

# How to Hire a Freelance Blogger

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If you run a small business, it may very well be the case that, with the number of balls you're juggling, you simply don't have the time to maintain a blog... and you probably don't have in-house writers or other employees who can do so for you. Or maybe your blog is experiencing a sharp rise in popularity, your readers want more, and you suddenly need a co-creator to help you produce content.

Of course, if your plan is to drive your brand, increase awareness about your business, broaden your customer base, and continue to make your readers happy, *not* blogging isn't an option.

But hiring a freelance blogger to outsource that content creation to *is* definitely an option. It will free you up to keep juggling everything else, and allow you to rest secure knowing that engaging content will continue to be created and published on a consistent basis for your business.

## Where to search for freelancers

Hiring a freelance writer isn't exactly the simplest of tasks. (And it's often not the cheapest of expenses.) But putting in the requisite work to find that gem among dull stones will be absolutely worth your while: There's no feeling like the feeling of having secured a remarkable writer who's ready and willing to bring value to your blog and your business over the long term.

Let's start with the places you should look:

### Referrals

Ask your friends and colleagues who run business blogs if they've worked with freelance copywriters or ghostwriters in the past. If they have, and can refer them, you've got an already-vetted writer on your hands for consideration.

### Competitor blogs and magazines

There are almost certainly other blogs out there doing something similar—or at least tangential—to what your blog is doing, or what you hope it will do. You can find these blogs through a simple Google search, using your primary keywords.

Read through the posts you find and note the authors whose writing most compels you or resonates with what you're looking for. You should be able to find their information in the author bios at the bottom of each post. (You'll know they *aren't* the company's in-house writer because their bio will say something like "contributing editor" or "freelance copywriter.") Use the links posted in the bio to contact them and offer them work.

The great thing about this strategy is that the writers you find this way are already familiar with your industry or niche, so there won't be the same kind of learning curve there would be if you hired on a generalist.

Of course, you can use this strategy any time you come across an article or blog post that resonates with you, whether or not that topic is in your niche. If the author's email isn't provided in the bio, a quick Google search will let you locate their LinkedIn page or personal website.

We *highly advise* a Google search on any writer you're considering. This will let you read their range of work before you take the plunge and send them an email.

## Social media

[LinkedIn](#) and [Twitter](#) both have search features that can be invaluable in helping you find freelance bloggers. The advantage of finding writers through social media (as in the case of using a search engine) is that you can take a look at their portfolios and other online work before contacting them.

What's more, any time you find a freelance blogger on either platform, you can be sure that person is following other writers. Take a look at the writers they're linked to, research them online, and see whose work suits your needs.

You can also use LinkedIn to search for students. (We recommend graduate students, who are already well-practiced in research methods.) College students are generally strapped for cash, and many would be more than happy to receive an offer from you for ongoing work.

## Content mills

Content mills are one of the least expensive options available to you (alongside hiring a student), and we certainly know some small businesses who've found diamonds in the rough this way. Indeed, if you know *how* to search for writers in these mills—as we'll show you below—they can be an excellent source of content creators for your business.

Sites like [Upwork](#), [Freelancer](#), [Speedlancer](#), and [Fiverr](#) are worth checking if you decide to go this route. If you *do* announce a job on any of these sites, follow the steps we offer below for creating an effective job posting. These recommendations should help you separate the initial wheat from the chaff in the content mill search.

## Job boards

[Prologger](#) is our recommendation if you decide to take this route, but there are plenty of job boards out there. (And of course, there's always Craigslist.) Right now you can post a job on Prologger's site for 30 days for \$70.

## Agencies

This option is for those with a bigger budget. The big difference between an agency and a content mill—at least as far as *you're* concerned—is that the agency takes on the role of matchmaker for you. [Creative Circle](#) and [BlogMutt](#) are two such agency options (the latter, obviously, specializes in matching *bloggers* with businesses).

If you hear about another such agency that seems up your alley, just be sure to take a look at their online reviews before contacting them.

## Google

(Naturally.) A search engine query might suit you particularly well if you're looking for someone local. Entering specific keywords (for instance, "freelance blogger," "SEO," your niche, and your city) may help you locate bloggers that slipped under your radar while using the above strategies.

## Writing an effective job description

Wherever you end up looking for your freelancer—and perhaps particularly if you search for them through a content mill—you'll want to write a job description that filters out poorer writers and allows those applicants with the experience you need to rise to the virtual surface.

It's useful to determine, first, exactly what qualities you want in your writer. Do you need someone who's already well-versed in your niche, or are you willing to work with a brilliant writer who needs to learn the ins-and-outs of your industry? Do you want someone who's current with SEO best practices, or someone who has a marketing background? Do you want someone who lives in your area? And so on.

Regardless of the particulars you decide on for yourself, there are some basic qualifications you should be looking for. The blogger you hire should be willing to learn your business, your products, your brand, and your vision from the inside out.

