

Getting Started With Your Ghostwriter

Ghostwriters are not just for the rich and famous, the politicians, gangsters and film stars whose dramatic life stories turn into TV shows, week after week.

Ghostwriters are for busy people with jam-packed lives and jobs and businesses to run, and whose precious time is booked solid.

Making the decision to hire a ghostwriter is no different than making the decision to hire a dentist or an auto mechanic. You don't try to clean and repair your own teeth, do you? And you don't diagnose what's wrong with your car when it's not running properly, or lug around special tools and try to repair it yourself.

No, you trust your dental work and your auto service work to the experts, right?

Why wouldn't you do the same for your content creation?

Why You Should Hire a Ghostwriter

Hiring a ghostwriter is a smart decision. Here are a few top reasons:

- 1) A ghostwriter gets the job done while you're busy with your own life.
- 2) A ghostwriter knows how to sort through your scattered ideas and organize them neatly.
- 3) A ghostwriter comes equipped with hard-working skills and tools, put to good use daily.
- 4) A ghostwriter sets aside personal opinions and promotes only yours.
- 5) A ghostwriter – the RIGHT ghostwriter – knows how to make you sound even smarter than you already are!

Let's look at these top reasons to hire a ghostwriter when you need to create content to build your reputation and your business online.

But first, let's make sure we're on the same page (naturally, because that's what ghostwriters do, we create pages...)

When You Should Hire a Ghostwriter

You should hire a ghostwriter when you are confident you have all the material you need to write your book yourself. Yes, that's when it's time to interview, select and hire a ghostwriter for your project. And if you're not ready to write it, then nobody else is ready either.

Now, I am not saying you must have every chapter completely outlined, or even suggesting you have created your final list of chapter headings. That's not what I mean by "ready." For this explanation, "ready" means you've got the core ideas, and hopefully you've got them written down to share with expert writers. Writers are readers and we like to see ideas in writing.

Ready also means you have the money to pay your ghostwriter regularly, since writing a substantial book will take weeks or months. Professional ghostwriters will want to receive some money in advance, and some in increments during the course of their work, with a final payment when the book project is completed.

This may seem like a no-brainer to you, but it comes as a revelation to some authors who have infectious enthusiasm and tremendous excitement about a great idea, but no actual plan for writing their book. And sometimes they have no idea what they intend to do with their book once it's written, a very important consideration indeed.

Do yourself a favor and make sure you have your research materials and foundational concepts in place before contacting and interviewing busy, professional copywriters who can bring genuine value to your book project.

FYI – it IS possible to approach a ghostwriter with only a vague idea in your mind. If that's where you are with your book project, sit down and write out everything you want to accomplish with your book. A smart ghostwriter will need some kind of clear goal in order to reach for it and, hopefully, achieve it.

I once had a client who emailed me, "I need a book written for people who want to become health coaches, and here are some recorded interviews with a few of them." That was it. The digital files were attached, but I received no further guidance at all. Fortunately, I know this client rather well and could grasp his goal without discussion, but there's no way I would launch into a project with very little directives from a new, unfamiliar client.

You owe your ghostwriter enough information to do the best work possible for you. At the very least you need to tell him:

- 1) WHY you want the book written now
- 2) WHAT the book is about, meaning the topic
- 3) WHO the book is written for, meaning who will be most likely to read it
- 4) HOW you will know the book project is completed. What will it look like when it's done?
- 5) HOW (and how much) you will be paid for completing the book

How You Should Hire a Ghostwriter

This whole book is about how you should set about to hire a ghostwriter, and how to get the right one.

I've noticed that some people like shopping for cars, and they'll research different cars and shop for various types of cars for weeks or months before purchasing their ideal car. Does this describe you?

And some people just want to grab one quickly because they don't enjoy the research and shopping part of the car-buying experience. They just want to get one and start driving it. Period.

Maybe that second description describes your automotive attitude?

My point is that you may or may not enjoy the research and shopping needed to get the best ghostwriter for your needs. But it will pay you to sit back and enjoy the ride.

Honestly, that's how you should hire a ghostwriter – you should do your research and shop for the best one for your own personal and business needs. Period.

Fortunately, I'll be sharing some tips to help make your research more efficient and effective. I wish I could paint a picture of the true value of the simple tips I share in this book. They can save you months and years of grief, struggling to cope as you wobble down the road with the wrong person doing your ghostwriting, since you're already in too deep to quit.

