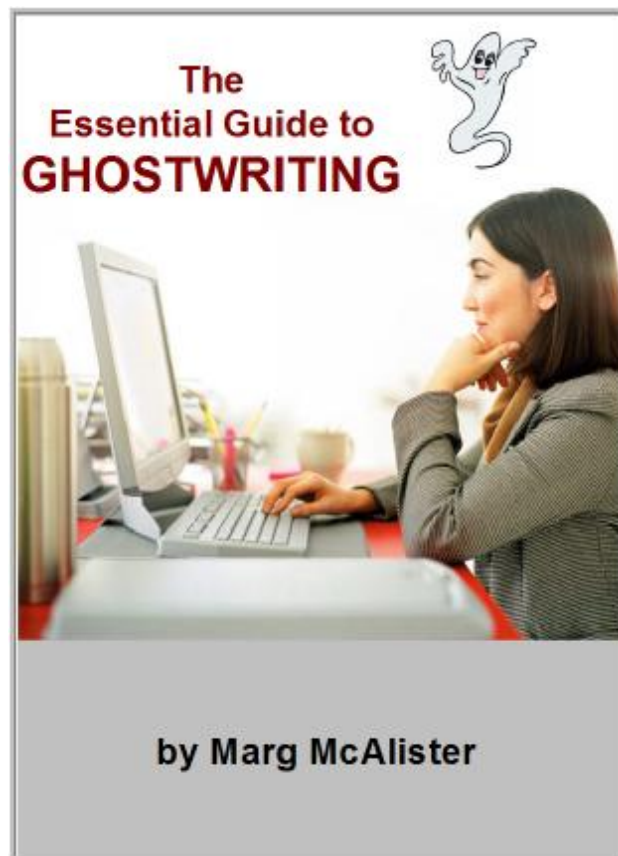


Should I Become a Ghostwriter?

A report brought to you by...



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“I Wish I Could Write Full-Time!”

Over the years, I've met a great many writers who long to turn their love of writing into a full-time career. The good news (the GREAT news!) is that this is entirely possible. I've been doing it myself for around fifteen years - wearing all kinds of writing hats.

If I can do it, you can do it.

I know that some of you (like me, when I started out) are mainly interested in fiction. You love telling stories, and that's how you want to make your living. The thing is... it's so hard to get started, and meanwhile you have to earn money **SOMEHOW**.

Well, if you're already working to bring in money - then why not earn money from your writing?

Let me ask you two questions:

- Do you enjoy writing more than your current 'day job'?
- Would you prefer to earn money doing *any* kind of writing rather than by working in your current occupation?

If the answer to both is "yes", then I urge you to consider ghostwriting. For anyone that loves to work with words, a ghostwriting career is a great way of earning a living while doing something you enjoy.

What if you'd rather write fiction? That's easy. You can spend half the day working on your fiction and the other half working as a ghostwriter to pay the bills. And best of all - you can use all the tricks and techniques in the fiction writer's toolkit to bring your non-fiction writing projects to life, so your clients will love your work!

There are certain qualities and skills you need to become a successful ghostwriter. Let's examine each in turn. If you can give yourself a tick for each one, then you can definitely carve out a successful career, either part-time or full-time.

1. You Need to Be Adept With Words

This is the most important requirement. As a ghostwriter, clients will be coming to you with ideas that they want to see turned into well-written articles, books, e-books, training courses, manuals and so on.

It is essential that you can write in a variety of styles. The basic ghostwriting 'style' is relaxed and friendly - as though you are talking to a friend. Naturally this doesn't mean that you should force an over-familiar approach - that is just as bad as being too stuffy!

Some clients prefer a more formal approach, but usually, a style similar to the one I'm using for this report is suitable. should be.

2. You Need to be Organized and Able to Meet Deadlines

When you first begin your career as a ghostwriter, you will probably work on one project at a time. It will be relatively easy to plan your time and meet your client's deadline, even if you have to work around your commitments to family, friends and outside work.

As you become better known and develop a track record, more clients will want to hire you. When this happens, it is important that you don't bite off more than you can chew. It's better to say to a client "I'm fully booked for the next four weeks, but after that I can do your job then and give it my full attention," than to agree to a rush job just for the money, then fail to get it done on time.

I can't emphasize enough how important it is to deliver your work on time. Next to getting a quality job done on their project, the biggest concern for clients is that you will finish their project when you say you will.

3. You Need to be Able to Work Fast and Prioritize

When you begin ghostwriting, you will probably find it takes longer to complete the first few jobs. Don't make the client pay for your learning curve - be prepared to spend more time than you quoted on the project, for the same fee.

As you develop confidence and expertise, you will write faster and your style will become more polished. You'll be able to fit more projects into your timetable.

