

If you work with freelancers and have ever asked them, "What's your hourly rate?" you might want to rethink this approach.



Custom graphic by Trevor Beach at [Wet Floor Studios](#)

Should You Pay Freelancers an Hourly Rate?

Orlando, August 21, 2020

Hi friend!

Since *Beach Bits* focuses on writing, marketing—and working with the freelancers who do it—I wanted to discuss the elephant in the room. Yep, I'm talking about the "F" word: Fee.



What (and *how*) should you pay a freelance writer?

Whether you're a content marketing agency, Fortune 500 company, or small business, you might occasionally outsource some writing projects to a freelance writer. Ideally, you don't wait until the last minute, desperately trying to find someone who's a good fit. Instead, you spend time [finding the right freelancer](#), before you need one.

Once you find someone who might be a good fit, you'll probably hop on the phone to discuss your project. During the discovery call between a freelancer and a potential client, one question invariably pops up: "What's your hourly rate?"

But you might want to reconsider this approach. Think about it—what's the incentive for a freelancer to finish the job quickly? The longer the job takes, the more the freelancer makes.

What Do Freelancers Charge?

A freelance writer might charge by the word, the hour, or the project.

- **By the word:** Charging by the word is more common in editorial writing for magazines, with pro rates starting at \$1/word. Yep, one dollar *per word*. I even got paid \$2/word when I published a piece in *Good Housekeeping*. Of course, smaller publications, especially consumer pubs, often work with a limited budget and can't match the fees that a national glossy can pay. But many small, B2B publications pay these pro rates. And sometimes this per word fee can cross over into content marketing or copywriting, when writers create eBooks, white papers, and case studies.
- **By the hour:** Some freelancers *do* charge by the hour, and some clients (like agencies) even insist on hourly rates. But not having a project cap often scares clients. What if the project hits a snag and requires twice as much work? What if the freelancer is simply a slow writer? That hourly fee just keeps upping the final project cost. Cha-ching! While this can work to the advantage of freelance writers, it can spell disaster for clients working on a tight budget. Not only can this "unknown" be nerve-wracking, but it can also derail a project if it goes way over budget.
- **By the project:** Most clients prefer to know their costs upfront. That's why many professional freelance writers charge per project, and that's exactly what I do. This allows me to focus on creating effective content instead of tracking hours. Once I gather project details from a prospect (either via email, creative brief, and/or phone call), then I provide a quick quote (if it's a timely request) or create a project proposal outlining deliverables, deadline, expectations, and fee.

How Much Should You Pay Freelancers?

No matter how you pay freelancers (word, hour, or project), payment varies depending on project details and writer experience. (I'll talk in more detail about project variables in a future newsletter.) But fees might also vary from freelancer to freelancer, even for the same project. Why? Because some writers might be less experienced, commanding a lower fee than those with decades of experience.

The general rule of thumb? The more experience a writer has, the higher the fee she commands. Shocker, right?

Of course, this makes total sense. Think of the years of formal education, in-the-trenches experience, trial and error lessons, client collaborations, and continued training a writer

experience, duration of lessons, client collaborations, and continued training a writer puts in to keep her skills sharp. For me, that equates to more than 30 years of hands-on experience as a writer. So, I command a higher fee than someone fresh out of college. This doesn't diminish a newbie, but it does explain how fees are commensurate with experience—just like every other industry. (For a quick look at what you can expect to pay freelancers, check out the Clearvoice survey mentioned in the resource section below.)

If you want to develop a long-lasting, mutually beneficial relationship with your freelancers, value them. While this certainly goes beyond fees, paying your freelancers what they're worth sets the baseline. Value also factors in respect, collaboration, open-mindedness, inclusion, and, above all, kindness.

