



10
Surprising
Places to
Find
Freelance
Writing
Clients

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Introduction

Contrary to popular belief, freelancing isn't easy.

In fact, it's anything but.

In reality, freelancing is a never-ending cycle of finding work, dealing with clients, meeting deadlines, and... finding more work.

The truth is freelancers never stop looking for work. They can't afford to. If you've been freelancing for more than five minutes, you've probably realized that by now.

Don't get me wrong. Finding work isn't a problem. It's extremely easy. There are plenty of content mills paying \$1 - \$20 per 500-word article.

But those rates don't put food on your table or pay the bills. They don't earn you respect, or get you raving client testimonials, and they definitely don't make a success of your freelance writing business.

The problem is finding better paying work.

Job boards and bidding sites aren't any better either. It's very rare to find a writing job that pays well and let's not even go into the competition you find there. It's like a contest to see who'll bid the lowest. And let's face it. You can't afford to write articles for \$2 and still earn enough to pay your bills. I certainly couldn't!

If you started freelancing by looking for work on job boards, bidding sites and content mills, you might still be stuck in them and struggling to find work that pays well.

Is this how you imagined your life when you became a freelance writer?

Been There, Done That – The Origin Story

When I started freelancing in 2008, I had no idea where to look for work. So like every self-respecting freelancer, I Googled it...and found my way to Craigslist, job boards, bidding sites and content mills.

For a long time, I thought these were the only venues available. I spent hours applying to jobs on Craigslist and more hours still on every job board and bidding site I could find.

Finally, I signed up for a content mill and thought I'd hit the jackpot.

\$10 an article instead of \$5? Wow, amazing!

Not.

It took me 2 years of hard knocks, plenty of mistakes, perseverance, and some excellent advice before I climbed my way out of the low paying rut and found clients who paid well. Really well. (Like \$300 per blog post well.)

Over the years, I've tried and tested plenty of ways to find clients. I printed and distributed business cards, tucked them in books and "accidentally" left them in coffee shops.

I presented an image of a well-to-do freelancer when I was flat broke and raved about how freelancing let me take the afternoon off when in reality, it was because I didn't have any work.

I wrote free samples and did pro bono work.

In short, I've hustled like a pro.

In all that hustling, I discovered many places to find freelance clients. Some more effective than the others and some bombed spectacularly.

This report lists 10 of the most effective places I've discovered to find clients.

This Report Is For You If...

You're sick and tired of trolling job boards.

You're desperate to break free from the low-paying writing gigs.

You want to earn more without having to depend on job boards or content mills.

It's for the freelancer who knows she's a good writer but doesn't know where to find clients who'll pay well for her skills.

If that's you, welcome aboard!

You're about to discover 10 places to find freelance writing clients. Places that not many freelancers think about or use often enough.

I really hope you'll make the most of this report. Check out the places included here and act on the tips given on how to contact clients through them.

Just one well-paying client can tip the scale from worrying about making rent to knowing you have a little left over to buy stuff for your kids.

Before you know it, writing for low pay will be a thing of the past.

Ready? Here we go!

1. Foursquare:

One of my favorite ways of finding businesses to pitch my writing services to is [Foursquare](#). All I have to do is fire it up, go to their Explore tab and see which businesses pop up in the area.

Use the web version if you don't have a smartphone or tablet.

Make note of businesses that catch your eye. Research them, find their contact details and send them an introductory email. Let them know what you do, how you can help them and offer to meet up with them.

Since the business is close to your area, you don't even have to rely on email. You can just visit them and talk to the person in charge.

Who knows? Your next client could be down the street—quite literally!

Don't limit your search to your neighborhood, though. Every time you find yourself in a new place, run a Foursquare check and see which businesses are listed.

Tip: Pay extra attention to businesses that have Foursquare specials running. If they have a special discount for customers who check in etc., then it's very likely that they're social media savvy and would recognize the need and benefit of hiring a freelance writer.

2. LinkedIn

A lot of freelancers ignore LinkedIn because they think it's more effective for people looking for full-time jobs.

Put bluntly—that's a misconception, and it may be costing you some very lucrative writing gigs.

Freelance writers and bloggers can just as easily take advantage of LinkedIn as anyone else.

We all know about LinkedIn's excellent job network. Unfortunately, there aren't many jobs posted for freelance writers there. But that doesn't mean that people don't look for or hire freelancers through LinkedIn!

This might sound like the same old advice, but it bears repeating because it works.

So please take the time to fill out your LinkedIn profile. Use descriptive keywords and add skills relevant to your freelance writing business. Add everyone you know. In case of an acquaintance or a stranger, take the time to personalize the "Invitation to Connect" message.

Lastly, share content that you think your prospective clients will find helpful. Aim to become their go-to source when they need information about anything related to your niche.

