



Freelancing

Readers
List
\$\$\$
Freelancing

The Blogger's Guide to
Freelancing

by

— Ali Luke —

Chapter One: Basics of Staff Blogging	4
My Story	4
This Could Be Your Success Story Too	5
Chapter Two: Questions about Staff Blogging Answered	6
What Exactly Is Staff Blogging / Freelance Blogging?	6
How Much Can I Expect to Earn?.....	7
Do I Need to Have My Own Blog?	7
Do I Have to Be a Good Writer?.....	8
How Do I Know if Freelancing Is Right for Me?	9
What Are Your Freelancing Goals?	9
Worksheet #1: Your Freelancing Goals	10
What topics do you love writing (or talking!) about?	10
What blogs do you admire, and want to write for?	10
List three reasons why you want to be a staff blogger – your motivations:.....	10
What wider goals do you have which staff blogging might help you to reach?	10
Chapter Three: How to Find Great Jobs and Write Great Applications	11
General Advice on Applications	12
What You Should Do.....	12
What You Want to Avoid	12
Chapter Four: Guest Post Your Way to Success	14
Why Guest Posting is a Great Way to Start.....	14
What Blogs Should You Start With?	14
How to Send In Your Guest Post	15
What to Do If You Get Rejected	16
After Your Guest Post is Published	17
Rejected for a Job?.....	19
Chapter Five: Apply On Spec – and Land a Job You'll Love	20
Maximising Your Chances	20
Finding the Right Blogs	20
How to Apply.....	21
If You Get Rejected	21

This ebook is an updated version of *The Staff Blogging Course (2009)* and is copyright Alison Luke, 2011.

Please do not sell, distribute or republish it in any form.

You may quote brief sections of the ebook for review or recommendation purposes. If you want to quote more than a few paragraphs, please email me (ali@aliventures.com) to get permission.

The cover is by the lovely and talented Charlie Pabst, of [Charfish Design](#).

This is a free sample of *The Blogger's Guide Freelancing*. If you'd like to buy the whole ebook, you can do so at: <http://www.bloggers-guides.com/freelancing>

Chapter One: Basics of Staff Blogging

Hello, and welcome! Since you're reading this ebook, I assume you're hoping to make money blogging. Great! I'd like to make one thing clear before we start – *you don't have to be a celebrity or internet guru to make money by writing blog posts*. There are hundreds of blogging success stories from ordinary people just like you and me.

This ebook focuses on a specialised form of freelance writing: staff blogging – writing regular posts as a staff member on a large blog. A lot of the principles will apply to any sort of freelancing that you want to do – but I'm going to concentrate on helping you find **steady, fun, well-paid jobs writing for blogs**.

I'll start by telling you my story – **how one \$20 per post job in February 2008 started a blogging adventure that led to me quitting my day job just six months later**. I'll go through some questions that you might have about staff blogging, and give you some questions to think about.

My Story

During 2007, I came across the concept of “problogging” – earning money from writing a blog. Since I love writing, and I didn't fancy being stuck in my tech support day job for ever, I decided to give it a go. I read Steve Pavlina's seminal [How To Make Money From Your Blog](#) – three times. I devoured Darren Rowse's [Blogging for Beginners series](#) (and later in 2008, I bought the ProBlogger book).

On January 1st 2008, I launched my first blog, and slapped GoogleAds on it, hoping I'd make enough to quit the day job.

It was eleven months before I received my first cheque from Google, for \$120. By that point, I'd written well over 120 posts for my blog. \$1 per article didn't seem too good to me.

But when I started my own blog in January 2008, I did something else too. Something that didn't seem like a big deal at the time – but which led me to find a far better way of earning from blogging. I wrote a guest post for a blog who offered to take me on as a paid staff member.

At this point, I was so new to the blogging world that I had no idea that staff blogging existed. Yet that one little job snowballed into more, and I quit my day job in July 2008. By

September, I was paying my rent each month just through staff blogging. And by January of 2009, I was covering all my bills as well.

This Could Be Your Success Story Too

What I learnt in 2008 was that there really is a way to make easy, certain money blogging – from day one. And it doesn't require an aggressive commenting strategy, Digg power-users, or any technical wizardry. If you can write, you can find paying work as a staff blogger.

