



Dream of Travel Writing

Pricing, Negotiating, and Contracts (for Travel Content Marketing and Magazine Writing)

This week we are going to be talking about Pricing, Negotiating, and Contracts both for travel content marketing as well as for magazine writing. I want to talk for a little bit so bear with me on this- I always talk a little bit about theory before we get into the practice. But I want to talk about different concepts of pricing and how you should allow those to inform your choices in terms of language, not just price, but really how you approach any sort of prospect price quote or negotiation. Then we're going to talk about negotiating and some different things that you can offer in exchange and how to go about that. This in particular is a great place, even if you don't have something that you have right now that you're trying to figure out about how to negotiate.

Maybe if you had something in the past, a client that you worked with for a little while and it didn't work out. This would be a great thing that I'd love to chat about here, like a different way that you could've approached the negotiation with this client. I have some clients that I've dropped over the years because of things I should have seen in the early negotiation that I'll bring up during that segment as well.

Then at the end we're going to look at some contract terms. These are interesting points because I think a lot of the times we just remain very ignorant, of where it's like indemnification and what that really means for us as freelancers. But they're all important. More importantly is what happens when you work without a contract, which is probably different than what you've heard.

Before we dive too much into specific numbers about pricing, I want to talk, like I said, about what we need to consider in terms of pricing theory and strategy. But first, what is the point of pricing? Right? I think we often get into this very one-sided mindset when we think about pricing. We think about what we are getting out of it, what is a reasonable for us to work at to do a certain job, different things like this. We don't always think about what the prospect or the magazine editor is getting for their money because the thing is you're never going to convince somebody of your price if that's not clear.

I think that the goal of good pricing is to find a number that makes both you and the buyer the most happy. Notice that I didn't say here that makes you and the buyer happy because that's not always possible. Especially, for instance, right now I'm trying to hire somebody to be kind of like the office manager and run the show and a lot of things for the company and somebody that I really, really love her offer sounds great quoted me this price that's not what we were thinking. But she has such an exceptional background that I can see it being worth it.



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The price doesn't make me happy but when I'm getting for it makes me happier than paying a lower price for somebody who's less qualified. We're going to talk later about how to make sure that you set up those sort of situations for your clients or for your prospective clients.

The goal of a good price is to make you and the buyer the most happy. What this also means, the corollary of what I said, is that in the case of myself, what I was just talking about, this price is a little higher than what I was looking to pay. Sometimes you may end up with a price that's a little lower than what you were looking to earn. When is that acceptable? Because I think that a lot of us have been told and something that I really try to rail against, is accepting low rates just because. Because that's what people pay. Because that's the only thing out there. Things like this.

You know what? I always say how sick I am of hearing that. That you can find other fish in the sea that will pay more and things like that. But the thing is, it's really true when you have the skills to back it up. But when you're new it's not always the case. When you're new, you often have to sort of take not necessarily what you can get but like I said, what people thing justifies what you are bringing to the position.

Keep in mind sometimes you might have a number in your head because that's what you heard, that would make you happy, and you're not able to get the type of gig that you want at that rate. Not that I'm saying that I advise settling. But that you should always be looking at what makes both people the most happy. If this is a client that you really want to work with, if it's going to turn into a long-term opportunity, if you see the potential for them to add more work down the line, then sometimes it's good to just go with that lower rate for now. But make sure that you don't stick with it forever.

A good example here and I think I had brought this up on another call was that I had a website that I wrote for many years and I did their social media for a while. When we the person first approached me or rather, I had applied- I guess they had a job on one the blogger sites or maybe on Craig's list and I had written in and it was a sort of lengthy application process just to write a blog post. You had to send in some different ideas and things like that. It's not something that I would have spent the time to do if it wasn't for ongoing work.

What happened was I sent her some ideas and she said they were fantastic for the white papers, not for the type of blog post she was looking for, which are actually more like x, y, and z. Not that that was in the job ad she had listed. I said okay, here are some ideas for x, y, and z. At this point I maybe brainstormed somewhere between six and 20 different blog posts ideas for her over the course of different discussions. She comes back to me and says but we



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can only come up with a rate of, I want to say it was like \$35 or something. I basically just said no. But by then, she was really into working with me. She went back to her bosses and she was able to push it up to \$50. She came back to me and said can you do \$50? I said if I don't have to find the photos or set them up online and if there's going to be more work in the future.

Now those posts go for \$150 and I've gotten five plus figures of work from this client over the years. It can be difficult in the beginning to suss out whether a relationship is going to turn into something like that down the line. That's obviously the goal and I don't always want you to take work that is below what you think you should work for or often even. But sometimes it can work out. I just want to start by saying keep in mind this concept of what makes you both the most happy.

Then another thing that comes up in pricing is what is fair. The word "fair" as a writer is really difficult, rather as a journalist. As a copywriter and things like that you can use words like "fair." But "fair" is such a loaded word. Fair to who? Fair in what way? I think with pricing it's really important though to think of this concept, that like I said, you might have a sense of what a blog post is worth. The client might have a sense of what a blog post is worth.

Or in the case of magazines, often with smaller magazines I see this thing where there's a magazine, perhaps it's for an association like the Greek American Association or something like that, and they've been paying x for their features forever. Because their features have been written by people who are members of the association and who are very passionate and really want to write this story. They don't really care what they get paid. That editor gets a skewed sense of what a feature is worth.

But they're also not working with somebody who's necessarily qualified, per se, to be writing that feature. You can come in and say a fair price for a feature with this amount of research is this. But what they think is fair is very different based on their own experience.

I think it's important to keep in mind the concept of fair in pricing is important and it does cross people's mind and that that should be an anchor of your pricing. But it can be hard to know what is fair to your prospect or what is fair to your editor until they quote a number to you.