Plan your work by constantly looking ahead for the next six to eight weeks. Block out time for projects as they come in, and allow time for research, invoicing, contact with clients, reviewing new projects to decide whether to take them on, and polishing final drafts.

Those three qualities are all you need to consider at this stage. So far I'm sure there's nothing there that most writers can't manage. So let's look at how you get into the ghostwriting circuit.

How Do I Get Started as a Ghostwriter?

First, you need to prove to clients that you can do the job. They're unlikely to hire you just because you SAY you can write! Spend a little time establishing your references and a portfolio of work. Even if you start with nothing, you can do this in just one week.

One week - and you'll be ready to start business!

If you have already written articles for magazines (or for article directories on the Internet) you will already have some samples of your work. If you haven't yet done this, then look at your experience in the workforce or for community groups (sporting or hobby groups).

If you've done some writing for others, try to get a reference from the person in charge - or the client - testifying that you did a good job. As you go on, and start to get finished projects under your belt, you will begin to get testimonials from satisfied clients. Make sure you file them all away when you do!

The quickest way to get a client (and to start building up your 'satisfied client' list) is to produce some sample e-books and articles. You need to have a portfolio of work to show prospective clients. When they contact you about work, you can send them some samples.

What do you need to have in your portfolio?

(a) Between 3 and 6 articles of differing lengths and styles. These can be anything from 400 words to 1200 words. A good length for an article is 600 - 800 words. This means you will have to 'write tight' so you can pack it full of useful content. Choose different subjects, so your clients can see you are versatile. Here are some sample topics... I'm sure you'll think of plenty more.

Running a Home Business

Time Management

Gardening

Training Puppies

Getting Out of Debt

Organizing a Children's Party

If you need inspiration, just browse through the weekend newspapers!

(b) An e-book outline and sample chapter. (You don't have to have written the whole e-book. Just show that you are capable of planning one in a logical structure, and that your writing style is fluent and lively. One chapter will do.) An example: "A Beginner's Guide to Establishing a Lawn-mowing Business". You could make this a Beginner's Guide to anything you like - pick a topic you know well, so it's easy and quick to write.

(c) A sample report (e.g. "How to Look for Finance for Your First Home") - Make this 6-12 pages long.

I recommend you set aside a week to prepare your portfolio and references. Plan your time and what you will write each day as a sample of your work.

How Do I Set My Fees?

If you're just starting out, it's not a good idea to put too high a price on your services. After all, you are an unknown quantity, even if you do have a few references. If you have already had a few magazine articles published, then you

already have credibility and you can look at setting fees in the mid-range, using other ghostwriting services as a guide. (More about this in a moment.) If you don't have anything published yet, then you'll have to price your services lower.

Don't fret about this. Look at it as the cost of setting yourself up in business. If you work fast, work hard, and you do a good job, you can soon put your rates up. As soon as you have some glowing testimonials and a bigger portfolio of work, you're in a good position.

Meanwhile... what DO you charge?

It's tempting to charge an hourly rate, because then you know you're going to be paid for whatever time you put in. However, most clients prefer to know exactly what they'll be up for at the end of the day. (And who can blame them?) So... be prepared to charge a flat fee.

The suggested prices here are for those just starting out, who need to establish a track record. (Please don't bother blasting me and saying "I'm not going to work that cheaply!" If you don't want to, don't. Set higher fees and see if anyone will risk paying them for a beginner. You might be lucky - but I doubt it.)

Articles: base your fee on the length and the subject matter. A 400 word article on "3 Quick Weight Loss Tips" is going to be a lot easier to write than an 800 word article on "The Chemical Structure of DNA". (Unless you're an expert on DNA.) If the subject matter requires more research, it will take you longer, and you should therefore charge more.

To work out your fee: work out how long it will take you to do a fast Internet search on the subject matter and massage it into an article. If you're willing to start off at \$15-\$20 an hour while you build your track record, work out how long it will take you to research and write 400 words. (For some subjects I could find what I need in 10 minutes on the Internet, then write and polish 400 words in 15 minutes. If I know the topic well, I can type 400 words off the top of my head in 10-15 minutes.

E-books: Tell the client you'll get back after you've had a chance to evaluate the project. Ask how many pages the e-book is to be, and whether the client expects it single-spaced or one-and-a-half spaced. (Double spaced is not really appropriate for e-books.) Get on to the Internet and spend half an hour researching. That will

be plenty of time to tell you whether the subject will be easy to research, or more complex. If extra research time is needed, or you need to consult with experts, include that extra time in your fee.

Only you can know how fast you can work. Here's a tip: hone your research skills and get into the habit of writing a fast first draft. Then leave your work to 'settle' and go on with something else. Come back and edit/polish after some time away... you'll do a better job and do it a lot quicker if you give yourself some distance. But ALWAYS edit and polish.

