



# ESCAPE the Content Mills

By Linda Formichelli and Carol Tice  
**LESSON TWO: Markets That Pay**

Welcome to Lesson 2! We're going to start with the (true) premise that just about any standard writing market out there pays better than the content mills. That's delightful news! But even better news is that the markets we're about to lay on you often pay ASTRONOMICALLY more than what you'll get through, say Elance or Demand.

So: A small trade magazine that pays 5 cents per word for a 1,000-word article, or a business that pays \$50 for a blog post? Yay! Let's do it.

A major magazine that pays \$2 per word, or a business that's used to shelling out \$100 per hour for copywriting? BONUS!

We know what you're going to say next: Just knowing about these markets doesn't mean you can break into them and actually, you know, get paid.

The answer is: Lesson 3! That's where we talk about marketing tactics that will help you land assignments, and we also discuss

how to break in even if you have no clips, or if all your experience is in the mills. These are also opportunities you'll find in any country, too.

### One Market You Want to AVOID

We often hear from writers who want to know how to break into writing essays for college and graduate students...and we're baffled at how anyone can think this is an ethical thing to do. Any student caught using a service or freelancer to write his essays could be expelled.

Here's [more on that](#). And here's [something else](#).

In short: Stay far away from these scams!

Now, on to our ginormous list of writing opportunities that pay better than your average Craigslist request for quickie SEO-keyword focused junk. This lesson has two parts: we've got 13 types of better-paying markets, and then 20 types of writing that pay better, too. We hope you find these lists eye-opening and inspiring!

## 13 Types of Good-Paying Markets

### 1. Mass Consumer Magazines

These are the *Redbooks*, the *GQs*, the *Fitness Magazines* of the world...the publications you see on newsstands that target a broad audience.

The glossies, as they're also called, are not easy to break into or write for, but it can be done—and as Linda has experienced with

some of her students, it can even sometimes be done without clips (samples of previously published work).

Pay ranges from \$.50 to \$2.00 per word and up. Linda remembers fondly the time *Health* paid her \$2.50 per word for a rush article.

You can land assignments with glossies by sending a query letter, which is a sales letter that describes your idea and your qualifications to write it. Query writing is an art form, which we'll discuss in Lesson 3. (And we want to add here that any time we suggest "sending" or "mailing" something—such as a query or LOI—we mean email.)

### Don't Write That Article!

Note that you typically do NOT just write an article and send it out! Most editors want to see a query letter so if they decide to assign the idea, they can help shape the story. The chances of your getting the exact word count, slant, and sources an editor would want without her input are pretty slim.

And because we want to make the process as fast as possible for you—we know content mill writers are often in need of fast cash—we want to also recommend calling editors with your pitch. It's not normally done, and many editors frown on it—but if you have the guts (and a great idea) we say go ahead and try to hit them with a phone pitch. Or, try connecting with an editor on social media like LinkedIn or Twitter.

To find magazines that pay, you can check [Writer's Market](#); Google the topic you want to write about plus the keywords "work with us," "writers' guidelines," or "pays"; or sift through the archives at [Who Pays Writers?](#)

## 2. National Niche Publications

A step down the pay ladder, but still on the newsstands, are those magazines that have a focused topic and target a niche readership. *Adoptive Families*, *BeadStyle Magazine*, *Hispanic Business*, and *Skin & Ink* are some examples.

Remember how, in Lesson 1, we had you delve deep into your psyche and your past to figure out where you might have salable expertise? These types of magazines play into that. If you have some obscure interest or hobby, chances are there's a niche magazine (or more than one) catering to readers like you. Are you a papercraft wizard? An adoptive parent? A homeschooler? A Revolutionary War re-enactor? A model train enthusiast? You'll find at least one magazine for readers like you.

Pay varies widely, but \$.50 a word and up is typical.

You can find many niche pubs by visiting your local newsstand, but Googling your hobby and "magazine" should bring up even more options. [\*The Writer's Market\*](#) also lists some of these pubs.

As with the national consumer mags, you can break into national niche magazines with a killer query letter. Pick a magazine that focuses on one of your personal hobbies and interests, and you're sure to have plenty of ideas for them. Another option is to try calling the editor, or reaching out on social media.

## 3. Trade Publications

Trade magazines are a big favorite of both ours, because we've both earned a lot from them. These are newspapers and magazines that target a particular industry, such as *In-Plant Graphics*, *Pizza Today*, *Restaurant Management*, and *Sanitary*

Maintenance. (Linda has written for all of these, which proves you don't need to be an industry expert!)

Trade magazines often can't find good people to write for them for love or money. It's not easy to get someone to write well about trends in shower curtain styles, restaurant fixtures, or grease recycling.

So if you have experience in any business or industry, trades can be a good market for you. And believe us, there is at least one trade magazine for EVERY business: Linda's husband has written for *Indian Gaming Business* (which has a competitor magazine!) and *International Fiber Journal*.