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There are really three bases for pricing. Cost. Cost-based pricing means that the price is 100% correlated to the price of the resources that have gone into producing this item. With a physically manufactured product, with food, with things like that, this is a little easier to figure out. But with service- This is where we get into an issue. If you're writing something for someone, even though you're creating a product, there's a service element involved. There's you working with the editor. You're doing the interviews. You're doing the writing. There's a service in there. How do you price that service? Probably differently than the editor or the content marketing prospect does.

This is why the issue of fairness comes up a lot in writing pricing because we have a very different idea of how much time goes into writing this, how much effort, how much care, how much expertise than the prospect does. A lot of times prospects just think that things can just be written by anybody. I had somebody approach me to write, to do a very complicated blogging project for them. They wanted something that was ghostwritten which is its own area of expertise that requires, in my opinion, quite a few years of practice to really do effectively with different people. You can learn to do with one person but to be able to do it with different people on the fly is very difficult.

She wanted ghostwritten blog posts about a very specific industry. It was something within the meetings industry. She came to me and she had all these questions. I can't remember what she quoted in the end. I want to say it was something to the degree of like \$25 a post or something. I didn't just say that's ridiculous but I reiterated the other things that had been said on the call about this type of expertise and the value of it and this and that. She said we have this intern that might do it so we can always just do it in house.

The thing here is to her what is fair for these blog posts is something similar to have them done anyway without going to an outside writer. That's the way she viewed this cost. What I then said to her, and this goes back to cost-based pricing, is what do you pay your interns per hour? I said how many hours do you think it would take the intern to write these posts? What sort of research would they have to do? How much time will they need to spend asking questions the person they're ghostwriting for, this and that. Then I showed her that the actual cost of doing it in house was not actually \$25 like she thought it was.

Sometimes, but very rarely, you can use cost-based pricing as a writer but it's not something that I recommend. For this reason, a lot of times people keep their costs, which is the number of hours spent on a project obscured from potential clients or magazine editors they're negotiating with or what have you, because of people's desires to negotiate down around the time that you spent.



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Another pricing strategy here or pricing basis is demand-based. What demand-based means is that the supply and demand seesaw. That the more demand there is for something and the less the supply, the higher the price. Or the more supply and the less demand, the lower the price. But in this case, to go back to the example that I just used about the ghostwritten meetings industry blogs, they were looking for two very specific skill sets. Right? They were looking for ghostwriting and they were looking for people very knowledgeable about a specific aspect of the meetings industry. The supply of people who can do that is actually quite low.

In this instance, if she hadn't had this intern that she was saying that could potentially do it for x dollars, even though as we looked at doing the cost-based pricing model that really wasn't the case, if I had presented it her purely on a demand level, if I had said I only know this many people who do ghost blogging because most people who do ghostwriting do blogs because the projects are much more lucrative and there's a lot of celebrities out there who are very happy to pay six figures to get a book written by a ghostwriter who's not going to take any credit and it's going to look like the celebrity wrote it. There's not a lot of people out there who do ghost blogging. Even if they wanted to, not a lot of those people have been trained both in ghostwriting and in blogging.

Separately the number of people who write about the meetings industry is very small so it's probably about, I'm going to throw a very random number out there but I would say maybe there's like 60 people in the United States that specialize in writing about the meetings industry that are freelance. It's probably less than that actually. I would say in the crossover between those two is basically nothing. You're essentially looking at a supply that's near empty and you have this demand. Essentially you're going to have to pay what you have to pay for it. You'd never tell the prospect you have to pay for it. But that's the way to set up demand-pricing, is to show them that their demand does not meet the supply and that they have to pay accordingly. We'll look at something similar later on when we talk about premium pricing.

Then competition-based pricing. This is something you really don't want to do. Competition-based pricing is what happens when somebody comes to you and says somebody else told me they would do this prospect for \$20, this blog post. Can you do it for me for \$15? The answer is absolutely not. You never want to write on competition-based pricing. This is the way, a spiral to the bottom, on the one hand. But it also really cements this idea with people, that writing is a commodity and not a skill and something that we shouldn't be demanding high rates for. Competition pricing is anytime you say so-and-so charges this so I'm going to charge you this based on what so-and-so charges.



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In content marketing, like I said, this sucks. With magazine writing, it can also suck. You can get into this sort of situation where if somebody says my other writer for 25 cents a word. Why can't you? If you don't know the other writer, this is really hard, right? If you knew that the other writer didn't have as much expertise in the area or didn't have as many years of writing experience or something like that, you could negotiate against it. But it's really hard to negotiate against competition pricing when you don't know what competition you're up against. I really recommend trying to get out of competition-based price situations as much as possible. If any of you have been one of those, I'd love to workshop one of those if anybody has any to suggest.

As we're setting our prices, naming our prices, negotiating our prices for different things, like I said, we have to think about what is fair to the prospect. What comes up a lot in that situation is the idea of buy power. If they are paying you this number, what else would they be able to get for their number? What do they see as the opportunity cost of giving you that money as opposed to putting that money into something else?

With magazines this is really simple. With magazines, there's a freelance budget pretty much across the board depending on the size of the magazine but pretty much across the board. There's a freelance budget. The editor has this much money that they can spend on freelancers per issue or per year, depending on the size of the magazine. The editor can make adjustments to that budget, depending on which editor but always the editor-in-chief. They can finagle within that budget to get the freelance work they want done. Anything they can't pay for with the freelance budget has to be done in house.

