



## *In a Day's Work for Idaho Mom: Homeschooler, Freelancer, Novelist*

On a typical weekday, Heather Robson writes for a few hours in the morning before breaking for lunch with her family. By then, she's already made a few hundred dollars – or more.

With her work mostly done for the day, she then sits down to teach her daughter history, science, and literature.

Such is the routine of the Boise, Idaho freelance copywriter and novelist, who has homeschooled her two daughters for the past 10 years. Heather and her husband have designed a life that balances work, family, and personal enrichment – a balance that wouldn't be possible with regular 8-5 jobs.

"Without this career, I wouldn't have been able to homeschool," she said. "I might have found a way to do it but it might have been painful and frustrating where this was very liberating and carefree."

### *Making the Leap – in Big Sky Country*

Freelance flexibility is pretty much the only lifestyle Heather's daughters have ever known. Her oldest daughter was just two when Heather began copywriting.

Prior to starting her business, Heather penned technical materials in house for a hearing aid company. It was a secure job, with benefits, but Heather was itching to write about something new. The answer came in the form of something Heather had never heard of before: copywriting. Her father had received a letter from American Writers & Artists Inc. (AWAI).

"My dad called one day to tell me he had received this great letter that he was going to pass on to my brother," she said. "I was thinking, 'This sounds like something I would want to do!' That's when I discovered marketing writing

#### **CASE STUDY:**

### *Heather Robson*

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#### **MEMBER:**

Heather Robson

#### **LOCATION:**

Boise, Idaho

#### **OTHER CAREER:**

Technical writer

#### **HOW SHE GOT HER FIRST CLIENT:**

Through a post in AWAI's *The Golden Thread* newsletter, she landed an AWAI project requiring design, copywriting, and editing. She got her foot in the door, and showed she was reliable and easy to work with.

#### **TOP AWAI PROGRAMS:**

- *The Accelerated Program for Six-Figure Copywriting*
- *FastTrack to Copywriting Success Bootcamp and Job Fair*
- *Web Copywriting Intensive*
- *Web Copywriting 2.0*

and copywriting. I thought it was the perfect fit because I enjoy talking to people and being persuasive – and this type of writing could earn me a nice income.”

Heather invested in AWAI's *Accelerated Program for Six-Figure Copywriting*. But with her first baby on the way, she chose to stay in her job a while longer. When the family wanted to move to Montana, they saw it as their chance to make a go at freelancing. They headed to Big Sky Country with all their belongings and a lot of hope.

“My husband and I both left our stable jobs to try to make freelancing work,” she said. “There were moments when we thought, ‘We’re totally insane!’ But there’s something to be said for putting that kind of pressure on yourself when you’re young.”

### **Serendipitous Meetings**

Indeed, Heather and her husband, Toby, got their freelance careers off the ground. Heather applied the marketing lessons she learned through AWAI to her business and her husband's, and grew their careers concurrently with growing their family. The key: consistent marketing.

“We made it work, but it took two years,” Heather said. “Part of the rockiness of getting started was that I landed my first couple of clients so easily. Then later, when they didn't come as easily, I didn't stick with my marketing as I should have.”

Despite inconsistent marketing efforts, Heather landed clients and mentors, including direct-response copywriting legend Clayton Makepeace who worked with her on a package for Weiss Research, and Don Mahoney who brought her on as a content marketer for Chesapeake Nutraceuticals. She also became the Managing Editor for AWAI's *Wealthy Web Writer*.

Heather found face-to-face events provided the biggest payoff in her new business. She attended AWAI's annual *FastTrack to Copywriting Success* Bootcamp and Job Fair and the AWAI *Web Copywriting Intensive*. At the latter, she bumped into Mark Everett Johnson, a noted speaker on copywriting and the former creative director for the publishing powerhouse, Rodale.

“I had no idea who I was talking to,” she said. “By the end of the conversation, he decided that he wanted to work with me somehow, and he later got back to me when he had a project in mind.”

That one conversation with Mark led to countless projects together over the past five years with American Lantern Press, publisher of *Independent Living News*.

That exact approach became the formula for how Heather expanded her business and her income: Build relationships – regardless of whether they will lead to work or not.

“My favorite way to market is to get in the room with people and talk,” she said. “What are they doing now? What are they excited about and frustrated with? And then, ‘What can I do to help?’”

When it came time to choose a copywriting niche, Heather didn't settle on just one. Opportunities and interests led her to the alternative health, privacy, and survival markets.

### **Saying “Yes” to it All**

Though Heather is an in-demand copywriter, she has opted to work less than full time in order to homeschool her kids and leave plenty of time for family fun.

**American  
Writers &  
Artists  
Inc.** SINCE 1997

“My kids are only this age for so long,” she said. “Because of that, I’ve never been willing to put in more than a certain amount of work. One of the big things about freelancing for me is that I can homeschool my kids through sixth grade.”

Heather and her husband share teaching responsibilities, with Toby spending about an hour in the morning and Heather devoting two to three hours after lunch. As her daughters have gotten older – one has now moved on to public school – they have become more independent in their schoolwork.

“We sit down and orient them to what we’re expecting and then we send them off to do things on their own,” she said.

In earlier years, Heather worked 20-25 hours a week. Now she logs up to 35 hours in a week.

What makes her productivity even more impressive is that she realized a childhood dream of becoming a novelist. In 2013, she released her first book, *Flight*, part of a modern

fantasy series called *The Alchemists of Galena*. Just one year later, she released the second book, *Rescue*. Now, she’s working on book three.

To meet work deadlines, and book goals, takes discipline. Her tactic: rise no later than 6 a.m. First thing each morning, she works on her book for about an hour. Effectively, one hour of writing each day produces a book in about a year.

With a loosely organized schedule, she’s free to join family whenever something fun pops up.

“I really try to never say no to family time,” she said. “If something is on the table to do as a family, I try to be a yes man.”

It seems Heather has found a way to be able to say “yes” to just about anything she wants to do, while maintaining a mix that works for the family as well.

“I get to do the things I enjoy and that are important to me,” she said. “At the end of the day, I’m happy with what I’ve accomplished.”

## Heather’s Tips For Copywriters

- **Stick with your marketing** – “Marketing strategies do work, every time, if you just do the work,” Heather said.
- **Build relationships** – “A lot of freelancers are too focused on closing the deal out of the gate. Relax and get to know people without an agenda of converting them,” she said.
- **Check your work** – Read everything out loud before you submit it to your client. “There will be sentences that you can’t believe you thought were ok,” she said.
- **Be easy to work with** – Be friendly, on time, and open to client feedback, and provide ideas and value to clients.

## Ready to pursue *the writer’s life*?

Learn more about the program that kicked off Heather’s career, [\*The Accelerated Program for Six-Figure Copywriting\*](#).

