

START HERE

**40 FREELANCE WRITERS
SHARE HOW THEY
FIND CLIENTS, STAY MOTIVATED
& EARN WELL TODAY**



EDITED BY CAROL TICE

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Introduction

As a freelancer who's earned a full-time living from my writing since the early-'90s, I have loads of experience to share on how to succeed in this line of work.

The one thing I couldn't help my readers with, though, was how to break in from scratch right now, in the Internet era. That's why I started taking guest posts from new writers on my [Make a Living Writing](#) blog. The best posts from the past two years make up the heart of this book.

The fresh voices you'll find in this e-book debunk the popular myth that you can't really earn a living as a new writer today—that there are too many established writers, or that global competition has made it impossible to earn a living wage. The authors included here show over and over that freelance writing is a viable career that can be done, right now—and can be done by writers based anywhere in the world. In fact, there's more opportunity than ever.

Whether you're juggling a day job and trying to build a freelance business on the side, starting out as a full-time freelancer, or a

longtime freelancer looking to learn new strategies and grow your income, you'll find valuable tips here from writers who've walked in your shoes.

I applaud the generosity of these writers in sharing exactly how they find good-paying gigs and keep a positive attitude in today's fast-changing marketplace. I'm excited to present these new writers to my audience—and thrilled that so many of them learned the strategies you'll read here in my own [Freelance Writers Den](#) community.

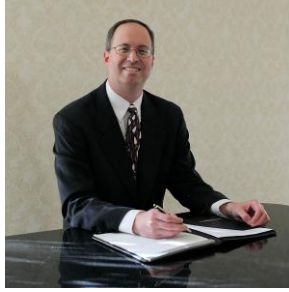
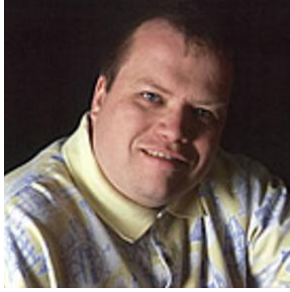
On behalf of all the authors, I hope these practical tips help you find your way to freelance success.

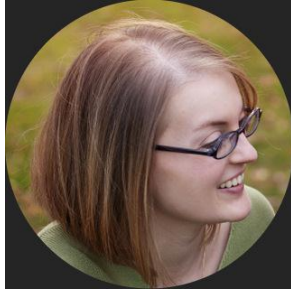
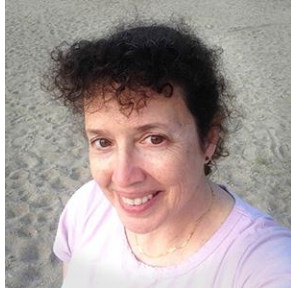
—Carol Tice

P.S. If you're wondering how I first got started way back when, or how I got back into freelancing in 2005, I've included those stories, too.









Chapter 6: Prospecting



How I Found 488 Red-Hot Freelance Writing Prospects

By Ayelet Weisz



What is the most urgent need for every new freelance writer? Clients. And finding them isn't always easy.

They may not have the desire or budget to hire you right at the time you pitch. It ends up being a numbers game — the more potential clients you pitch, the more likely you are to find the right one at the right time.

Recently, I did a lot of research to find good businesses to pitch. I ended up with nearly 500 leads! Here's how I did it:

1. **Let prospect news come to you:** Set up [Google Alerts](#), and industry news — funding, acquisitions, expansions, and other changes — will be waiting in your inbox.
2. **Stay curious and keep looking:** Check out Google News and search for "Top 10" lists, like the "10 fastest-growing pet product companies in 2014."

