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Time-Saving Skills to Get More from Your Writing

By Jim Green

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As you set out to create your first niche non-fiction book (and hopefully your first bestseller), you will be supported by a strong motivation to keep your mind focused on the essential business at hand i.e. complete the project, achieve publication, and hit the bestseller lists.

Before that can happen though, you'll need a plan to get you underway.

MANAGING YOUR TIME TO SPEED THE PROCESS

The only time constraints are those of your own making. This is not a race and you are not competing with anyone else, so don't rush.

ØMake out an action list for every day of your new adventure but don't overload it.

ØNever start on tomorrow's work today. Tomorrow will be time enough.

ØTake a break when hit a snag. Rest, go for a walk, watch a movie - and come back refreshed.

ØYou will work best during your most creative time of the day or week. We have already established that for some people, that is very early in the morning; for others, late at night or over the weekend. Try to discover when your creative moments occur and capitalize on them.

ØDon't work when you're tired or jaded. You run the risk of turning out garbage and opening the door to disillusion.

ØWhen you're surfing the Net for information, always be on the lookout for items of relevance to your project. These could be in the form of articles and reports. They are in the public domain, so incorporate extracts if you feel they would enhance your content. If you need author consent, ask for it; permission will not be unreasonably withheld.

OPENING SEPARATE FILES FOR EVERY ASPECT OF THE PROJECT

You will have many matters to attend to (often simultaneously) in the process of writing up your material, converting it into book format, and preparing your output for publication. Make the job easier and cut down dramatically on your workload by creating separate computer files of every aspect of the project; files you can refer to instantly.

- oResearch findings
- oWorking notes
- oDraft copy
- oStructuring the list of contents
- oAuthoring resources

- oPreface
- oBack cover blurb
- oGlossary
- oIndex
- oPublishing options
- oProposal for publication

Coordinate your activities this way right from the start and the production of current and future produce will look after itself. It will flow off the assembly line like honey dripping from a spoon.

WHY THOSE WORKING NOTES ARE YOUR STOCK-IN-TRADE

Your various researches will have provided you with an ever-growing batch of working notes (stuff you have copied to a computer file or pulled down from web sites and printed out); notes that you should always have readily to hand when working on every aspect of the overall project. These notes are the stock-in-trade you will refer to frequently in the fulfillment of your sundry assignments.

WHY GOOD AUTHORING RESOURCES ARE ESSENTIAL

If you are to produce information products worthy of publication, products that people will want and be willing to pay for, you need access to as many efficient authoring resources as you can locate. You'll want to be able to visit a comprehensive cyberspace library for additional information- and perhaps even acquire some help with your creative writing.

Here are some other online places you can visit.

LITERARY LEAPS

Thousands of publishers, bookstores, literary locales.
<http://www.literaryleaps.com>

BOOK MARKET

'If you are new to book marketing, you've come to the right site' - John Kremer, editor, Book Marketing

Update newsletter.

<http://www.bookmarket.com>

PUBLISHING RESOURCES

Valuable tools and resources for the worldwide publishing community.

<http://www.bookzonepro.com>

HOW MANY WORDS? – HOW MANY CHAPTERS?

It's never that easy to estimate the eventual length of your first work but (as a rough guide) if you are planning on turning out 10/12 chapters your word count should be somewhere between 30,000 to 35,000 words; for 12/15 chapters allow for 35,000 to 45,000 words. Do not set firm targets at the outset though because as your list of contents develops so too will the potential number of chapters in the final draft. Some material will merge with other data, some will expand, and some will disappear altogether.

HOW DRAFTY COPY HELPS TO SHAPE THE FINAL PRODUCT

Even with a fully structured outline to work from (which we'll discuss in the next chapter), committing the first paragraph to your word processor can often prove problematic. When you've accomplished the opening salvo and it is to your liking, press on with the composition but stop now and again to review what you have written. Doing it this way, your output operates much in the same way as a fountain; ideas spill out presenting you with new angles and twists in direction. This will continue to happen every time you return to work on your draft copy - and all to the betterment of the final product.

