

The background of the entire page is a dense, overlapping pattern of US dollar bills, including \$100 and \$20 bills, rendered in a light green color. The bills are scattered across the page, creating a textured, financial-themed backdrop.

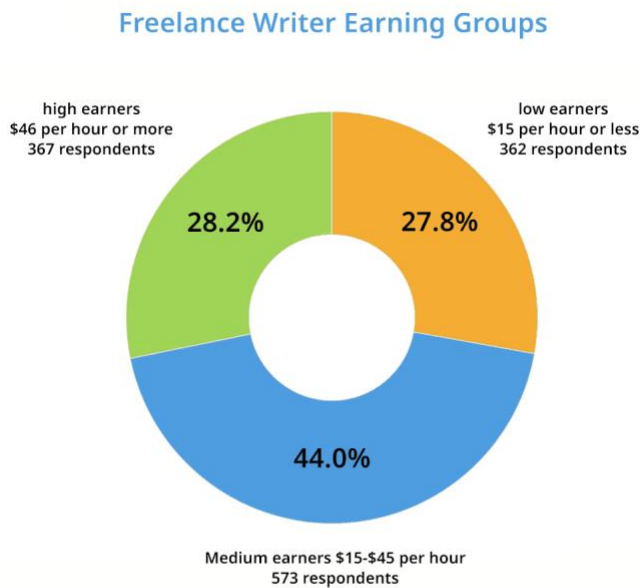
10 Things Highly-Paid Freelance Content Writers Do

and **how you can do them, too**

Let's talk about money.

Not a comfortable topic for many people, and especially for freelance writers. 27.8% of freelance writers, to be exact.

That's how many freelance writers earn \$15 or less per hour. But some freelance writers – about 28% - earn \$45 or more per hour.



©ContentWank, 2018 Freelance Writers Survey
<https://contentwank.com/freelance-writer-survey-summary-of-results/>

And some very elite freelance writers? They earn \$75 or more per hour. But only about one in ten of freelance writers ever gets to that level of income.

So it's not really true that freelance writers can earn a lot of money. Some elite freelance writers earn \$8,000, \$10,000, even \$12,000 or more per month.

What are they doing that other freelancers aren't?

Good question. They're doing quite a lot of things, actually. If you look into how highly-paid freelancers get work and the type of work they do, they are very different from their underpaid peers.

But here's the good news: You can be like them. It isn't even very hard... if you know what to do.

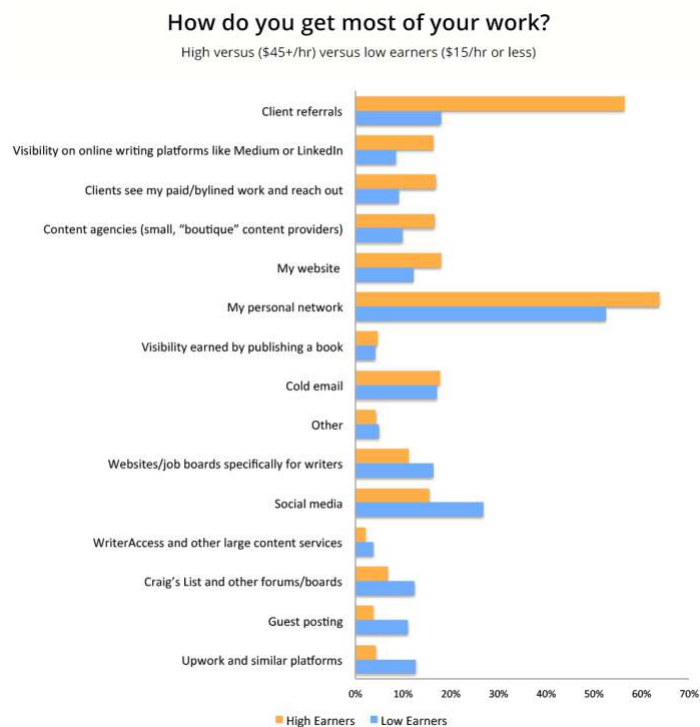
1. They get most of their work through referrals.

Highly-paid freelance writers know a secret other freelancers don't: When clients come to you, everything is better.

Clients that come to you:

- Are more likely to agree to your rates.
- Are more likely to take your advice (and so they get better results).
- Are not in the power seat during negotiations. Because they were the ones asking the elite writer to work with them, the elite writer is in the power seat.

Incredibly, freelance writers who get most of their work from referrals are THREE TIMES more likely to be in the group of high earners.



