will absolutely help you get your business on the right track.

But I'm sure you will find something in here that helps you move forward – if not the entire package.

Health Writing Business Building Tactic #1: Persevere

I'm going to start off with the least exciting tactic because I want to make sure you understand this important point.

Nothing will work if you don't stick with it.

You can speed up your climb to success with some smart tactics – some of which I'll reveal here. But ultimately you have to put sweat into it.

Over the course of my building my writing business I experienced plenty rejections. When I started out trying my hand at writing for consumer magazines, I sent out literally hundreds of query letters and didn't get a response.

When I started my work as a copywriter, one of my first big clients decided to kill the project after reviewing my headline and leads for the sales letter. He told me, "Some people just aren't cut out for this."

Now certainly I stewed for a few days after getting a comment like that. And considered the possibility that maybe he was right. But in the end I just turned it around to fire myself up and keep working at it.

Michael Jordan was told he stunk at basketball too!

Years later those rejections have faded into the background. Through hard work and trial and error I've turned my skills into something I can rely on to bring success to me and my clients.

Now, I've turned the tables a bit. I assess my clients as well and decide whether I want to pursue the project.

So if you've been rejected or feel a little doubtful of your abilities, keep this in mind. It takes perseverance and sweat. The stories you hear about the writer who was discovered and jumps into ready-made fame and fortune is an aberration.

Most successful writers get there by working on their skills and continuing to knock on doors.

And this doesn't really end when you start hitting the big time. The very successful copywriters I looked to as role models – Bob Bly, Clayton Makepeace, Parris Lampropoulis, Dan Kennedy – they all work incredibly hard to continue to build their mastery and serve their clients well.

And by the way, This same mantra about perseverance goes for marketing yourself . . .

I've tried a lot of different tactics to market myself (some of which I'll get into later) – direct mail campaigns, cold calling, networking on LinkedIn, article writing, SEO . . . and much more.

You can argue the pros and cons to different marketing tactics until you're blue in the face. But ultimately, the people who experience success are the ones who try things long enough to give it a fair test, tweak it and make it work for them.

So along with persevering with your writing, I urge you to give each marketing tactic you try a fair shake. Give each approach enough time so you can start to learn the finer points of how to make it work for you.

If after spending some time on a tactic it just seems like more effort than it's worth, it may be time to shelve it. But don't make the mistake of jumping from one tactic to another because someone just told you about a new thing to try. It's easy to get lured in by all the attractive promises of what will work.

One thing is constant in all the approaches you'll hear about – nothing works without sticking with it for a while.

Health Writing Business Building Tactic #2: Choose Copywriting Over Writing For Magazines

Okay, now that we've gotten that unglamorous tactic out of the way . . . let's get into some juicier ones.

When I first started writing freelance I went for the magazines. Eventually after developing some steady gigs with medium-rate magazines I got my foot in the door with one of the much sought-after dollar-per-word gigs. An editor from *Health* magazine finally responded to my query letter.

I was in heaven. For a month I sweated over the article and produced something that I'm proud of to this day. I conducted tough interviews, and scoured the research for perspective.

It resulted in an article where one reader even described how it saved her daughter's life. I felt like I had made it to where I wanted to be.

But then I didn't hear back from that editor for one month . . . two months . . . three months . . .

Eventually I got a second job with him but it took several months of waiting and querying.

I realized I was competing against many fish for a limited number of slots.

Around this time, Bob Bly's book: ["Secrets of a Freelance Writer: How To Make \\$100,000 A Year"](#) resurfaced on my bookshelf. Years ago I had picked it up for a dollar at the Goodwill and promptly forgot about it.

Now I held it in my hands again, curious. And surely enough, when I opened it and began reading I discovered a world of writing opportunities that I'd never considered. Businesses need writers desperately.

While Bly wrote this book decades ago, this hasn't changed. Even in this recession. Especially with the web. At no other time have business writers been in such high demand.

Businesses need writers to create all their marketing materials, ghostwrite magazine articles, create press releases and flesh out their websites.

If you can develop the skills to write for businesses – called copywriting – you can find an endless stream of clients.

Now I'm not saying you'll get that endless stream right away – that takes marketing and some of the tactics I'll get into in a moment.

But certainly you'll up your chances of getting regular writing work for top dollar if you choose the business side of writing – copywriting.

