

How to Make It Easier to Sell Your Writing Services in Just Five Steps

By Jen Phillips April



When I first started freelancing, I had no idea how to sell myself. I showed up at local networking events and nervously stumbled my way through my introduction. Worse, most people gave me blank stares after I used the word "copywriter." (Turns out, most of the people I was talking to didn't know what a copywriter was!)

However, a certain portion of them DID need a writer, so despite my fumbling efforts, I landed my first clients ... A travel agent, a fitness coach, and a business coach.

Fast-forward several years later, and I'm a lot better at speaking with (and identifying) potential clients. Plus, I've discovered a more strategic way you can use your existing experience and skills to expand your client base than attending every event in town.

It makes it SO much easier to sell your services too.

The 5-Step Process to Matching Your Skills with Your Potential Clients

1. Assess Your Existing Skill Set — When you discover the intersection between your skills, interests, and background, you're able to find the sweet spot between what you can do and what your potential clients are willing to pay for. It makes it easier to focus and find your clients.

Here's a brief exercise for you.

Set a timer for 15 minutes and write down every job you've ever had — paid or volunteer. Next, write down any writing you may have handled in those roles. For example, back in my museum education days, I was responsible for the print newsletter, press releases, and virtually any marketing materials that went out. I leaned on that writing experience when speaking with my early clients.

2. Mindmap It — For this step, you can use paper or a computer program like Mindjet. If you're not familiar with mind mapping, it's a way to diagram thoughts that helps your brain connect various ideas around a central theme.

You can use a software program like Mindjet or go old-school with paper (my preference). Whichever you choose, draw a circle in the middle and put your background/experience.

For example, if you've been a teacher, you can write that in the center. Teachers have lots of experience writing lesson plans. That experience can provide you entrée into writing for the growing education market.

Or, if you're an accountant like fellow AWAI Member Liz Farr, you can utilize your accounting background to open the doors to a writing career focused on that industry. Liz is so busy now, she's turning away work!

Writers who focus on a specific type of content and target market find it easier to sell their services because they have a better idea of WHO to reach out to and what to say.

Next, research who uses the type of content you want to write.

3. Evaluate Who Uses That Type of Content — The easiest sale is to businesses who already use the types of writing services you offer. For example, businesses with active blogs see the value in their blog and want to keep it going. They may have a content manager and well-executed content calendar and they certainly need writers.

Imagine you have some experience blogging in the natural health industry and you want to offer blogging services. It's a natural fit for you to connect with natural health businesses who have active blogs and ask if they use freelancers.

Try googling things like "Natural Health + Blog," to find prospects. I did this and found 742,000,000 results. Even if only 1% of them hired freelancers (a low estimate I'd think), that would still be over 7 MILLION prospects!

Of course, now you need a way to make sense of all this potential.

4. Make a Spreadsheet — Did you cringe a little at the "s" word? It's okay. I did too at first, but then I found that having a spreadsheet really did make it easier to track my outreach efforts. Now, instead of sending an introductory email and never following up because I forgot, I have it all laid out in front of me.

You can label the top of the spreadsheet with Company, Date, Title, Contact Info. For this initial pass, you can just put the company name if they have an active blog (if you want to pitch blogging).

5. Discover Who's in Charge — If you're going to write for XYZ Company blog, then they need to know you exist, right? This is where you're going to write a simple email that inquires if the company uses freelancers.

To find out who to write to, you can look for people who have titles like "Content Manager" or "Editor," Or, look for a "Marketing" related title. You can also use a Chrome extension called "Clearbit." This handy tool has saved me hours of time! Simply type in the URL of a company and up pops the senior staff's names and emails.

What happens when you use these five steps is that you match your skills to businesses that need writers. That way, instead of thinking the whole world is a potential client — a sure way to overwhelm yourself — you get to align your skills and interests with those who are the best potential fits and it becomes far easier to sell your services.

Do you have any questions about this five-step process? Share with us in the comments below so we can point you in the right direction.

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2 Responses to "How to Make It Easier to Sell Your Writing Services in Just Five Steps"

Hi Jen,

It's good to know that just doing a search to educate ourselves on prospects in our niche helps a writer gain confidence that they will find work. Thanks for these tips!

-Vanessa

VLewis — over a year ago

Great article. IMHO Oxyleads is a better alternative to Clearbit. It's an overall better Chrome extension.

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