



## **Writing Online for Clients**

### ***Build Your Own Writing Business***

**Written by Tess Tackett**

Online, there are “content” sites you can sign up with so that you can write articles for the clients of these sites. There are also sites that allow you to submit articles on any topic you like; when your article sells, you get a percentage of the sale and the “consignment” site keeps the rest. What about building a business of your own, one where you get your own clients so that you are the one in control - and YOU keep all of the money you make? Can anyone do this? Absolutely. When you build your own business, you are in charge of your time and how much you charge.

Today, many people are getting in to the “ghostwriting” business. That is what I do myself, and I can tell you that it's a big money-maker. While I write for some of the content provider sites like Interact Media and Content Divas, the biggest percentage of my income comes from ghostwriting for my own clients – and charging the rates I feel comfortable with. That's the great thing about having your own business; you can build

a client list as big as you like, and charge what YOU want to charge.

Most people who decide they want to build their own writing business have no ideas how to go about it – how to find clients, what to charge, how to deliver the writing, how to schedule their time working at home, what costs can be deducted on their taxes. That is why I wrote this ebook. I want to tell you EXACTLY how to do what I do. You will find step by step guidance in the information below – I'll even explain a few things about keywords and SEO optimization that you need to know in order to gain more clients.

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## **What is a ghostwriter?**

Simply put, a ghostwriter is someone who writes content for someone else, so they use it as if they actually wrote the content, and pay the ghostwriter for their work. As a ghostwriter, you relinquish all rights to the person who pays you for the article, web page, etc. While you get no recognition for your work (the client gets the recognition), you do get paid well! If

you are the type of person who wants to be known for your work, ghostwriting may not be for you - but if you're looking to make incredible money, go for it!

I am a ghostwriter myself. I have written literally thousands of website pages and articles for clients, though you will never see my name on them because to the outside world, the client wrote the content. Make sense? It's just like many fiction novels today; a ghostwriter writes the content, then a famous or well-known author puts their name on the book.

Ghostwriting is just like any other writing for the web. As long as you understand keyword use and how to optimize content, it's an easy career that pays well. Ghostwriters can write anything and everything, from articles, blog posts and web pages to eBooks, special reports and even fiction novels.

## **What you need to know about keywords and SEO**

You probably already know this, but for those of you who do not keywords are those words and phrases that people (just like you and me) type in on Google or any search engine to find the information or product we are looking for. In writing for clients, most will prefer writers who understand keywords and how to use them in articles, web pages and other content so that search engines find this content easily, and understand what it is about.

For example, you type in "how to earn money writing" when you were looking to find out how you could earn an income by writing articles or other content. Those words, "how to earn money writing", are keywords! Easy enough, huh?

Clients will generally tell you what keywords they want used in an article or website page. You can read all over the internet different opinions on how much you should use those keywords in your content, but I generally stick to around 1 to 1 1/2% keyword density. This means that if I write a 400 word article, I will use the keyword(s) in that article 4 to 6 times. To me, that is enough so that the search engines know what the content is about without it reading in a crazy way that looks a bit odd to someone reading that content. Can you imagine if you read a 400 word article that had the keywords "how to earn money writing" in it 10 times? Overkill, in my opinion.

SEO, or search engine optimization, is a method in which strategies are used to help a website rank higher in the search engine results pages (SERPS). Naturally people who own websites want those websites to rank highly so that they get more traffic. Think about it for a moment; when you search for something, do you usually go farther than the first two or three pages of results? Most other people don't either, so website owners are constantly fighting for position on those first highly-coveted pages. More traffic equals more money, and fresh content helps these sites rank higher - which means plenty of writing opportunities for all of us!

Most clients LOVE writers who have a good grasp of keyword optimization and SEO, so the more you learn about the subject, the more high-end clients you can add to your list that are willing to pay you well for your work.

## **How to Write and Deliver Content**

You may be curious as to how to write your articles without flipping back and forth to your research sources. If you're like me, by the time I read the

content I am researching and then go back to my article, I've already forgotten what I read. It's easier for me to read and research as I go.