If you don't have any sort of specialized expertise, take heart: If you have a background in a business area like marketing, human resources, sales, customer service, law, productivity, technology, or finances—you can write for trade magazines in ANY industry. These types of knowledge are cross-industry, meaning every field needs them. More on that in Linda's blog post [How to Write for Trade Magazines in Any Industry](#).

Pay can start as low as 5 cents per word, but goes up to 50 cents and even \$1 per word. And trade magazines are good for regular, reliable work: Once you do a great job for an editor, they'll want to hold onto you and send you more assignments. (This is unlike the large newsstand magazines, which almost always require you to pitch ideas.)

Where can you find these magazines, since they're not on the newsstands? [The Writer's Market](#) lists a bunch. You can find many trade magazine directories online—a couple of the best are [the one on WebWire](#) and [FreeTradeMagazines.com](#). (You will need to Google the names of the mags you're interested in to check out

their websites.) And if you write internationally, you can find British trades at [Britishpapers.co.uk](http://Britishpapers.co.uk). (Be aware that you DON'T need to subscribe to dozens of trades! You can find most of what you need to know by checking out their websites. If that fails, you may be able to request a 'sample' copy by calling the publication and identifying yourself as a writer.)

Don't discount using Google to find trades. Many organizations and individuals have done you the favor of compiling lists of trade magazines in various industries. For example, Linda once had a client who wanted to write about tile. Linda Googled "tile trade magazines," and came up with a list someone had compiled of six or seven trade magazines for the flooring industry! (You'll be amazed at how many trades there are.)

You can break into a trade magazine with a Letter of Introduction (more on that in the next lesson on marketing!) that introduces yourself and includes a few quick ideas. Another tactic is to call on the phone with your idea, or to reach out to editors via social media. In general, trade editors are much more accessible than the editors of glossy mags.

## 4. Local/Regional Publications

In this category you'll find magazines like *Cary Living*, *Seattle Business*, *Midwest Living*, *Seattle Bride*, and *New York Magazine*. Those are the obvious ones...but if you keep your eyes open, you'll also find magazines like *Carolina Parent*, *Triangle Style* (for North Carolina's Triangle area), *Atlanta Baby*, and *Orange County Woman*.

These typically appeal, well, to people living in or visiting those areas. And guess what? No matter where you live, the region you

live in probably has a magazine dedicated to its wonders—and you are the perfect writer to write for them.

Pay varies widely, from a low of \$50 for an article up to \$1 per word, depending on the size of the publication. A query will help you break in, but if you're a local writer you can also try simply calling the editor to introduce yourself.

## 5. Association/Organization Pubs

Here's another great market that's overlooked by a lot of freelancers: Organizations and associations that publish magazines for their members. For example, Linda has written for magazines for the American Tae Kwan Do Association, the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, and Friends of Norway.

You can also find regional association publications such as *California Lawyer*, which goes out to everyone who belongs to the California Bar Association.

Pay varies, but you can sometimes command \$1 per word and even more. A killer query will get you in the door, as will a good LOI...but if you belong to any organizations, or if any associations resonate with you personally, definitely start by reaching out to them with a phone call, email, or social media post. For example, if you're heavily into animal welfare, the animal welfare orgs would be a good bet.

## 6. Custom Publications

Freelancers often overlook custom publications, even though they're everywhere—once you know where to look.

Custom publishers (now more commonly called custom content companies) create magazines and other content—from blogs to videos—for businesses to use as marketing tools.

If you shop in the grocery store chain Stop & Shop, you'll see they have *Small Victories* magazine. If you're a member of Wells Fargo Bank, you'll receive *Wells Fargo Business Advisor*. If you're a member of Costco, you'll find *Costco Connection* in your mailbox. Hannaford supermarkets have *Fresh* magazine. LifeTime Fitness gyms has *Experience Life*. Many hospitals put out a magazine now, too.

While these publications are mainly marketing vehicles for the company, they run journalistic-style articles to inform and entertain their customers and readers. And many, if not most, of these pubs hire freelance writers!

Even better, once you start writing for one custom published magazine, if the editor likes you, she'll often introduce you to the editors of other pubs the company prints. While a few companies—including Costco—produce their own magazines, most custom publications are created by large publishers with many custom pubs in their stable.

Pay rates are very competitive, from 50 cents per word to \$1 a word, and up. You can break in with a query or with a letter of introduction, or even try calling. Linda once left a voicemail for the editor of a magazine for *Rhode Island Blue Cross/Blue Shield* members and ended up with several \$1-a-word gigs.

As for finding these magazines: Keep your eyes open! Sometimes there are custom pubs right under your nose. For example, Linda had one student who came to her with an idea for an article, and she said, "You should pitch that to *USAA Magazine*. It's a

magazine for a financial services company that targets the armed forces."

He said, "You know what? I get that in my mailbox every month, and I never thought about pitching it."