They should be able to write flawless, scannable content in your voice (and in a conversational tone) for your ideal clients. Of course this means they'll understand your target audience very well. They should be able to work autonomously, creating a blogging schedule and identifying topics for you. They should be adept at research, know how to solve problems in the content they write, and

know how to generate traffic once each blog post is up.

That may sound like a lot—and you might not feel you need your freelance blogger to perform all of the above. Regardless, below are the elements that should go in your job description to ensure that you get exactly the writer you're looking for. These elements will require your applicants to self-select, so you're not wasting time doing all the weeding out on the other side.

### **Announce your niche and the desired years of experience in your job description title**

"Seeking long-term blogger for 1-2 posts a week" will get you applications from every blogger in existence. "Seeking blogger with 3+ years experience in the vitamin industry" will significantly reduce the size of that applicant pool... not to mention raise the qualification levels of the applicants you get.

### **Spell out the end goal**

You've got a series of [goals](#) for your blog that may include establishing industry expertise, generating interest in your products or services, increasing conversions, or boosting website traffic.

Those goals should be explicit in your job description. If you need your writer to focus on SEO-friendly content so that you can draw more organic traffic into your conversion funnel, your description should say precisely this. If you need them to help you generate a community of active subscribers, or to better match your blog post CTAs with your products, say so.

Here's an example, based on the job description title we used above: "We're seeking a freelance blogger with 3+ years in the vitamin industry to write SEO-friendly content geared toward generating more inquiries from intermediaries such as gyms and fitness centers."

The more qualified writers (the ones who will end up applying) will be grateful to know the standards to which they'll be held and the metrics that will determine how successful their content is.

### **Specify the qualifications of your ideal writer**

This extends beyond years of experience. What publications have they written for? Does English have to be their native language? Should they have a BA, or a journalism degree? Should they have a portfolio of blog posts online and available for viewing? Should they have metrics to show you about the number of social media shares past posts have garnered?

These additional qualifications will be entirely up to you. Don't pigeonhole your applicants too much (there are many exceptional bloggers out there who simply won't fit into all of these categories), but be clear about the qualifications that you absolutely won't budge on.

## Ask for links to their work

This one's probably obvious, but worth including. You'll want a writer who is capable of maintaining the tone and voice that your blog already has (or that you *want* it to have if you're just starting out). You'll also want a writer who can create well-researched, engaging content. Any writer can *promise* this, but far fewer can perform. Ask your applicants to prove, early on, what they're capable of.

## Be specific about the amount of work they'll be doing

How many posts per week will they be writing? How long will each post be? What style will they be writing in? And so on. However, we recommend you wait until after you've listed all your qualifications to say this.

## Tell them to write something specific in the subject line

This final strategy is really just to weed out those applicants who will apply without reading all the way through your job description. (You won't want to hire these writers, as they're obviously not thorough.)

Asking your applicants to "Write 'I'm a health and nutrition freelance writer' in the subject line" is a perfect way to distinguish those who are mass-applying to jobs from those who are carefully selecting the jobs they want and are qualified for.

## Final steps

Once you've narrowed your search down to a few writers, you might consider a final step in the decision process. This is perhaps especially the case if the blogger will be working for you long-term. If you plan on cultivating and sustaining a relationship with your writer over the long haul, you want to be sure you *really* like their work.

It will also be the case if your applicant is a ghostwriter. Ghostwriters are at a disadvantage when it comes to portfolios because they can't share the content they create for clients. This absolutely doesn't mean you shouldn't give ghostwriters a chance! But it *does* mean they'll have to clear one more hurdle of "proof" before you hire them on.

This final step might be asking your applicant to write a test blog post. If you end up using the post on your blog, pay them for it—and then go ahead and hire them! If you *don't* use it (which probably means you won't hire them), you can rest easy knowing that the applicant has one more piece of content to add to their portfolio. Maybe you'll even decide to take a small hit and pay them for their work. (Of course, you'll want to let your applicants know that these are the conditions of the test post before they write it.)

On the other hand, maybe you ask them to pitch five headlines for posts they could imagine writing for you, along with a 1-2 sentence description of what each post would entail. This exercise assesses the writer's ability to work autonomously—which may be something you want to ascertain early on.

The test post may follow this, or it may not. These final tests will hinge on a number of factors, including how much of the writer's prior published writing you have access to, and the kinds of things you want to clarify about their work or thought processes (Can they write not just one good headline, but many? How quickly do they write?).

Once you've chosen the freelancer who'll be maintaining your blog, you'll want to establish expectations about communication, revision policies, and turnaround times right away. Draw up an official contract—and don't forget to ask for a W9 early on, since they'll be working for you as a private contractor.

And we hope this is the beginning of a long, delightful, and successful relationship between the two of you.

*If you've been reading our content on business blogs from start to finish, you've now got ten webpages' worth of tips, tricks, best practices, and examples to keep in mind. In the next section, we offer a [business blog checklist](#) that you can use as a refresher each time you sit down to write new content—or whenever you wish your blog was performing better, or when it's time to update your blog's look, or... well, you get the picture.*