You can make this much easier on yourself! I usually open up two or three different windows in Explorer, or two or three tabs in Firefox so that I can browse back and forth between them all while I'm writing. Then, simply open up notepad or wordpad - nearly every computer comes equipped with notepad. You can "minimize" your notepad by clicking the square box up in the right hand corner between the minus and the "x". This will make your notepad box small enough so that you can see your research sources while you are writing. This makes it much quicker, since you don't have to flip back and forth between your pages and where you are writing. You can have a view of what you are writing and your sources at the same time.

Some clients (not many) prefer their content to be delivered as a Word document. When I have a client that wants content in this format, I simply write the article in notepad as I always do so that I can still have a view of my research sources, then when I complete the article I "copy" and "paste" it in to the Word document and finish the formatting there. Makes it much easier than flipping back and forth between your Word doc and your research pages!

As far as writing the articles, there are several ways you can do this. Many people simply write short paragraphs that consist of about 70 or 80 words, while others include numbered or bulleted lists. Many writers also include headings in their articles, so that they are broken up in to sections. Readers like to read articles with sub-headings and numbered lists; it makes the reading easier.

Titles for your articles - The title you write for an article should be attention-grabbing so that people want to read it. Here is an example - see which one would catch your interest so that you would want to read the article:

#1 - How to Get Rid of Dry, Itchy Skin

#2 - Dry, Itchy Skin - 5 Secrets for Getting Rid of Itchy Skin by Tomorrow

Hopefully, you thought that #2 would catch your interest and make you want to read the article. This is how clients want you to write; the article title and introductory paragraph have to really make the reader want to keep reading.

In the introductory paragraph of your article, briefly summarize what you are going to tell the reader in the body of the article. Then, go on to tell them! You may write the body of your article as simple paragraphs, sections with sub-headers or as a numbered or bulleted list of points that you are wanting to get across to the reader.

A great place to study how other people write articles is Ezine Articles. On the home page, you will see at the top that there is a list of categories. Just click on any of the categories you like, then browse around and see how different writers use different styles of writing. Eventually, you will find your own style, what works best and is most comfortable for you.

If you have never written articles before, a little practice is all it takes. There are plenty of research sources online which I will give you in a moment - of course Ezine Articles is one of them!

Here are a few easy ways to research when you are writing about topics you are not familiar with:

Just key in your subject in a search engine like Google or Yahoo. For example, if you want to learn how to train your dog to stay, key in those words. You can research the websites that come up, or read articles about your topic on sites like Ehow, Associated Content, or other article directories like Go Articles and Buzzle.

Blogs are a great tool for researching! To find blogs about your topic, go to:

<http://blogsearch.google.com>

Then key in your search phrase to find blogs related to your topic.

### *After you have completed your article*

Always proofread your work before sending to a client! Do this even when you practice writing your own articles so that you will get in the habit. Most clients want articles that range between 350 to 500 words, some will want shorter articles, others like longer articles. In order to count your words without actually counting them yourself, I use:

<http://www.wordcounttool.com> - Just copy and paste your article in to the box, then hit “submit” and the tool will give you the total number of words at the bottom of the box.

To check spelling, I use:

<http://www.jspell.com/public-spell-checker.html> - With this tool, again copy and paste your text in to the box and then click on the “spell check” button at the bottom of the box. If your spelling is all correct, a little box will come up that says “spell check complete”. If there are errors, a box will pop up that gives alternative words that the spell checker thinks you meant to use. If none of the options are what you wanted to use, type the word correctly in the blank and click on “replace”.

Always remember to check for the proper use of words like “there”, “their” and “they’re”, or “your” and “you’re”.

You always want to send a client an article that is free of spelling and grammar errors, so be sure to proofread thoroughly.

When you are pleased with your work, you can send the writing to clients through an email attachment either as a text or Word document, or even in a folder if you have several documents to send over and want to send them all in one neat package.

## How to Find Clients

Once you feel comfortable that you can write good articles, the next step will be to find paying clients! This may seem like a challenge, but it really isn't that hard once you put your mind to it.