Once you've done that, keep an eye on the following things to spot clients.

Profile Views: A lot of time, people go through a LinkedIn profile because they were searching for specific keywords or people in a specific industry. So if it states clearly on your profile that you're a freelance writer or blogger, chances are, that they landed on your profile because they were searching for one.

You can find the names of people who've viewed your profile on the right sidebar of your LinkedIn homepage, towards the bottom.

Make it a point to keep an eye on who's visited your profile. Return the favor and go through theirs. See what they do, note anything interesting that stands out and then send them a private message asking if they were looking for a freelance writer and ask how you can help them.

You can either send a message through InMail (LinkedIn's private message service for users not connected to each other) or ask for an introduction if you have any connections in common.

Another way to get in touch with prospective clients (if you don't have a premium LinkedIn account and don't want to upgrade to one either) is to send them a friend request. Simply personalize the friend request message with your own.

If you're thinking this requires vigilance, don't worry. LinkedIn sends weekly updates about people who've visited your profile so you don't have to keep logging in to check manually.

Jobs posted inside LinkedIn groups: While networking on LinkedIn and LinkedIn groups does work, it's a long-term strategy that doesn't help when you need a new client now.

Instead, focus on the hidden gem of LinkedIn groups—the jobs listed *inside* the group.

Posting an ad on LinkedIn costs money, but posting a job discussion within a group is free so a lot of small businesses choose to advertise for freelance writers through it.

Find groups that fall in your area of expertise. If you write about small businesses, find an active group for the topic and join.

If you don't have the time to frequent LinkedIn groups, then sign up for email updates. It will send up updates of any jobs posted within the group too.

Folks who add you on LinkedIn: Not everyone who adds you on LinkedIn will know you or vice versa. In fact, one of the most common complaints about LinkedIn users is that unknown people add them on LinkedIn and don't even bother with an introduction.

And yes, I can understand why it would be irritating for the big guns. But for us freelancers who're always looking for work, it's an opportunity.

Instead of declining requests from people you don't know, accept them and send them a message saying hello and ask if they were looking for a freelance writer.

Even if they're not, they won't remain a stranger to you. You'll have made a new connection and created a warm lead. Just because they don't need a freelancer now, doesn't mean they won't in the future. They might even know someone who's looking for one and refer you to them.

With LinkedIn, you never know when a connection will turn into a client!

3. Twitter

I joined Twitter with the simple goal of finding and networking with other freelancers. I wanted to create a virtual water cooler for myself. A place where I could relax, talk to people, voice my opinion and share interesting content I came across.

Imagine my surprise when I started getting work offers through Twitter!

It took me a while to realize that it was a mix of answering questions, sharing great content and helping other people on Twitter that was putting me in front of prospective clients.

While the first few work queries were coincidental, the others were a result of setting up Twitter searches for specific keywords and keeping a close eye on companies or businesses that followed me. If it was a content marketing company, a big blog or business, I'd shoot them a DM saying hello and ask if they worked with freelancers or needed writers.

Confused about how to introduce yourself in 140 characters, and pitch your services at the same time? Try this DM that I typically send out to my followers:

“Hi, thanks for following! I'm a freelance writer and blogger. Let me know if I can help in any way. [Link]”

You can either set it as an Auto DM or pick and choose which followers to send this to if you routinely check who your new followers are. Personally, I would recommend that you keep a close eye on your followers and DM them messages tailored specifically for them. You'll receive a much better response this way.

For Twitter searches, set up a search for keywords like "freelance writer", "blogger", "write for us", "guest post" etc. Check these search streams routinely and contact the ones that look promising. There are plenty of people looking for freelancers on Twitter, it's just a matter of finding them.

Tip: Set up a Twitter search stream for your keyword with a question mark. This way, anyone asking questions about your keyword will show up in your search stream, and you can swoop in and save the day.

For example, set up a search for “freelance writer?” or “freelance blogger?” and any tweet with those keywords and a question mark will show up in your search stream.

Learned this one from Melissa Culbertson of MomComm.com in this excellent post titled “[Three Streams You Should Add to HootSuite.](#)”

4. Facebook Groups

The last couple of years has seen a rise in private Facebook groups. Big or small, they provide an excellent networking opportunity and access to prospective clients you wouldn't otherwise discover.

Find Facebook groups where your target audience hangs out. My personal favorites are [The Careful Cents Club](#) run by Carrie Smith and [Creative Super Heroes](#) by Allison Marshall. These groups are fun, supportive and provide excellent leads. Not to mention, they're a productive way to procrastinate because now I'm not wasting time on Facebook – I'm marketing my business. Ha!

You can use the search bar to find groups related to your prospective clients. But if that sounds like too much work, here are a few excellent posts that list some of the best Facebook groups.