Maybe you have some doubts about staff blogging – perhaps you think you could earn more money by having your own blog and owning all the contents. And, after years of hard work, that might well be true. But selling your work as a freelancer means you can make an income from day one – while building up a blog of your own too, if you want.

The huge advantage to working as a staff blogger is that you know exactly what you'll be paid for each post you write. It's a much safer (and for many writers, a more enjoyable) way to make money blogging than by running ads on your own blog and hoping for the best.

It doesn't matter who you are. You might be in the same position as I was in early 2008, trying to make some money on the side of a full-time job. You might be a stay-at-home mum or dad looking for something creative to do that brings in some extra dollars. You might be a student hunting for a job that uses and builds your writing skills – one which is a lot more fun than stacking shelves.

Whoever you are, I'm hoping that you'll be sending me an email with your success story before the year's out. Drop me a line at ali@aliventures.com any time to let me know how you're getting on!

Chapter Two: Questions about Staff Blogging Answered

I know you've probably got some questions. These are the ones which I most often get asked.

What Exactly Is Staff Blogging / Freelance Blogging?

Some terms about blogging can be confusing, so I'll clarify a few here:

- **Blogging** – writing articles for a blog (usually your own)
- **Guest blogging** – writing an article or articles for someone else's blog, for free
- **Staff blogging** – writing regular articles for someone else's blog, and getting paid
- **Freelance blogging** – writing paid posts for a blog, though not necessarily on a regular basis (it might be as a one-off)

Staff bloggers write on a regular basis, usually anything from once a month to twice a day, and either receive a monthly salary or, more commonly, get paid per post.

When you write a post as a freelance blogger, the *copyright* will normally remain with you (meaning that you have the right to state that you are the author).

The *rights* to publish the post, however, are transferred to whoever bought it from you. Many blogs don't provide contracts for staff bloggers, so ask your editor if you're ever unsure. In general, you should assume that the right to republish the post on other websites belongs to the blog you're writing for – if you want to repost the piece on your own blog or on another blog, you should ask permission first.

To give you some idea of what staff blogging can cover, here's a list of some of the blogs I've written paid posts for. (I've given their taglines so you have an idea of the type of content they cover):

- [Diet Blog](#) – “Eat right. Get healthy.”
- [Daily Writing Tips](#) – “Simple yet effective tips to improve your writing.”
- [The Change Blog](#) – “We can consciously change for the better.”
- [Pick the Brain](#) – “Anything related to self improvement.”
- [Dumb Little Man](#) – “Save money, increase your productivity, stay sane.”

How Much Can I Expect to Earn?

In [Chapter Ten](#) I cover getting paid and how much you should charge. You can expect to earn anything from \$20 - \$100 per post – there are a number of positions which pay less, but I'd recommend avoiding them.

If you're used to writing for print media, that figure may seem quite low. Bear in mind that blog posts are much faster and easier to write than magazine articles: few will require in-depth research, and your posts will often be quite short – around 400 to 800 words.

In early 2009, I was making around \$1,000 per month from my staff blogging, working just one or two days a week. I've wound that down slightly over the past couple of years, as more and more of my income has come from entrepreneurial projects – but staff blogging still puts a hefty dent into my bills each month.

Do I Need to Have My Own Blog?

Most freelance bloggers began blogging on their own sites. You don't *have* to have your own blog, but you'll find it trickier to land your first job if you've got no blogging experience at all. (Having said that, you certainly don't need a large or well-known blog – editors and owners of blogs will just be looking for evidence that you know how to write for the web.)

If you have your own blog, you've got a helping hand when it comes to applying for staff blogging jobs. You can easily demonstrate that:

- You understand how to upload posts and perform basic technical operations related to blogging (most, though not all, staff positions require you to enter your posts into the blog's software).
- You have some experience in writing for the web.
- You have clips (samples of your writing) available.

If you don't already have a blog, think about what topics you'd like to staff blog on, and start a blog in the same area. In [Chapter Nineteen](#), we'll be looking at how to market yourself using your own blog.

Do I Have to Be a Good Writer?

I won't try to tell you that writing ability doesn't matter at all – because it does. If you're an experienced and confident writer, staff blogging will be a breeze. But if you agonize over every email you write and if you're frequently told you have problems with basics like grammar and punctuation, you need to sort out these issues before you try to launch your freelancing career.