I got my very first client after posting an ad on Craigslist! You can only imagine how terrified I was to place that ad - I had never written for anyone else before, what if they didn't like it? What was I going to do if someone actually replied to the ad? Someone did that very day, and I wrote about 20 articles for him resulting in \$160 in a two-day time period. Needless to say, I was ecstatic!

The funny thing is, after you have worked for a few different clients the nervousness goes away and you won't be intimidated at all. Now, I look forward to the challenge of writing for anyone, no matter what the topic (other than I don't write about gambling and topics that are sexual in nature).

There are many ways that you can find clients, some of which I will go over in this section. You can find out even more ways to find clients later on in this book in the "How to Promote Your Business" chapter.

Truthfully, Craigslist is a good place to find clients. You can place ads in larger cities - it doesn't matter where you live, since all of your work will

be online☺ That's the great thing about this work; you can get it from other cities, other states, even other countries! You will have to create an account (free), then go to the "services" section and post under "write/ed/tr8" section.

Also on Craigslist you can find other people looking for writers; these types of advertisements are typically listed under "Writing Gigs". There are some good opportunities here, but you have to look several times a day because they go fast!

Place an ad for your services in your local paper. You can advertise yourself as a freelance writer, copywriter, ghostwriter, content writer, however you like to word it. Most businesses these days have a website, and they need copywriting work done just like those who have only an online business. List the services you offer in the ad such as article writing, blog posts, web page content, etc. If you do not have a website or blog yet, simply request the reader to e-mail you for details if they are interested in your services.

If you are like most people today, you probably have a Facebook page. Facebook is the perfect place to offer your services! Talk about your business in your profile, create a "Fan" page and add all of the friends you can! Facebook is also a great place to offer discounts or special packages on writing services to all those who become a Fan.

Join online forums and message boards. Internet marketers, online businesses and even individuals need articles and other content. Find forums where potential clients may be lurking. Internet marketing forums, work at home forums, small business forums, affiliate marketing forums - there are hundreds of forums you can join where people discuss online business and their needs.

Write articles! Of course this will be part of what you do in your writing business, but you need to write articles to promote your own business as well.

Write articles describing how (your services as) a copywriter, ghostwriter, freelance writer, etc. can benefit someone who needs content. How do your writing skills help an online business or individual? Explain how you provide great content for their websites or blogs; how hiring someone else to do the writing will free them up to attend to other important aspects of their business. Submit your articles to Ezine Articles, and link them to your blog or website (which you probably don't have, but we will get to that in the "How to Promote Your Business" section).

There are literally hundreds of ways to find new clients - just use a little bit of creativity!

## How to Determine What Rates to Charge Clients

Now we come to the good stuff - how do you decide how much to charge clients for articles, web pages or other content? When you're the one in control of your business, it can be a challenge deciding what rates to charge. You don't want to charge so much that you can't get any clients, but at the same time you don't want to cheat yourself. How do you determine a fair rate?

On the internet, everything is relevant. Consider whether a client is an individual who is just getting started in business, or whether the client has an established business in an industry such as law or another high-end profession. You can usually tell which clients have the money to spend, and which are trying to get by and need to spend as little as possible.

Even those people with a tight budget are usually willing to spend .02 to .03 per word, which would amount to \$8 to \$12 for a 400 word article. Those with successful and established businesses will often spend \$20 for a 400 word article or more. The thing is, you really have to set a price that works for YOU, then you can negotiate with clients if they need a special deal on a large package of articles.

How can you decide the rates that will best work for you? Decide how much you feel your time and efforts are worth. Sure, we would all love to make \$100/hour, but that's not realistic.

In order to set rates for your business, practice writing articles - even on topics you know nothing about. Do about 5 to 10 articles, some on topics you are familiar with, some that are completely foreign to you. Time yourself; see how long it takes to complete a 400 word article on a topic that you're very familiar with. Do the same with the topics that are unfamiliar to you; do the research necessary to write a good article, then see how long it took to do the research and write the article.

Most people can write an article on a topic they are very familiar with in about 30 minutes. It may take an hour or longer to write on a topic you know nothing about, including research time. You will find that you get faster the longer you write, and that even those topics you have to research can be completed in 30 to 40 minutes.