3. **News sites and business magazines:** These often feature business news in a variety of industries. Sites of local papers where your niche is most dominant might even have a designated tab just for news about your industry.
4. **Niche news sites:** Working like trade publications, these sites allow you to cut through the distractions more general sites offer. I found one site for my chosen niche that's more effective than Google Alerts and newspapers combined.
5. **Low-ranking companies:** If they're on the 20th page of a Google search for their industry, they need your help. That's how I found my first business client. Plenty of companies are inundated with to-do lists and will gladly pay you to help them up their marketing efforts.
6. **Watch Google ads:** These ads represent companies that are actively looking to grow their client base. Click through and brainstorm ways to help them create a better long-term marketing strategy, like blogging.
7. **Conferences and contests:** They list speakers or judges and participants — plenty of potential clients. To discover even more prospects, find a Twitter hashtag and follow the buzz on social media, or search for forum talks about these events.
8. **Tap into your network:** You never know who the people in your network know, so make sure to share your journey with them. I found that great niche news site because I talked to a friend who shared our conversation with her husband.
9. **Think beyond your geographical area:** Being local might give you an advantage with some prospects, yet there's no need to limit yourself to one city, state, or even one country. Companies everywhere need English copywriting to attract a global audience. I've personally written for websites based on four continents.
10. **Look beyond your niche:** Look for peripheral industries and organizations. If you initially looked for startups, you might also

look at venture capital firms, computer science schools, branding agencies, business coaches, organizations that promote women and minorities' participation in the tech industry — and the list goes on.

11. **Pay attention to your surroundings:** From sponsored ads on your Facebook feed, to friends who casually mention a business, to consumer magazines that profile or mention companies.... opportunities are everywhere.

How I organize my leads

I like using Excel to easily sift through prospects. Unlike Word, Excel will alert you when you've already included a prospect in your list. I write down prospects' names and websites, then divide them into categories (such as niches, industries, or locations, depending on my needs).

I also write down where I found them, which is usually somewhere online that contains information I can use to warm up my pitch. Additionally, I leave space for random comments and for tracking responses.

How I pre-qualify leads before I pitch

To save yourself time, [pre-qualify prospects](#). Carol recommended to me only approaching prospects that earn at least \$1 million a year, as they're big enough to have a marketing budget yet small enough that they don't have an in-house marketing team. When it comes to startups, you can approach companies that raised venture capital funds of \$1 million or more.

Check out [Manta.com](#), business sections of newspapers, and niche sites to find this information, or simply run a quick search on Google. You can also check companies' blogs, news or press sections on their sites, and their social media accounts.

If you can't find financial information, see if the company advertises the pricing of its products or services and "guesstimate" whether those prices indicate the possibility of a marketing budget.

Still coming up empty? If you think you're a great match for the prospect—pitch anyway. Sometimes interest comes from the most unlikely prospects.

The first time freelance writer [Ayelet Weisz](#) got on a plane, she landed by skydiving. Now she helps businesses and organizations skyrocket their ROI and make a difference with content. Get her delicious, bite-sized [content tips](#) that you can implement right now to drive results, so you can join her in a happy content dance.

The Simple Marketing Tactic that Tripled My Response Rate

By KeriLynn Engel



When I first started freelance writing full time, I was sending out email letters of introduction (LOIs) left and right, sometimes dozens in a week.

Some writing gurus will tell you email marketing is just a numbers game. But if you're sending out a ton of LOIs and still hearing crickets — like I was — you need a new strategy.

So I created a more targeted and streamlined [LOI strategy](#). Now I spend only a couple hours a week sending LOIs, and my response rate has more than tripled, from less than 5 percent to 15 percent or more. Here's what I did:

Get prospects in your email inbox

The first step is to save time by setting up a system where prospects are sent to you automatically — prospects with a high likelihood of needing a freelance writer.

Press releases are a great source for finding those prospects, so I started by subscribing to them via RSS feeds. Try VCAOnline.com for

venture capital and private equity news, or [PRWeb](#) for press releases organized by industry. Companies that just got VC or angel investor money are often ramping up marketing, and companies that put out press releases have a marketing budget — and those releases often bring news of company expansion that might trigger more marketing needs.

Copy the URL of the RSS feed by right-clicking on the RSS symbol and choosing “Copy link URL.” Now head on over to [Blogtrottr.com](#), a free RSS-to-email service. Paste the URL into the field, fill in your email, and choose “Daily Digest.”

To prevent inbox clutter, I have a filter set up in Gmail that labels all my press releases “Prospects” and sets them to skip my main inbox and go to a folder, so I can look at them when I choose.

Qualify your ideal prospects

Now you’re rolling in prospects! A few times a week, you can peruse them for ones that seem like a good fit.

