

Ten top tips for freelance writers

Freelance writers are being hit by the recession in exactly the same way that permanent staff are feeling the pinch. With editorial budgets being slashed and the number of redundancies seen in the writing and editorial field increasing, the opportunities available for freelance writers are becoming scarcer.

However, overall the market for writing is always expanding – you just have to spend a bit more time finding out how that expansion can be profitable to you. So, if you are a freelance writer looking to keep your momentum and optimism up high, here are a few tips to keep you smiling.

1. Stay calm. Let's be honest, rejection can be tough, but editors or commissioners who change their minds all the time can be extremely frustrating. Remember to reign that anger and frustration in – count to ten before you pick up the phone for a rant or before you send that snotty email – after all, you need their ongoing business in the long run. Instead, walk away from the situation...physically. Move yourself away from the laptop, go and make a cup of tea or coffee and take it into the garden after a particularly bad telephone call with an editor. Just take 15 minutes out of your day to get things into perspective and to calm down. You'll find that this 15 minutes is worth its weight in gold.
2. Never stop learning. Writing is the same as any skill or trade – you need to keep your knowledge of the market contemporary. So keep in touch with what is happening with the world of publishing or publications, as you'll find this is a great way to seek out early writing opportunities.
3. Don't put all of your eggs in one basket. If you are nervous about the state of the current freelance market, see if there is another job or role that you can take on temporarily to remove or ease any concerns about income. Similarly, don't put all of your efforts into writing for one particular publication. Approach several, and spread the risk of rejection.
4. Keep writing, and keep pitching ideas and work to editors or commissioners. As tough as it can be some times, don't lose the momentum.
5. Be persistent! Keep that tenacious attitude strong at all times.
6. Take advantage of your specialist knowledge. If you have a background in healthcare then use this to pitch health articles to popular women's magazines, or to write a focused health piece for a healthcare journal.
7. Believe in yourself and aim high. If you don't go for large opportunities you definitely won't win them. But if you do try a pitch, you just never know...it might come off!
8. Play to your strengths. You are usually best at things you are passionate at. So if football really floats your boat, see what opportunities lay within this field.
9. Keep an eye on your finances and chase up late payments. Don't let yourself get caught out financially through sloppy book keeping.
10. Maintain your own well-being. Things always appear worse when you are tired, hungry, run down or depressed. And this outlook can create a negative vibe which can be devastating for writers. So keep yourself mentally, emotionally and physically happy, and you'll find that this has a positive impact on your writing too.