Often when you're negotiating with editors, you run into this issue where you are negotiating for more. That money, it's not just coming away from another writer, but it also means that there will be one fewer front of book thing or department or something that the editor is able to give to a freelancer down the line and it will have to be written in house instead. It's actually you're treating that editor or someone else on her staff's time for this extra money that they're paying you. That's something worth keeping in mind when negotiating with editors, is this concept of their freelance budget and what trade-offs they would need to make somewhere else to get you that money that you're asking for. We'll talk about later how it might be easier, not necessarily in the better interest more than money, but easier to ask for different rights arrangements rather than different pay rates when it comes to magazines.

With content marketing however, it's a very different situation. The opportunity cost of giving you that money instead of using it for something else takes on a totally different perspective. If you're looking at a large business, for instance a tour company, then that



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money is typically coming out of their marketing budget. Sometimes they'll have a separate budget for blogs or social media. It depends on the size of the company. But it's coming out of their marketing budget. If that money is coming out of their marketing budget, then it's money they would spend on a blog post versus a Facebook ad or on you running their social media versus paying the PR person to send an extra press release. Or something like this.

The trade-offs are very different. That's why when you're doing content marketing writing you need to really be thinking not just in the simplistic terms of what is the ROI or return on investment for your prospect, but about what additional benefits, what additional marketing benefits, what additional usage benefit from you doing this writing the prospect is going to get. Because those are the types of things that can help you push them into deciding that the opportunity cost, the money they're giving up by paying you rather than paying for something else is worth it.

This relates a little more into negotiating but I want to talk about it during pricing strategy. I know, like I said, we're being super psychological here but this concept of the motivational triad is something that comes from the psychology of behavioral change. I think this is really important to think about because anytime- This is more for content marketing than for magazines because magazine editors are used to paying freelance writers every month to do different work for them. But if you're looking at getting a higher rate this can help. But particularly with content marketing it's a behavior change if somebody hasn't been paying for blog posts and they're going to start. Or they haven't had an outside person running their social media and they're going to start paying for that. Or generally if they've been doing all of their marketing in house and now they're going to start spending expending money to have somebody else do it.

This theory of behavior change goes like this. It's that even though we often know that we quote unquote need something or that it's beneficial for us, we often don't do it. Why is that? It's because at any given point in time our psychology, our hormones, all sorts of things are balancing these three different motivations. It can happen even on a cellular level. It happens all throughout our body but particularly it happens unconsciously. That's why you often need to make sure that you're catering to these things because a prospect might not tell you that they have this issue. But it might be keeping them from pulling the trigger on a signing a contract with you.

These three things are pleasure seeking, pain avoidance, and energy conservation. The thing I was reading had a really interesting example here. It had a video of a black widow spider and bear with me because this is sort of an esoteric example but it really illustrates these three



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things very poignantly. Black widow spiders, if you don't know, the female black widow spider usually kills the male. Right? I think we've all heard that. That's why they're called black widows. That's why women who have murdered their husbands are called black widows. But do we know why? Here's what happens.

There's a female black widow spider. They're much larger than the males. She's sitting there, she's looking very attractive in her spidery way. The male sees her. He's torn. She's big and he's scared. That's pain avoidance. He's worried that something bad might happen to him. But, she's looking sexy in her spidery way so he also has the male desire to copulate with her. He's balancing these first two things, this pleasure seeking and this pain avoidance. She wants to create more black widow spider babies so she also wants to copulate with the male spider. This happens. But then, here's the kicker. Here's the energy conservation point. The black widow spider female rather than expend additional energy later to hunt for food to help her make her little spidery babies says hey, there's some food right here and she eats the male. That is the real reason black widow spider males get eaten.

I know it's a little of an esoteric example but I'm using it here because I really want you to understand these three things. That at any point your prospect is thinking wouldn't it be great to have this beautiful new blog on my website, people would see it, they would think that I'm really professional and that I have a great company. But then I might have to spend money and what if it takes a while to get this person set up? What if there's problems? Then energy conservation, right? But I don't want to spend money. I want to keep the money. There are always these three competing things going. If you notice, there's more negative for our purses than good here because the pleasure seeking is just one of three.

Often the pleasure seeking can take precedence but it really helps us if we can make sure that we are minimizing the other ones' effects as much as possible. When you're pitching content marketing gigs, look at ways to mention pain avoidance.

I think Donna's on this call, right? Donna has been following these content marketing webinars and I hope you all just take a moment to congratulate her because she is having awesome luck. She has a bunch of pitches out there. She's got one she's already signed. She's got one- It's Thursday, right? She already had a call with them on Monday. She's totally killing it. She sent me her proposal to review and I looked at it and I noticed something, that there weren't a lot of bullet points, that it was really a lot of text. Great, there's a lot of an explanation.



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But that means that when they look at your proposal, they sort of feel avoidance, right? They're like this looks like it will take a long time to read. Then we get into energy conservation. They want to conserve their energy for their tasks. They're like I don't want to read this. But then the other thing that I noticed was that her scope section, the part where you explain to the prospect exactly how the relationship will work was actually quite short, unlike the other sections.

But this is where you show the prospect how you're going to minimize their pain and help them conserve energy in the future. This is where you tell them that you are going to put the blog posts up, that you are going to do the key word search, that you are going to find the photos, that you are going to select the tags and all of these things so that they see that their life will be easier once they bring you on. I mentioned these three things. I know it's a bit esoteric, but when you're getting in the negotiation phase, this can be very, very helpful.

Pricing strategies. We talked about the three different bases of- I hope that's the right word, of cost, that are of pricing. There's cost-based pricing, there's demand-based pricing, and then there's competition-based pricing. We primarily want to do demand-based pricing as much as possible. How much does the prospect need it? Great. We price accordingly.

Within that, there's a couple different things that you can do and I'm just going to mention these quickly. Premium pricing means if somebody wants something special you charge them more. It's pretty simple. Economy pricing means you're charging to look attractive from an economic perspective. It's a little different than competition-based pricing because you're not necessarily pricing exactly in line with a competitor but you're pricing to look like you are nice in their wallet. Penetration pricing is an interesting one. This is where you are new to a market, you are new to travel content marketing, or you are new to social media and you've done blogging in the past.