Just FYI- a lot of smart people get in too deep with the wrong ghostwriter and choose to slog it out. It CAN be done, but it is NOT FUN.

In the interest of having fun and rolling down the road with the top down and satellite radio blaring your favorite tunes (or educational podcasts, if that's your thing) let's step on the gas together now by exploring what NOT TO DO when hiring a ghostwriter before arriving at what TO DO.

What Most Ghostwriters WILL NOT DO

Here's a list of 5 things most ghostwriters WILL NOT DO:

1) Provide the concept and write a complete novel for you to publish under your own name or pen name.

Yes, you could possibly find someone to create a whole novel for you from start to finish, and do so with little if any input from you.

But if a ghostwriter is willing to do it, beware. Something is wrong. A writer who genuinely has that much talent and skill would be writing novels under her own name or pen name. She would not be selling her time and skill to anybody. She would want the credit for her own work.

If you are rich and famous and have the money to hire a well-established, many-times-published ghostwriter, then you can probably become even more famous by publishing a

series of ghostwritten novels. You can buy whatever you want, an expensive ghostwriter included.

But if you are not already rich and famous, keep reading. You may find some valuable ideas hidden in this book.

2) Give expert advice about the best ideas to attract readers.

A ghostwriter is not a business coach, although he may have tremendous business experience to share. You need to bring your own knowledge and confidence into the kitchen when you're planning to cook up a tasty book with a ghostwriter. He's more like a chef.

You need to do your own shopping, and heft the grocery bags yourself. Then you need to unload the meat and the produce, the spices and the pasta. You need to do the shopping yourself, and deliver the ingredients for your ghostwriter to assemble and cook up for you with great skill.

Now, any experienced chef will have some secret recipes on hand and possibly some signature seasonings to add. That's why people hire him, because he does his kitchen magic for them, time after time. He wows their dinner guests and leaves them begging for more (even when they're stuffed after dessert.)

You want to hire a ghostwriter like that chef.

Now, the truth is, if you pay him enough, he may arrange to have all the groceries delivered so you don't have to do the shopping yourself. But keep this firmly in mind – you WILL pay for the groceries either way. You will pay that chef for his time or you'll invest your own time putting together the menu and shopping for all the ingredients. One way or the other, you'll pay.

I hope it's clear that most of the time you are going to need your own content ideas before you contact and interview a ghostwriter for hire. You'll be sharing your ideas so the ghostwriter can understand your writing project as well as understand you. Both are very important to the magical mix, the delicious concoction with the sweet smell of success for you.

3) Work for free.

Even if you have the best ideas EVER, IN THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD (who knows, it's possible...) and you just KNOW there's somebody out there smart enough to see your brilliance and be willing to join you in your inevitable success, don't expect them to work for free.

Nothing shows a ghostwriter you're not really serious more than offering him only a percentage of book profits in the future. He needs to eat today, and pay his other bills tomorrow, not a year from now. He's smart (or you wouldn't be hiring him) and he knows he needs to earn a living on a daily basis, just like you do.

So, think and plan ahead before contacting your chosen ghostwriter. Set a realistic budget for your project, a sensible budget you can honestly afford, and make an offer to pay your ghostwriter when you meet in person or online. Don't say, "I'm just shopping," without discussing his fees or your budget. That's not professional. Be professional and you'll be much more likely to engage the best ghostwriter you can afford to pay.

Yet again, beware of any ghostwriter who is willing to work for free. It's a red flag, signaling you to STOP and think. Do not proceed because danger lurks ahead. Stop and think... would you work for free if you were a smart, talented, skilled, professional ghostwriter?

4) Wake up different.

OK, this particular thing that most ghostwriters WILL NOT DO is something none of us can do. We cannot wake up one fine morning and be something entirely new and different. We are who we are and we know what we know. Yes, we can acquire new knowledge and skills. That's true.

And we can endeavor to grow and change and improve ourselves each day.

But my point is this - you don't want to hire a writer who had a revelation one morning that she is, in fact, a ghostwriter. So she jumped online, did a bit of research, posted on craigslist.org this afternoon and now you're interviewing her and thinking about hiring her this evening.

Make no mistake, this kind of thing really happens. And unless you get references, it could happen to you. Just take the time to check out any ghostwriter you want to hire, and consider the reality that her fees may represent the value she brings to your project and to your future success. If she's too cheap to be true, she's probably not even worth her fees as an investment in your future success.

