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**Marketing for Writers When Writing Just Isn't Enough**

**By Caterina Christakos**

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Many writers write for the experience. Others dream of having a number one best seller. Both are wonderful reasons for writing. What many fail to realize is that these two do not have to be mutually exclusive. With a little research, you can enjoy writing incredible stories and see to it that they generate a profit.

The first thing that is needed is a business like attitude toward the process. From day one you must:

1) Know your niche.

Research which books are popular in your genre. Go to bookstores and start reading popular authors in your field. Also pick up writing magazines and see what publishers are looking for today.

2) Know your audience. If you are writing for children, for example, know the developmental stage that a child reading your book needs to be and cater to them.

Ex. A five year old would not be a good candidate for a chapter book.

You can also talk to your future readers and find out what really sparks their interest.

Ex. If you are a sci-fi writer, you can go into sci-fi chat rooms and ask what books are the most popular and why. Also ask what they feel is missing in this field. Do they want a return to some of the earlier styles of sci-fi books or an even more futuristic approach?

3) Write from this knowledge.

Once you know what your audience wants, create your story and characters around that theme. Give them what they want, what they crave and you have a better chance of creating a book that they and

publishers will love.

4) Pre – market. If you are self-publishing, you can give away a free chapter of your book on hundreds of sites to spark an interest and get feedback. You can also send out press releases right before your book is about to be released. Prweb.com is a great place to send out free press releases.

5) Network – Contact the webmasters of writing sites online. Submit your book for pre-review. Go to writing chat rooms and offer to answer other writer's questions about your book or writing in general. Do book readings at your local library or bookstore. The more people that are exposed to you and your book, the better the chance of it being a success.

Those are just a few examples of pre – marketing. There are hundreds, if not thousands, of other free ways to gather interest and get feedback.

The more information that you have before you write, before you market and before you go to press, will determine your chances of creating an enjoyable and profitable book. Remember you can be creative and profitable. Just start from a place of knowledge and the rest will follow.

Caterina Christakos is the author of *How to Write a Children's Book in 30 Days or Less*. For more writing tips and articles go to:

### **A Simple Contest with a Strong Message for All Writers: Wake Up Your Writing Spirit**

**By Shelley Wake**

The Blogfest 2005 Writing Contest has only been running for two weeks and already the results are overwhelming. And not because we're getting far more entries than we expected. It's because along with entries, we're also getting heartfelt messages from writers all over the world. I've run a few contests before and received quite a few entries, but I've never been personally emailed and thanked by so many writers.

What's the difference with this contest? I think the main reason is that the idea actually came from writers. Even though the writers at our company work in publishing, they find it a little sad that there's so much focus on writing what can sell instead of writing what truly matters to you. They wanted a contest that would allow people to write whatever they wanted to write.

From that idea came Blogfest, a contest designed to encourage all writers to get the project of their dreams done. Unlike most contests, we decided not to offer publication and not to pay the prize for a completed work. Instead, we decided to offer the prizes based on how much the writing project means to the writer. This is one contest that isn't about whether or not your work can sell or about what your writing will mean to someone else. It's about what it means to you.

To enter, we asked writers to tell us about the one thing they've always wanted to write and to tell us what it would mean to them to write it. Now, after only two weeks, we have an inbox full of emails from

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people. Entries so far have included grandparents wanting to write their life story for their grandchildren, aspiring novelists, professional writers looking for the chance to write something for themselves and not for money, and a young woman wanting to capture and preserve her mother's family recipes.

These people have entered and then sent us an extra email just to thank us for the opportunity. They've told us how just writing about the project has made them so excited and full of joy. They have enthusiasm and feel delight just for thinking about finally writing. And we've started reading the entries and the joy is there too. As a publisher, I'm used to reading submissions and contest entries. It's often a joy but there's rarely as much life as there is in these submissions. Reading them, I can feel that people have that spark of excitement that is only motivated by something much greater than money or even publication. It's the joy of doing what your heart's always wanted to do.

There is more to writing than publication and money and this competition is bringing out the real spirit of writing.

My message to all writers is to think about what matters to them. Think about that one thing you've always dreamed of writing. I challenge you to write down what completing that project would mean to you. If you feel that spark, I challenge you to commit to your project and get it written. Not because you can make money from it, but because it means something to you.

This contest has made me see more clearly than ever that there is far more to writing than making money. There will only be a few winners to Blogfest, and choosing them is going to be the toughest job we do all year. But I hope this idea can reach further than that. I hope all writers will listen to their hearts and complete their projects. I hope that just thinking about actually doing it will wake up that writing spirit that is in so many people.

Shelley Wake is one of the organizers of Blogfest 2005 and the manager and editor of Writing Stuff - the site that offers everything a freelance writer needs to succeed.<http://www.writingstuff.com>

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