To get into that market, you're going to set your prices low so that you can make it in. Then you'll raise them later. Another one on here, psychology pricing, I don't do this. People really rave about it is setting your numbers in ways that people psychologically respond to. This is why you see things that are \$199.99 instead of \$200 or sevens are really big these days. People really like sevens. 27, 77, I can't remember them all but there's literally lists online about what are the prices that you should use. Also, bundle pricing. Bundle pricing is where you actually charge somebody more per item when you put them all together in a package as opposed to less, which I think is what prospects usually think they get when they buy a bundle.



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I want to look at how some of these things play out. If somebody wants a premium item or circumstance, I have a friend that does a great job of this with rush pricing. She builds on work on E-lance or Upwork or whatever that site is called these days and then she puts a very high number and then the prospective client is always very impressed with her proposal but says no because of the competition pricing because other people are quoting him like literally one 1/100 of what she's asking for. She says no problem, come back to me when they've fucked up. Pardon my language. And they do. Then she says, wow, you're on a shorter timeline now? I'm going to have to charge you twice the original price because it's a rush project. That's a premium item or circumstance.

You can also use this when somebody asks you to do work-for-hire. We're going to talk later about what work-for-hire means. Just remember that name. This is when somebody has purchased all of the rights forever and always and perpetuity and in any form of media to use what you've created and you have no more right to use it. This can be a bit dangerous because say you use the same fact or the same example written in a similar way in a future piece. Then you're plagiarizing yourself but unfortunately you're plagiarizing something you've already sold to somebody else. You're not just plagiarizing yourself anymore. You're legal plagiarizing yourself. When somebody asks me for work-for-hire, I explain to them the situation and that I write about this topic a lot and that it takes extra time to make sure that I'm writing something for them that I can give away the rights for and so it cost double.

Economy price. If somebody comes to you and wants an economy price, if they say what's the lowest you can do this for or can't you do this for something. This happens a lot with magazines. Then I look at ways to take pieces out of my work process to make what they're looking for possible. I mentioned earlier when I was waiting for the website about reward travel and they came to me with the \$35 proposed rate and I said not going to happen. Then they came back with \$50 and then I said even that, not really. But maybe we can do it if and then I suggested a couple different portions of the process that they could do instead of me to make that work for me.

I find that often when you're travel content marketing with small companies who have been doing all this stuff in house previously, they're very happy to take that opportunity. Like I said when I talked about this example earlier, those opportunities can often grow into much more lucrative things down the line. Sometimes economy pricing can make sense. But don't just lower your price. Lower your price and take something out. Make the blog posts shorter. Make them less frequent. Make sure the client is posting them instead of you, that they're finding the photos or something like that.



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What is somebody wants a variety of different services, not just more blog posts but they want you to blog posts, they want you to promote them on social media, and they want you to do a couple of different types of blog posts and they also want to put them on Facebook. This is where we get in the bundle situation a little bit because the thing about bundles, of different types of products, services, what have you, is that there's thing involved called switching costs. I'm not going to spend too much time with this right now because it's more of a productivity principle.

But we'll just use the short example of context switching which a lot of you are familiar with which is when you go from working on a blog post to writing social media posts. It's a much shorter form of writing. It's very different. You can be more pithy. You have to look through some things you've written, maybe recall interesting sentences. It's very much different than just sitting down and writing off the top of your head a blog post and going back and editing it and posting it, maybe finding some tags. These are all different types of work. Your brain switches from one to another. There's some time, there's some lost productivity associated with that.

Anytime somebody wants a lot of different types of things, I give them a price based on the switching cost. Sometimes they don't like that and they think they should get more things for less money. But that brings us to the next one. If someone thinks they want more things for less money, then you say look, I usually do blog posts in bundles of four, one per week, for the whole month. But if you want eight, and I used this example earlier when I was talking to Natalie about pricing the blog post she was looking at pitching. I usually price this at \$500 a month because it's for four blog posts and also the content strategy. But if I'm going to do eight blog posts a month, I've already done the content strategy. I'm already thinking of some ideas. I can give that to you for \$800 instead of \$1,000 or something like this because it's not involving switching cost. You're doing more of the same thing. When you do more of the same thing you actually are faster and it becomes easier for you.

If somebody wants more social media posts, more blog posts, something you already have a system for, you're already doing, then I don't see a problem discounting it. But, this is different than if someone wants a variety of different services where a switching cost is involved. As you're putting together proposals for content marketing gigs and I know some of you on the call are, keep that in mind as you're pricing. If people want more different things, don't discount it. If people want more of the same things, then it's okay to discount it. But don't just discount it. Make it clear to them that you do four blog posts a month for this but if they go up to the next level, if they go to two blog posts a week, then they get this. If they go up to three blog posts a week, then they get this. But always make sure that the discounted price is with things you're okay with doing.



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The thing about quoting high rates is you had better deliver. We talked about this a little bit earlier in the call. I just want to reiterate this one more time. If you are new, I know it is so easy to feel like you shouldn't charge as much. But just because you don't have experience with this particularly type of writing, doesn't necessarily mean that you don't have experience and you can't get it done as well or better than somebody who's been doing it for a very long time.

The important thing when you are quoting rates is not just to think about how many years of experience you have because that doesn't really matter to the client. It doesn't really matter to the person getting your magazine article, the editor. What matters to them is the final product. If the final product is good enough to justify the rate that you're charging.

