

## **At-Home-Mom and Dad Well-Fed Success Stories:**

### *Full-Text Versions*

I dearly love to hear about writers succeeding. Does my heart good. And that's what this link is all about: writers across the country (and beyond), with vastly different circumstances and backgrounds, all making it happen—and on *their* terms.

In the pages that follow, you'll read the full-text versions of the At-Home-Mom and Dad success-story abstracts that appeared in Appendix B of *The Well-Fed Writer*.

Building a writing business while staying home with children takes a special blend of creativity, ingenuity and superior time management skills. All of which are on display with flying colors in these stories.

And virtually all of them started their journey with a copy of *The Well-Fed Writer*. Love that.

So, dig in. I'm guessing you'll find a few folks whose stories will resonate with you – people who perhaps started where you are now and made their writing dreams come true.

*NOTE: To navigate through the document by profile headings, click on the blue icon with the bookmark to the upper left of the document.*

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## **New Mom Parlays Business Experience Into FLCW Success**

I started freelancing on the side two years ago while I was recruiting for an accounting/finance recruiting agency. I'd been writing fiction for a few years and decided that with my business experience (five years in accounting, two years in recruiting), commercial writing might be a great career for me. I approached my company about helping write sales letters and any other written material. Initially I tapped friends, colleagues, and former co-workers for business so I could build up a portfolio. I found a talented graphic design graduate willing to work for free on a few projects needing design. I did this all for free.

I still had my full-time job during all this, but the biggest challenge I faced was my newest job: PARENTHOOD. I started doing this "side" freelancing when my daughter was about four months old (and not quite sleeping through the night!). I was working four days a week at the office and one day at home. When my day at home was a slow recruiting day, I'd pick up the phone and call people about doing some writing for them (I did this while my daughter was napping).

After several months of building up a portfolio, I started to realize that this could really happen if I went after it. I started to gain confidence. I was very nervous about quitting my job with a baby at home and no guarantee that I would make a living out of this, but my husband and I decided it was time. So, I quit my recruiting job and pulled my baby out of daycare (until we could afford to hire a nanny or find another daycare setup).

Today, I have five or so regular (paying!) clients, as well as a dozen places I've done smaller projects for. I have a nanny for 25 to 30 hours a week (previously, I'd been relying on the grandparents for babysitting and working at night, when my daughter napped, and early mornings until my husband went to work). I also now have a baby boy, which makes life even crazier. I started out charging \$55 or \$60 per hour, and I now quote new prospects at \$65.

For me, initial success came from calling everyone I knew. At first, I was offering to work for free, but once I'd quit my job, I stopped offering that, and it worked. My first paying gigs were all for the "friends & family" crowd and referrals: I wrote marketing materials for my mom's business, marketing collateral for my husband's company, a business plan for a referral, Web site content for a couple of friends' businesses (former co-workers), a newsletter for my old company, and several other things, including acting as project manager and copywriter for an old friend who wanted a redesigned Web site and just didn't have time to coordinate any of it himself. I'm not well connected by any means, but I am the type to stay in touch with people. This was a great way to start finding work, especially because these people know and like me.

One thing that has also helped me is to be wide open on the kind of work I'll do. I love variety, so I have no problem doing things that may be a little outside the scope of copywriting, as long as it's great experience and I'm getting paid for it. This has opened doors that might not have otherwise opened. I did a big editing job and that has landed me several other slick marketing writing jobs with that same company.

Of course, I don't know a thousand people, so once I tapped my friends, family and co-workers, I opened up the Yellow Pages and started cold calling. As a recruiter, cold calling was a huge part of my job, and you know what? I never liked doing it. Still don't! But if you make a certain number of calls per day, people start calling you back—it's a fact. So I did as much calling as I could every day, even if it was only five calls. As business started coming in, I had less time to cold call, but I still think it's important to market yourself all the time, not just when you're starting out. I believe in a lot of ways, recruiting set me up to succeed in this business because back in my accounting days, I NEVER thought I'd be capable of calling up perfect strangers to find business. But if you're genuine and honest, people are nice to you (or at least, they're not mean). So far, cold calling has landed me one of my biggest clients and two that are likely to become part of the "top five." This strategy worked for me, and it makes me confident that I can always find more business if I want to.