You certainly don't need to have an English degree – or even a high school diploma – to be a freelance blogger. Most blog reader (and editors!) want you to write in a straightforward, clear, direct and conversational manner. Showing off a huge vocabulary or an ability to construct 100-word sentences is an active disadvantage.

If you do need a hand with your writing, I strongly recommend [Daily Writing Tips](#), a goldmine of information about grammar, spelling, correct word usage and much more. (Yes, I'm a teeny bit biased: as you saw earlier, I used to write for them.)

You might also want to get a copy of Strunk and White's *Elements of Style*. It's a classic guide for elegant, clear writing and it's available from [Amazon.com](#), [Amazon.co.uk](#) and almost certainly can be found in (or ordered into) your local bookstore. You can also read it online for free, at [Bartleby](#).

And, of course, you'll want to check out another ebook in my *Blogger's Guide* series – "[The Blogger's Guide to Effective Writing](#)" – which takes you through everything you need to know to write great blog posts easily. **Since you already own this ebook, you can get *The Blogger's Guide to Effective Writing* for just \$19 – use the discount code "staffblogger".**

Learning is important – but you also need to practice. Write thoughtful posts for your own blog, giving yourself time to redraft them. Look out for grammar and spelling mistakes, but also for clumsy phrasing, awkward word choices or over-used clichés. If you have a friend who's good with words, ask them to take a look at one of your posts and point out where you're going wrong.

How Do I Know if Freelancing Is Right for Me?

The simple answer to this one is to just give it a try! If you dislike it, you can just stop.

To offer you a bit of reassurance before you embark upon your freelancing journey, though, staff blogging will probably be a great fit for you if you'd like to:

- Make money working from home (or anywhere in the world with a net connection!)
- Research and write about topics which interest you
- Bring useful information and advice, or great entertainment, to people who need it
- Set your own salary and control your own workload
- Work at any time and in any place that suits you

There are only a couple of reasons why you might *not* find staff blogging such a great job:

- If you're a slow or unconfident writer. Don't be too put off if this is the case – you'll improve with practice.
- If you can't bear having your writing edited. Most blog editors change post titles, many will rewrite sections of your post to suit the style of their blog or to suit search engines. Again, don't worry too much about this – you'll probably become less sensitive about your work if you do start staff blogging.

What Are Your Freelancing Goals?

Now I've answered some of your questions, it's your turn to answer some of mine. ;-) This is about getting you to think through what *you* want to achieve from staff blogging.

This will help you target your initial pitches to the blogs which you'll most enjoy writing for – and it'll boost your motivation (or get you back on track) whenever staff blogging starts to feel more like “work” than “fun”.

You'll find the questions over the page.

Worksheet #1: Your Freelancing Goals

What topics do you love writing (or talking!) about?

(Be fairly general here, e.g. football, technology, art, literature, computer games)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What blogs do you admire, and want to write for?

(Don't censor yourself here because you're "not good enough". You will be, given time.)

List three reasons why you want to be a staff blogger – your motivations:

(Be honest. "Money" is fine!)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What wider goals do you have which staff blogging might help you to reach?

(You might want to build up your profile as a writer, for instance.)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Chapter Three: How to Find Great Jobs and Write Great Applications

If you've worked your way through the first two chapters, you should have a good idea what staff blogging involves. Maybe you tried out the exercises on the previous page. Now it's time to really dig in...

You'll need to find a staff blogging position to apply for, and I'll take you through four different approaches to finding and landing that job.

While you read the next few chapters, keep in mind that there's no single, fool-proof, perfect way to find a staff blogging job. My various positions have come through routes as varied as:

- **Writing guest posts** and then being offered a staff position unexpectedly!
- **Emailing bloggers** who use staff writers and asking for a job
- **Applying for jobs** listed on job boards ... surprisingly, my least successful method.
- **Receiving emails out of the blue** from people who've read my work and want to hire me.

Keep in mind your goals while you're looking for staff blogging jobs:

- If your main reason for staff blogging is to build up high-quality writing credentials, try to get jobs with sites that will look impressive on your resume.
- If you just want to maximise your income, search for big blogs on popular topics (technology and celebrities are two huge areas).
- And if you just want to have fun and enjoy your staff blogging as a hobby, make sure your job hunt leads you towards blogs that interest and excite you.