This is a magazine that comes to this guy's house every month, pays good money—and it never occurred to him to pitch it, because it's not a newsstand magazine. So keep your eyes peeled for what's in your mailbox—your friends' mailboxes, too—not to mention your doctor's office, the airport, the businesses you frequent, or anywhere else you go.

In addition, you can find many, many custom publishers and see what businesses they create magazines for on the [Content Council's website](#).

**Bonus:** If you get in with one custom pub that's in a publishing group, it's often easy to get your editor to introduce you to editors at other pubs in their stable, and land more clients.

### Resource for You!

You can [sign up for Job Alerts](#) on the Content Council's site too! You will occasionally find a job ad for a freelance position

## 7. Paying Blogs

Blogs are huge—obviously!—and many businesses need help with theirs. If you can write in a conversational way and craft killer headlines, you can earn from \$50-\$250 per post. If you don't believe these rates are real, check out this post (and its comments): [4 Freelance Bloggers Tell How They Earn \\$200+ Per Post](#).

The beauty here is, blogging is often a regular gig, where you write two to four—or even more—posts per month.

Blogs typically don't require you to do interviews or heavy research, which is why the pay is lower than for magazine articles. But that can be a good thing: When you're writing a post on a topic you know and love, the writing is easy and fun.

### Big Blog Tip

Rather than trying to talk business owners who don't have a blog into starting one from scratch (not an easy task!), look for business blogs that haven't been updated in a while. That means the company understands how blogging can help grow their audience and bring them new customers, but they don't have the time or skill to blog in-house.

Hit these owners with an LOI that talks about the importance of keeping their blog updated and how you (of course) are the writer who can do it. Add a few blog post ideas for them (with terrific headlines!), and email it in.

Besides businesses that pay for blogging, there is also a growing list of niche blogs that pay per post. For example, Linda and Carol have both earned \$75-\$150 per post writing for Freelance Switch (now Microlancer). Here's a list of [140 websites that pay writers](#) at least \$50 per post (check out the comments for updates and other paying markets!). Many of these blogs have guidelines on how to submit an idea or a post draft—but if not, a good query letter can open the door.

## 8. Businesses

There's a myth in the writing world that business are either too small to have a marketing budget, or so big (and intimidating!) that they probably have a big writing staff, and wouldn't use freelancers. Wrong!

In fact, there's a huge "middle market" of medium-sized companies with \$10-\$100 million in revenue or so. These companies are big enough to spend real money on marketing, but they may not yet have a marketing writer on staff...or, especially at fast-growing companies, their staff may not be able to handle all their varied copywriting needs. And, surprisingly, even huge businesses hire freelancers.

For instance, Costco certainly has a marketing staff...but they still hired Carol to write articles for their business-services newsletter. And Dun & Bradstreet has marketers galore, but they didn't know how to write a great blog post, so they paid Carol \$300 a post for a whole series. Pay rates range widely, but can be great—Carol got \$95 an hour from one global insurance consultancy for writing their Web content, on a big project that lasted over 2 years!

Linda has written businesses ranging from the smaller end (a roofing supplies manufacturer, a local company that sells Judaica) to very large (Pizzeria Uno, Tripadvisor, Sprint, Wainwright Bank). Sometimes Linda gets hired through an intermediary (which we'll discuss below), but sometimes, like in the case of Pizzeria Uno, she's hired directly by the company.

One of the big advantages of writing for businesses is that they can be a source of ongoing assignments that bring in steady income—monthly blogging, quarterly white papers, website revamps, regular newsletters and more.

Pay for writing for businesses can be pretty sweet. We recommend starting out at no lower than \$35-50 per hour when you're new and writing for small businesses. But Linda has charged \$85 per hour for smaller businesses and up to \$100 per hour for larger ones. Believe us...when you pitch businesses in this revenue range, they don't even blink.

You can start out getting free or low-paid samples doing marketing writing for businesses you patronize. Then, take those clips and pitch bigger businesses with an LOI or a cold call.

Start out with the smaller end of these businesses (like a local branch), and reach out to the marketing manager, if there is one, or the owner, at smaller businesses. The range of writing types businesses need is wide, from blogs, case studies and white papers to Web content, brochures, and advertorials (see our list of writing types below).

## 9. Government Agencies

Many writers don't quite grok how much freelance work governments assign. This may vary from country to country (or city to city), but here in the U.S., the federal trend has been toward more outsourcing over the past decade or so. Yes, most federal contracts are for huge projects like building bridges, but In 2014, [the SBA reported](#) that the U.S. federal government contracted out some \$83.2 billion in work to small businesses and solopreneurs...like you.

To bid on government work, you need to go through a process and become a qualified government contractor. Fortunately, the red tape has been streamlined in recent years—and freelance coach Allena Tapia created a guide on [how to become a qualified](#)

[U.S. federal contractor.](#) In general, government contracts are competitively bid to find the best price, and be a good steward of public money. To learn about how your local country, county, province, prefect, city or other municipality works with freelancers, give them a call or check their website for contractor opportunities.

