



Get a Raise Guide

Edited by: Carol Tice



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Introduction

Have you been working for clients at low rates for too long?

You're not alone. I surveyed 250 established freelance writers recently—and discovered only half were able to live off what they made from writing. Nearly half made under \$20,000 a year!

That's not right. Writers need to earn a living.

That's why I've put together this 'Get a Raise' Guide for you.

It's got my own template for asking for a raise—feel free to steal from it. I've also included several posts from other freelance writers who've done well asking for more money.

I hope these tips help you ask for raises and earn more from your writing. You deserve it!

—Carol Tice

Why You Should Raise Your Freelance Writing Rates Right Now

By: Carol Tice

November is one of my favorite months. It's not because of the impending holidays, though.

It's because this is the best time of year for freelance writers to get a raise.

Why?

If you notify your existing clients of your new, higher rates now — but make them effective Jan. 1 — that is the optimal strategy for getting your raise accepted.

Don't ask for too much, where it freaks them out. Maybe 5 percent or 10 percent is ideal. It's not likely clients will give you a 50 percent or 100 percent raise. If they're paying you peanuts, realize it'll be easier to find a better-paying client and then drop your low-payer.

Why this raise plan works

With the small raise, the pain to your client is much less than the pain of having to start over and train a new writer to know everything about their business, topic, or reader.

And the 6-week lead time means they make a note to budget a little more in the future...and then basically forget about it. They don't have to pay it now, so it goes off their radar.

You also seem professional by giving them all that notice that the rate hike is coming. Here's a template for asking for a raise:

STEP 1: DECIDE HOW BIG A RAISE YOU WANT

Remember, the smaller your raise is, the more likely the client is to simply agree.

STEP 2: ALERT THE CLIENT YOU WANT TO DISCUSS YOUR DEAL

If you have a short term 30- 90-day contract, or an annual contract that's expiring soon:



“Our contract is going to be expiring soon, I’d like to propose some revisions based on how the work has evolved during these first few months. Please look for it [on email/in the mail].”

If you don’t have an expiring contract, invent an inflection point:

“I recently noticed [it’s been a year since I started working with you/I’ve written 50 posts for you now/the end of the year is coming up/YOUR INFLECTION POINT HERE]. I’ve been reviewing my client agreements and have a revised proposal for you going forward – please look for it [on email/in the mail.]”

If you don’t currently have a contract:

“I recently noticed [inflection point here]. I’m in the process of professionalizing my business, and am getting contracts together for all the clients I’ve worked for without one. Please look for my proposed contract [on email/in the mail.]”

STEP 3: WRITE AND SEND YOUR RAISE PROPOSAL

Here are the elements that give you the best shot at a successful raise request:

A. Remind them of your increased value

Use all you can of the ideas below. The goal is to show what a pain it would be to try to replace you:

More knowledge:

“Since I started working for you X years/months ago, I’ve learned all about X widget company, and the widget industry.” [Examples here of lingo you now understand, trends you spotted, depth or breadth of your knowledge of the various company activities/services/products /departments/goals/mission.]

Results:

“The writing I’ve done for you has had X tangible result [shares, comments, opt-ins, traffic bump, great letters to the editor].”

You like working with me:

“I know you’re happy with my work because of [the LinkedIn recommendation you gave me/praise letter you sent/positive feedback from others on the team/your reason here].”

B. STATE YOUR BASIS FOR THE RAISE

Your basis might include:

My value has grown:

"I know my writing is of greater value to you at this point than when we first started, based on the [results I've achieved/praise I've received/my increased knowledge of your business/industry.]"

My rates have risen:

"In the past year, I've taken on new clients at higher rates. I've kept you at the old rate because I enjoy the work we do together. But at this point, I simply don't have any other clients at this rate. I won't be doing writing work at this rate going forward."

Scope creep:

"When we began, I was doing X level of work [500-word blog posts, single-interview case studies, flexible deadlines]. Now, the scope of my responsibilities has grown to include [define increased scope of work: longer blog posts, multiple interviews, shorter deadlines.]"

Market forces:

"Rates for [type of writing and/or writing about your industry] have been rising steadily over the past year. Market rates are now more like X for writing of this type/length/deadline, and I know writers who are getting [even higher rate than you're going to ask for] for these assignments."

C. STATE YOUR RAISE AND TIMELINE

"As a result of [briefly recap why things have changed], my new rate as of [your chosen date 4-8 weeks from now] for your work will be \$X."