If you want to know more about this you can check out [Bob Bly's updated version of his book.](#)

Health Writing Business Building Tactic #3: Give Your Copywriting Skills A Jumpstart With AWA!

If you learn more about how Bob got started as a freelance copywriter, you'll hear a story that is common to the freelance copywriting industry . . .

He worked his way up as an in-house copywriter, wrote for a few agencies and eventually struck out on his own.

You hear this story a lot. Of how very successful copywriters started working in-house or through an agency. Often enough, they refined their skills through the help of at least one wizened mentor and lots of writing.

As well as this story worked for Bob – it wasn't a story I could live.

I wasn't willing to move to a big city so I could work for a company. I was determined to work at home.

Fortunately for me, I ended up stumbling upon the ultimate solution . . .

One day as I cruised around the web, Googling "freelance health writer" and trying to drum up another inroad, I happened across a page that stopped me in my tracks.

It was a page describing the life of a health copywriter. It started with the headline, "Save lives and earn a doctor's income, too."

As I read through it, my excitement started building . . . this was indeed what I wanted to do. Helping companies with excellent products reach their audience.

You can read it this very same life-altering letter here:

[Doorway to health copywriting](#)

When I read this about 8 years ago it seemed almost too good to be true.

But I'll tell you, I just read it again before writing this report and I can vouch for everything in there. As this sales letter states, when you become a health copywriter . . .

You will get paid well. I just finished a website job that totaled \$14,500 and another shorter editing job that paid me \$5800.

You will have an in demand specialty. I'm usually booked several months in advance. Additionally, since this is such an information-intensive industry, many of my clients have continued to give me work after our initial project.

You will save lives. I've worked with phenomenal companies that developed safe, healthy ways to prevent heart disease, help children recover from autism, soothe inflammatory bowel disease.

Often enough, I end up sharing the products I write about with friends and family members. Just recently I sent a bottle of AHCC to my father-in-law to help him in his struggle to recover from unnecessary prostate treatment. He couldn't thank me enough for how it helped him. And his doctor wants to know more!

And I was able to get all this started by deciding to go with the promise in this letter.

This was not a letter filled with pie-in-the-sky promises. I've seen this for myself. Of course it didn't all come to me overnight.

But through work and strategy (and help from the course this letter is about) the promises in this letter are part of my life today.

The letter that led me to all this – and the course it talks about is [Secrets of Writing For the Health Market](#).

It's one of several copywriting home study courses published by [American Writers And Artists, Inc. \(AWAI\)](#).

I simply cannot say enough good things about connecting with this terrific resource.

AWAI was started based on a need. You see, just as Bob Bly had talked about in his book, companies are desperate for good copywriters to help them market their products.

Businesses needed a good place to get reliable, well-trained copywriters who know how to write copy that will effectively sell.

There are innumerable approaches to copywriting and marketing. AWAI teaches a particular form of copywriting called direct response. And this is the type of copywriting more and more businesses are turning to because it works so well to sell products or services and build businesses.

[AWAI](#) was created to fill in this gap.

They've pulled together some of the most successful marketers and copywriters in the industry. People like Bob Bly who's been writing copy for close to half a century.

And they've developed very clear step-by-step courses to help you learn this skill.

With [AWAI's courses](#) you don't need to work your way up through the agency's ranks.

And with AWAI you get access to dozens of the very best in the industry.

Truly, if you want to create a freelance business in this arena, AWAI is one of the best resources you can invest in.

I'm going to tell you more about some of their resources in future installations. But let me outline a few qualities I find particularly useful about their products:

- Their courses are built on solid experience and give you solid skills. These are not created by some guy at home who decided to rehash something he read online. No, these courses were created by people who have been in the trenches and helped companies effectively sell their products. And made a good living doing this.
- Almost every course comes with what's called a spec assignment. It's a writing assignment you do for free that is submitted to a business looking for a copywriter. If they like what you've created, they will pay you for the copy and potentially hire you for more work. You don't want to run your business on these kinds of assignments, but it's a great way to get started. Some courses include a free critique of your spec assignment.
- Some courses – like [Secrets for Writing for the Health Market](#) – come with a list of several hundred of the biggest mailers in the industry. This gives you an excellent place to start from. I got some of my first assignments through contacting people in these companies.
- AWAI is committed to your success. Once you purchase a course, you are considered a member. This means you can call them up for help on certain issues. They've answered questions for me on pricing, contracts and referred me to other copywriters who can help me sort through problems I'm facing in my business.
- AWAI connects you to an extensive network of copywriters, marketers, and businesses looking for copywriters. Not only do you have access to their Direct Response job board and regular notifications about assignments, but you also have access to forums that provide invaluable peer support and feedback.