Now, if it took you 30 minutes to write about a topic you are familiar with, that means that you could write a 400 word article in 30 minutes, which means on average you could complete 2 in an hour's time. If you charge \$8 per article, would you be comfortable earning \$16 per hour? If you charge .03 per word (\$12 per 400 word article) would you be content to make \$24 per hour?

There will be times when it takes you longer than you would like to write on an unfamiliar topic, but that's just the nature of writing. This doesn't happen too often, and if you can still make \$12 in an hour on a topic that slowed you down, that is still far more than most people make at a regular job.

Currently, I average anywhere from \$25 to \$30 per hour depending upon the client, article length, etc. That is a rate that I am very comfortable with, and my clients find it fair as well. I do have one client that I have been writing for since January of 2009, who gives me 20 articles each week to write, so I give him a slight discount.

When you get to know your clients and get used to the writing industry, you will become more comfortable with negotiating rates, although I have to say that 90% of my clients never ask for a bargain, they are happy to pay the rates I list on my website.

It all boils down to that fact that you should earn what you feel you are worth realistically. While some content sites pay article writers \$2 per article, I feel like that is a slap in the face. Other writers charge \$100 for a 500 word article; in my opinion, that is highway robbery. Somewhere in the middle you will find a rate that works well for both you and your

clients.

## **How to Manage Your Time**

You will see as your business grows that good time management is essential. Even though you are working at home, it is important that you have structure. This is YOUR business, so you need to run it in a professional manner that allows you to get your work done on a timely basis.

What does this mean? You will need a private space in your home where you can concentrate on your work and be away from the phone, television and other distractions. If you have small children at home, find a way that you can have blocks of quiet time to complete your work. When you are a writer, it is important that you have an atmosphere that helps you to be creative and write good content for your clients. Too many distractions, and you will find that you forget where you are at in your writing, lose your train of thought, etc.

It's important that you leave plenty of time to get your articles or other writing projects completed on schedule. This includes time for any research you may need to do, as well as the writing, proofreading and editing.

After you get accustomed to writing, it will be pretty easy to figure out how long it will take you to complete your work if you have 5 articles to complete in a day, 10, etc.

I suggest that you choose those times of day that are most productive for you to work on the majority of your writing. For example, if you rise early in the morning ready to go like I do, mornings may be a good time for you to get a lot of work done. I usually get up around 5:30 a.m. By 7:30 or 8:00, I've usually completed about 4 articles or web pages!

Here is my typical schedule. My husband is retired, and I have no small

children at home so if you do, you just have to arrange a schedule that works for you:

Get up at 5:30, work until 7:30 or 8:00.

Shower, drink coffee and generally take a small break from 8:00 to 9:30

Work from 9:30 to 11:30

Lunch break from 11:30 to 1:00 (cooking, eating, cleaning up, etc.)

Work from 1:00 to 3:30

Afternoon break from 3:30 until 6:00 p.m. (This is when I usually do anything I need to do - laundry, run errands, eat dinner, etc.)

Work from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Done for the day!

I work about 8 to 8 ½ hours Monday through Friday, but as you can see my schedule is extremely flexible - which is one thing I love about working at home! No boss telling me when to clock in, when I can go to lunch or how much I make☺

I will work on weekends when it is necessary, such as when I have an extremely large work load. I don't generally do much work on weekends, just an hour or two here and there.

As you can see, you can do anything you like as long as you complete your work, so just work out a schedule that suits your lifestyle best.

One thing I have to warn you about with writing; you never know when you will get a new client, or a current client will request a writing project. That being said, I urge you to try to schedule your errands so that you can take care of groceries, gassing up the car, shopping for clothes or the kids, etc. all at one time, and not find yourself having to run somewhere every day of the week. It just makes life easier!

## How to Promote Your Business

Now for the fun part - promoting your business and services! This area may get a little technical, but I will write it in a way that is as simple to understand as I possibly can. It's really not as bad as it sounds, and if you don't quite understand keywords yet I suggest you go back and re-read that section of the book. Keywords will play a huge part in your success as a writer!