DEVELOPING A DISTINCTIVE TITLE FOR YOUR BOOK

The title of your book depicts the very first words that anyone reads; it is the catalyst that determines whether anything else is read. As such it is an instrument of ultimate consequence. When the title is plumb center, it hits the bull's eye; when it's off center, it's off the wall. Treat the development of a distinctive title as essential work that you cannot start on too soon, but never settle for the first suggestion that springs to mind, no matter how brilliant it strikes you at the time. Keep working on it, polishing it, developing the power words that will transform it into a masterful catch phrase that compels the prospect to turn the pages. Even when you have done all this to your satisfaction, you may find that a publisher alters it. Don't balk or consider the change as interference. Publishers know better than authors do what constitutes a winning title.

Remember too that a powerful sub-title that sells the title itself is of equal necessity. In my new course I discuss how to wrap both into a commanding double-edged designation.

Your ability to plan for fulfilment will hinge largely on how effectively you manage your time. If this is a problem for you, draw down my complimentary e-report at this website

<http://1st-creative-writing-course.com/makemoney.html>

Jim Green is a bestselling author with an ever-growing string of niche non-fiction titles to his credit.

'Make Money Writing Part Time' is his latest dynamic creative writing course and is available for immediate download at <http://www.1st-creative-writing-course.com/makemoney.html>

If Your Resume Is The Cake, Your Cover Letter Is The Icing.

By Heather Eagar

Cover letter writing is almost as important a skill for a job seeker to learn as resume writing. The cover letter accompanies the resume at all times as the primary support document. Whether you use traditional mail, email, faxing, or another type of electronic submission, this should always be sent with the resume. There are, of course, other tools you'll use when job seeking. Your cover letter and resume come first of course, followed by follow-up letters, thank-you letters for after the interview, reference sheets, salary histories, and job acceptance letters. If you have good cover letter writing skills, and good resume writing skills, the other written tools should be a snap to compose.

Your goal in this is to get the attention of the hiring manager, just as it is with resume writing. The method and format are a little different however. Your resume will cover all, or most of your professional career, and will be from one to two pages. Your cover letter will be a very brief page serving as an introduction to the resume. Cover letter writing style must be direct, to the point, and able to grab the attention of the reader quickly, with a goal of making the reader want to read the attached resume.

Many people, when engaged in this type of writing, have a tendency to say too much. Good cover letter writing is short and punchy, and will take two or three key points from the resume and emphasize them. The old adage "tell them what you are going to tell them, tell them, and then tell them what you told them" holds true in both resume writing and cover letter writing.

As an example, let's assume that you are a materials handling manager for a defense contractor, seeking another position. In your line of work the buzz words are MRP, lean manufacturing, ISO 9000, and cost savings. Your writing efforts should reflect these buzz words to show your value to your current employer and any future employers. Your resume will go into more detail about how you accomplished these goals. The cover letter will simply point out to the hiring manager that you accomplished them. An example of this would be two bulleted paragraphs in the body of the letter that say....

- Experienced in quality assurance and quality control, MRP, ISO 9000, QS 9000, and Lean Manufacturing.
- Demonstrated results in saving significant money for employers through cost savings, inventory level reductions, and on-time supplier delivery.

The hiring manager, according to many surveys, devotes only about fifteen seconds to each resume and cover letter he or she reviews. With that in mind your writing skills need to be top notch to get this person to look at your resume. Your resume writing skills need to be just as good to get the reader to want to grant you an interview. In turn, your interviewing skills need to be excellent to get the hiring manager to offer you the position. This long, and hopefully positive chain of events begins with good cover letter writing skills and ends with job satisfaction and a nice paycheck.

Are you guilty of sabotaging your own job search along with the opportunity to earn more money? Heather Eagar, a former professional resume writer and creator of ResumeLines.com, provides reviews of the top resume writing services that put you in charge of your career so you can get the job

you deserve. Sign-up for your free Job Search Tips E-Course.



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