

“10 Tips to Double Your Freelance Income”
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Footnote Session, Saturday night
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1. Write several query letters each week!

Definition of a Query Letter:

*A query letter is a letter that pitches a story idea; tells why you are the perfect person to write that article; and then lists your writing credentials.

Quick Query Tips:

- *Always address your query letter to a specific person. (Call the publication to find out spelling and title just to be sure, because editors move around a lot!)
- *Indicate that you’ve studied their magazine. (You might mention a past article or series of articles you saw in their magazine.)
- *Show how your proposed story idea fits with their readership.
- *Remember, magazines work four to six months ahead, so propose holiday stories early enough.
- *Always close by offering to take on story ideas that their staff may generate. (Tell them you like to write “on assignment.”)

Why multiple queries and submissions?

*By crafting a couple of different query letters each week, you’ll keep your idea machine operational, and you’ll be able to pitch different article and book ideas to various publications and publishers. The more you pitch, the more you’ll sell! 😊

Definition of Simultaneous Submissions:

*A simultaneous submission doesn’t mean sending out different query letters, pitching different ideas, to various publications. A simultaneous submission means pitching the same article or book idea to different publications/publishers at the same time. (Note: Some publications/publishers do not accept multiple submissions so be sure to study the listings on their websites, as well as in Sally Stuart’s “Christian Writer’s Market.”)

2. Take Advantage of Your Expertise/Position!

How?

*Example: If your day job is being a church secretary, you are the perfect person to write a story about ways to celebrate pastor appreciation month. It happens every year. You can sell that piece to every denominational magazine without any conflict of interest. How? Well, because Free Methodists reading “Light & Life” will probably not be reading “The Pentecostal Evangel” which is the Assemblies of God magazine. So, send that query to several denominational magazines at the same time!

Quick Tip for Finding A Market:

*If you don’t know where to find those magazines mentioned above, you have to get Sally Stuart’s “Christian Writer’s Market.” I also suggest getting the secular “Writer’s Market.” (And, if you want to save a few bucks, you can buy a 2003 edition pretty cheap right now because the 2004 will be coming out next month. It won’t be totally up to date, but it will be pretty accurate. ☺)

3. Recycle, Rework and Reap!

Mine your Goldmine:

* If you’ve been writing a while, you probably have lots of published articles under your belt. If that’s true, then you have a gold mine of untapped resources—re-workable, re-sellable stuff.

Quick Tips for Reworking and Re-selling:

*Make a list of magazines/websites/newspapers/newsletters that might have a need for your piece.

* After selecting a publication, find ways to tweak your article that will make it specifically appealing to the publication at this time.

*Know the audience for the publication.

*Add a sidebar that will make it more audience specific for the publication.

4. Develop a Pitch Letter and Pitch Away!

Perfect Your Pitch:

*This is different from a query letter. In a query letter, you are pitching a story idea. In a pitch letter, you are pitching yourself. It’s a general letter that is simple and to-the-point, stating that you’re a freelance writer and highlighting your qualifications, any awards you’ve won, and all of your contact information.

Why Pitch?

*So that you can visit the online job boards and freelance websites and send them your pitch letter, gaining more writing assignments than you’ll know what to do with—really! Also, it’s a great letter to have if an editor says, “We’re always looking for regular contributors...” Jump all over that and send that editor your pitch letter, offering to tackle any assignments he might have in the works. ☺

5. Scan the Classifieds for Writing Gigs!

Scan the Classified Ads

* Scan your local newspaper's classified ads for possible writing opportunities as well as the classified ads of newspapers around the world—you can do that online! You'll be surprised what you find. Even if a newspaper ad says: "Seeking a fulltime magazine writer..." in an employment ad, you can always apply for the job, using your handy-dandy "pitch letter" and stating that you can produce lively copy for them on a freelance basis. They may have never considered that option...

Quick Tip for Getting More Work:

*Go to www.ilovetowrite.com and order "How I Made \$66,270 in 9 Months Writing for Websites" today!

6. Split Your Time 50/50!

Divide Your Time Equally Between Writing and Marketing:

*This may sound extreme, but it keeps assignments coming in and your writing going out in magazines, in newspapers and on websites/e-zines.

Quick Tips for Splitting Your Time:

*Try to contact five to 10 editors/publishers/publications a day. That may seem like a lofty goal, but it is not that difficult if you have already crafted your "I'm a freelancer contact letter/e-mail."