5) Read your mind like a psychic.

I guess you could find a psychic ghostwriter if you really want one. It's probably not impossible in this wide world full of everything you could ever want, at your fingertips, right now.

Literally.

But you'll have more control and achieve your content production goals quicker and easier if you stay away from a ghostwriter who thinks she knows everything, especially who thinks she knows YOU.

Nobody really knows you until you choose to open up and share. I've noticed it may be easier to share with a professional (an accountant, lawyer, therapist, for example) than with friends and family members. Most of us don't like sharing with people in our lives who may use the information against us, or make fun of our feelings and our bright ideas. It happens a lot, and it's really sad.

So, one way a ghostwriter can cut through the issues for you is to use what I call "Super Sight,"™ to see you even better than you can see yourself. Super Sight™ is a learned skill in the toolbox of an experienced ghostwriter. It's not some kind of software you can buy at a discount store. It's not a slick, new app.

**Super Sight™ is a skill and a gift,
all rolled into one terrific asset for you and your content.**

A professional ghostwriter will spend hours interviewing you and recording the interview, so she can hear your voice and get a sense of your personality as well as the subject matter of your content. She will take what she hears and turn it into an outline and a text document, meaning words on a page. It won't be word-for-word what you said in your interviews. It will be better.

Why will it be better than simply transcribing the interviews? Because she'll pull back from your spoken words and get into your head (in her own mind) to discover more and more words that sound just like yours. She'll weave those words into clear, logical sentences and paragraphs that sound like you wrote them, or better than you could write them. She'll invest her intelligence, creativity and intuition into your ideas and your book project, which is to say, into YOU.

Remember, it's a skill and a gift. Not everyone has it. Some people pretend to have it, but you want to find and pay a ghostwriter who brings true Super Sight to your writing project, don't you?

What a Good Ghostwriter WILL DO FIRST

It might be a bit disappointing to discover you can't just send an email, make a deal with a ghostwriter, then sit back and wait for your perfect content to appear in a few days, weeks or months, depending on the pre-arranged scope of your writing project.

I say this because there are definitely people (I've met some of them) who think it's that easy. They want instant content... rather like ramen noodles. You just add hot water, wait a few seconds, and you're ready to consume an instant meal. A CHEAP instant meal.

Sorry to say, but quality content does not puff up into a warm, soupy, tasty dish that way. It takes some input from you, some effort from the ghostwriter and some time to concoct. It's not ramen noodles, it's a sumptuous feast, prepared just for you and your personal tastes.

A good ghostwriter (like a professional chef) will not start writing without asking you a lot of questions.

Truthfully, this questioning could feel somewhat irritating, especially if you're into ramen noodles and instant gratification.

But your answers are the bedrock, the solid foundation of the content you desire. They are the substance of your success, and skipping the questions, the initial interview process means death to your content project. You might as well bury it before it's ever born. No serious responses to intelligent, thoughtful questions means no good content can happen. Period. End of story before it was ever written.

What a good ghostwriter will do first for you is help you to answer questions. It's that simple.

Blowing past this first step, the all-important initial interview, means you have put a blindfold over your copywriter's priceless, precious Super Sight. It cannot function without the sound of your voice and a useful collection of your words and ideas. Your copywriter is handicapped, and that means you are, too.

Now, some people really like to be interviewed, and they are treasured clients. Ghostwriters LOVE treasured clients who make themselves available for an initial interview and for quick questions throughout the content creation process. Ghostwriters thrive on easy, clear communication. That's how they get what they need to "be you," meaning easy access to your ideas and opinions, as well as the sound of your voice.

Sadly, many people don't like to be interviewed. They are too busy or too shy, or... well, I'll just leave it as too busy and too shy. Further comment might go down a dark, thorny path of negativity and that's not my purpose here. I want to pave a right, clean, easy path for you to follow when you decide to hire a ghostwriter to help you become a content-creation dynamo.

What A Good Ghostwriter WILL DO NEXT (And What You May Have To Do, Too...)

There are as many different descriptions of what comes after an initial interview as there are ghostwriters. Each of us is unique and has a slightly different system, a unique method to our ghostwriting madness.

Unlike those exciting cooking shows on TV where the master chefs are all working frantically in a big room with supervisory chefs and an audience looking on as they try to beat the clock to win the big prize, most chefs generally cook calmly, alone.