D. SET YOUR EXPECTATION IN THE CONCLUSION

Be sure to end with a statement that you WILL be implementing this raise, unless you hear back that it's not OK. Don't leave it vague, where silence means you don't know whether you get the raise!

With a contract:

"Please let me know if you have any feedback, or simply indicate your acceptance by signing the attached new/revised contract." (Or, if you feel more confident, don't ask for feedback.)

Without a formal contract:

"Please let me know if you have any questions about this. Otherwise, I'll be implementing the new rate on [date]." (You can also ask for a quick 'I agree' response to your proposal email as confirmation.)

Why the time is now — anytime

Even if you're reading this at a different time of year than November, you should realize that now is the time to raise your rates.

Here are five big reasons why:

1. **Rising costs.** Consumer-goods prices are rising (check out corn and oil these days, for instance), so you need a raise just to keep your standard of living the same. If you're not raising, your earning power is eroding.
2. **Growing knowledge.** If you've been with a client for a year or more, your value to them has increased, as you've learned more about what they do. You should earn more to reflect that. The anniversary date of when you started with them is another great time to negotiate for a higher rate.
3. **You're underpriced.** Most new freelance writers tend to bid way too low — I see this all the time. The only way to start rectifying this problem is to ask for raises. If you're too low, you'll be surprised how many clients readily accept your higher rates for next year.
4. **It's normal.** Most other service providers regularly raise their rates, on everything from housecleaning to transcribing to cable TV service. Why should you be the exception?
5. **Better writing.** You're a more experienced writer than you were a year ago. So you should adjust your vision of the pay level you are entitled to. Start targeting better-quality clients and asking for more.

The easiest way to get a raise

If the idea of asking your current clients for a raise terrifies you (or you know they only pay that one, low rate no matter what), you can still start earning more.

Just raise your rates for new clients.

They never paid the old rate, so they'll never know the difference.

Double Your Freelance Rate with These Easy Negotiation Tips

By: Brittany Taylor

When I was fresh out of college, I got lucky.

I got a job offer at a magazine, almost right away. It was great ... except the pay. It was much lower than I'd told myself I would accept.

So I did what everyone suggested: I negotiated. I did my due diligence — including market research, a look at industry norms, and lots of number crunching. Twenty-four hours later, I crossed my fingers and hit 'send.'

And I got steamrolled.

I took the job anyway. I was worried nothing else would come along. But the entire time I worked there, I felt underpaid and poorly treated.

Ever since, I've shied away from asking for more money. I've always feared that the offer would be yanked out from under me, that I'd be yelled at, or that the person I was negotiating with would be offended.

Recently, I got another offer. But this time, I pushed my fear aside and negotiated better pay. Here's how.

Take advantage of a second chance

One day, an editor at an online outlet connected with me out of the blue, on LinkedIn. I sent her a quick message:



Hi [Editor],

Thanks so much for connecting! I hope this finds you well and not freezing your way through winter. If ever you need a writer, do let me know. I specialize in features and profiles, and have two pieces coming out this spring in [Magazine] and [Another Magazine].

Best,

Brittany

She told me to let her know if I had any story ideas.

I dug through the site, scribbling ideas for new articles as I went.

Then, I wrote up an email with the pitches. She loved them.

But just as I was starting to see dollar signs, I saw the rate. It was \$20 apiece — way below what I had decided I was worth when I set my rates for the year.

Cue the déjà vu.

Ask for what you need

I started with a pep talk.

I told myself that:

- It didn't matter if this gig was \$20 or \$2,000 — the rate needed to make sense for the project and for me.
- This job wasn't the be-all, end-all. I'd need other clients, anyway.
- If this client didn't work out, I'd get others. And if it did work out, I'd still get others.

So I swallowed the lump in my throat and started typing.

I said:

“Thanks for getting back to me! I usually charge \$100 for a 500-word article online. I know that’s a big leap from \$20/piece. Would \$50/piece be something we could discuss? Let me know!” It was a little white lie: That \$100 rate was something I targeted on a low end, not something I’d earned before.

She said: “Let me talk to finance to see if we can push the budget. I’ll let you know!”

I thanked her, but a week later, I hadn’t heard anything. I was starting to worry. What if the silence was a brush-off? Still, I followed up.

The editor wrote back the next day with the news: “I got the approval! When can you start?” My more-than-doubled rate was accepted, and it was so easy!

Build on success

Is that rate low? Yeah, it amounts to \$0.10/word, still less than my target.

But the negotiation itself fulfilled a few other 2015 goals: I diversified the outlets that I currently write for and I finally got up the courage to negotiate.