*Spend a couple of hours doing "follow-up" work. This might include sending thank-you notes to editors; or sending a "Hey how are you doing, wondered if you were needing a writer to tackle any stories in the near future... e-mails to editors you've already established a relationship with (I get so much work that way); or pitching another story to a publication that recently purchased one of your articles—why not strike while the iron is hot? (Note: Example: I already sold four devotionals to Lydia magazine by doing that...)

*Write a few new query letters.

*Work on existing assignments.

*Write the great American novel... ☺

7. Attend Writers' Conferences—both secular and Christian!

Just do it:

*Take advantage of the networking capabilities here and at other writers' conferences. Remember: one important contact can lead to a book contract; several magazine assignments; who knows?

Go Armed with Ideas:

*When you go to conferences like this one, be prepared. Come armed with story ideas appropriate for each publication that will be represented—or at least the ones you have an interest in writing for. Then, pitch those ideas. If you can't get an appointment with an editor because all of his/her appointment times are taken, make a point to introduce yourself to that person at some juncture during the conference, and see if there is another time you can meet. The editors/publishers are here to find new talent. They want to find great stories, and you've got them to share. ☺

Find Conferences Just for You:

* Check out <http://writing.shawguides.com> to find out about writers conferences in every genre in every location of the world.

Quick Tip to Make the Most of the Conference:

*When offered, **always** attend the editorial magazine and book panels to see what the editors are looking for right now. You'll get the insider information that other writers who didn't attend the conference won't have!

8. **Subscribe to Important Industry Newsletters—both hard copy and online**

Get in the Know:

*As you'll see from my "Resources Handout," there are several important newsletters I couldn't do without—some online and some through the postal system. I have some with me that I'll show you: "Writer's Digest," "The Writer," "The Christian Communicator," "Advanced Christian Writer," "The Ready Writer," "Children's Writer," "Children's Book Insider" as well as several web e-letters. (See the Resource handout for more.)

*By taking these newsletters, you'll keep up-to-date on industry trends; editorial needs of various houses and publications; editorial shifts (editors moving around); new imprints; etc. It's so worth your money, and they would be considered tax deductible, too! ☺

9. **Dare to Write Where You've Never Written Before...**

Dare to Write:

*Just because you've never ghostwritten for a minister before doesn't mean you can't do it. It just means you haven't yet explored that area of writing. You might be really good at it! There are lots of churches and ministries that use ghostwriters to craft articles from the pastor's sermons/notes. There's no byline, but it can be quite lucrative and lead to other projects such as books.

Don't despise small beginnings:

*I have written about everything from how to care for an aging cat (and I don't have a cat or even like cats) to how to brush a dog's teeth. OK, so those are not really exciting, life-changing topics, but by writing those pieces and making a steady living doing those articles, I was able to write my book, "Living the Love Chapter" which is meaningful and could change somebody's life. Somebody has to write those mundane, how-to pieces, why not you? Trust me, trade mags and website pay a lot!

Quick Tips for Finding Trade or Local Magazines Looking for Writers:

*Check out department store magazines such as Home Depot's decorating issue and Target's trade magazine.

*Approach your local newspaper and offer yourself as a freelancer. (Newspapers put out specialty "tabs" like Bridal tabs and Fashion tabs every quarter, and typically, the on-staff reporters don't have time to write the stories for those sections.)

*Send a pitch letter of yourself to local freebie magazines such as "Fort Worth Child."

*Find trade magazines in your area of expertise (Check out the Writer's Market guides) and send those magazines your pitch letter and a few article ideas...you might just find some steady clients that will help double your income!

10. Clue into Column Writing!

Pitch a Column:

*In order to snag your own weekly column in your local newspaper, you'll have to do a little homework, but the rewards could be a regular writing gig for you and great exposure, as well!

Quick Tips for Snagging a Newspaper Column:

*First, find your audience and format. Determine your readership. Decide if you'll write a Q and A format based on readers' letters, or if you'll come up with your own topics each week.

*Second, identify your competition: Zero in on what you can offer that other local columnists or the Associated Press columnists cannot. Prove a need for your expertise in a regular feature.

*Third, write a sample column or two, and propose 20-25 future column topics.

*Lastly, include all of these elements in your cover letter to the Lifestyle, Business, Religion, Education, Sports or Managing Editor—depending on what your column is going to be about. (Make sure you send your letter to a specific editor, and spell his/her name correctly!)