

Choosing a Winning Freelance Writer

Today, I will give you one secret to help you hire freelance writers. A good writer can boost your results and crank up your business. To find a good writer, you could consider lots of people and sort for several dozen skills and attributes. But, I can tell you this... most of that effort would be wasted. And the truth is, if you want a winning writer, you can focus on just one key personal attribute. It's even more important than writing skills.

Today, I will tell you what I think the #1 personal attribute businesses should look for. If a writer has this one quality, it is a total game changer. If they don't ... well, your odds of getting winning writing out of them is only slightly higher than winning the New York State Lotto (currently 1 in 46, across all their games). If you're comfy with those odds, then disregard this article and enjoy the game. But, if you'd like slightly higher odds... if you'd like to pick a writer that will actually save you time, give you big peace of mind, and help you boost business, then read on...

Let me tell you a story to highlight this one quality. See if you can pick it out. One day some months ago, the phone rang. It was Mike. Mike was the marketing director for a local client company. "One of my team is putting together a presentation to promote our product. He will present this to several major local area businesses. The objective is to partner with them and increase our community presence. We need this presentation to be perfect and persuasive. Jim, can you help? We know exactly what we want to say and know what the key messages are. We just need someone to help wordsmith it. What do you say?" Let me pause the story right here so we can dissect what is happening. Mike is looking for a writer. He has the messaging. He knows the medium. He knows his audience.

On the surface, Mike is looking for what I call an "order taker". "Here's the job, here's the fee. Just sit down and do as you're told." I hear that from a lot of marketers. And many of them truly want that kind of writer. I suppose Mike thought he wanted that kind of writer, but he came to the wrong place... Because, I'm not an order taker. Back to my story... "Humm. Sounds pretty interesting, Mike. I'm really not sure if I can help you. Mind if I ask you a few questions about it so I can really understand what you need?" Mike and I spent the next 45 minutes running down several dead-end trails. We looked at their overall purpose for pushing further into the that particular marketing channel. We discussed the target audience and what they really want in a hardware solution... we touched on past

mistakes and victories... and, of course, we talked about all the communication efforts that would happen before and after the presentation. “Jim, I’ve got to run - but you bring up a lot of great points. It seems like we need to dig a little deeper on this before we produce these slides.” “Yes - I think the same. You’ve got a great start, but if you really want this perfect and persuasive, there’s a bit more prep work to be done. Plus, we both know the sale isn’t made during the presentation. It’s all the stuff before and after that makes the difference. Here’s what I think we should do next.

Why don’t I do a bit of research? You can have your team do the same. Then I’ll fire off a proposal. We can compare notes and make a plan to really nail this. Sound good?” We booked another call. I did the research and sent over a comprehensive proposal - which they accepted. In the end, the presentation (and all the other stuff we did together) was a smashing success. Here’s a secret for you... At the time of the call, I knew relatively little about Mike’s company offerings.

So, how did I help them create an extremely profitable and successful campaign? The answer lies in a single word, **Resourcefulness**. I knew that’s what Mike really wanted was a winning campaign - not an order taking that pumped out some nice sounding slide content. They want magical campaigns that break the records, burst profit ceilings, and keep payments pouring in. Writers that are order takers can’t see this. They see the project. They see the assignment. They see the fee. It’s like having blinders on. It limits creativity. It isolates you from digging deeper - deep enough to really understand the market, the readers, the buyers. In almost every case, order takers lack an essential skill. I call it “**resourcefulness**”.

It is the ability - the confidence really - to look outside the box, face down any challenge, dream up a solution, apply some commonsense and make it work. Resourceful writers are not afraid of using proven solutions to make things more effective...or to dream up new, innovative solutions to tackle unique challenges. So, how do you know if a writer has this wonderful quality of being resourceful?

The #1 tell is passionate curiosity. If you propose a project to a writer and they ask you a few detail-oriented questions about the project, and not much else, then you likely have an order taker on your hands. You’ll get the project done (usually), but it’s probable that you won’t be overly thrilled with the results. On the other hand, if you get a barrage of questions, each digging deeper and wider into your business, your offerings, your purposes, your history, and your challenges, then it's likely that you have a resourceful writer on your hands.

Resourceful writers are rare and worth finding and keeping.

About H. James Hulton III:

I'm a freelance writer, semanticist, word smith, entrepreneur. Need a resourceful, dedicated, hard-working writer? Might be a good idea for us to talk. www.thewritestuffjh.com. If you want to hire a winning writer, don't just focus on writing skills. Focus on this one personal attribute... because it is more important than skill. What is that one attribute? **Resourcefulness**. The ability to think outside the box and apply a bit of commonsense, organization, and grit to a writing project. So, more than writing skills, you should look for *resourcefulness*.