Now if you look at the pricing for their courses, they may seem a bit steep. They did to me when I first started out. But I saw the satisfaction guarantee and bit the bullet.

I have earned every penny of the thousands of dollars I've invested in AWAI's courses back several times over. And I'll directly attribute these earnings to being able to jumpstart my way into new forms of copywriting with their guidance.

For example, the Secrets of Writing For the Health Market course costs \$399. When we were living on my husband's carpentry income plus a few sporadic writing assignments this was a big investment.

But today that's less than I get paid for one web page of copy.

Going back to the first piece of advice I gave you, it didn't get paid off automatically. And buying the course didn't automatically create a copywriting business for me.

AWAI can give you the instruction and lots of places you can take it to. **But you still need to practice the skills, market yourself and build your business.**

I ended up skipping their basic course, [AWAI's Accelerated Program For Six-Figure Copywriting](#) and went right to the [Health Copywriting course](#) and their [Master's Course](#).

Many people, however, swear by the value of their basic course, [AWAI's Accelerated Program For Six-Figure Copywriting](#). If you feel like you'd like to start off with a strong foundation on writing copy, this course is a good place to start.

However, without question, AWAI has been a key aspect of how I got my freelance health writing business zooming.

Health Writing Business Building Tactic #4: Tap Into Trade Journals

When I started out as a health writer, I knew a lot about health. I'd been a health educator in a past career, I had a BA in biology, and we had a small organic farm that served as a living laboratory, keeping me curious, thinking and learning.

But while that knowledge contributed to building my health writing business – understanding the nature of business and marketing was a whole other story I needed to understand.

Since I was already very familiar with the work of contacting magazine editors with story ideas and writing journalistically, I decided to try my hand

at reporting for trade magazines covering the natural health products industry.

I didn't have many clients. And I knew this would help me gain perspective on how to sell myself as a business ally. Not to mention find some potential clients.

So I started contacting the editors from various trade magazines for story assignments. Each time I wrote a query letter, sent it by email and followed up with a phone call.

The editor of *Nutrition Business Journal*, eagerly took my call, letting me know that they had an immediate need for a writer to complete an assignment with a quick turnaround. It was a tight deadline – but I jumped on the assignment.

I worked late nights completing this assignment. I also took up every contact suggestion the editor made and packed my days with interviews. (Each of these interviewees was a potential copywriting client as well!)

In fact, I ended each interview with:

In addition to trade journalism, I write marketing copy for natural health companies. Do you ever outsource for your marketing? Could I send you some information about my services?

More often than not, the person I was interviewing said yes or referred me to the person in marketing who I should contact.

This whole approach helped me build my business in several ways:

1. I got business directly from my interviews.
2. I was able to position myself as an industry expert by highlighting my published articles on my website. And truly I was an expert in many ways. I had had the opportunity to pick the brains of so many people in the industry and build my own understanding from this.
3. I could nurture client relationships. For some assignments I interviewed previous clients. This gave me an excuse to get back in touch and remind them of my value to them and my expertise. This garnered me some new assignments.
4. Not all my articles were bylined. But the ones that were have steadily brought people to my website, all of them pre-sold on my skills and

knowledge. Some of these visitors have turned into excellent, longstanding clients.

And last but not least - because I was a struggling writer at the time, the trade journal assignments I had gave me a steady – albeit more humble – income as I built my copywriting business.

These days my copywriting pays much better than the trade journalism. But I continue to occasionally take assignments just because it's a great way to market yourself and keep yourself positioned as an industry expert.

If you're interested in writing for the natural health industry, here are some of the trade journals you should consider connecting with:

[Nutrition Business Journal](#)

[Natural Products Marketplace](#)

[Natural Products Industry Insider](#)

[Natural Foods Merchandiser](#)

[Functional Foods & Nutraceuticals](#)

[Vitamin Retailer](#)

[Nutrition Industry Executive](#)

[Nutritional Outlook](#)

[Nutraceuticals World](#)

Keep in mind these are from the industry niche that I've worked in mostly – nutritional products. If you're interested in writing for alternative health practitioners or natural health publishers, you can probably find some trade magazines geared specifically to them by doing some sleuthing around on the web.