I did it again a few weeks later and managed to get another \$25 per article out of a new editor, for a steady stream of work.

At this stage of the game, negotiating is more about confidence than money. The more frequently I ask for a higher rate, the more I realize that I’m worth it—and that editors won’t be put off when I assert my value.

And you know what? If they are, they’re really not the kind of people I want to be working for, anyway.

How One Paid Blogger Got a 33% Raise

By Casey Kelly-Barton

[Den 2X Income Accelerator](#) grad

If you want to boost your freelance blogging income, you're probably doing all the things you're supposed to do:

- Regular marketing
- Checking in with past clients
- Asking current clients for other projects



But here's another income-boosting approach I stumbled on: Pitch extra services on the same work you're already doing for clients as a paid blogger — in a context that matters to your client.

Those of you with sales experience already know this “want fries with that?” strategy. When I saw how well it worked, I about smacked myself in the forehead, because I didn't think of it sooner.

Why my original offer flopped

I have a long-term business blogging client I write for quite a bit. The company — an established business-to-consumer (B2C) service business — has invested a lot of time, money, and effort into developing its blog. They have several writers posting regularly.

When I was hired, I offered two blog post rates, \$220 with expert interviews and \$165 without interviews.

The client went for the no-interview option — still a good rate, but not the premium rate I was hoping for.

Why didn't the client bite?

- At the time, the company was hiring several writers and wanted to stay within budget — not much I could do about that.
- I failed to spell out how the interview option would add value by increasing the likelihood of shares and visibility on social media.

Even if I had elaborated on the value that expert interviews add, budget considerations might have trumped potential shares while the client was ramping up its blog. But I didn't try, so I don't know.

The revamped offer that made the sale

About six months after I started blogging for this client, I was researching topic pitches for them. Scanning their existing posts, I noticed that many weren't getting as many social-media shares as I'd expect.

I decided the time was right to pitch the interview package again — this time, as something that costs a bit more but adds value to a blog that client invested a lot of resources into developing.

My approach:

- I mentioned that my posts for other clients get many more shares when there's an expert quoted, because the expert and their colleagues, PR team, and friends share the link with their networks. For a bit extra, I said, I'd be glad to provide the same service for this blog.
- I also offered to tweet each post through my professional Twitter account, with a shout-out to the interviewee to get the ball rolling.

Turning one raise into many

My client agreed to try it out with the next few posts I write.

So I'll be getting 33 percent more per post and making my work more valuable to the client, without backbreaking extra effort on my part.

If it works, I hope the client will see the value in continuing with the interview approach, and I'll earn more on every post in the long run. Hopefully, I'll also have a success story on traffic growth and social-media sharing to market to other prospects, when I pitch the interview option for their blogs.

Anyone who blogs for clients can use this method to raise their rates — without the discomfort of raising your rates based on experience alone. You're adding immediate, measurable value for the client. Who wouldn't expect to pay more for better results?

12 Tips to Overcome Freelance Clients' Cost Objections

By David Leonhardt

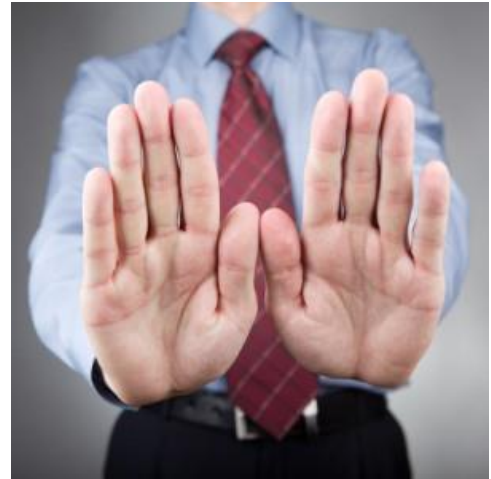
So you caught your potential freelance writing client's interest. Congrats!

You like the project (it's an interesting one, for a change!) and it might even keep your mortgage from defaulting next month.

You've agonized over the price and finally presented your fee.

The client doesn't like the price. Now what?

Go back to the client and figure out the reason behind the objection. Then, negotiate.



Why clients fight back on price

My freelance writing agency runs into such objections all the time. You don't have to cave in. There are many tactics you can use to overcome cost objections, but you first need to understand their motivation.

Most fall into three categories.

An “over budget” objection is about money. You need to understand whether the budget can be altered.

A “seems pricey” objection is about both money and value. You need convince the client you will give them value for their money.