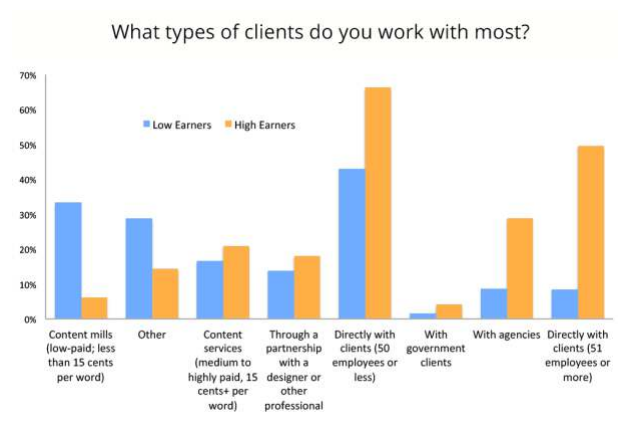
So how do you get more referrals? You ask. Ask:

- When clients are happy.
- After you've established a relationship with them.
- On the invoices you send. (This works especially well if you offer a 5% discount to any client who refers you at least, say, \$2,000 worth of work.)

2. They work directly with companies, especially companies with 51 employees or more.

If you want to earn big bucks from freelance writing, you have to cut out the middleman (content mills and content writing services).

You'll do even better if you work with medium-sized or larger companies. Freelance writers who work with companies of 51 employees or more are FIVE TIMES as likely to earn over \$45 per hour than underpaid writers are.



So how do you do this? You look and act like a pro. You present yourself like a professional, approach these companies with a business to business mindset, and use social selling and a great personal network to find and engage with the decision-makers at these firms.

If that sounds like a lot of work, consider the next point.

3. They get recurring work.

This is the secret for a high hourly rate. You invest the time in finding a few great clients, then you work with them long-term. This saves you hundreds of hours of marketing and self-promotion work every year, and so radically increases how much you can earn. Instead of chasing clients all the time, you pick just a few good, recurring clients, and you stay with them.

For years.

Freelancers who earn more than \$45 per hour are TWICE as likely to say that most of their work is recurring than their underearning peers.

4. They write for clients who know how to make money from their content.

Far too few freelance writers (and the clients who hire them) understand how to monetize content. But this is actually one of the most essential things they need to know if they want to earn anything from their writing.

Some clients, unfortunately, will never make much money from the writing you give them. It's not because your writing is bad... it's just they don't know how to take the words you gave them and turn those words into business, whether that business is sales, or subscriptions, or advertising dollars.

Because so many clients don't know how to monetize content, they can't pay writers a living wage. And the clients aren't making any money, either!

Highly-paid freelancer writers work with people who know how to take their writing and turn it into dollars (or pounds, euros, or what have you). They seek out the clients who make money from content, because those are the clients who can afford to pay them well.

How can you do this? Look for clients who are selling stuff. Who are clearly monetizing their content in smart ways. Those are the people who can afford to pay you what you're worth.

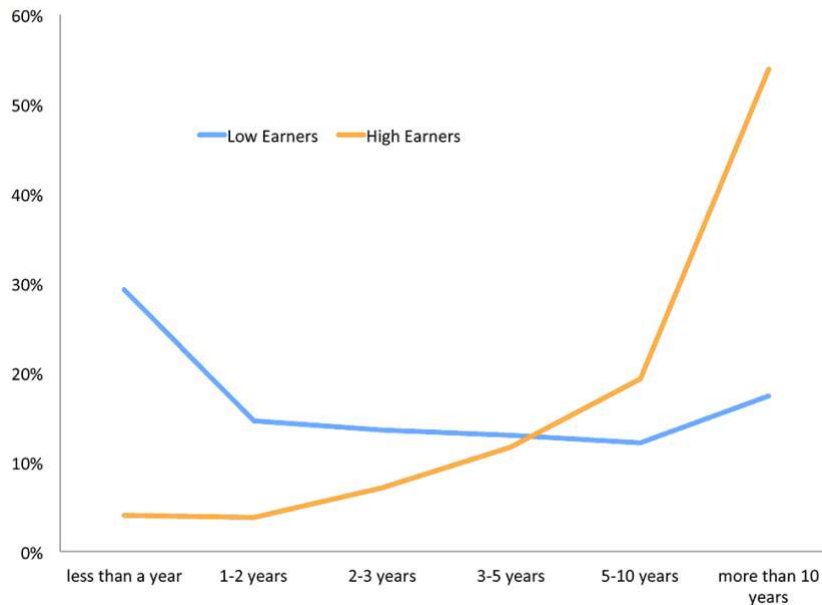
5. They have more than five years of experience.

Sadly, only one out of 20 freelance writers earns more than \$45 per hour in their first year.

So while it might seem pretty simple to "make money from your writing!" the reality is that most freelancers have to go through the professional writers' School of Hard Knocks before they do well.

If you're relatively new at freelance writing, you should be aware that the first few years can be rough. You may need to hunker down for a few years or get advice from someone who's got enough experience to show you how to really earn a living.

How long have you been writing professionally?



6. They specialize.

Here's a hard truth: Writing skills aren't all that special.

Sorry, but it's true. Writing skills are an asset, definitely, but of themselves they won't usually earn you a whole lot of money (especially as a freelance writer).