And if you want to find out a little more about the fine art of contacting editors and getting writing gigs in trade magazines (or consumer magazines for that matter), I highly recommend my fellow New Hampshireite, Linda Formichelli's book:

[The Renegade Writer](#)

(As I mentioned earlier, I tried out the consumer magazine route and found some success but decided the copywriting route provided more business opportunities. This is the route I recommend for finding lots of work that pays well and still allows you to help people access good health information and products. However, if you should decide to go the consumer mag route, this book is invaluable.)

Health Writing Business Building Tactic #5: Specialize

I'm not the first to say this – in fact you'll hear this all over as you start to dig into other resources . . .

But I will stand adamantly behind this advice:

Specialize.

When you specialize you gain in a number of ways:

1. It's easier to position yourself as an expert – the go-to person in the arena. People will seek you out more for your expertise.
2. You can work faster and better. Since you don't have a huge learning curve to master with each project, you can jump ahead on each assignment.
3. You can command higher fees. As an expert who understands the products and market well, you can demand higher fees of your clients and they will feel quite comfortable agreeing to them.

I specialized in the natural health industry. And in many ways I even subspecialized in nutritional supplements due to the ebook I wrote with Bob Bly's editorial oversight:

How To Write Irresistible Copy For Nutritional Supplements

It's made it much easier to build my business with this focus.

And there's an additional reason specializing helps – especially when it comes to writing copy for nutritional supplements . . .

You understand the specific regulations governing marketing in the industry you're writing for.

The nutritional supplement market has very funny regulations that impact copywriting tremendously. It's essential that you understand them in order to give your clients copy that is legally compliant.

I give a basic overview of how to write with these regulations in my ebook

How To Write Irresistible Copy For Nutritional Supplements

But you can also find some excellent perspective and gain a thorough understanding of these regulations in my colleague, Pam Magnuson's, course:

What To Say If You Can't Say Anything At All.

These two courses together will give you a great start in writing for nutritional supplement companies.

Bear in mind, specializing doesn't mean you can't work outside of the perimeters you advertise. It just means that you highlight these areas as your specialty and do a majority of your work in so you can master the finepoints.

Health Writing Business Building Tactic #6: Connect With More Experienced Writers

I'll be honest - once your business gets going, time gets ever more precious. I know I've let a few emails from aspiring freelance writers slip through the cracks.

But overall I try to answer as many as I can - even if it's just a short email. Because I know what a difference it made from me to connect with more experienced writers when I was starting out.

The more experienced writers I reached out to gave me insights and opportunities I couldn't get on my own. And as a way to show my appreciation, I try to pass the favor forward.

Not to mention, I think it just makes good business sense to treat everyone you connect with in this business with courtesy - you never know how connections will come back around in your business' future.

For my own business, reaching out to more experienced writers was a critical step. Here are some of the ways I did so:

1. Reach out and offer help:

I sent out letters to several high profile health copywriters offering my help as a researcher or subcontractor. This resulted in writing an ebook for Bob Bly through which I connected with other writers. I also did a research gig for Parris Lampropoulis and worked with him pro bono on some legislative issues. In both situations I got to ask them questions and watch how they operate. I got their feedback on my work and perspective which was equally invaluable. I even got a few client referrals out of these connections.

Plus, it was another nice way to earn a little while I was building my business.

2. Get coaching:

I remember the panic I felt when I secured one of my first big webwriting jobs. It was a potentially BIG job. But I still had doubts about doing it right. For this reason I hired web copywriting guru Nick Usborne to coach me. Not only did he review some of my writing but he also helped me develop confidence in my skills and strategize about my self-promotion in a way that allowed me to grow my business much more quickly.

With Nick's help the butterflies dissipated.

There are a lot of good coaches out there. Most of all you want someone who has been in the trenches and is a good teacher. I highly recommend Nick's coaching and also recommend the coaching program run by copywriter Chris Marlow.

3. Interact:

If you've signed up for a newsletter, follow someone on Twitter or notice someone's article in a blog you read, comment and give some feedback. All writers like to know they have an audience out there who is actually listening. And feedback - both positive and critical - helps us tune our

words even more finely.