- [**9+ SMART FACEBOOK GROUPS FOR WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS, FREELANCERS, + BLOGGERS**](#)
- [**9 FACEBOOK GROUPS FOR ENTREPRENEURS AND BLOGGERS \(PLUS A NEW TNC GROUP!\)**](#)
- [**16 FACEBOOK GROUPS FOR CREATIVE FREELANCERS, BLOGGERS & ENTREPRENEURS**](#)

- [THE ULTIMATE PRONTO LIST OF FACEBOOK AND PINTEREST GROUPS](#)
- [TOP 10 FACEBOOK GROUPS FOR WOMEN IN BUSINESS ONLINE](#)

Use them to market your business and grow traffic to your website and blog at the same time.

Just remember, network the right way: help first, then market.

5. Non-profit organizations

Writing for non-profit organizations is a great way to build your portfolio when you're just starting out. Not only do you get quality clips and samples, but your value as a freelancer and that of your work increases too.

The fastest ways to work with an established charity or foundation is to offer to work for free.

But you know what's interesting? Non-profit organizations routinely hire freelance writers.

So instead of offering free work, contact them and ask if they need a freelance writer. Tell them the different kinds of writing you do, and pitch your services. Give them a special discount to make your offer attractive.

Before you pitch a non-profit organization, do your research. Make sure they're registered and have a solid reputation. GuideStar.org has an excellent database of non-profit organizations with detailed information on them.

6. Personal Network

One of the biggest sources of clients is a freelancer's personal network. Sadly, it's also the most undervalued.

Personal network includes your family, friends, their friends; even people you went to school or summer camp with but have lost touch with, your entire list of Facebook friends, etc.

I know only family and friends count as personal network, but as a freelance writer trying to find better-paying work, you can't afford to be choosy!

At least I couldn't when I started out.

Include anyone you were once friendly with or have communicated with more than a few times—be it in person or online.

Send an email to the ones closest to you. They already know you're freelancing. But do they know what it is you actually do? Give them details of your work. Show them samples too. Then ask them to introduce you to anyone in their social circle who might be looking for a freelance writer.

For everyone else, just mention you're a freelance writer in your conversations with them. Let your social media statuses reflect that you're a freelancer for hire.

Lorna Doone Brewer realized the importance of her personal network when she was setting up her freelance agency. She was telling a friend about her freelance business when he told her his firm had moved to a new location. He asked her to send over a brochure of what she did as they needed some introductory material written.

Brewer couldn't believe it. Her business had barely been set up, and it already had a successful, professional organization interested in her work—from a source she hadn't even considered!

The post she wrote about the incident ([Build Your Freelance Business Through Your Personal Network](#)) is worth a read if you're still on the fence about using your personal network to find clients. It's a pretty old post, but it's still solid gold.

7. Web Design Blogs

Unlike most blogs out there, web design and technology blogs generally tend to pay for guest post submissions. And because the demand for content is high on web design blogs, they're always on the lookout for new writers and bloggers.

If you thought web design blogs only cover topics related to web design, you're in for a surprise.

Every web design blog I've come across also covers diverse topics like freelancing, online business, writing, blogging, productivity, client relationships, motivation, etc. to name just a few.

These are all topics freelancers are well equipped to write about. And if you love trying out new services and software, you can also review them. Apart from that, the demand for tutorials and showcases is always high.

Most web design blogs have a "Write for us" page where they invite readers to send in submissions. Search for popular web design blogs and see if they have a "Write for us" or "Submissions" page.

Web design blogs generally pay a lot more than your average blog. Rates per blog post can range anywhere from \$50 - \$300 and above.

Once you've shortlisted blogs you'd like to write for, send them an email, and include 3-5 topics you'd like to write about and see what they say. A lot of times, editors get back with the direction their content is taking in the coming months and invite you to pitch them more topics if the ones you sent don't pan out.

Tip: Instead of using Google to search for web design blog, try AllTop.com. AllTop does all the hard work of listing the best blogs in the blogosphere and divides them by topic. And guess what? AllTop has a list of top web design blogs too! Check it out here: <http://web-design.alltop.com>

8. Previous place(s) of work

Just as your personal network can be effective in getting new clients, so can your previous place of employment—provided you left on good terms.

Contact your old bosses and colleagues and catch up with them. You never know, your old company might be in need of a writer and because you've already worked for them, the learning curve is going to be non-existent in terms of capturing the tone and culture of the company. You'll also already be aware of their policies.

Princess Jones of [Diary of a Mad Freelancer](#) not only managed to convince her former employers to hire her as their freelancer, but she made them realize that they didn't need to replace her position with a full-time employee when she could continue doing the same work as a freelancer!

"Like many freelancers, I dipped my toe in the waters by starting part-time. Later when I quit my job as the marketing agent for an insurance business, I decided to take them on as clients to give me some stable income as well. It was a delicate conversation because I was, in essence, quitting in one breath and selling them something in the next.