But if you add in some subject expertise, that's a different story. Subject experts who can write well are valuable. If they're in the right niche, they're more valuable still.

Subject experts don't have an income ceiling. Unfortunately, freelance writers do.

But here's the good news: You can become enough of a subject expert fairly quickly. And once you're known for a specialty, clients in that niche will seek you out. You'll double, maybe even triple or quadruple what you can charge.

The sort of client who pays \$600 per blog post doesn't want a generalist. They want someone who knows their industry and understands their business. They're happy to pay for that kind of expertise.

7. They are twice as likely to work with “B2B” companies (business to business) rather than with “B2C” companies (business to consumer) companies.

You’ve seen how the size of the company you work with affects your earnings as a freelancer. Well, the type of company you work with affects your earnings, too.

So why do writers who work with B2B companies earn more? It’s because of a thing known as “average order size.” When a B2B company makes a sale, it’s typically worth several thousand dollars (sometimes tens of thousands of dollars). When a B2C company makes a sale, it might be for just \$30-\$100 dollars.

B2B company sales are more complex than B2C sales. Because they’re more complex, B2B companies break the sales “funnel” down into separate parts. One of those parts is a “lead.” B2B companies focus on driving lots of high-quality leads and converting those leads into sales. Many B2B companies will pay \$200 or more for a lead (which is more than the average value of a B2C sale).

This is great news for freelance writers, because the content they write tends to be especially effective for generating leads. A good freelance writer, given the right assignment, can generate two, ten, even 50 leads.

This means the freelance writers’ work can easily generate \$400, \$2000, even \$10,000 worth of business.

... which means most B2B companies can afford to pay writers **much** more than B2C companies can.

8. They have a platform.

Highly-paid freelance writers make themselves easy to find. They have websites, good LinkedIn profiles, and they may even have written a book (which is a great way to instantly become a subject expert, by the way).

They post useful, industry-specific content to their social media feeds. They keep their bylines as often as they can. And because they are visible, potential clients find them all the time. These clients come to them without any direct effort on their part.

Highly-paid freelance writers rarely send cold emails. They don't waste time on job boards. Instead, they build and maintain their platform like a professional does, and their clients come to them.

9. They are picky about who they work with.

Elite freelance writers know that nothing wrecks their hourly rate quicker than a bad client.

Demanding clients, mean clients, clients who constantly expand the scope of projects... elite freelancers won't work with them. They don't allow their hourly rate to get diminished too badly, but more importantly, they don't work with clients who make them unhappy.

Unhappy writers don't write as well. They make more mistakes, get tired faster, and work slower. A highly-paid freelance writer who has a good platform and a good personal network never has to work with these types of bottom-of-the-barrel clients. This type of freelancer will immediately put on their boss's hat and defend their valued employee (themselves) and tell any bad client they're fired.

Also, because elite freelance writers want to find dream clients they can work with for years (for all the recurring work), they will be very picky about which clients they take on. If a client isn't a great match, and someone they want to work with for years, they won't take on the work.

Does this make them picky? Yes. But here's the secret: Once you have recurring work, you need FAR fewer clients.

10. They invest in themselves.

Elite freelance writers view themselves as pros. They value themselves, and strive to deliver world-class work for every assignment.

To do this, and to stay current in their industries, they need ongoing training. So they invest in courses, and go to conferences, and set aside enough time to read the current books and studies in their field.

They will also invest in a few carefully picked professional listings (even if they cost \$300+ per year) because these types of listings attract their ideal clients... with almost no work for the freelancer.

These certifications and professional memberships also telegraph to their ideal prospective clients that they are an expert. They are a professional. And they deserve to be paid accordingly.

How to apply this for yourself: Get at least one high-value, industry-recognized certification. Join 2-3 well-respected organizations for writers. Invest in yourself; you're a business.

About Pam Neely and Content Wonk

Who is Pam Neely? She's a freelance writer who charges \$600-\$1,000 per blog post or more, and regularly earns \$200 or even \$300+ per hour.

Pam has:

- Published over a million words online in the last few years in publications ranging from Forbes, Entrepreneur, TechCrunch, MarketingProfs, CoSchedule's blog, and many, many others.
- Won a Gold Hermes Award for blogging, plus several other B2B content awards and accolades.
- Earned Master Content Marketer certification from Copyblogger.
- Won a New York Press Award for a feature article she wrote while still in college.
- Run a/b split-tests on headlines that have saved her clients up to \$900,000 per year in ad spend.
- Earned a Master's Degree in Direct and Interactive Marketing from New York University.
- Been building, writing, and marketing websites since 1997.
- Launched, grown, and sold three internet businesses.

When she's not working on her laptop, Pam is usually:

- Gardening
- Having an amazing dinner with her partner of 18 years
- Improving and documenting the thru-hike she blazed in 2017, which goes from the Santa Fe Ski Basin all the way to Taos Plaza in northern New Mexico. Her thru-hike covers 118 miles of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, covering four counties and totaling 20,000 feet of cumulative elevation.