### Another Way In

If you partner with bigger agencies that are bidding big writing projects, you might be able to piggyback on their bid without having to go to the trouble of becoming a qualified federal contractor. For instance, Carol has one mentee who has written for the U.S. federal National Institutes of Health through a big marketing agency. The agency was the qualified federal bidder on the job, and he subcontracted from the agency once they won the contract.

No matter what you're interested in (or have life experience in)—health issues, education, the military, employment, scientific research, land management, energy, children, the environment—there is a government agency for it. All of these are potential markets that you can explore. Don't forget your local public schools are part of "government," too—Carol knows more than one writer who's gotten lucrative work from the Seattle Public School District, for instance.

Pay rates are usually moderate to high. Remember, governments usually have lavish benefits packages for full-time employees, so paying a fat contract still saves them a bundle. For instance, Carol got \$65 an hour on a \$14,000 contract with a regional transit agency, to spend about six weeks writing two lengthy annual reports.

Smaller agencies may even offer you help getting through their bidding process—that transit agency walked Carol step-by-step through their paperwork.

Networking with other writers in your niche may give you leads on government contracts that are out for bid—Carol subbed out half that transit contract, for instance. Also check local business journals, which sometimes publish bid notices. But the Internet will be your best friend on this.

There are many free and fee-based websites that list government contracting opportunities, such as free site [FedBizOpps](#) for US federal contracts. The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) has useful [resources on how to get into government contracting](#), too. Bid listings contain all the information on who to contact and how to apply.

If you're stumped, call the agency you're targeting and ask them where they publish their bids, or check their website. Usually, they're required to publicize the contracts so that they get many bids, so the information shouldn't be hard to find.

Some locales may not use freelancers, but in general, the trend is toward more and more independent contracting of things governments need done. If you have been in the military, are a former civil employee, or have experience at companies that do government contract work, this may be a natural niche for you to explore.

## 10. Nonprofits

A lot of writers roll their eyes at the idea of considering nonprofits a market, because they've been in the trap of working with tiny

nonprofits that expect you to work for free. That's obviously not where the money is!

If you target *large* national nonprofits and foundations, they tend to be very professionalized organizations, and they understand that they need very high-quality marketing materials to get people interested in their cause.

You want to target nonprofits with a \$10-\$100 million annual budget and up, which is where you start to see real marketing money. You can look up the budgets of U.S. charities on sites such as [Guidestar](#), [CharityNavigator](#), or [The Foundation Center](#). In the U.S., charities' tax forms are a public record, and these sites compile these records for you. In other countries, do a little Web research to determine how to access these records.

You can expect pay similar to writing for a medium-sized or larger company for writing an annual report, email campaign, Web content, client success stories, or other marketing pieces for large charities.

You can break into the nonprofit arena with an LOI. Often, your foot in the door here is to write for that small, local charity in the niche you love...and then use that clip to help you move up to big, paying charities.

## 11. Colleges & Universities

Universities put out material like you would not believe. They have alumni magazines, newsletters, brochures, student guides, press releases, internal communiques to faculty and between a college's various schools or campuses—and, of course, websites. All of this is an opportunity for...you. Many colleges rely on freelance writers,

to save on having to offer their pricey full-time benefits packages to more workers.

Pay varies, but Linda has earned \$500 for alumni profiles for one university's website, \$1,200 for editing an alumni magazine's Class Notes section, and \$.50 per word and up writing articles for alumni magazines.

The most obvious first step is to reach out to your alma mater with a phone call, if you attended college.

Next, think about the interesting people, successful businesspeople and local celebs you know. Where did they go to college, and does that college have an alumni magazine? These publications love profiles of successful alums.

Any time you're interviewing an interesting person, you can potentially line up another sale by finding out what college they attended—and pitching a profile to their alumni magazine.

To break into other departments at universities, contact the marketing and communications director, or alumni relations director, of universities in your region—you'll find plenty of directories online. That's how Linda landed the gigs we mentioned above: She compiled a list of 200 local universities, and sent each one an LOI via email.

## 12. Ad Agencies and Other Intermediaries

If you like the idea of writing ads, press kits, and other types of marketing collateral, ad agencies and marketing agencies can be another good market for you. While you can break into writing for some businesses directly, others use agencies to manage their freelancers.

The pay is the same as for copywriting—nice!—except the agency will take a cut. But you can still earn some serious money. Linda once earned a couple thousand dollars in a weekend writing for a client through Edelman, the largest PR firm in the world.

It's easy to find agencies online, and you can even choose agencies that handle the type of writing you want to do—for example, for health writers there are healthcare marketing agencies. Contact their marketing director with an LOI or a phone call, or reach out on social media.

For more info on writing for agencies, check out [this podcast](#) by Ed Gandia, and [this post](#) on the Writer's Living blog.