Tip: Browse around sites like Elance.com and Rentacoder.com to see what others are charging. What bids are being made for projects of various lengths?

Bottom line: be conservative with your fees when you start out. Think of yourself as an apprentice. Once you become a master craftsman, you can increase your fees.

How Do I Find Clients?

- 1. If you know other ghostwriters or freelance writers,** ask them if they can help you spread the word. You may even get some 'overflow' work from others.
- 2. Visit online forums and writers' sites.** You'll find that ghostwriters are in great demand on the Internet to write e-books, mini-courses (like the one you're reading now), website content, reports and articles. Type "Internet marketing forum" into Google and start visiting forums. You'll quickly get a sense of what people need.
- 3. Advertise off-line and on-line.** It's easy to place small ads in local newspapers, advertising your writing services. Look into placing ads for your services on writing sites.
- 4. Type 'ghostwriting services' into Google** and browse other writers' sites to see how they promote themselves.
- 5. Create a blog or build a website** to advertise your services and offer tips on writing. This might sound intimidating if you've never done this before, but it's surprisingly easy. The *Essential Guide to Ghostwriting* gives a step-by-step plan on how to do this.

6. If you want to start working as a ghostwriter in your local community, start attending meetings - small business groups, Chamber of Commerce, service groups like Rotary or Lions. Give a talk on what you do, and be ready to hand out cards.

A Final Word on Ghostwriting As a Career

The hardest part for most people is getting started. Once they do, they realize that there was nothing to be worried about - in fact, quite the opposite: that this is a good career that can bring in a steady income. One of the huge benefits is being able to work from home. You can:

- do ghostwriting part time to earn extra income, working for a few hours at night after coming home from your day job
- work part time outside the home and part time as a ghostwriter on the other days
- set up a full-time business working from home
- work your hours around sick children, caring for older parents, school holidays and family vacations
- set up a healthy business for very little expense (virtually NO expense, if you already have a computer and an Internet connection).

The Essential Guide to Ghostwriting: A Step-by-Step Plan to Help You Set Up Your Business

What I have written above should be enough for you to decide whether you're truly interested in becoming a ghostwriter. If you are feeling a growing sense of excitement at the possibilities, then you have a choice with the next step. Essentially, the trade-off is between time and money.

ONE: If you have plenty of time, but not much cash: you can explore further on your own. You will certainly be able to find information about becoming a ghostwriter on the Internet. You will be able to sign up with various services to outsource your work, and you can advertise in local newspapers and prepare letter drops, brochures and so on.

This will take more time, but in the end, if you're serious, you can do it.

TWO: If you have a little cash to spare to research and set up your new business, then I recommend that you invest in the Essential Guide to Ghostwriting. This is more than a 'how to' manual. It's a carefully structured "Ghostwriting Business System", designed to guide you, step by step, in setting up your business.

The Essential Guide to Ghostwriting has been updated for 2006 with 70 new pages of content, including more information on setting your fees and advertising your services in online classifieds. you'll find step-by-step instructions on how to set up a blog (completely free!) - with a sample blog to click on for reference.

And even better, it shows you how quickly and easily you can set up a website to 'showcase' your business. (I created and uploaded a website, with basic information about ghostwriting services, in just over half an hour. If you don't yet have a web hosting service, it could take you a little longer to register your domain name (website address) and set up your site - but not much longer.) The updated Guide to Ghostwriting shows you, with detailed screen captures, how this website was created.

You can get this step-by-step guide to setting up your Ghostwriting business for just \$77 - and this includes six bonuses! I promise you, this Guide and the bonuses will save you a LOT of time and anxiety in setting up your new venture. When you consider how much you spend on the weekly groceries, or for a meal out with your partner, you can see that \$77 is a drop in the bucket compared to what you will get back with your new business.

Even more good news: as I find out new and better ways to promote your business, I include that material in the next update. The people who bought the Essential Guide to Ghostwriting in the past year were delighted when they received an email telling them the download details for the updated version - free of charge!

You will enjoy the same benefits - **as the Ghostwriting Guide is updated, the next version is always free to previous owners.**

- **By this time next week**, you could be ready to launch your new business.
- **By this time next month**, you could be already seeing the income from your ghostwriting services flowing in.

- **By this time next year**, you could have a lucrative full-time business as a professional, well-respected ghostwriter.

Is it time for you to take the next step toward your dream - earning a living as a writer? If you can't wait to get started, come join us! Get your ghostwriting step-by-step plan within the next few minutes - and begin.

www.essentialguidetoghostwriting.com

Warm Regards,

Marg :-)