That's the type of chef most ghostwriters resemble. While some choose to work on their tablets or laptops in crowded coffee shops and cafes, most work quietly, alone in a dedicated home office or separate office away from home.

You may not really care, but it's not a bad idea to find out whether or not a ghostwriter works in a private, dedicated office space. You will have one more piece of information you need to make your decision about hiring a professional to write your content. Established professional copywriters very often have a separate office space where they are 100% focused on client writing projects each day.

It seems that the transition to establishing a dedicated office space frequently accompanies a significant level of success for a ghostwriter. This is true for other businesses, too, not just a ghostwriting business, but it's important to keep in mind as you shop for a good fit in a relationship with a ghostwriter for your content.

!!! IMPORTANT POINT ALERT!!! You are hiring a ghostwriter to make you look good on the web, and also in your printed materials used offline. You want a person who has what it takes to make you look and sound your best, or preferably

BETTER THAN YOUR BEST.

Not just anybody can create written content that reflects you in the best possible light. But that's what you're searching for, and when you find it you'll be able to trust in a clear reflection of your personal best, or even better. It takes a smart, skilled, talented and gifted person to write like that, to be quite frank.

So, part of what comes next after you interview a ghostwriter is similar to the digestive process. You're feeling it and so is the ghostwriter, in your own, separate ways. Hopefully, you're both satisfied and feeling good.

How does your mutual interaction sit with you? What are you feeling about the person you've decided to hire? Is it a good feeling? Are things working out well between the two of you so far? (Maybe there are more than two people involved in your writing project... more on that complex topic later.)

PLEASE pay attention to your genuine feelings in this digestion process. Pay attention to them and if you don't feel good about your interaction, if your interaction is not digesting well, realize you can choose to end your work together.

Bear in mind, your chosen ghostwriter may very well be feeling uncomfortable somehow, too. Really, consider that possibility, and then prepare yourself to communicate your discomfort with him or her.

I know it's easier to back out of a deal by email or text message, but you should choose to make a phone call or a Skype call, whichever means of talking suits you and your ghostwriter best. You need to show your professional behavior and give the ghostwriter an opportunity to do the same.

There is a real possibility that another straight-up conversation about your interaction together may identify some communication issues and open the door to solving them. Give yourself another meeting to make sure your uncomfortable feelings were not just a passing thing. Give your chosen ghostwriter another meeting to do the same thing, too. Be polite and clear. Be professional.

And if you don't feel the awkwardness or discomfort is resolved, make a business decision to end your relationship with this ghostwriter, kindly but professionally, before signing a contract and becoming obligated.

Remember, it's your writing project. You are in control of it, and you deserve to be comfortable with the people you hire.

Sometimes it's hard to know what to say in situations like this, so here is a suggestion:

"I'm sorry, (say his or her first name), but our working relationship is not working for me so far. I feel (pick a word that describes your feelings, not your thoughts) and I don't want to cause either of us any problems or create any resentment by going forward from here. I think we should stop working on this writing project together now.

"What do you think?"

Here's how your part of the conversation might sound with the details filled-in:

"I'm sorry, Beth, but our working relationship is not working for me so far. I feel unsettled and hesitant, and I don't want to cause either of us any problems or create any resentment by going forward from here. I think we should stop working on this writing project together now.

"What do you think?"

As I mentioned, be prepared for something good to come from your willingness to be professional, clear and candid. That's about as straight-up as you could possibly be in any business relationship, isn't it?

You don't beat around the bush or gloss over anything. You deal with it, head-on.

After asking the ghostwriter to reply, then just wait. Don't speak up again, just wait politely for a reply. The waiting can be a true test of your own professionalism, but it's very, very important to prevail in this conversation.

Once again, it's your writing project. You're in charge, and you need to be comfortable for the duration of the project, and after as well.

Oh, by the way, yesterday I was set up for an interview as a ghostwriter. First the authors delayed the Skype session for an hour. When I called back an hour later, they never picked up the call. I tried calling them several times and they just blew me off. I'm sure you know that's not professional. It's tacky and just plain bad manners.

I wouldn't care how much they wanted to pay me someday in the future. I'd NEVER work for authors who didn't have the common courtesy to pick up my Skype call and say, "Thank you for calling, Mia, but we have already hired another ghostwriter today." It's just common sense to close the loop politely and professionally. You never know if and when bad manners may come back to haunt you!