### 13. "Move-Up" Mills

I know—this whole course is supposed to be getting you off the content mills! But hang in with us a minute.

There are a few content companies that \*do\* offer substantially better rates than most mills—more like \$75-\$150 a post, and we're hearing about \$500 article assignments through these, too. Three worth mentioning are [Ebyline](#), which focuses on newspapers primarily, and marketing-content platforms [Contently](#), and [Skyword](#). [Here's a report on rates at Skyword](#).

Obviously, it's not ideal, because this is still the mill model. You're still at the mercy of the managers on this platform as to whether they'll let you bid for the better gigs, and you're still competing for gigs in a large pool of writers. You still can't get a raise, and have to take the rate offered. But some big brands, including IBM, are using these to find writers.

If you're getting \$20 a post now and have strong writing skills, consider checking these out. This could be a type of client where you earn a bit more, you get to work with some blue-chip brands, and it tides you over as you build your own stable of clients through your independent marketing. Consider this a possible stepping-stone out of lower-paid mills...but don't linger too long.

Those are our 13 types of markets that pay (way) better than content mills. We have a ton more info on how to land gigs with these markets in Lesson 3...and if you feel you need even more, you may be interested in our [Freelance Writer's Pitch Clinic](#) class, which we run a couple times per year.

And now, on to...

# 20 Types of Writing That Pay Better Than "SEO Articles"

Writing quick little blog posts and articles for mills is a type of writing that doesn't pay well. You've probably found that out the hard way.

But when you move up to more sophisticated types of writing—types that don't have as much competition, and call for a bit more knowledge—the pay improves. To earn more, you don't just need to know how you find new clients...you need to offer a wider array of writing services as well.

Once you learn about the types of writing in this list—and we include handy links to make it even easier—when you reach out to a prospect, you can offer them the type of writing they need, to increase your chances of getting the gig. For example, you might offer to write case studies, a white paper, or a ghostwritten article.

## Resource for You!

Worried that you've only done a certain type of writing, and no one will hire you to do another type—for example, you've written articles for mills but want to move into copywriting or blogging? Use Carol's [Simple Addition Method](#) to convince clients you can make the switch.

What pays better? Here's our list of better writing types:

## 1. Articles

Sure, magazines need articles—but so do websites, newsletters, and businesses. Writing articles typically requires you to interview people and use journalistic techniques.

If article writing is new to you—or you'd like to learn more about the ethics of reporting, so you don't worry about getting sued for articles you write—we have a class on article-writing basics you might want to check out: [4-Week Journalism School](#). You can also read this resource post for an introduction to this topic: [17 Super-Useful Posts About Story Ideas, Article Writing, Interviews and Editors](#). More article-writing resources from Carol [here](#).

## 2. Advertorials

Advertorials look like articles, but they're actually paid ads. Think of those "articles" that you see in magazines that say "Special Advertising Section" at the top. Many agencies handle advertorials for their clients; for example, Linda once wrote an advertorial for OnStar that appeared in People magazine, through the company's marketing agency. It can also work in reverse: Carol has written articles for UPS that appeared on Entrepreneur.com, for \$600 apiece, where Entrepreneur assigned the stories.

With consumers' growing hatred of commercials and ads, advertorials are increasingly popular, as they are a way to get a company's name exposed to the public in a positive light, while providing useful info, instead of "selling."

Writing advertorials is little different from writing articles—it's just that instead of independent reporting, your topic and interview

sources will be set by the business client, to fit their marketing goals.

Copyblogger has a great post on [The 14 Keys to Writing Advertorials That Sell](#).

### Resource for You!

At this point, you may be wondering about the ethics of writing both editorial and advertorial/copywriting/branded content. Linda wrote an [article on this topic](#) for *Writer's Digest* that has a ton of tips!

## 3. Better Blogging

The content mills pay you \$5-\$25 per post, but you can turn your blogging skill into real money by writing for blogs that pay more, or by getting a retainer gig from a business to write for their blog on a regular basis. Carol did many small-business blogging contracts that were \$500 for four posts a month, for instance.

Don't know how to blog, but want to learn? We like Sophie Lizard's [Be a Freelance Blogger blog](#) for lots of info on how to write for blogs, how to get hired, and more. You might also check out [A-List Blogging's Kickstart Your Blog course](#). And don't forget Carol's list of [140 Websites that pay \\$50 a post or more](#).

## 4. Brand Journalism

Many businesses are using journalistic content to inform and entertain their customers, and to build brand loyalty. Writing these articles is just like writing for a magazine, newspaper, or online site, except that your client is a business rather than a publication. [Here's a nice discussion of brand journalism on the Skyword site](#).

Hubspot has a free, downloadable [comprehensive guide on the topic](#) as well.

Brand journalism projects tend to pay great—for instance, Carol has written quite a few \$2,000 articles that were online exclusives for a Fortune 500 company in financial services. Companies including Intel, IBM, American Express, and Dell develop online article content, and interest in this method of promoting business products and services is growing.