In this chapter, I'll help you over the biggest hurdle that many would-be staff bloggers face: applying for a job. Many people feel quite daunted by this, especially when writing to blog editors with a readership of tens of thousands – it can be tricky to know whether your application sounds too formal or too familiar.

I'll clear up some of the mystery surrounding blogging job applications by giving you a few simple guidelines on what to do and what not to do.

General Advice on Applications

Your email is going to be the first thing that the editor sees. With dozens of applications in their inbox, yours needs to look professional – otherwise it'll get deleted with barely a second glance.

What You Should Do

Read instructions carefully. When blogging jobs are advertised, editors are often quite specific about how they'd like you to apply (for example, some will want a resume, some will want clips, others will want both).

Even if you're applying on spec, look for a page on the blog specifying any requirements.

The same goes for guest posting – many blogs publish tips for would-be guest posters. Here's an example: [Copyblogger's Guest Post guidelines](#)

Proof-read, twice. Careless typos create a bad impression when applying for *any* job, and that goes double for writing jobs. In some cases, your application email will be the only sample of your writing that the editor has. Impress them!

Be friendly, not stuffy. Your email isn't a college essay – you can use contractions (“I’ve” not “I have”), you can start with “Hi” or “Hello”, and you don't have to end with “Yours sincerely”.

Be concise. Blog editors are busy people, and large blogs receive a *lot* of emails. Keep your application as brief as possible. Don't include your life history or a long list of irrelevant credentials.

Use bullet-points to list your *relevant* skills and experiences: such as blogs you've guest-posted on (“I have written for ProBlogger”, for instance) or your own blogging experience (“I have been running a gadget-related blog since January 2008”).

If you have a relevant academic or professional qualification, put that in too. (“I am a registered dietician” for a health food blog, or “I majored in English” for a writing blog.)

What You Want to Avoid

Don't try to be too clever. “Cute” subject lines like “You Can Haz Awesomest Blogger On Teh Planet” or hubristic ones like “Stop searching now – I'm the writer you need” can backfire. If you're not careful, your email could get deleted before it's even opened.

Don't aim too low. Blogs offering \$5/post aren't worth your while. Even if the posts are short, it can take as long to write a 100 word post as a 300 word post (if anything, it might take longer; it's hard to say something in very few words.)

"I have made this letter longer than usual, only because I have not had time to make it shorter." – Blaise Pascal (17th-century French philosopher and mathematician).

Don't give up too soon. It might take ten or twenty applications before you land that first staff blogging job. But if you can write well, you *will* get that break in the end. Just make sure your emails let editors know that you'll be a friendly, professional person to work with.

Tip: Don't Settle For a Topic You Hate

Where there are niches, there are people willing to pay you to write for them, so they can use their time doing more valuable activities. If you're absolutely passionate about the topic, I say go for it - if not, steer clear. You would be amazed at what some people are willing to do to make some extra money. Your discomfort with a topic, as well as your boredom crafting the words, will reflect when you crank out dry, mechanical writing.

Just imagine that you're an animal loving vegetarian, and someone offers you a great offer as a staff writer on some burger site. You'll be selling your soul every time you cross a *t* and dot an *i*. On the other hand, if you're an artsy type, and someone has you drawing up white papers on taxes, you might just poke your eyeballs out to stop the boredom that you've brought upon yourself.

Alex Shalman, www.alexshalman.com

All the above advice applies to communicating with blog and website editors, whatever application method you're using. In the next four chapters, I'll cover different ways of finding a job, with specific tips for each one.

You can either read through all the chapters, or jump straight to whichever one interests you most:

- [Chapter Four: Guest-Post Your Way to Success](#)
- [Chapter Five: Apply On Spec – and Land a Job You'll Love](#)
- [Chapter Six: Standing Out From the Job Board Crowd](#)
- [Chapter Seven: The Best Job Boards for Bloggers](#)
- [Chapter Eight: Networking Your Way to a Job](#)

Chapter Four: Guest Post Your Way to Success

I learnt the guest posting method by accident (see “My Story” in chapter one). I wanted to get more traffic to my very new blog, so I sent a guest post to the editor of a much larger blog in my niche. He published it, and a couple of weeks later, he emailed to ask if I’d like to be a staff writer.