Thanks for reading,



Lisa A. Beach
Orlando Freelance Writer

P.S. Like this newsletter? Forward it to a friend with an invitation to [subscribe](#). Seriously. What are you waiting for? Share it now. 😊

Resources Worth Sharing

- **Race-Related Words Matter.** According to the *AP Stylebook*, "Reporting and writing about issues involving race calls for thoughtful consideration, precise language, and an openness to discussions with others of diverse backgrounds about how to frame coverage or what language is most appropriate, accurate and fair." If you're struggling to provide an inclusive, fair tone when writing about race, check out the *AP Stylebook*, which was recently updated this summer.
- **Clearvoice Freelance Fees Survey.** Check out the [2018 survey results](#) from Clearvoice to get a real-world view of what to pay freelancers. The results define "experience levels" as beginner (0-3 years), intermediate (3-7 years), professional (7-15 years), and expert (15+ years). The results provides a great benchmark for whether or not you're paying freelancers what they're worth. For example, if you're paying a writer with 18 years' experience only \$30 an hour, you're essentially paying beginner rates.
- **Content Marketing Toolkit.** Bookmark this resource-packed article from Content Marketing Institute called [The Best Checklists, Tips, and Templates for Content Marketing](#). It's filled with practical tools for critical content marketing tasks to help you build a solid foundation.



I'm honored to say that, for the third year in a row, I've won a Charlie Award from the Florida Magazine Association (FMA) for "Best Writing: Department" in the Association/Trade category. (I regularly write the marketing and technology departments for *Florida Realtor* magazine.) Recognizing achievements by Florida magazines since 1957, FMA's annual Charlie Awards competition crowns publishers, writers, editors, artists, photographers, printers, marketers and others as the best among their peers in scores of categories. A separate shout-out to *Wyndham Destinations* magazine (another client of mine) for also snagging a Charlie Award this year!

Fresh Ink

If you'd like to see what I've been writing about and where I've been published these past few months, check out a few recent links, including B2B and B2C magazine articles, website content, and newsletter articles:

- **Club Wyndham:** [How To Avoid Looking Like A Tourist: Itinerary: 3 Days in Newport, Rhode Island](#)
- **Optimum Wellness:** [Happy Handwashing](#)
- **Conde Nast Traveler:** [How Walt Disney World Is Caring for Its 10,000 Animals While Parks Are Closed](#)
- **Florida Realtor:** [6 Ways to Pivot, Adapt & Thrive in the Pandemic Real Estate Market](#)
- **Taste of Home:** [Inside Out: Carrots](#)
- **National Environmental Education Foundation:** [Where Does Your Water Come From—And How Can You Keep It Clean?](#)
- **Orlando Magazine:** [In Focus: Summertime Teachable Moments](#)
- **Resources for Educators:** [Nutrition Nuggets 5/20](#)
- **Nature Made:** [About page: General Wellness, Women's Health](#)

Tip: [Grow \(or start\) an email newsletter](#)

Tip. Grow (or start) an email newsletter.

While your digital footprint likely includes a trail of content on various social media channels, don't overlook the importance of developing your own email newsletter. Why? Because you retain total control of this channel and you're not at the mercy of ever-changing platform rules and algorithms.

Case in point: If you put a lot of effort into Google Plus, you had zero control when, in 2018, Google pulled the plug on its failing platform.

In particular, when budgets might be stretched thin during this pandemic, it might be a great time to double down on building your email subscribers.

Thanks for reading! Be well, stay safe—and, please, wear a mask.



Illustration courtesy of [Wet Floor Studios](#)

About Me

Looking for a seasoned B2B & B2C freelance writer? [Work with me!](#)

Travel | Food | Lifestyle | Wellness

Need to see some samples? Dive into my [portfolio](#).

Know someone who could benefit from my services? I love referrals!

www.LisaBeachWrites.com

This email was sent to <<Email Address>>
[why did I get this?](#) [unsubscribe from this list](#) [update subscription preferences](#)
Lisa Beach Writes · PO Box 195414 · 1065 State Route 434 · Winter Springs, FL 32719-5414 · USA