There are lots of ways to promote your business and gain clients, but I want to tell you that in order to really experience success you should have a website or blog. Why?

When a potential client is looking for a writer to write articles or web page content, they will generally do a search online for "article writer", "ghostwriter", "freelance writer", "website content writer", etc. If you build a website or blog around the keyword phrases you plan to use to offer your services, over time you won't have to work so hard to find clients - THEY will find YOU. My ghostwriting site typically ranks on the first page of the search results when you key in "ghostwriting services". I optimized my home page for this phrase, then wrote articles and submitted to article directories to build links to my site.

I suggest you build a website using Hostgator or Wordpress. You will need to buy a domain name, simply search on Google for "buy domain name" and you will have many places to choose from to purchase your domain. Some writers use their name such as [www.sarahsmith.com](http://www.sarahsmith.com), some use creative names that actually have their keywords in the domain name.

Weebly is another good place to build a website, and it's free so it's a good place to start until you get familiar and comfortable with what you are doing. For the free version, you can put 6 pages on your website. I use Weebly for my ghostwriting site, and it works really well for me. With Weebly, you don't have to buy a domain name and hosting - you can do it all right there at no cost! Just go to [www.weebly.com](http://www.weebly.com).

I know you're thinking "but I can't build a website or blog!" Yes you can! Most web hosts today offer templates that make it as easy as typing up a word document. You can get tons of ideas by searching on the internet; just search for freelance writing services, web content writing, seo content writer, ghostwriters - anything related to writing, and study how some of these sites are laid out. Then come up with your own creative ideas!

Before you start writing the content for your website, decide what keywords you want to use. You may want to offer your services as a "freelance writer", "freelance writing services", "article writing service", etc. I think it's best to combine your keywords. For example, you may want to use "article writing service" and "article writer" on the same page, and write articles to promote your business using these terms.

When you begin to write the content for your website, remember to use keywords and keyword phrases! Search engines have to know what your website or blog is about. Remember, keep the keyword density at around 1 ½ percent at the most, and use them a little more often in the first two paragraphs of your content - this is what the search engine "spiders" that crawl websites notice most! I suggest that if you have a 500 word web page you use your keywords or keyword phrases about 7 times, using them twice in the first paragraph.

Always put good quality content above optimizing your website for search engines. While you want to get your keywords in the content, it's more important to write in a way that people enjoy reading what you have written, and that offers them valuable information they are looking for.

Search engines like web pages that are filled with good content. I suggest that you make your pages about 400 to 500 words in length. Also, check your website content for spelling and grammar errors! You don't want a potential client landing on your website looking for a writer to find that maybe you aren't such a good writer, which is what they will think if there are spelling errors in your content.

Now, you have a website or a blog - what next? Promote your website and your services!

To start promoting your business, write articles and submit to article directories like Ezine Articles. Write and submit a press release to sites like Prlog, or do a search on Google for “submit free press release”. This will bring up many sites that allow you to submit a press release at no cost.

Press releases aren't that hard to write; just browse some of these press release sites to see how other people write them, then write your own and submit it. Again, write a press release that is keyword rich. I know this may be hard to grasp at the moment, but everything you do to reach success in your business will hinge on keywords.

Have a Facebook page? Announce your new website, and include a link to it in your profile. Tweet about it on Twitter. Continue posting ads on Craigslist, and link to your site using the keywords you used on your site, this will help your page rank as well. Here's how to do it:

Suppose the keywords you chose for your site are “article writing services”. Your domain name is [www.WhateverYouChooseGoesHere.com](http://www.WhateverYouChooseGoesHere.com). You would make a clickable link out of your keywords with the following code:

```
<a href="http://www.whateveryouchoosegoeshere.com">article writing services</a>
```

So, if you were to put an ad on Craigslist or Ezine Articles - or anywhere really - and want your keywords to be what someone clicks on to go to your site, this is how you do it. The code will not show up in your ad or article signature, only the words “article writing services” will be underlined and clickable in your text. I hope this makes sense, I know when I first started learning this stuff was all Greek to me!

LinkedIn is another social networking group where business people communicate, so it's a good idea to sign up and get involved here as well. Many business professionals may need your writing services, and this is a good place to connect.