When you send a guest post to a blog, you’re offering it for free. In return, you’ll get a bio line or two, with a link back to your blog or website.

Why Guest Posting is a Great Way to Start

The guest posting method is less intimidating than applying directly for a job or asking for a job on spec. If you loathe writing cover letters and filling in job application forms, give guest posting a try.

Guest posting is great if you’re aiming to build up your writing clips and reputation by blogging. Even if your guest post doesn’t lead to a job, you can say you’ve “written for XYZ blog” on your resume – and writing guest posts for several blogs helps to build up your profile in your segment of the blogosphere. It’s also a good way to get some blogging experience while applying for paid gigs.

What Blogs Should You Start With?

Most bloggers use guest posts, but it’s worth targeting blogs which might have staff jobs. Think through the blogs which you read and enjoy – do any of them have multiple authors?

Write a guest post specifically targeted at one blog. Look on the “contact” page for the blog to find out where you should send it. In some cases, you may have to pop a note in a contact form explaining that you’ve written a guest post and asking permission to email it in (most contact forms won’t accept attachments).

Tip: Write the Post Before Contacting the Blogger

At times it may be very clear that a blog is looking for guest posts, at other times you might have seen somebody write one but with no obvious request from the author for more. When I've been featured on the likes of ProBlogger and Copyblogger, I took a chance to write the post first and send it to them directly, rather than ask if they were looking for content.

This way, it cuts the communication process of them saying no and you feeling discouraged, and actually shows what you are all about by giving them a post to look at straight away. It's easy for them to turn you down if there's no good post to go with it, but if you send them a great article, they can find it hard to refuse.

Glen Allsopp, www.viperchill.com

How to Send In Your Guest Post

If you're contacting an editor for the first time, you'll want to make a good impression. You'll also want to maximise the chances of your guest post getting published.

Although what's *really* important is that you write a great piece, it's also a good idea to make life as easy as possible for the blogger who'll be receiving it.

- **You should follow any guest posting guidelines** – check their blog for these. They might be titled "Guest Posting Guidelines" or "Write for us" or "Submit your post" or similar. You can find an example [here, on Dumb Little Man](#).
- Normally, it's easiest for everyone if you write the whole post before emailing. **Some bloggers, though, prefer you to run your idea past them first.** Their guidelines will usually make this clear.
- I email guest posts as attachments in .doc format (MS Word 97 – 2003). You could copy and paste your guest post into the body of an email, but some email systems will strip out the formatting. Again, **check the guest posting guidelines** to see what the blogger prefers.
- **Address the blogger by first name** (or whatever pen name they use). Don't write "Dear Mr Jones" or, worse, "Dear Sir / Madam". On some larger blogs, the editor/owner doesn't actually write any posts themselves – so you may need to check the About or Contact pages to find out the correct name.
- **Proof-read your post** – and your email – to make sure you've not made any silly mistakes.

I know that sending in a guest post can be really daunting. I've had finished guest posts just sitting on my hard drive for *weeks* before I've been able to get up the courage to send them in. But, the worst that can happen is the editor says "no" – and then you can move on to a different blog.

And, if your post is good, there's a high chance that it'll be accepted. You'll be able to use it in your portfolio or resume, and you might even find that it leads to a job.

What to Do If You Get Rejected

Not all guest posts get published. If yours gets turned down, it could be for any of these reasons:

- The blogger has had dozens of great guest posts sent in recently, and there's not room for yours as well.
- Your topic wasn't a good fit for the blog. It might have been off-topic, or on-topic but too inflammatory/boring/basic/advanced...
- Your style doesn't work well for the blog. (This doesn't mean that your writing style is *bad*. You might have written a thoughtful, almost lyrical piece for a blog which generally publishes snappy, straightforward content. Or vice versa.)
- Your writing simply wasn't good enough. If you're worried that this is the case, ask an honest friend or fellow writer to take a look at the guest post.
- Your post needed too much editing. Perhaps you sent it in riddled with typos and grammatical errors, because you forgot to proof-read.

If your post is turned down, *don't* email and ask the blogger to take another look. Don't revise the post and send it in again – unless they explicitly ask you to. If they offer you any feedback (e.g. "not the right topic for us"), take that on board. Write a new post and try again in a month or so.