Others just like to haggle. Anticipate hagglers by being alert for clients who ask for the best price from the start or micro-managers who are often as concerned about pennies as they are about commas. Quote high; they will be happy with the “deal” they negotiate — the price you would have offered in the first place.

Once you know the type of objection you're facing, you can decide whether to hold fast on the price you quoted or work with the client to get your wage where they want it.

Tricks to get your quoted rate

The key here is to help the client see why you are worth the price. Here are some tactics:

1. Sell the client on a quick turnaround. You can complete the job before they even find another writer.
2. Itemize costs they save with you, such as your knowledge that saves paying for research time or auto-formatting the document.
3. Paying bottom dollar has embarrassed many companies. Remind the client of this.
4. Stress how good you are and how effective your results will be. If you don't demonstrate value, the client might look for a writer more willing to haggle.
5. Compare your fees to the competition's pricing, unless you command top dollar. Position yourself as "reasonable" to overcome cost objections.
6. Offer something extra – formatting, a related press release – as a free bonus for signing quickly.

Ways to lower your price — pain free

If it's clear that you DO need to lower the price, but you don't like slave wages, here are some tactics to try:

7. Identify steps the client can take to reduce your workload, so you can lower your price to their desired level. Sometimes this makes the client realize that it's worth paying you full price, after all.
8. Offer a cash-back incentive for speedy feedback or proper input from the client. Client cooperation can reduce your workload, so it might be worth lowering your price.
9. Look to outsource parts of the project to students. Research? Editing? Can you lower your price this way without working for less?
10. Offer a payment plan — three portions works well. This is of no import for large clients, but smaller clients love it.
11. Suggest downscaling the project. If they really have funds for just part of it, offer to do just part of it. This also can make the client decide to just pay full price.
12. Divide a project into phases. Determine what you can do within their budget, and call it Phase I. Chances are they will pay full price for Phase II later on.

If you remain at a stalemate on price, it's time to decide how badly you want this job. Just remember that when you accept a lower price, you are raising expectations for the next time and lowering your value forever.

How One Freelance Writer Got a 600 Percent Raise

By Bree Brouwer

I used to think pro freelance writers were crazy when they said you should drop your lowest-paying client to make room for one with a bigger budget.

“Don’t they remember what it’s like to have student loan bills come due?” I thought.

But now I realize they were right.

It’s completely possible to drop a bad client and get a better one instead. Here’s how I did it.



How I Met Bob (and Bill)

This past spring, a friend recommended me to her friend Bob (no, that’s not his real name) to do blogging for his company.

Bob couldn’t pay me my \$50 per 500-word-post rate, but I agreed to do \$30 for 300 words because he had connections to the entertainment industry, where I wanted to get more freelance work. Bob was a nice guy who was impressed with my writing, but I wasn’t happy with my rate.

In July, I attended a new media and gaming convention in Austin, Texas, where I met the owner of a mechanical keyboard company, Bill (nope, not his real name, either). He said he was interested in hiring me, but didn’t have work at the moment. We kept in touch over the next few months.

How I Dumped Bob for Bill

Meanwhile, I went to Bob and told him I wanted to renegotiate our 2-month contract, which was now over. I was honest by telling him I was commanding higher rates than he was paying me, but I’d be willing to negotiate since he was easy to work with.

Unfortunately, Bob came back and told me flat-out he couldn’t even afford to pay me \$40 a post. This was after I put together an entire content strategy proposal for him, which he’d also rejected even though I was charging far below the going rate of most professionals.

I realized Bob would never be a good long-term client, no matter how nice he was, because he simply didn't realize the value I was providing.

I told Bob I'd submit my last post, and it was a pleasure working for him so I hoped he'd let me know if his financial situation ever changed.

Days later, Bill contacted me, saying he needed blogging services. After an initial phone call, Bill agreed to pay me \$175 per 500-word blog post with three social media status updates.

Only a few days after dropping Bob, Bill sent me the \$175 per post contract in an email. Simple as that.

How to Find Your Bill

It might seem impossible that in just 72 hours, I jumped from \$120 a month with Bob to \$700 a month with Bill (almost 600% raise). You're probably thinking I'm crazy for dropping a client before I had a new contract signed, much like I thought Carol and other pro writers were when they told me to do it.

But it's not — you just need to be courageous enough to dump your Bob so there's a space for better-paying Bill to come along.

Need a Raise?

Could you use help gaining the confidence to ask higher rates for your writing? Come to my free training on May 31, 2018: [How Freelance Writers Double Their Income](#).