If you've written \$50 articles for your local paper, consider sleuthing for these gigs, which use the same skills but pay way better. Often, these companies reach out to writers—we'll go over how to get found online for good gigs in Lesson 4, on writer websites.

(Wondering about the difference between brand journalism and advertorials? [Here's a site](#) that explains the difference.)

## 5. Brochures

Plenty of brick-and-mortar businesses still use brochures to sell products, inform their customers, and more. Brochure writing is a form of copywriting, and it pays really well. For example, Linda once earned a few thousand dollars writing a big brochure for a Boston-based bank. Here's a nice, basic [guide on how to write a brochure](#).

## 6. Case studies

A case study is the story of how a business's product or service helped solve a problem for or improve the life of a customer. Businesses use them as sales tools on their websites, in their newsletters, on their blogs, and more. If you can write an article,

you can write a compelling case study. Here's a really cool overview of the [parts of a case study, plus links to a few case studies.](#)

Inside the [Freelance Writers Den](#), we've got a 4-week bootcamp with Casey Hibbard of [Stories that Sell](#) on how to write case studies, if you need to learn how to write these projects. It's well worth doing so, as you can get \$750 for a one-page case study and \$1,500 for a full length one of three pages or so.

## 7. Community Moderating

You've chatted on forums, right? You may have noticed that many bigger sites have moderators that patrol for flamers and trolls, and post responses to questions. At bigger sites, that's a paying gig!

Carol knows one writer who was actually flown to Denmark and trained to be a community moderator for Lego Universe, if you can believe it. This was a highly lucrative, 20-hour-a-week freelance gig, just responding to players in the game forums. He responded to an ad—check [Indeed.com](#), and you'll see dozens of listings for moderators.

If you want to break into forum moderating, be active on platforms where you think there may be moderating opportunity, and comment intelligently on their forums (without overdoing and being a pest!). This is actually how Jon Morrow became an editor at Copyblogger—his comments caught the attention of owner Brian Clark.

## 8. Content Strategy

If you've been writing blog posts for cheap, consider this: If you're also choosing their topics, writing headlines, selecting photos,

scheduling publication times, adding appropriate internal and external links, using their WordPress dashboard, determining the overall strategy for the blog, maybe even creating special reports or short ebooks for subscribers, and promoting those posts in social media...you're really more than "just a blogger."

You're a content strategist—and if you position yourself that way, you can earn a lot more. Presenting yourself as a one-stop solution for getting the blog content conceptualized, created, and promoted can help you attract better-quality clients. Think \$60 an hour or so, instead of \$20 a post.

In this lesson we have a bonus podcast with Greg Ciotti from HelpScout, on how to position yourself as a content strategist rather than a blogger, to earn much more. (This is a goodie from the [Freelance Writers Den](#).)

We're hearing that many well-funded startups looking to make a marketing push search for a "content strategist," rather than a blogger or freelance writer—so put that phrase into your marketing, and you may attract better-caliber clients at better rates.

## 9. Direct Mail

You'd think with the Internet and email, no one would be sending direct mail anymore. But that's far from the case. Just think about all the sales letters that land in your mailbox every week! Marketers still use them because they still work, and many businesses hire freelance writers to write theirs.

*Target Marketing Magazine* (which Linda used to write for!) offers [14 steps for writing a direct mail letter that works](#).

## 10. Ghostwriting

Ghostwriting is writing for a client under their name. That's right—you get no credit, but you should get paid big bucks. (Please don't accept ghostwriting jobs for peanuts!)

Most people think of ghostwriting in terms of books, but you can also ghostwrite articles, blog posts—really, any form of writing. For example, Linda once got a nice check for ghostwriting a blog post for the head of a PR firm's health marketing division. And Carol has ghosted blog posts for more than one CEO.

One easy, lucrative ghostwriting niche is known as "placed articles." That's where you write an article that goes under a CEO or manager's byline, and also pitch publication to accept it. It's basically an advertorial that you both write and seek to place in publications your client targets. Carol knows writers who get \$1,200 an article for this service!

While projects can be as small as a blog post, there are also book-ghosting deals that go for \$20,000-\$50,000, mostly writing books for big-company CEOs. So you can see that mastering the trick of writing in someone else's voice can really be worth your time! Ghostwriter Kelly James-Enger wrote a lengthy blog post for Writer's Digest on [the ins and outs of ghostwriting books](#). The [Association of Ghostwriters](#) has a blog full of information as well.

## 11. Landing/Sales Pages

You saw one of these when you bought this class—[here, take another look](#).

Sales pages are the backbone of Internet business...and we know top writers in this field who're making up to \$2,000 per single,

long-form landing page. You could easily start at \$500 and move up quickly from there. If you can write persuasive copy that makes customers buy, companies will love you—and pay you handsomely.