The ideal prospect is a business in your target niche that just got millions in new funding, because you know they can afford to hire you. If the press release says they’re spending the new funding on marketing, that’s a bonus! Mention it in your LOI, and point out how you can help them.

Sleuth out contact information

Find the name and email address of the person in charge of marketing — it may be listed right on that press release. If not, go to their website and look for their management team. Look for the marketing manager, chief marketing officer, or anyone with “marketing” in their title or job description. Next, you’ll have to hunt down their email address, if it’s not listed on the website.

Write a short & sweet LOI template

A person is less likely to read an email when they don't know the sender, so you want to get right to the point. Here's my super-short, no-pressure template:

Hi [Name],

Just saw the press release about [some good news]-
congrats!

My name's KeriLynn Engel, and I'm a professional
freelance writer specializing in [niche]. I wanted to
reach out to see if you have a need for any written
marketing materials like [list examples]. (Optional short
sentence here about your experience in the industry or
suggestion about what their marketing is missing that
you could provide.)

Let's chat if you're interested. Just hit "reply" or call me
at 800-555-5555. Thank you,
[Name]
[Email signature with your portfolio URL.]

Consider providing a phone number

Including a phone number in my LOI boosts credibility. Not many spammers provide phone numbers! But I don't want unknown callers using my personal number. Instead, I use a free Google Voice number. They can leave a message, and I can call back at my convenience.

By spending just a few hours a week on this strategy, I'm in constant negotiations with new freelance writing client leads. Last month, I signed a couple of new contracts and was able to let go of my lowest-paying client, which feels great.

KeriLynn Engel is a business writer and blogger for online businesses and tech startups, and happens to be one of those rare freelance writers who actually loves marketing!

Found Money: My System for Selling More Article Reprints

By Carol J. Alexander



You've interviewed your sources, done your research, and worked your tail off to create a stellar piece of work — for a one-time gig.

Don't settle for that single paycheck when you can sell the same story again and again, to the right markets. Roughly one-third of my [freelance writing income](#) comes from selling article reprints.

Here's how I do it:

What you can re-sell

You can re-sell anything you write, so long as you retain the rights to it.

When you sell first rights or one-time rights to an article, after the terms of the contract are fulfilled, you're free to sell the piece elsewhere.

Don't be afraid to negotiate contracts if they ask for more rights than you want to sell.

Where you can re-sell it

Generally reprints are sold to non-competing markets — different audiences, regions, or countries.

If you write “Supplements for the Menopause Years” for a woman’s magazine, a health magazine would have a different audience.

Chicago Parent and *Houston Family* cover different regions.

Chickens Magazine and *Practical Poultry* have similar audiences, but in different countries.

Where to find markets

Generally, publications with a smaller circulation, regional magazines, trade publications, and newspapers purchase reprint rights.

Haunt the bookstore, peruse the digital pubs found on Issuu.com, and scour the [Writer’s Market](#) for publications that buy reprints.

Read a magazine’s submission guidelines online, or email the editor and ask if they purchase reprints and what they typically pay. Some publications have a set rate. Some will pay what you ask.

I have made anywhere from \$15 to \$50 on article reprints in regional markets. That might not sound lucrative, but I have an extensive list of publications that purchase reprints in one niche. If I sell one article 20 times, for an average of \$35, that’s \$700.

If that article already appeared for first rights in a national magazine for \$400-\$500 or more, then I think pitching the reprint market is worth my time.

How to submit your work

I group potential markets by niche in my email address book.

When I have a reprint to submit, I write a snappy email cover letter describing the story, listing a few places my work has been published, and what I'd like to get paid for this story. I mention that if they're interested in the piece, I will forward it as a Word document with an invoice. I then paste the text of the story after the email.

Keep your eyes peeled and continually add to your list of markets. The more publications you have to submit to, the more opportunity you have to re-sell your work.

From the beautiful Shenandoah Valley of Virginia, freelance journalist [Carol J. Alexander](#) has written for over 60 magazines and websites, including Grit, Hobby Farms, Urban Farm, From Scratch, Home Education, The Old Schoolhouse, and regional parenting publications all over North America. She is the author of [Break into Magazine Writing: A Step-by-Step Guide to Getting Published](#), an e-course for beginning freelancers.

BUY THIS E-BOOK NOW!