

## ***Launching a Communications Business***

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### ***Rationales (why do it)***

- Interest vs. opportunity in regular job
- No one is safe — fired/laid off/RIFfed
- Personality issues
- Burnout
- Personal style

### ***Limits (why not to do it)***

- Self-discipline
- Able to work alone
- Work more
- Several bosses
- Won't make (more) money right away
- Not easy
- Selling yourself/pricing services
- Competition
- Some office politics
- Keep your own records
- Rip-offs

### ***Danger zones***

- Financial cushion
- Health insurance
- Manage your time
- Tell your family and friends
- Say “no”
- Protect your rights
- Don't accept projects if ...

### ***Rewards***

- Freedom
- Flexibility
- Non-corporate lifestyle
- More time for partner or family
- Never get bored
- No limits on income

## ***Genres/Niches/Specialties/Services to offer***

- Writing
- All levels of editing
- Proofreading
- Indexing
- Graphic design/Illustration
- Desktop publishing
- Website design/management/writing
- Photography
- Copywriting
- Marketing/PR
- Abstracting
- Research
- Speaking/Training

## ***Preparation***

- Start now!
- Network
- Build skills
- Save money
- Get equipment and systems

## ***Setting up***

- Generalist or specialist
- Alone or not, home or not
- Look/sound/act professional
- Promote yourself
- Research rates
- Tools — Microsoft Word, Acrobat (PDFs), InCopy
- Website with e-mail address (domain-based)

## ***Starting out***

- Moonlight
- Convert employer
- Write for free/volunteer
- Keep up and expand

## ***Finding work***

- Former employers, colleagues; friends, family
- Professional groups
- Hobby groups
- Volunteering
- Market, market, market
- Convert want ads
- Send out queries
- eLance, Reedsy, fiverr, upwork, etc. (*not!*)
- Social media: LinkedIn, Facebook groups, Instagram, etc.

### **Query letters**

- Plain-text résumé on hand
- Writing:
  - Read publication
  - See website for guidelines
  - Descriptive and detailed but keep sources to self
- Editing/Proofreading:
  - Identify publishers
  - Focus on skills and training

### **Responding to listings**

- Only respond if qualified
- Follow listing language — parrot back
- Give it time
- Plain-text résumé on hand
- Accept tests

### **Work samples**

- Writing — published articles or links to them, Word versions of original mss.
- Editing/Proofreading — excerpts from client work *only with client permission and if client not identifiable*; marked-up text from newspapers, magazines, websites, menus, etc.

### **Promotions**

- Website — showcase! (get domain even if not ready for a site)
- Social media
- Blog
- Advertising
- Presentations/Speeches
- Letters to the editor
- Barter

### **Markets**

- Publications, medical practices, health systems, etc.
- Membership association outlets
- Local/neighborhood weeklies
- City magazines
- Business journals
- Specialty pubs — women's, parenting, health; ethnic press
- Book publishers
- Colleges and universities
- Hobby groups
- Alumni associations

- **Getting paid**

- Contracts/Letters of agreement
- Invoices
- Follow up
- Be prepared
- “Lawyer letter”

- **Resources**

- Professional organizations – be visible, not just “checkbook member”  
*Networking/referrals, job lists, discussion lists (be careful in early messages!)*

ACES

ASI

ASJA

**AMWA**

ASTW

AWC

EFA

IABC

NASW

NWU

PRSA

**STC**

SPJ

- Chamber of Commerce
- Lead/tip groups
- [http://groups.yahoo.com/group/wellfed\\_writers/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/wellfed_writers/)
- <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/freelancing4newspapers>
- *Writer’s Digest, Poets & Writers*
- *Writer’s Market, Literary Marketplace*
- Bookstores and newsstands
- “Get Paid to Write! Getting Started as a Freelance Writer,”  
*by Ruth E. Thaler-Carter — \$10 for attendees, \$20 others;*  
*By check or money order to:*  
Ruth E. Thaler-Carter/FL Booklet  
10 N. Kingshighway Blvd., #3C, St. Louis, MO 63108  
*By PayPal to:*  
Ruth@writerruth.com
- “Freelancing 101: Launching Your Editorial Business,”  
*by Ruth E. Thaler-Carter and Robin Martin, and “Résumés for Freelancers,” by Sheila Buff and Ruth E. Thaler-Carter,*  
and other EFA booklets: <http://the-efa.org/res/booklets.php>