I know some people who have had some concerns about pitching feature articles. But if you're pitching future articles to a place where the editor's job is to not do that many issues, they're only quarterly and the editor's whole job is to put together this magazine. The editor doesn't have a very large freelance budget. The editor's job is to edit. The editor's job is to get the best writers they can for the amount of money they're able to pay and edit the pieces into being good enough for the magazine.

When I used to edit a wine magazine, I had to spend an exorbitant amount of time rewriting every single thing that came in because my publisher decided that only people who worked in the wine industry really knew wine well enough to write for us. We weren't hiring professional writers. We were hiring people who had no idea how to write and knew some things about wine. I spent a lot of time editing them. This is not uncommon. I didn't include this slide in here but I really love the quote from the editor of 5280, Denver's magazine, who used to work at Men's Journal. His name is Jeff Van Dike and he said that at Men's Journal he learned that professional writers aren't really that great because his whole job was rewriting professional writers.

If you're going to quote a high rate, which I whole heartedly recommend, no matter how many years you've been doing this, make sure that you absolutely blow the editor or your prospect away with the quality that you deliver. I know I mentioned this last week but I have to tell you with the people who pitched me to write for the travel magazine database, the ones that pitch me \$200 a post, not a single one of them got it right. I was shocked. Not a single one. I was not super happy to go back to the price should make both people as happy as possible. I was not super happy to except that number that they had quoted me. But I said this person looks like they know what's up and if that's what I have to pay to get good quality, okay.



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But not a single one of the people who quoted me that number or \$150- I even had somebody quote me \$300. Not a single one of those people actually wrote the database entry the way it was supposed to be written. Quote high rates, even if you don't have experience, if you are sure you can deliver but if you are not super sure you understand the tone or you think you'll need some editing, you need to give the person who's going to be doing that editing, whether it's the magazine editor or the prospect, some psychological leeway to help you out with that by making a lower rate.

In terms of rates, we're going to look at a couple of different recommendations here. I just wanted to pull up this chart for a second. It's hard to see with my Go To Webinar on. Okay, there it is. This is the rate per, I want to say it's per thousand words, just looking at the far ones over there. This is the flat rate or the range of rates that these different magazines pay for a thousand words. You'll notice that it goes up very steeply at the end here and here where we've gotten into newsstand magazines. *Cruising World*, even if you haven't heard of it I've seen it on newsstands all around the country. *Via* is not a newsstand magazine actually, it's a AAA publication but it's one of their very high level ones. *Modern Farmer* is also a newsstand publication. *Backpacker* and *AFAR*, obviously newsstand publications and these you'll see at the higher end here.

If we got this way, there are still some other ones that are newsstand publications though. There's *Savannah*. There's *Mountain Life*, Alaska Beyond, not newsstand but its national magazine because it goes on Alaska Air. *Global Traveler*, also a national magazine that you won't find on a newsstand but you'll find it in airline lounges. You'll notice here that the national magazines or the newsstand magazines are actually pretty distributed across here. Some things like *Garden and Gun*, *Down East*, *Yankee*, some regional magazines actually find themselves here and some very specialized magazines- *Modern Farmer*, *Cruising World*, and *Backpacker* also find themselves at the higher end of this range.

What I'm trying to show you with this chart is that magazines are all over the place. Where they're published geographically or where they're published locationally, so like on a newsstand versus a custom magazine or something, is not a clear indicator of how much the magazine does pay or is able to pay. Because of this, when you're quoting a rate to a magazine, it is always, always, always worth if there is more money in their budget because you just never know. Because the same way you're trying to figure out what the editor can afford, they're also trying to figure out how low they can get you for because of their freelance budget. Because they're trying to balance their freelance budget. They try to get people for as low as possible so they can maximize it. It has nothing to do with your skills. It's them trying to get the most articles out of their freelance budget possible.



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In that vein, I just want to give you a couple of rules of thumb about what you should expect to get or try to get based on your skill level when you're negotiating with magazines. If you are super new and somebody quotes you something that's 10 or 15 cents a word, don't feel bad about that. Don't be upset about it. You can always ask for more. But if you're new, that's not uncommon.

If you've been in the game for a while I think you should really be working in the 25 cents to 50 cents a word range for smaller magazines. I say this for smaller magazines not just because they pay less but because the editors tend to be less involved editorially and by that I mean that there are fewer rounds of editors that your article has to go through so it's not like the editor you're corresponding with will love your article and then it will go the person above them and that person just doesn't like it and it gets killed and you have to rewrite the whole thing from scratch.

You can have a lower per word rate with smaller magazines because the time that you spend on rewriting your article is typically much lower. For regional magazines that are pretty large or airline magazines like a *Southwest* or *Mid West Living*, all the way up to an *AFAR* sort of magazine, always a dollar a word. Because in those cases there's often, like I said, multiple rounds of editors and that's really going to drive your hourly rate down.

If you've been doing this for a while and you're sort of stagnant with the editors that you're working with, you can always go back to editors that you worked with for years and just say my rates are going up. Is it possible for you to pay me blah? If they say no- We're going to look at this in a couple of slides later. But it's totally up to you to decide what to do. If you want to keep working with them. But they just might say yes.

I had- I don't think she's on the call today, but I had somebody, Brittany Rollinson, who is the Course Director for Travel Blog Success. After she wrote *The Six Figure Travel Writing Roadmap*, she went to a client that she'd had for a long time and she asked for a raise and they just gave it to her. No negotiation. She just asked for it and they gave it to her. If you've been doing this for a while, you can always start by asking for higher rates for the people you're already working with. Just start pitching magazines with higher pay rates. You have the experience now. You've been writing for a while.