What Your Ghostwriter WILL EXPECT – To Sign a Legal Agreement

I'm not going to provide a sample ghostwriter agreement because I'm not a lawyer. But in addition, I am going to caution you to resist using any template contract you find on the web. It's not a good idea to copy them and use them, although many people do use them with no bad consequences.

However, knowing some real-life horror stories, I can only say one thing with a clear conscience – get a competent lawyer to draft a simple contract for you to hire a ghostwriter, one you can use over and over again as you require more content. You'll need a separate contract for each book and for every piece of content.

Basically, you take a risk that a template agreement form you find on the web won't cover certain eventualities, and it could potentially cause you more problems in the long run. This is not just a vague warning, folks. It's for real, especially if you are making an agreement to spend thousands of dollars to get your book ghostwritten. Do it right from the start and you won't have to worry about being sorry someday, perhaps much, much later.

At the risk of sounding a bit gossipy, here's what you may avoid by paying a lawyer to draft a contract for you – You hire a ghostwriter. The book manuscript is completed. The book is published. The book does well financially. The ghostwriter gets jealous or resentful or something similar, and decides to find fault with your contract, claiming you owe him more money now. The ghostwriter sues you. You go to court. The judge finds flaws in your original ghostwriter agreement, stating that you (now a famous, successful writer) took advantage of the poor ghostwriter who only got a few thousand dollars. The judge awards the ghostwriter a portion of

your earnings on the published book. You have to pay the ghostwriter more money by a certain date. You feel sick...

I'm sure you see my point. It's sensible wisdom for the short-run and in the long-run as well. It's just good business to use a lawyer-drafted contract when you make an agreement to hire a ghostwriter.

So that you can be a well-informed consumer, I want to make sure you understand that the best ghostwriter agreements give you, the author hiring a ghostwriter, all the ownership rights in the content. You are buying all the rights, which means the ghostwriter is giving up all his rights. That is not complicated, but it needs to be specified legally, or other assumptions may be made by a court by default. And you don't want that to lose out accidentally because your contract was not specific.

When I say, "you are buying all the rights," it's possible you may not completely understand what that means, so I'll explain it a bit more. People often think of the word, "copyright," but they don't know why it's important or what it means. Here's a picture for us get started understanding it:

Selling a car is pretty simple. When you sign over the title to a car, the new owner gets all the rights to drive it, fuel it up, maintain it, insure it and to sell it again. The new owner could even rent out his car as an Uber driver, giving other people rides and charging them for the privilege. But after you sell it, after title to the car passes to the new owner, you have no rights to use it at all.

Ownership of a book manuscript is completely different than ownership of a car. Legally, a book manuscript is called "intellectual property" because it is a creation of the human mind or intellect. And historically, since the invention of the printing press, intellectual property such as the written word has been protected by copyright laws.

What's important to you as an author is this – you absolutely want to own all the rights to your work. You want your ghostwriter to give up all the rights and retain no rights to claim the work as her own, or to use the written work she produces for you for her own purposes in the future.

And what does all that mean to you, as an author? It means your copyrighted book cannot be made into an audio book, a movie or a TV show, or staged as a play or a ballet without your permission. You own all the rights to it, until you sell or license the use of your copyrighted book to others. These examples make more sense to authors of novels, of course.

To authors of non-fiction it means your copyrighted book cannot be recorded as an audio program or turned into a course or included in a package of free gifts without your permission.

In other words, you want to make sure the contract your ghostwriter signs states clearly that she is giving up all rights to the content she created for you. She can't make a recording of it or build a course with it or anything. She has **NO RIGHTS** when she signs a contract giving you Exclusive Rights, even though she wrote the book.

The downside of an inadequate legal contract with a copywriter can become a long, slippery slope over time, and you don't want to go there. Get your copywriter to sign a contract drafted by your lawyer BEFORE the book is written and you will be protected from the very beginning, which is always the best place to start feeling smart, safe and protected.

Are you enjoying this book?

**Do you want to learn more about hiring a
ghostwriter now?**

**Please email me or call me to get the rest of this book,
and to discover how we could work together on YOUR book, too.**

mia@mia-sherwood-landau.com

903-328-9670

“There's an old saying that you should never judge a book by its cover. Today, perhaps, that conventional wisdom has rarely had more meaning. To a degree that might astonish the reading public, a significant percentage of any current bestseller list will not have been written by the authors whose names appear on the jackets.”

Robert McCrum, The Guardian (UK)