

## *How I Got My First Paid Publication as a Freelance Writer*

*By Susan Lewis*

The first time I was published, I was so excited and happy that someone was actually willing to pay me for my work. I had been trying to get paid for my writing without any luck. I knew it could happen but I didn't know how to correctly go about it. It seemed like everyone else was making great money and I had no clue what I was doing wrong. I had read every article I could read on the subject, but it was all a jumbled mess of ideas, opinions, and successful actions of others that I couldn't make sense of for me.

I had done the training program at [Writing Launch](#) and I felt that finally someone was telling me exactly what I needed to do and how to do it. I felt a renewed sense of hope and confidence and began the process of correctly pitching my work.

I work two jobs and maintain two blogs, so my time is extremely limited. I don't have the time during the day to write or do anything other than what my employer needs. My work day is usually 10-12 hours, 6 days a week, so not only do I not have the time to look for work and write, I don't have the energy by the

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time my day is over. I knew if I wanted to have my dream career of not just writing, but supporting myself, I had to find a way to make it work without losing my current income.

I use the emails Jacob sends from "Freedom With Writing" as my starting point. This makes it much easier to look for pitches and in almost every email, I can find places where I want to find out more. Once I find something, I begin reading their site to get a good feel and understanding of what they publish. I have created a long list of potential work, so I also work that list every month.

Once I figured out who I wanted to pitch, I wrote an email that was short and to the point. For me, it has to be something that I liked writing about. I had done the content mills, which did teach me how to hit a deadline, but I knew that was not the way I wanted to go. Too much stress for too little pay on subjects I didn't give a damn about.

I had articles I had written which had either been rejected or I never got a response, so I went back to them, did some editing, and looked for publications that I thought would be interested. I would then pitch them. I knew the more I sent out, the better my chances of getting a paid job.

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I read the submission guidelines on one particular one and as soon as I did, I knew exactly what they were looking for. It not only interested me, but I had one article that had been rejected a few times. A large part of being paid to write is not letting the rejections bother you. If you're lucky, they will give you feedback. I rarely got anything other than "Thanks, no thanks." Usually my pitch went unanswered.

The first thing I learned was to follow their submission guidelines to the letter. Do EXACTLY what they tell you do to. Some will ask for a pitch and others will ask for samples and/or a link to your portfolio. Don't try to be clever and always be professional. Thank them for their consideration and go onto the next pitch.

I send out at least one pitch a night because it takes time to put together what they are asking for, compile your pitch and double-check that you've included what they have asked for.

The first one that agreed to publish me and pay me simply asked for an email with the article copied and pasted into the email. I couldn't believe it was that easy!

Here is the pitch that got me published and it was very easy and simple to do:

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*“I write stories and blog about my work in the past with women, along with current jobs and life. I've been writing for years and like to submit stories that I loved to have written. I hope you enjoy this one and thank you for your consideration.”*

I copied and pasted my story into the body of the email, exactly as they requested. I received a response immediately:

*“Hi,*

*Thanks for submitting. Please review the attached editorial calendar, with monthly themes and deadlines listed, and let me know where to place your essay for consideration.*

*Best,*

*Leslie*

I emailed her back with the information she requested, gave her my short bio and head shot and that was it. I was published in their next issue and paid.

Having now been published, I used that for all my following pitches. I put the link to it on my portfolio and all my social media accounts. A big part of earning money as a writer - or any other profession - is promoting yourself and your work. Once I was

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published, I gained a confidence and a sense of accomplishment that has kept me going.

It is important to keep pitching and going after where you want to be published. From that article, someone who read it sent me an email to tell me how much they loved my story. That was almost as good as getting paid. They expressed an interest in an article for them, which I sent the following week. I was paid for that within a week, so being published the first time caused someone to pitch *me!*

There is a lot of information and advice on getting published. Of course, nothing replaces good work, but you have to do the right actions to get the work. [Writing Launch](#) broke it all down for me into easy steps and the correct sequence.

The key is to get their attention with your pitch immediately. They don't have a lot of time and they are probably getting hundreds of pitches a day, so if you follow the steps of the training and submit exactly what they are looking for, you'll have a much better shot at getting your piece accepted and paid for.

It has become easier and more productive for me since I first started. I keep my pitches short and to the point. I follow-up only if it is in their guidelines to nudge. If not, I go onto the next one.

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Some publications will get back to you and others will not. The key is to have a lot going out and doing the steps daily.

I simply follow what I learned in the training. I don't have to reinvent the wheel. I just have to do the steps consistently and not complicate it. It's a simple process that needs to be done.

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**Susan Lewis** is a freelance writer of fiction and non-fiction short stories. She also writes effective content for business and non-profits. She maintains several blogs and is an advocate for human rights and for those who have been silenced and works to be their voice. You can find her on LinkedIn [here](#). She is a graduate of [The No B.S. Course on Freelance Writing](#).