On the content marketing side- Oh, no. Sorry. These are missing. On the content marketing side- Let's go back to the previous slide for a second. On the content marketing side, if you're absolutely new and you are pitching to a client, don't settle for \$25, okay. Even if you're absolutely new and you're pitching blog posts to clients, I don't want to see you



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asking for less than \$50 because, here's why. If you were an admin, if you were in an administrative position and you were freelance, the sort of going usual rate is like \$25 an hour because even though it's less when you work for company freelance, you have to pay your own taxes and so on and so forth. I think if you're new, it's going to take you two hours to put that blog post together. I want to see you working at at least \$25 an hour so please don't quote for less than \$50 for blog posts, okay?

If you've been around for a little while, this \$100 a blog post has really getting batted around. But I want to emphasize a hundred dollars a blog post is great for 500 words. If you've been at this for a while, I don't want see you getting a hundred dollars for a thousand word blog post. I want to see you getting more for that. Like I said about getting more of the same thing, a thousand word blog post is actually not that different than a 500 word blog post. I don't really find there's a huge difference in the amount of time it takes me to write them because more time goes into planning the post and setting up the structure and things like that.

It's totally okay if you've been at this for a while to get \$150 for a thousand word blog post. It's great if you can get more. I've seen some resistance from this, even on magazine websites. They seem to sort of cap out at \$150. If you've been at this for a while, \$100 for a 500 word blog post is great and don't go below that. Make sure to get at least \$150 for a thousand word blog post.

If you have been blogging for companies but just not creating your own gigs and now you're striking out on your own, I'm serious. Do not be afraid to ask for \$250 a blog post because you now entered the plane where you have previously been getting \$100, \$150 a blog post, something like that, and now you're also you are also doing the content strategy. You're doing a lot more high level things. Do not be afraid to ask for these kinds of rates. But, like I said, it's about how you present it. Make sure that you show in your proposal all of the things that go along with that to help the prospect understand what that means for them.

What do you do when it's time to negotiate? You've sent out your pitch. You've gotten a response. The editor has accepted your article and said great, can you do it before us at blah blah per word by blah blah date. There is a huge difference between negotiating with editors versus working out pricing with content marketing prospects. Huge. Because editors won't take your assignments away when you ask for more pay. However, content marketing people will just can the deal if they don't feel good about it.

I'm going to talk first about editors. With editors, it's very easy to ask for more money. It's so easy that I want you to always do it. Make it an exercise. Something automatic like putting



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on sunscreen in the summer. I don't know. Make it one of these things that you just do automatically. If somebody gives you an assignment, just say bump it up a little bit and say can we do blah. If they give a dollar, let's say can we do \$1.25 a word. If they give you \$300 for a feature, say I was thinking more like \$400. Would that be possible? If they give you \$1,000 for a department that includes both photos and words and is about a thousand words, it's a dollar a word but you also have to do the photos. Say since there's photos involved, I've typically received more like \$1,500 for something like this. Would that fit in your budget?

Just pick one. Here's three different types of languages you can use but include one in every single response or acceptance that you ever get. Here's the thing. There's only three possible responses from an editor. No, that's not possible. Then you can decide if you want to take the work or not. I can do this much or I can't do this much but I can make this much work. Maybe you asked for that department that's a thousand words for the photos as well as the words it comes out to \$1,000. They say I can't do \$1,500 but I can do \$1,000 for the words and I can kick another \$250 for the photos. Why not just say yes, you can do that? But they are not going to take your assignment away. Content marketing is different. They might just say that's not going to work. Or they'll just stop responding to your emails. All not good scenarios.

We want to avoid this type of BONG- BONG is a rejection, by a couple of different things. When you send your proposals, don't make it a yes or no situation. Don't say in the proposal you've included a couple of different options of packages. Let me know which one works best for you. Because then they feel that they have to pick one and what if they don't want to. What if they don't like one or if they're not sure about the price or they would rather it would include something else? Say I put together three different packages for you. I'd love to hear your thoughts. Then they're going to tell you what they don't like.

But sometimes they're not going to tell you. They're just going to be a little sad or stop responding so quickly or something and this means that you need to make sure that you properly understood what was the most important thing to them about this deal. This goes back to that motivational triad that I talked about. Pain avoidance, pleasure seeking, and energy conservation. If energy conservation is the highest goal, if not spending money is the highest goal, it's going to be really difficult to get to them to sign any sort of deal.

But if prestige, if having a better blog, if making themselves look good, if getting more leads, if that's the most important thing for them, you can work with that. Likewise, with pain avoidance, if they know they need to have a blog but they don't want to be the one to do it, if that's the most important thing of them, you can work with that. But you need to play to the



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right one. You either need to give them more stats about the number of leads it's going to bring in. You need to make it more clear to them how this is going to make their life easier, whatever it is.

If you've sent somebody a proposal and you haven't heard back or you've heard something back middling, go back over your notes from the call. Figure out what they said was really important for them and send them another email emphasizing that thing.

Another way to avoid the BONG is to clearly demonstrate the value that you're providing. This is something that you do in your pitch letter, you do in a phone call, you do it in the proposal. But if you're getting a middling response, don't set it up quite like an ultimatum but just send them an email and say I'm sure you're busy. I'd love to get started so that and then mention all the great things that you're going to do for them. You can get more leads coming in and I can take this off of your plate. That I can get your site looking more attractive and more in line with your prospective customer's needs. This is different than making sure you're emphasizing just the most important point. But it's really sort of tantalizing them with all of the different things, all of the different value you're providing. If they're on the fence because they're just not sure if it's worth it, you're showing them that it is.

The other thing is offering alternatives. If they've come back and they're not really sure, then you can start to offer some different things. It helps if they say this seems like too much. I'm not sure if I need this thing. Because that gives a leg to stand on. I talked earlier about this. I'm going to bring up the same example again, but about these blog posts for \$35 and then I got them up to \$50. I said I still can't do that but if you can do the photos and you can upload the posts and donate all the formatting, then we can make this work. This is a really good way of doing it when people are being stingy or when they just don't have the budget. Like you're talking to someone who doesn't have the ability to approve the budget.