Finally sometimes that feedback may plant the seed for future opportunity. When you respond, you get noticed. And you never know when your comments will hit someone just when they need to refer a client or hire on a subcontractor.

Another place to interact is face to face. I'm not a conference goer. But I know from talking to colleagues how much they've gotten out of meeting with people face to face and having the opportunity to really sit down and talk.

[AWAI](#) hosts a once a year Bootcamp in the fall. And each year they bring in some real masters in the field. Having a class with one of these folks can be career-changing. In addition, this conference brings in many experienced copywriters who have a solid business as well as new copywriters, giving you lots of opportunities to meet with people who are in the same position - or have been - that you are.

4. Show appreciation:

I see it as part of my responsibility to pass on what I've learned to newer writers. I also see it as a gesture of goodwill. And for that I always like a nice thank you. It doesn't have to be much - a simple email is fine. But it can go a long way to keeping the connection a good one.

As part of marketing her copywriting coaching program, copywriter Chris Marlow gave me a half hour of valuable coaching for free. I didn't end up going through her program (although I highly recommend it since I know other copywriters who have gotten great mileage out of it.) However, I did send her a jar of maple syrup from our farm with a thank you note.

Years later when I had developed a product that I thought would be a good fit for her coaching students, I got a warm reception to the email partnership proposal I sent her. The maple syrup didn't do it on its own, but it certainly paved the way for this subsequent interaction.

It doesn't matter how old you are - or what your career path has been. It is always good to put on your student hat once and a while and learn. And fortunately there are some great people out there who are willing to teach, offer some advice and maybe could use an extra hand.

Seek them out.

Health Writing Business Building Tactic #7: Never rest on your laurels

This lesson started early in my copywriting career when my confidence about being a good writer was slapped around a bit by that first client who killed my project halfway through.

See, I had started off copywriting with a sense that I was a good writer. I'd received lots of kudos from former bosses and the magazine editors I had worked with as a freelance consumer magazine writer.

But right from the start, this early client let me know in no uncertain terms that many good writers can't write good copy. I heard the same thing from Bob Bly and Clayton Makepeace.

It didn't mean I wasn't a good writer. But it did mean that to be a good copywriter – as with any form of writing - I had to work for it.

The successful writers more often than not are the ones who practice diligently, study what's working and then practice some more.

When I look through older projects sometimes I say to myself, "Hey, that was pretty good." But just as often I say to myself – "Wow, I could make this so much better."

So how do you keep getting better?

1. Just write . . . a lot. Any professional athlete owes their finely tuned success to refining their skill. But much of it is due to repetition – plain ole practice. You simply need to build up "writing muscle". And the best way to do this is to write.

My favorite way to get this steady practice in is through writing for my various side businesses, my money-making websites. (You can see [the excellent guide I use for this](#) right here – also from AWAI.)

Not only do I practice my writing here, but I also get to experiment with marketing and SEO in ways I can't when doing work for clients.

2. Study other successful copywriting. I have a couple big boxes of what most people would dismiss as junk mail. For me it's a treasure trove. It's what copywriters call a swipe file because it helps you see what kind of copy is working in the mail to generate a response. And while you should never plagiarize, you can swipe ideas from these successful pieces.

Beyond the specific ideas I get from reading through these I always find myself rethinking my tone and approach in ways that help my copywriting improve.

3. Read and learn. I was just reading marketer Bill Glazer's article on the 3 traits common to every successful entrepreneur. And according to Glazer – having worked with thousands of businesses - reading is one of them.

Several of [my book recommendations are here](#).

I also subscribe to several newsletters and invest in courses throughout the year. Some of my favorite online resources for refining my copywriting skills are:

[Clayton Makepeace's Total Package](#) (no longer active, but still archived)

[Gary Bencivenga's Bencivenga's Bullets](#) (no longer active, but still archived)

[John Forde's Copywriter's Roundtable](#)

[Nick Osborne's Excess Voice](#)

[Brian Clark \(and Sonia Simone's\) Copyblogger](#)

[Sandi Krakowski's A Real Change](#)

[Heather Lloyd Martin's Success Works](#)

[Jeff Sexton's Jeff Sexton Writes](#)

[Carline Anglade-Cole's \(sporadic\) Copy Star](#)

[Bob Bly's E-newsletter](#)

[AWAI's The Golden Thread](#)

And of course my very own, [Healthy Copy Ideas](#)

4. Get critiqued. I've gone various routes with this – from coaching to peer groups to my husband to my kids. And I've found it always helps to get someone else's perspective.