The good news is, this isn't a hard skill to master. And if you hate hard-selling, that's OK, because the trend is towards less obnoxious and more just-the-facts approaches in sales page writing.

If you need a training on how to write a sales page, we've got a terrific bootcamp with Amy Harrison of [How to Get Your Sales Page Done](#) in [Freelance Writers Den](#).

Clients for landing pages are pretty easy to find—look online for companies in industries you know, that are trying to sell products or services without a pro-looking sales page, or whose sales pages seem ineffective or outdated. Bad sales pages are everywhere, and this is a vital page of any website—it's an easy pitch to ask if they'd like it rewritten.

## 12. Marketing Emails

If you're on [Carol's](#) or [Linda's](#) blog subscriber lists, then you've seen our marketing emails. It's probably how you found out about Escape the Content Mills! If you're in this class, it's proof that marketing emails work.

Many, many businesses have mailing lists, to which they send marketing emails meant to inform, entertain—and sell. And a lot of these companies hire freelance writers to craft these emails.

Some masters of creating marketing email campaigns whose lists you may want to sign up for—just to see how it's done—include

[Naomi Dunford](#), [Danny Iny](#), and [Ben Settle](#) (whose specialty happens to be email marketing).

Face it—you've read a million of these, and probably already have a good idea of the basics. Why not earn \$150 apiece and up for writing a series of short emails? Start with newsletters you subscribe to—if you notice they're getting quiet and not sending as much email as they used to, reach out and see if they need help.

## 13. Newsletters

A newsletter is a publication on one topic that businesses send on a regular basis to their subscribers, clients, or employees. For example, Linda has her Monday Motivations for Writers newsletters, which she sends to her email list. And she once wrote an internal, print newsletter for the employees of a roofing supplies company to get them on-board during a new project. Carol has written for the employee newsletter of the temp-labor firm TrueBlue, and for Costco's customer newsletter.

Many businesses hire this task out to freelance writers, because they want "fresh eyes" and a reporter's perspective, not corporate-speak. The best part—you can charge copywriting rates for this work (think \$1 a word or \$75-\$100 an hour).

### A Note on Pricing

Wondering what to charge for your writing and how to tell clients your fees?

The trick is to have a target hourly rate you want to earn, but to quote the client a project price. You don't want to tell a prospect your hourly rate if you don't have to, because then they start to micromanage how you spend your time, how fast you write, etc.

So if you think a blog post will take you two hours and your target rate as a newer writer is \$35 per hour, you would charge a flat \$70 for the project.

AWeber, which offers email marketing solutions, has a [blog](#) with tons of information on the art of the newsletter.

## 14. Press Releases

You've read a million of these—and probably have a good sense of what makes a compelling one versus a dull one. And if you haven't, head over to [PRWeb](#) and give yourself a quick primer. Or try this quick [tutorial from CBS](#).

Businesses put out reams of these...and medium- to larger business pay well for them. Yes, ignore any \$50 Craigslist-ad offers for cheapo press-release assignments—you'll need to find your own prospects. Target companies where they've sent press releases, but none are recent. That means they understand the power of releases to get them free press, but their in-house team isn't having time to get these done. Pro rates for these range from \$200-\$500, depending on length and complexity, and whether you're also actively pitching the release to selected media contacts.

If you need to learn press-release best practices for creating a great release that will get your client in the media and get you repeat assignments, we've got a bootcamp in [Freelance Writers Den](#), Get Big \$\$\$ Gigs in PR, where you can learn how to write a great release, as well as how to find these clients and get hired.

## 15. Requests for Proposals

Remember back in that first list, when we were talking about writing for government agencies? Well, when big companies bid on government contracts for big-money jobs, they usually need to create a lengthy proposal about why they are the company the agency should select for this job. The government's bid process is usually called a "request for proposals," or RFP.

If you're a big contractor, you know building, not writing. That's why many types of companies hire a professional writer to make their proposal compelling. After all, millions of dollars in potential business may be on the line if they win the bid! So it's worth spending a few thousand on a writer who'll take their story from dry to dazzling.

Want to learn more about writing RFPs? One big hint: Winning bids are often a public record you can access online, or request from the agency that put out the bid. Read, learn, and swipe their ideas! For more, check out this [set of resources from government sales/marketing firm FedMarket](#).

## 16. Research Reports

Have you ever downloaded a big research report with survey data on a topic, and narrative analysis of what those stats mean? The fact is, someone takes that data, interviews the researchers, and writes up those reports. Some research firms do that in-house, but some hire freelancers.

This is well-paid work—Carol has made \$1500-\$3000 writing "quality of management" investigative research reports, where she interviewed CEOs' former colleagues and reported on how they were regarded.

If you've written articles and done interviews, this is a bit like writing a long feature story—but it pays better. Research firms are your target here. If you have a background in research or data-gathering, it can be a real plus.