But with magazines, and I'm going to throw out a very important legal disclaimer here, with magazines this trade-off thing is one of the key points of negotiating. Earlier I gave you some different things you could say to get people to increase the per word rate for your magazines. But there's also, and this can be easier to negotiate, some different legal things that you can exchange for your contract terms. But the ever important legal disclaimer here is I'm no lawyer, this is not professional legal advice, please seek out professional legal advice whenever needed. Blah blah blah. You know what I mean.



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When we're trading contract terms, I've mentioned the concept of work-for-hire earlier. I want to really, really rail on this. Try never to work-for-hire if you can avoid it and if you do have to do it, make sure that you get premium pricing on it. I mentioned why, because it's make you have to take more time on any work that you do that is similar. I've used that argument for everything. I've used that argument to get people to drop work-for-hire. I've used that argument to get people to pay more money. People understand it. All you have to tell them is I write about this topic often. If I sell these words for you as work-for-hire, it means I will potentially be plagiarizing myself if I mention anything too similar to them in the future. It requires a significant extra time investment for me and that is priced accordingly or it needs to be priced accordingly or what have you.

There's a lot of gradations of rights that people are buying and this is both for content marketing and for magazines. I don't want to go too, too much into them. We have some more content around this on our blog, on everything you want to know about freelance contracts. But there's a lot of different ways you can step down from work-for-hire. There's sort of two balances. There's what geographic range of rights that you signed and what format of rights are you selling.

I've put in here you can exchange that for 5-year, world-wide exclusive in all formats that currently exist or will be invented. This currently exist or will be invented is a very, very popular thing now because as more and more digital things come out, people keep asking for all rights and all forms that exist and will be invented. This is something that I tend to kind of give people that they can have the future invented but I try not to do too much with the exclusivity.

This is a pretty stark one here- 5-year, world-wide exclusivity. I usually offer six months or one year. Then they have non-exclusive rights in perpetuity. This is really important. Anytime anybody wants work-for-hire, you need to give them non-exclusive rights and perpetuity because they want to make sure that they can still use that thing down the line and not get into legal trouble. Always keep that phrase in there, non-exclusive rights and perpetuity. If you're trying to get rid of this obnoxious all formats that currently exist or will be invented, I recommend again giving exclusive rights for a low period and then give them the non-exclusive rights and perpetuity.

Exclusive web rights. This is a huge pain in the ass. Sorry, pardon my language. Because you want to be able to post a link on your website, maybe you want to use it on your blog or something like this. Also this is just a tricky thing because things get cut and pasted and when things are online is when people can run these plagiarism searches. You run into that thing



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with what I was talking about work-for-hire where if you write something for the future that sounds too similar to something that you wrote in the past that you've sold exclusive rights for, you're plagiarizing yourself. I like to give them non-exclusive rights and perpetuity and exclusive rights only for a little while.

The next one is a little stark. I've seen some magazines, this is not super common, and even some content marketing contracts, where they charge you a fee per day if your work is late. This is ridiculous. I hate it. People should never do it. It's just so bully and bossy and not adult. Anytime somebody does that and they won't take it out, I tell them that I would like to have the same thing about my pay so that I get an additional 10% pay that everyday payment is late. Because you would not believe, like I said, everyone needs to protect their own interests but people do not care about paying you at all as much as they care about getting your work from you. Any time you can protect that, and this is the only reason that I would ever let anybody keep this 10% per day per late work thing in there because it really protects your ability to get your money.

Again, I'm really short on time, so I'm going to try to make this fast and this is the end of the slide deck as well. Let's look quickly at some of the common contract terms that you might come across. But first and I'm curious. You guys chime in over here. Do you guys know that if you don't have a contract in place what type of rights are buying when they pay you? Because this is a really common misconception and I found out recently, even among magazine editors- I was really shocked about this. I thought because I think I've learned this from magazine editors that everybody knew how rights worked in the magazine world because they are dolling out contracts. They're editors. They have to deal with legal things, right? But no, that's not true.

If there is no contract in place, the only thing that people are buying from you is a one-time, non-exclusive license to use your words. That means if you have written something for a print magazine and you don't have a contract, they actually legally cannot use it on their website. This is super important. This is a great negotiating chip. I have had magazines that I pitched once and then I did an article for them and they're putting the full text of the article up on their website and they don't have a contract and they haven't mentioned anywhere in their materials that they are buying the right to use the words both in print and online. They're at subject to this standard rights arrangement.

They're buying the one-time, non-exclusive license to use your images or text or whatever it is. Then they want something else. They want something from me that I don't like. They want to give me a new contract that's work-for-hire or something like this. I say "Look



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buddy, you're currently illegally using all of this stuff so let's put together a better contract here. This little tiny piece of knowledge is something that you can use really, really effectively as a negotiation chip down the line. I definitely recommend that you take that with you.

The reason that everybody tells you in *Media Bistro*, journalism classes and things like that is to always have a contract is to make sure people pay you. I found if people don't want to pay you, it doesn't really matter if there's a contract in place or not. There are two very prominent newsstand magazines that everybody wants to write for, *Budget Travel* and *National Geographic Traveler*, that have huge, huge payment issues for years. All of those writers were on contract and they were suing the magazines and they still weren't getting their money any faster. I think if somebody doesn't want to pay you the contract doesn't make a huge difference. But you can actually benefit when there isn't a contract.