It doesn't matter if they're a professional writer or not. In fact sometimes it's better if they're not since when it comes to copywriting, they're more likely to react to your copy like your average reader will (unless your audience is professional writers.)

So hook up with some people you meet through a forum, organize a peer group in your neighborhood or simply grab your spouse by the ear. AWAI's forums are a great place to organize a peer review group. And I've seen a couple start on LinkedIn as well.

Not everything you'll get as feedback will be helpful. You'll have to listen carefully and ponder the reactions you get. But good or bad, critiques make you think, make you question, make you see your writing in new light.

Critiques as an essential part of growing as a writer.

Health Writing Business Building Tactic #8: Don't get stifled by perfectionism

On one hand you should do everything you can to improve your skill and bring that mastery to every job you do.

But don't take it too far.

One of the best pieces of advice I got was from multi-millionaire copywriter and marketer, Dan Kennedy. He constantly urges his students to go for "good enough copy".

This doesn't mean that you slouch off and let typos and sentences run rampant. It simply is a warning to not get stopped short from taking action by the demons of perfectionism.

If there is one thing that keeps me procrastinating, it is the fear of not creating the perfect piece of copy.

But as Dan reminded me, I can't. More important - Get something out there so you can refine it. And then eventually test it. And then refine it again.

As I mentioned before, I look back at previous projects and often grimace when I see what I wrote. But that's what life's about - growth and change.

In fact the power of direct response copy is that it's meant to be tested and tweaked.

So while I work hard at creating a really good piece for each of my clients. I also keep reminding myself to work towards creating a good enough piece to get the job done . . . and learn from . . . and improve upon.

Worrying about creating the best can sometimes get you to a point of creating nothing.

And nothing doesn't get you anywhere!

Hint: To help move myself towards writing that good enough draft or sending that good-enough final edit to my client, here's what I do:

- I leave lots of time for editing.
- I create a few extra headlines and ledes to give to my client if they want to test the copy against another option.
- I incorporate royalty agreements into many of my projects so I can comfortably stay involved during the testing and work with my client to improve it.

Health Writing Business Building Tactic #9: Know How To Write For The Web

I write both for the mail and online. And while my first jobs were for direct mail projects, my real business breakthroughs came when I started writing online.

Why? Three reasons:

1. **There is simply so much demand for online copy.** While every business doesn't need to be in the mail or on Main Street, just about every business needs to have some kind of online presence. And they need copywriters who understand online marketing to help them with this.

2. **The stakes aren't quite so high.** In direct mail, if your client prints out 200,000 copies of your letter and sends it in the mail and it doesn't do well, your client just lost a lot of money on that enterprise. If you write something online and it's not quite working, it's much cheaper to refine and change. For this reason, online marketers are less wary of taking on new copywriters.
3. **The web is so information intensive.** As social media, search engine optimization (SEO) and content marketing take off, online businesses need more and more good copy.

Over and over again when new writers ask me for advice on how to get started writing online, I point them in the direction of two foundational courses:

[Nick Usborne's Web Copywriting 2.0: Your Complete Guide To Writing Web Copy That Converts](#)

I hired Nick for a coach when I was just starting out for good reason. He is one of the most experienced and skilled web copywriters around. And he's a wonderful teacher. I read through this course periodically and I always find new angles and reminders of what I can do to improve my web copywriting.

Nick's approach to copy is very much in tune with the unique requirements of ecommerce. He starts off by helping you understand the dynamics of online shopping and helps you get into a visitor's head.

And then he uses this understanding to help you craft the structure of several different forms of online copy.

Throughout his instruction he helps you understand how web pages function and how your prospect is likely to react – and how you can help influence this reaction with your copy.

It's an invaluable resource. And – like most of AWAI's courses – it's periodically updated and added to with enrichment materials like webinars and special reports.

[Heather Lloyd Martin's SEO Copywriting Certificate Course](#)

Heather is known throughout copywriting and SEO circles as the Queen of SEO Copywriting. No one else has so deftly married the "geeky" numbers and data of SEO with direct response's salesmanship.

Heather's course can get you started at square one and walk you through until you've gotten a good foundational grasp of SEO and how to write direct response copy.