The trick to good promotion is to be creative, and consider everywhere you go online and off a potential place to promote. Offline, make up some business cards that you can hand out when you have the opportunity. Create a brochure about the writing services you offer and send it out to local businesses in your area such as law firms, dentists, really any business that is likely to have a website online.

Contact website owners - this is how I got one of my very first long-term clients! If you want to write in a particular area such as weight management, electronic games, skin care, sports, etc., simply use the keywords you would use if you were looking up information on that topic. All those results that come up in your search? Visit a few of them, take a look around their site, and offer them a free article.

All you have to do is find their “contact us” page or email address, and email them a short note explaining that you are an article or content writer, that you have attached a free article that they can use for their website or blog, and invite them to contact you should they have future writing projects or needs. I can promise you that if you contact a dozen or so webmasters every day, you WILL get writing work - and possibly more than you bargained for!

There are literally hundreds of different ways you can promote your business. Once you get established and money starts coming in, you may want to consider paid promotion methods such as Google Adwords (those little “sponsored ads” you see down the right-hand side of the page when you’re searching online).

## **Tax Deductions for Your Business**

You may be wondering what expenses you will be able to deduct when it comes tax time. When you have a list of your own clients, most of them will send you a 1099 after the end of the year, and it's likely that you will owe money to the IRS - which none of us like! You want to pay in as little as possible, and there are several deductions you are entitled to as a business owner. Be sure to take every deduction possible, otherwise you're likely to end up owing a few thousand dollars.

Here is a list of expenses you can deduct when filing your taxes:

1. Home office costs. You can deduct electric, water and phone charges for the percentage of your home that is used as a home office. However, you cannot take this deduction if your family room IS your home office. The room should be separate, and used only as your office.

To determine how much you can use as a deduction, take the square footage of your office and divide it by the total square footage of your home. If the square footage of your home office is 10% of the total square footage of your home, you can take 10% of the total spent on utilities for the year as a deduction on your taxes.

You can also deduct a percentage of your mortgage or rent, real estate taxes and home owners insurance.

2. Internet charges. If your business is primarily internet based, you can deduct the entire amount you pay for internet each month.

3. Computer, monitors, keyboards, software, hardware, etc. Any expenses that are used for setting up your business can be deducted. Additionally, any tools or supplies that are necessary for running your business can be deducted. This may be copy paper, ink cartridges, etc.

4. Costs for business calls, gas mileage, etc. If you use your home phone for business calls with clients, or if you travel frequently for business purposes, these costs can be deducted on your tax return.

5. Health insurance premiums - If you are a sole proprietor, in other words you work for yourself and have no employees, you can deduct your health insurance premiums on your taxes. While you cannot deduct the premiums for other family members, it is allowable to use your own as a deduction.

6. Advertising Expenses - Monthly website fees, Google Adwords and

other methods you use to promote or advertise your business are deductible in most cases. When you have any questions, ask your tax preparer or accountant.

7. Furnishings for your office - Desk, office chair, filing cabinets and other office furniture can normally be deducted when you have a home-based internet business.

8. Membership fees and education - If you are a member of an online coaching or mentoring program that helps you learn and grow in your business, or if you participate in continuing education related to your business, these expenses are usually deductible.

I genuinely feel that the information in this ebook will help you build your own online writing business IF you put the information to work for you.

The problem with many ebooks available today is not that they do not contain good instruction or guidelines; most do, it is the person who buys that ebook and does not use the information and put it in to practice that fails.

The most important thing for you to do at this point is TAKE ACTION. If you leave this book setting on your hard drive and never look at it again, it won't do a thing for you. I have a hugely successful ghostwriting business, and I didn't get here by sitting around and wondering what to do next!

I feel confident that you will be a successful writer making more money than you ever thought possible if you will apply the lessons in this ebook.

I wish you the very best in your writing career, and I want to reinforce one thing: If I can do this with no formal writing education, no degree and no previous experience, you can do it as well.

To your writing success,

*Tess Tackett*

[www.writeforprosperity.com](http://www.writeforprosperity.com)

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