This is not to say go out there and do all of your writing without contracts. I don't recommend that. But this is just something worth keeping in mind. If it seems like it would be a huge hassle to get a contract, it's not the end of the world. I had somebody tell me once in a media distribution class that they had lost some really good assignments because they refused to begin work on the assignment until the contract was signed and they didn't get the contract back until the day of the deadline. That's not smart. That is not a strategy I recommend to anybody. It's very important to have a contract, specifically with big magazines for some reasons we're going to look at but don't put yourself in a situation where you're going to lose what could be a really important click for your career because of an administrative hurdle. In a big magazine, contracts usually go through a bigger office and your editor only has so much power to get that sorted out.

Common contract terms to look out for. There's a bunch in here and I'm going to give you a little bit of a review on each of them. But take a little screen shot or a picture of this slide if you want to look up more about each of them so that you understand them when you come across them. But I'm going to give you what you need to know to understand.

Relationship. I don't see this is every contract but it should be there. It's pretty important. It specifies that you are an independent contractor. You are not an employee. This is important for tax reasons. It's the difference between getting a W-2 or a 1099 this time of year.

Term. This is particularly important for content marketing gigs. This specifies what happens if somebody wants to end the arrangement. I typically try to put in there that anybody can end it with a certain amount of notice. But the particularly legal wording in here that's very



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important is at will. This means that you're not contractually obligated, no matter what happens, to work for them for six months. That you with the appropriated notice as stipulated in the contract can leave at any time, that either party can leave at any time.

Submissions. This is typically mentioned but then it's described in an appendix. This is the exact things that you will be providing for whoever your editor is. If it's a magazine, this is what your article will consist of. If it's content marketing. It's the different things that are in that deliverables part of the proposal.

Representation. This is an interesting one and again you don't see it all the time. But I find magazines increasingly including it. Representation is when you are acting on behalf of a magazine or a company. For instance, I have people for the Travel Magazine Database sometimes ask me or sometimes they are asking me if they can call the magazine to get information that they're not able to find online. I say, and I have this in our guidelines, that writers are not authorize to represent for a company. Often in your contract or in the guidelines it will say if you are able to act with a tourism board, when you're on a press trip or something like that, as a representative of the magazine.

Indemnification. This is a huge one and again please legal disclaimer. This is something that is really worth looking into that you have coverage either in terms of insurance, which is a bit expensive, and honestly I don't have it and I only know a couple of people who do. But this is what keeps you safe if the magazine or whoever has physically published your content, if somebody sues over that content. Most magazines that have a contract will have an indemnification clause that shifts the blame from them to you if there is an issue with that content because legally the person who's published, not the person who has the byline, but the person who's published it is responsible for that. If you are setting a contract for content marketing work, I highly recommend that you put in an indemnification clause in there to protect yourself and make it very clear that any responsibility is on the company.

Compensation. Of course you want to have this in there and we want to have not only the amount that we are going to be paid but also the terms. When and how. How is very important so make sure that you get that in there.

The license. This goes into the different types of rights that they're acquiring. There are also a couple of licenses. This is where it's going to be work-for-hire, it's going to be exclusivity in print and online for six months and then non-exclusive rights and perpetuity in all forms that currently exist or will be created.



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Exclusivity. I use the word exclusivity separately from license because I'm not talking about exclusive license to use your work. I'm talking about exclusivity for you as a writer. It's become increasingly and more common for magazines to ask or require exclusivity from the writer. What that means is that if I write for one meeting planning magazine, I am not allowed to write for another meeting planning magazine perhaps for like six months after my article comes out and the one I'm writing for or something like that.

Conde Nast started a huge hullabaloo a couple of years ago by asking not only for exclusivity for a whole host of magazines- Essentially if you worked *Conde Nast* magazine, you couldn't write for any other major newsstand magazine that came out from another company for a long time. But they were also asking for crazy rights. Like they wanted to acquire the right to all royalties if your article was developed into a book or a movie, which is a huge chunk of change and really sad. That goes in the license section, the royalties' issue. I don't know if that particularly will be coming up for any of you in the near future. But if you're writing for a very large magazine, watch out for that and ask that they can take it out. Sometimes they can and sometimes they can't. These are the kinds of things where you need to ask yourself is the pay, is the prestige of this clip worth what you are giving up here.

Intellectual property. This is something that you sometimes see in magazine contracts. It's more likely in content marketing contracts. But this goes with content strategy. Anytime you are doing content strategy for somebody, I recommend having an intellectual property clause in there that protects that the ideas you come up with while working on this contract still belong to you. That you don't forfeit every idea that you you've had, that you've ever sent to the editor, that they can use even if they're no longer employing you.

Force Majeure. This is one I don't see in writing contracts enough and I wish I would see it more. This is very common in contracts for events. It means that if something, if there is an act of God as they say, if there's a hurricane, an earthquake, a flood, something like, that they won't be held accountable for the event being canceled. As a freelancer, I really recommend that you have something like this in your contracts to protect you from any of the sort of liabilities that come with not getting your article done. If you are critically injured, detained over seas- I have a friend who knows someone that got stuck in like prison in North Korea. I swear to God. They got detained for some really silly made-up reason and they got stuck there for like six months. Force Majeure is something that if you're making up your own contracts I think is worth having in there.

I know I've gone a little bit quickly through contract terms and like I said this is something that I'm not a lawyer so I don't want to tell you too, too much about this but there is some



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actual legal advice online. But these are the main, about 10 things that I recommend that you both look at, including in your contracts and look out for. If you want to make up your own contract for travel content marketing work or to give to a magazine when you are accepting magazine contracts, there's a lot of great templates out there. There's even some apps these days that let you put in different specifications and they'll create one for you. There's some actual legal people out there that have created really nice solutions for freelancers to put these things together.

On that note, I just want to say thank you so much to everyone who's diligently followed every one of the webinars in our content marketing series.

It's been such a pleasure chatting with you. I hope you all have a really great week. Cheers.