But I ended up explaining it in terms of being good for them. I said that I understood losing me to freelance would be difficult, but I was willing to complete copywriting projects for a flat rate from home during the transition.

They ended up realizing they didn't need an in-house person at all anymore, and we worked together happily for years."

- Princess Jones

If your boss or colleagues have moved to other companies, ask them if they could refer you to somebody in the company who took these decisions.

When I left the company I used to work full time for, I kept in touch with my former colleagues including the HR manager. A few months later, the HR manager moved to another company. Soon after joining, she needed someone to rewrite the HR policies of her new company so that it was easier for the employees to understand. Guess who she contacted?

I was the first person she thought of because I'd been in touch with her over the months and had kept her abreast of what I was up to work wise.

If you're freelancing straight out of college, contact your old teachers and college administration. A lot of people keep in touch with their old teachers and Alma Mater. You never know who you'll be introduced to.

9. Former clients

Former clients are a surprisingly great source of new work. You don't have to sell your services to them because they've already worked with you and know your work is stellar.

Send them an email. Quite often, simply popping back up on a former client's radar is enough to land you work.

Refresh their memory by telling them once again what kind of writing you do. This'll help if your writing focus has changed since you last worked with a client.

I once wrote an ebook for my client. He was extremely happy with the work and we parted ways on good terms with him promising to come back to me if he ever had another ebook written.

Almost a year later, I came across his newly designed website and sent him an email telling him his website looked great. I also asked how the ebook I wrote for him was faring and mentioned I'd shifted my focus from ebook writing to blogging. He got back to me saying that he wanted to start a blog for his newly designed site and voila! Just like that I had a new project.

Contacting former clients is an area often overlooked even by the most seasoned freelancers. Peter Bowerman of The Well-Fed Writer fame mentioned in "[Why Aren't You Still Working With That Client From 2008 \(Or Earlier?\)](#)" that this was one place of finding work that he didn't think to utilize until recently.

10. Flippa

I learned this tip from Sarah Russell when she guest posted on [Writer's In Charge](#). She discovered this tip herself when a company bought a blog she was selling on [Flippa](#). They liked her writing style so much that they hired her to write for other websites they owned.

"It sounds goofy at first, but think about it – where else can you get as much information about websites, their content strategies and the people who own them than from Flippa's product listings?"

For example, if you tracked the listings on the site and found a content-rich site that's just been sold, why not shoot the buyer an email asking if he or she anticipates needing writers in the future?"

– Sarah Russell

Ever since then, I've been paying extra attention to the listings on Flippa, and it blows my mind how much information about a site is given there.

And if someone buys a very popular blog, the chances are high that they would want to continue producing content for it so that it makes them money.

Tip: Read the guest post Sarah originally wrote for Young Pre Pro in which she shared this tip. It includes a few other ways to find work including offline methods: [9 Ways to Find Freelance Writing Clients Who Will Actually Pay You](#)

Conclusion - The Common Denominator

Even though all of the tips included in this report are different, they have one thing in common: They all require you to take the first step.

Don't wait for work to come to you because that's never going to happen. Go out there and find it. Very few freelance businesses work solely on referrals, and even they spent years finding clients for themselves before getting to this point.

You can't base your entire career on low-paying writing gigs either. That's no way to live! The stress and worry of trying to make ends meet will burn you out if the blah-ness of the work doesn't.

Take control of your freelance writing business. Use the ten places included in this report to find clients who will pay you well and break free from the low-paying rut once and for all.

This report has just smashed your biggest excuse for being stuck in content mills or other low-paying work.

You now know exactly where to look for clients and how to approach them.

So go out there, pitch your services to prospective clients, and make me proud.

I can't wait to hear your success story!

About Freelance Flyer

In simple words, [Freelance Flyer](#) is a blog for freelance writers.

Its sole purpose is to help them treat their freelancing as a business and not a hobby.

The blog's content focuses on:

- treating your freelance writing as a business,
- setting it up as one, and
- taking your writing (and business) to the next level.

It provides actionable advice, step-by-step guides and tough love.

If you'd like to read more about freelancing, visit the [blog](#). You'll find plenty of in-depth information there.

About Samar Owais

Samar is a freelance writer, blogger, and lava cake lover who has been freelancing since 2008.

She's one of those rare breed of freelancers who started freelancing straight out of college.

Okay, enough with the third person. Hi! I'm Samar. That's me on the right.



I love writing, blogging, lava cakes, and helping freelancers establish and grow their freelance writing businesses.

If you have any questions, feel free to send me an email at samar@freelanceflyer.com.

You can also find me on [Twitter](#) and [Linkedin](#).

To find out more about me, read my [About](#) page.