

Avoid Writing Income Disasters With These Five Tips - Part One

There's never been a better time to be a writer. You've got the potential of earning an unlimited income. Writing jobs abound, on the Web and off it.

However, some writers manage to cripple their income, both by not understanding all the opportunities which are available, and by not understanding that their writing skills deserve to be well-recompensed.

So let's look at five writing income disasters, and how you can avoid them.

1. Not asking for a retainer

Sadly this disaster is very, very common, especially for writers who are used to writing for magazines and newspapers.

If you don't have a regular gig writing for them, magazines and newspapers are lousy markets. After they cherry pick your proposals and you get a commission, they take their time paying you. They pay on acceptance or on publication, but they don't pay a retainer.

They train writers to wait for their money, and it cripples writers when they write for businesses or for the Web. They fail to understand that they must get a retainer.

A retainer is standard, it's vital, and if you don't ask for it you have no way of knowing whether you're dealing with a genuine client, or with someone who's out to scam you.

So get a retainer of at least 50 per cent of your fee. On long projects, your writing services agreement should include payment milestones - weekly, monthly, or as the project progresses.

You send an invoice for your retainer when you send your writing services agreement. Don't start writing, until you've got the retainer payment.

2. No writing services agreement

This is the second most common writing disaster I see.

You must have a writing services agreement, and you must state your payment and delivery services clearly in the agreement.

The project as you understand it forms the main part of the agreement. Please don't copy and paste into the agreement from the project brief. Rewrite the brief in bullet points and in your own words, as YOU understand it.

Rewriting the brief in your own words will not only clarify your thinking about the project, it also means that you will ask more questions of the client so that you understand completely what's required of you.

3. Procrastination

The more you write, the more income you make. Procrastination is a writing income disaster - and it's easily avoided.

Here's how. Make a commitment to write when you're at your computer. Write! Don't "research" (surf the Web), or dither. Decide that when you're sitting at your computer, you'll write. You can Web surf after all your writing for the day is done.

When you commit to a writing project, and have received your retainer, your speed of delivery is paramount. Your clients expect speed, but 90 per cent of the time their expectations are dashed.

Therefore when you fail to meet a deadline, not only do you guarantee that your current client won't send you further projects, you also poison the pool for other writers he may consider hiring.

So please, meet your deadlines. All it takes is commitment.

Watch for Part Two of this article, in which we'll cover other writing income disasters. If you avoid all five disasters, your writing income will soar.

About the Author

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