And even if you've been writing for a while, you'll still get some useful ideas from it. I took it after writing SEO copy for a few years. I was feeling incredibly frustrated because everywhere I looked for answers to my questions about writing SEO copy, the information was dominated by discussions of just SEO in the technical sense. I had to sift through article after article and filter all the info myself from a copywriter's perspective.

Heather's course was a relief. She's done the careful evaluation based on her deep understanding of SEO and the job of a copywriter. For me, the course filled in gaps I was struggling to find answers to.

She's also a terrific teacher.

And at the end you get a nice shiny certificate to put on your website.

Health Writing Business Building Tactic #10: Think

Thinking is very much undervalued these days.

As the information age has hit full stride, information has flooded into every crack and crevice of our lives. We plug ourselves in through all our different screens. And we end up kicking and flailing, trying to keep up like a drowning swimmer trying to keep her head above the water.

We start to think that we have to keep up with everything.

We somehow are convinced that the important stuff is all that information churning through our lives.

Admittedly, there is some important stuff there . . .

But we're losing track of the important stuff that percolates up within us like a clear, mineral-rich spring . . .

Our very own thoughts.

Good copywriting is not just about regurgitating information and formulas.

It's about really thinking about your prospective audience, the product you're writing about and how to connect the two.

So take time to read, network, write and repeat the whole sequence.

But make time to think as well.

On the farm I live on I have ample time to stretch my brain muscles as I move the goats around, feed the chickens or weed.

I joke with my husband that I've found some of my most brilliant copy concepts hanging on the clothesline. Or in the woodpile when I'm stacking wood.

It's these moments when I'm physically engaged doing something other than writing and reading that all that information weaves together and starts to tug at my deeper understanding. And that's where true brilliance – and some common-sense insight - comes from.

Health Writing Business Building Tactic #11: Take Care Of Your Most Important Business Asset

The nice thing about starting a freelance writing business is that it isn't a very capital-intensive enterprise.

A computer, an internet connection, a phone. Perhaps you squeeze your office into a corner of the living room or set up a desk in your bedroom.

If you're on a really tight budget, you could get going on a computer at a library.

You don't need a lot to get going.

But you do need to make some careful investment moves to keep going. In a place that many home business owners overlook. Yourself.

You are your business' most important asset. And if you don't take care of yourself, you're not taking care of your business the way it needs to be taken care of.

Think about it. When you're sick – who's going to pick up on the marketing or do the work to meet that deadline?

If you're distracted by family strife, who's going to step in and hold a measured conversation with a prospective client?

No one else can keep your business moving forward like you can. And for this reason it's infinitely important to employ tactics that help you take care of your health.

It's just sound business advice, here.

You can learn more about the specific tactics I've developed to keep myself healthy and sane while running a home business right here:

[Get Your Healthy Home Business Guide](#)

I've put together all my tactics in a jam-packed 6-chapter guide for running your business without running yourself into the ground.

It's perhaps one of the best investments you can make for your business. I know the steps I've taken that I document in this guide are what has allowed me to have . . .

More focus
More energy
More confidence
And more determination

These ingredients have helped me and my business thrive together.

Health Writing Business Building Tactic #12: Take Action

I hope these ten snippets have given you some good insights into how to get your freelance health writing business up and running.

It's a wonderful business. It's a wonderful way to make a living. It's a wonderful way of life.

And it's doable.

I won't say it's a walk in the park to get it started. And I don't want you to think you'll automatically be making six figures year one. Some people do – but it's not a reasonable expectation for most people.

It will take hard work.

It will take strategy.

It will take determination. Don't let hiccups turn into monstrous mountains that get in your way.

Try things, learn and adjust.

And here I'm going to add one more piece of advice:

Take some form of action every day to move your business forward.

It's easy to get caught up in reading, learning and pondering your next move.

Don't get stuck there. Do something. Don't worry about if you're going to make a mistake. Find out for sure.

As another copywriting master, Michael Masterson has drilled into his marketing advice – the best thing you can do is fail fast.

So you can learn from that trial and recalibrate and move forward.

Just do it.

Periodically I'll be adding a few thoughts here and there and sending them to you via email.

Also, connect with me on Facebook or on Twitter. I periodically send tidbits of information through these channels as well.

And I always welcome feedback – let me know if you have questions or comments about this mini-course.

You can simply hit reply to this email and it will come right to my in box.

To Your Healthy Freelance Business!

Sarah Clachar

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