## 17. Social Media Management

Do you love hanging out on Facebook? If so, consider getting paid for it. Increasingly, companies are outsourcing social-media promotion to people—particularly, younger people—who understand how to get their name out without being obnoxiously salesy.

Yes, there are lots of super-low priced offers to tweet or write FB posts for clients...but refer back to that "content strategy" section. If you package social media management with blogging, or writing articles or special reports, you can tack on a charge for this. Big agencies are getting major bucks for figuring out campaigns to do in social media, such as contests or fun photo posts that get a lot of shares. Pitch this as an add-on to clients—and pick up an extra \$300-\$800 a month on that blogging contract. (Too many bloggers do social media at no extra charge—cut that out!)

For social media marketing basics, check out this [starter kit of resources](#) from Buffer.

## 18. Sponsored Posts

Sponsored posts are advertorials that have migrated online to big blogs. We've all seen blogs where a post comes with a banner on top that says "sponsored by Kraft," or whomever. That's a sponsored post! They're also known as "native advertising."

If you've been blogging, this can be a way to earn more. Rates range from \$100 or so up to \$1 a word, depending on the situation and complexity of the topic. Look for blogs that are accepting sponsored posts and reach out to companies you've seen sponsoring content. Sometimes the blog is assigning these posts on behalf of the sponsor, and sometimes you'll need to connect directly with that sponsoring brand.

To learn more about best practices in sponsored posts, check out this Copyblogger post: [12 Examples of Native Ads \(And Why They Work\)](#).

## 19. Web Content

Think of all the websites out there...and all the content on those websites. That equals a lot of opportunity for the freelance writer! You can charge regular copywriting rates for webpage writing—\$300 per page is not unusual, depending on the amount of content, and \$100 a page is a rock-bottom minimum, for short copy of 300 words or less.

Great Web content comes from a skill we bet you've got: listening. Ask your client questions about what they do and how they do it, how their products work, who's on their team, and you'll have the materials you need to create compelling Web content for them.

There are a ton of resources out there for learning to write online content, but we love this [tutorial post from Enchanting Marketing](#).

Clients don't usually expect you to know HTML, but this is a great skill for web writers, and very easy to learn. Clients will love you even more if you can get right into their dashboard and update their website yourself. Here's a [very simple HTML tutorial](#).

## 20. White Papers

A white paper is a persuasive report that introduces a problem or challenge and then offers a solution. (You can Google “white papers” and see many examples online, if you aren’t familiar.) Usually, that solution is a product or service your client sells...but the approach isn’t overtly salesy. White papers build authority and present useful information to their target clients.

If you read our section on case studies and found that interesting, well, white papers are a bit like case studies on steroids. They’re bigger projects, and typical rates are \$3,000-\$5,000 per 7-8 page white paper!

[This resource](#) is meant for software businesses, but you can glean some good tips for writing any types of white paper.

If you’d like an in-depth training on how to write these, inside [Freelance Writers Den](#) we have a 4-week bootcamp on it, Learn to Write White Papers With [Steve Slaunwhite](#) (who’s a co-author of *The Wealthy Freelancer*).

And....that's it!

Now, that was a LOT of information. It may be a bit overwhelming at first, but we hope you’re feeling great about how many good-paying types of markets are out there, and all the types of writing you can do that will bring in bigger checks! The homework assignment below will help keep you from getting overwhelmed and give you a way to move forward productively here and start using this market info.

We know what you’re thinking: But how do I *find* these better gigs, and get them to hire little old me?

We'll answer that in Lesson 3, as we lay out all the various marketing tactics you can use to reach out to these better clients. Many writers like writing query letters and LOIs. But we know content mill writers need fast results (and fast checks) to help them break out of the mills—so we're also going to talk about cold calls, visiting prospects, networking, and other marketing techniques that require more cojones but less time.

## HOMEWORK

**Part 1:** Pick one new type of market from our list of 13 lucrative markets, and do some research. Identify at least 10 prospective clients in this new type of market that you'd like to write for. In our next lesson, you'll learn how to reach out to these clients and get hired.

**Part 2:** Pick at least three new types of writing to explore from our list of 20 types, either with the resource links we've offered, or through your own Internet research. These are all options you can think about pitching to the prospective clients you found in Part 1 above, based on your skills, your interests, and what you think the prospect needs.

### Feeling Overwhelmed?

We know—between your niches from Lesson 1, the markets, and the types of writing, you have a TON of options. Where should you start?

You ideally want to start with one or two niches and types of writing just to try them out. Not every one is going to work out for you—maybe you won't find a lot of gigs in that area, or you simply

won't like it.

Keep in mind that if you select a niche or type of writing and it doesn't work out, it's not permanent! You can switch anytime you like.

There's no rule about which to pick first. We recommend just starting with the niche/writing types you feel most passionate about right now...and that you feel have a lot of market opportunity. For example, if you love both crocheting and marketing, you probably know there will be more lucrative opportunities in marketing—so start with that.