You might feel upset or angry about your post being turned down, especially if *you* thought it was really good. Resist the urge to blow off steam on your own blog – it's unprofessional to rant, and can kill your chances of building a good relationship with that blogger.

If a really big blog turns down your post, send the post to a smaller blog. They may well have room for it. You shouldn't send the same guest post to multiple blogs at one time, though.

Sometimes, no response means rejection – but sometimes, you'll suddenly see your post live on the blog. If a couple of weeks go by and you've not heard anything, it's fine to follow up with a polite email to ask "Did you receive my guest post submission?"

After Your Guest Post is Published

Hurrah! You've had a guest post published on a blog which you'd love to write for. Don't make the mistake I did, and sit back hoping for an email and a job offer.

If you're successful in landing a guest post, view this opportunity as the start of a relationship with the blog's editor. Once a blog has published one post from you – especially if it's gone down well – they'll be much more likely to accept more. Many will consider taking you on as a paid writer.

I'd recommend sending them a second guest post before asking for a job. It's up to you, though – sometimes you won't need to (for instance, if the blog is advertising for paid writers, it's a good idea to get an application in as quickly as possible!)

Here's a template email that you can use when sending a follow-up guest post.

Hi [name],

Thanks for publishing my post, [title of post, possibly a link to it too].

Would you be interested in the attached guest post, [title of post]?

I really enjoy reading [name of the blog] and I've had a lot of fun writing these guest posts. I'd love to write for you more regularly, and I wondered if you're open to taking on paid writers at present? *[NB: modify this sentence to suit you and the blog – if they've recently advertised for paid writers, obviously make reference to that.]*

A couple of topics I could write about for you are [suggested post title] and [suggested post title]. Let me know what you think!

I hope you enjoy [title of the attached guest post], and all the best,
[Your name]

And, over the page, I've included an example of one of my real-life emails. This landed me one of my very favourite blogging jobs, with Dumb Little Man – I've been blogging there for two and a half years now, and you'll still see my posts there almost every week!

I've added in some notes to explain what I did right (or wrong!) throughout the email:

Hi Jay,

Thanks for running my previous article – I had quite a bit of traffic to The Office Diet from it. :-)⁽¹⁾

I wondered if you'd like the attached, "Get back on the dieting wagon: 8 easy steps to post-vacation recovery"? Please feel free to run it whenever is most convenient!⁽²⁾

Also, if you're in need of staff (ie paid ;-)) bloggers at the moment, I'd love to write more regularly for Dumb Little Man.⁽³⁾ I'd like to branch out from the "dieting" niche into wider self-improvement topics (I've been a guest blogger for personal development blogs including www.ririanproject.com, www.pickthebrain.com and <http://www.adaringadventure.com/blog/wordpress/>)⁽⁴⁾ I'm particularly thinking of topics related to writing, literature, college and technology. Can happily supply a list of potential headlines if that would help.⁽⁵⁾

All the best,

Ali

1. If you've built up a relationship over time, reminding an editor that you've written for them before is a good move. Normally I'd mention the title of the previous post (but I forgot to do that in this email – whoops). The Office Diet is the blog I used to have.
2. Giving the editor something useful, rather than just flattery, is more likely to put them in a favourable mood for the next paragraph... By saying "Please feel free to run it whenever is most convenient", I'm also making it clear that I'm offering this post for free.
3. Be clear about what you're after. In this case, I want a paid job – not more chances to write guest posts – and I state that explicitly.
4. I give Jay details of *relevant* experience – other personal development blogs that I've written for.
5. Blog editors sometimes like to see a list of potential articles you could write. (Hint: make the headlines really snazzy, exciting ones and it'll be harder for the editor to resist! See [Chapter Twenty-Three](#) for headline tips.)

With the template and that example, you should be able to put together a good, friendly but professional email that makes it clear you're looking for paid work. I know it can take a lot of courage to send an email like this, but it's a great way to land a blogging job.

Rejected for a Job?

Of course, this approach won't always result in a paying gig. Sometimes, the editor will turn you down.

Don't be discouraged if the editor says they're not taking new staff writers at present.

Many blogs – even big ones – have small or non-existent budgets for hiring writers.

If an editor says they'll keep you in mind for future openings, this is a promising sign.

