

Building a lucrative relationship with your freelance writer

So you're thinking about hiring a freelancer. Whether you've worked with one before or you're a freelancer newbie, starting a new business relationship can be nerve wracking.

Don't sweat it. They're normal people, just like you. They want to do great work for you so you'll love them. They want to build relationships with their clients.

The best way they can do that is provide exactly what you want—great writing.

You can do many things to make this relationship productive. The more you do, the greater the return on your investment in the writer's work. In other words, help them and they'll help you.

1. Provide project details

First off, your freelancer will schedule a meeting with you called “the brief.” You will communicate your vision of the project during this meeting. Think of it as one big learning session for the writer. They'll ask all the questions they need answered to create the best content for your business.

The secret? Supply as much detail as possible.

2. Establish voice and tone

Your freelancer needs to understand how you want your company to sound to readers, referred to as the voice and tone of your written materials.

This is one of the most important things you can convey to the writer.

If they don't understand what you want, they may miss the mark completely in their writing.

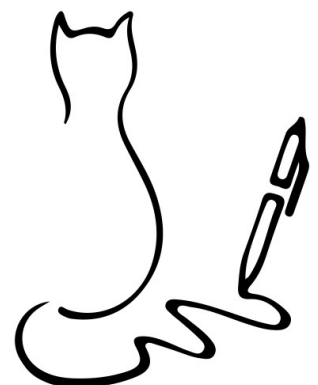
A good freelance writer will help you find the voice and tone of your business if you don't have them nailed down already. They'll want to read your existing marketing materials to understand your business and get a feel for who your client is.

They'll also want to get to know you because your personality influences the voice and tone of your business. Are you more casual, traditional or peppy? Do you have a great sense of humor? Those things can be incorporated into the voice and tone—lending a distinct personality to your brand.

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3. Answer the writer's questions in a timely manner

Now that the writer has completed the brief, they'll start writing your content. Questions will inevitably pop up during this phase. You may receive a call or email requesting more information or just asking a quick question.

The faster you can get the question answered or supply the information requested, the sooner you'll get that content up and working for your business. When you put off the writer, your content could be pushed back.

No one wants that.

Get your writer what they need as quickly as you reasonably can.

4. Tell them what you like, and what you don't

Freelance writers are creative people. They want their clients to love what they create for them. Feedback tells them if they're on the right track or not.

When you get the first draft back, read it through and tell the writer what you like and what you don't like. This feedback is vital in the early stages of a writer/client relationship.

Writers aren't mind readers and may sometimes miss the mark here and there. They're counting on you to help them nail it by giving great feedback.

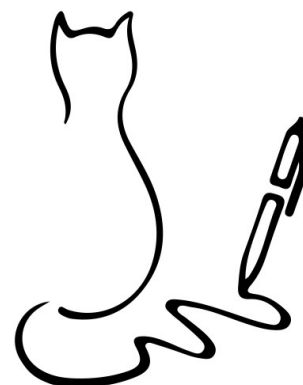
Don't be afraid to give honest feedback. Describe what you don't like and why. Answer any additional questions the writer has. Most professional writers are used to this back and forth, so don't worry about hurting their feelings. If you keep it professional, the writer will as well.



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5. Let the writer make the edits

As you make notes about changes to the first and any consecutive drafts, let the writer make the edits. You may think something is incorrect grammatically, but, as the grammar expert, the writer may have written it correctly the first time.

If a sentence doesn't make sense, let the writer fix it. All you need to do is note the sentence doesn't make sense to you. A writer's skills include editing to make the copy more readable.

The writer may even get the tone wrong in parts of the draft. Point out any areas you feel this has happened and allow the writer to change it.

Open communication is key during the editing process.

Everyone is working toward the same goal during editing—producing the best copy to represent your business.

Copy that makes your brand memorable.

Copy that sells.

6. Solidify the relationship

You want your relationship with your new freelance writer to be solid and fruitful. They're running a business just like you, so I offer three more bits of advice to keep your freelancer and yourself happy.

Find out what their business hours are and work within those hours. You don't like to be bothered after hours or on weekends, so don't do it to them.

When you get the bill, pay on time. Freelance writers are professionals and deserve to be treated as such.

If you love the work they've done for you, refer them to others. The highest compliment you could give your writer is to give them more work. They'll remember it and appreciate it more than you know.

Build for the future

I hope this helps you build a good relationship with your freelance writer. The investment you make in them and their talents can bring growth your business will benefit from for years. Their value to you will only increase as your relationship strengthens.

-Renaë Kranz

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