

Writer makes \$805 – with clips 'to go'

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By Cheryl Paquin

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An exciting day! I sent out invoices for \$805 dollars, for one article and three hours editing. But it did take time and effort to finally get my freelance writing career off the ground, with a few tricks learned along the way.

Before I began applying for work, I built a Web site for my writing business. I updated my resume, I signed up for a fax service, with free business cards as part of the deal, and I dreamed a lot about being a 'writer'. And then, when the inevitable could be put off no more, I began applying for jobs. There are scores of job sites on the Internet, and I trawled them everyday. Some of my favorites include:

- <http://www.Copyeditor.com>
- <http://www.CraigsList.com>
- <http://www.Sunoasis.com>
- <http://www.JournalismJobs.com>
- <http://www.Career.com>
- <http://www.Monster.com>
- <http://www.WritersWrite.com>
- <http://www.InscriptionsMagazine.com>

Another great resource is the Sunday classified sections of metro newspapers. Just type in 'freelance', 'writer', or 'editor', and see what comes up.

Once I see a job I'm interested in, I apply for it right there and then. If I bookmark it, I KNOW I'm not going to go back to it later, I'm just not. So fully aware of my ability to procrastinate, I made it easy to apply for jobs as soon as I found them – with clips to go.

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Many jobs ask for a resume and clips in text-only format. This means typed directly into an email, or copy and pasted from another program. It doesn't mean sending Word attachments, or text attachments or any sort of attachment. It means TEXT ONLY. Remember, your potential employer is possibly wading through hundreds of resumes. Does he/she want to open another program to read yours? Probably not.

So, to streamline the process, I set up an email template with a text-only resume, which I used ***** and ----- to separate sections. I pasted in three clips, with the headline in caps, and the date it was published. Because I had online clips, I added the URL using the http:// format, so

even in text-only email the link could be clicked. Then, for each job, I open the template, write a brief 'cover letter' at the top; remembering to include the job reference in the subject line and the body, and VOILA, press SEND.

Oops, I omitted a crucial step here. I didn't SPELL CHECK. Please, please never overlook this, because I have, and spotted the glaringly obvious faux pas AFTERWARDS. It's not pretty, and it's not professional.

Not only do I keep my sent queries in a separate folder for easy reference, I also keep the job description. I've learned to do this, because one day, after I'd applied for five jobs, someone called about my application and I couldn't remember what particular job they referred to. So I have a simple text file, into which, I copy and paste straight from the job-site page. I really hate applying for jobs. I'd much rather sit and think about it than do it. But putting in some time with my resume and clips made it a quick, easy and PROFITABLE process.

You can, too.

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Break in with Fillers: The Best Market for New Writers

By Shelley Wake

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Interested in breaking into writing or breaking into a new area? You can't go past writing fillers. Fillers

are one of the most overlooked opportunities in the freelance writing world and offer one of the best opportunities for new writers.

Fillers Are In Demand

I've spoken to hundreds of editors and been told over and over again that fillers are the one thing they never get enough of. Most publications tend to publish more freelance fillers than they do freelance articles. Yet, they often receive 100 times more articles than fillers. This is a gap in the freelance market that you can take advantage of.

Fillers are a Great Place to Get Started

Many publications are careful about publishing feature articles from writers they don't know. Even if your article is good, an editor might decide not to publish you because they don't know you as a writer. This is especially true if you don't have a lot of experience or any clips. But even without experience or clips, most editors will consider a filler. In fact, many editors treat writing fillers as the testing ground to see if a writer can be relied on to write feature articles.

Here's what one editor had to say about fillers:

"One of the best ways to break in is to write fillers. It gives me a chance to start to build a relationship with a writer and see that I can trust them. Of all the freelancers I work with, over half started out writing fillers." – Margaret, Magazine Editor

So not only can writing fillers get you some clips, it also has the potential to turn into a long-term writing opportunity. Consider fillers a stepping stone to much bigger things.

The Smart Way to Write on Spec

Fillers are almost always submitted on spec. This means that you avoid the problem of having to query the publication and sell yourself as a writer, because your filler is doing the work for you and showing the editor your writing skill.

The big argument against writing on spec is that you spend your time writing pieces that might never sell. Fillers reduce this problem because they are short and take less time to write. So even if your filler doesn't sell, you haven't wasted as much time as you would have on a longer feature article. Fillers are also more flexible, with few publications having set guidelines for fillers. This means that a filler will often be suitable for more than market. So if it gets rejected once, it's not a waste of time. You can just send it to a new market, often without having to make any changes.

Fillers Rely on Information, Not Writer Qualifications

Fillers usually rely on information, not on the writer's qualifications. This means that you don't have to sell yourself when you submit fillers. Instead, the information you put in the filler sells it for you. This makes fillers a perfect option for writers lacking the experience or clips to sell themselves to an

editor.

You Can Write a Lot of Them

Since fillers are short, you can write a lot of them and submit a lot of them. You could literally have hundreds of pieces out in the market for consideration in a short time. And if you write them well, you could have a lot of them published in a very short time. That means you can build a list of clips fast.

And one other benefit is that magazines don't have as limited a space for fillers as they do for feature articles. So if your filler gets accepted, it's likely to get published fast. The same isn't true for feature articles, where an accepted article will often be scheduled for an issue a year or two away. That's one more good reason why fillers are a great way to build clips fast.

Once you've got the clips, then you have a few more options. Until then, fillers are a great place to start.

And one final tip. Once you have the clips and start moving into feature articles, don't forget about fillers. As you're researching a feature, take note of interesting facts, trivia, or anecdotes you come across. These can make fillers and be an added bonus, bringing in some extra cash and some extra clips.

Shelley Wake is the author of "Getting Published Without Clips." This practical no-nonsense guide shows writers exactly where to go and what to do to break into freelance writing. Packed with inside information, proven methods, hidden markets, and more, it's successfully launched hundreds of freelance careers in record time.<http://www.writingstuff.com/fr02m.html>

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