Make time to send them a guest post every four-six weeks, and let them know (without being pushy) that you're still available if they want to hire you. I still write regularly for two blogs where I got started out in exactly this way.

Tip: Keep in Touch

Guest blogging isn't just about guest blogging so-to-speak, it's about forming a relationship with the author. I now write regularly on Dumb Little Man along with Ali, and have some good conversations with the site owner, Jay. You never know when a relationship is going to benefit you in any area, from being asked to do more posts, to occasional link-love from the author or anything else.

Don't just write for someone and then disappear from their radar. Keep in touch now and then to see how they are doing, talk about aspects of their blog etc. It's nice for the author to see that you weren't just writing for the money or some traffic, but you generally care about them and their audience.

Glen Allsopp, www.viperchill.com

Chapter Five: Apply On Spec – and Land a Job You'll Love

Applying on spec means applying for a job that might not exist. Obviously, it's a bit of a hit and miss method – so you need to pick blogs that definitely *do* use paid writers.

It works like this: you write to a blog and ask if they've got any staff positions open. Rather than sitting around waiting for your favourite blog to put out a call for writers, you take the initiative.

Maximising Your Chances

If you're an established writer, ideally with online experience, sending an on-spec application is a great way to get a first staff job. However, you'll probably find that quite a few blogs turn you down before you get once which says "yes". You'll boost your chances of success if you have one or more of the following:

- **Your own blog** (that you've been posting on consistently for at least a few months)
- **A record of guest posting** on other blogs or websites
- **Demonstrable experience** in the blog's topic area. For example, if you're a professional life coach, a personal development blog would probably be very interested in hearing from you.

Finding the Right Blogs

As with guest posting, look through the blogs which you read. Find ones which definitely use staff writers, or you'll be wasting your time and theirs. Clues to look for are:

- A "write for us" or "submit an article" page.
- Several different names cropping up regularly on blog posts. Chances are, if someone's writing for a blog every single week, they're being paid.
- An "About" page with a list of different authors.
- At least 10,000 subscribers – most smaller blogs won't be able to afford to pay writers.

Find a blog where you can clearly explain the benefits you'll bring. In many cases, this involves relevant professional experience – for example, if you work in the IT sector, you'll probably want to write for technology blogs. You could also consider your education: if you've studied management, you might contact a career-related blog.

Editors are likely to view your application favourably if they already have some level of contact with you. Perhaps you've written a guest post for them in the past (even if it was a few months ago), or maybe you're a regular name in their comments or on their forum.

How to Apply

Once you've found a blog that definitely takes staff writers, which you have the experience or knowledge to write for, take the plunge!

Your email doesn't need to be long, but it should demonstrate that you're a good writer. You'll want to:

- Make it clear that you're looking for a paid job
- Mention other blogs which you write for (as a paid writer or a regular guest)
- Link to samples of your work
- Briefly outline any relevant qualifications or experience that you have

It's probably best *not* to mention rates at this stage. The editor will probably have a standard rate for new writers – and you can always negotiate (or even turn down the job) if you think the pay is too low.

In most cases, I'd advise that you only apply to blogs where you've already made some sort of contact with the editor. You might even want to plan ahead for this – perhaps by following some big bloggers on Twitter, and chatting with them, or commenting regularly on blogs. You could even send in some suggestions or ideas for the blog via email.

If You Get Rejected

When you're applying on spec like this, you'll often have to write to a number of blogs before you land a gig – so don't take rejection personally.

If the blog editor says they're not hiring new writers, don't be put off. This is probably completely true, rather than any reflection on the quality of your application. You could offer them a free guest post, if you're keen to write for them. Otherwise, just move on to your next application.

Don't pester editors for jobs. Leave it a few months before you ask the same blog again about vacancies. And if the editor's reply makes it clear that they never consider on spec applications (e.g. "All our writers are well-known bloggers who we approach"), don't tell them they should make an exception for you.

Tip: Don't Give Up

Remember that staff bloggers come and go all the time. Even if a blog you want to write for isn't looking to hire people right now, that could change sooner than you think. It did for me! Ask them to remember you if they need staff writers down the road.

Hunter Nuttall, www.hunternuttall.com



The Blogger's Guide to Freelancing is available from:
<http://www.bloggers-guides.com/freelancing>

Use the discount code ***alinewsletter*** to get a \$10 discount.