My circumstances—including my limited time to cold call AND do work, as well as my part-time status—posed some obvious challenges. But what I've come to conclude is that we all have our challenges. Being persistent and believing that it WILL happen is a formula for success. I do believe that.

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## **At-Home Mom Commands \$50K Through FLCW'ing Working Only 15 Hours A Week**

Several years ago, I had an excellent job as a public relations manager for a major health care company with lots of room to continue moving up the corporate ladder. I'd never have guessed I would resign from my job the minute my little baby girl was born. In fact, I had promised my boss I'd be back with bells on as soon as my maternity leave was over. The new and improved plan was for me to consult from home for that same health care company and build a consulting business.

Then my husband was transferred to Wisconsin, where I didn't know a soul. One more baby and another move later, I found myself in Georgia—loving my kids, husband, and my life but missing the challenges and excitement of my career (not to mention the money!). I'll admit I had a little crisis of confidence. Who would be willing to hire me as a copywriter after I'd been a stay-at-home mom for nearly 10 years? I read *The Well-Fed Writer*, dusted off my résumé, and started collecting writing samples.

I'd been out of the work force for almost seven years when I decided to start freelancing, which meant I really needed to jazz up my portfolio with up-to-date clips. I started by scooping up any pro bono projects I could: I wrote news releases for my brother's political campaign and volunteered as the vice president of communications for the local Junior League, then filed all the writing samples and clips in my portfolio. I did some work at a much-reduced rate for other family members and nonprofits, and I started pitching my previous experience to executives and business owners I knew in the area.

My plan was to do straight copywriting while my kids were at school, but my public relations background was a huge plus for my clients. I positioned myself as the copywriter who could not only write a feature article or news release but also pitch it to the media.

Within six weeks, I was bringing in around \$4,000 a month and working around 10 to 15 hours a week. My trick to getting this business without having ever worked a day in this city? Network, network, network. Talk to your neighbors, church friends, the printer down the street—you never know who's looking for a writer. Also, don't discount yourself as "just a stay-at-home mom." Learn how to tailor your experience—no matter how many years ago or what you charged—to what your potential client needs. Also, demand to be treated professionally and compensated fairly for your work. I've discovered there are lots of folks out there who believe they should pay you less since you aren't schlepping into an office everyday. Probably the most important thing I've learned since starting this business is how to negotiate fair prices for my writing.

When you are working at home part time, you really have to make professionalism your top priority. Clients can be demanding; they want their work done now. Some clients want you to be available anytime, anywhere. As a stay-at-home mom, I quickly discovered I needed to set firm boundaries while building my clients' confidence that I would be responsive and give their work the attention it deserved. A top-notch Web site, quality business cards, and a dedicated business line go a long way to helping your clients bridge the gap from "mommy" to "professional." Be organized, don't miss a deadline, and don't let your kids answer your business phone, and you'll be surprised at how quickly your client list grows.

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## **A Well-Fed Mom In A Small Market Gives Thanks**

As a stay-at-home mom in a semi-rural region, I am leveraging my experience in the crowded newsletter field and building a successful copywriting business in Yakima, Washington (a largely agricultural area with a population of 72,000). Business was painfully slow at first, but now I'm approaching the busier-than-I-can-handle threshold. If my business keeps growing as it has, I'm going to have to quit one of my other jobs...housework!

I earned a bachelor's degree in journalism and expected to travel the slow and uncertain route to writing success by producing feature stories for newspapers and magazines (while making a living with a full-time non-writing job). Shortly after my husband's career brought us to Yakima, I was hired for an administrative position with a leading fruit processor. Within a few months, I had an opportunity to apply for a position in that company's communications department and landed the job of employee communications editor. In the right place at the right time, I happily held a writing job that also sharpened my page design skills.

When my first child was born a year later, I negotiated a contract to bring a portion of that job home with me, and for the next nine years, I produced the company's employee newsletter from my home office. The part-time work and flexible schedule allowed me to stay home with my two young children. I loved it.

Eventually that job went away, and my youngest child went to kindergarten. With massive debt looming, I started looking for a job. I found several opportunities to use my skills, but none of the positions paid well or offered the flexibility I needed for my kids' school schedules and family obligations. I remembered seeing a plug for The Well-Fed Writer on Moira Allen's Writing World, so I bought a copy...and quickly realized I had a far greater opportunity in front of me. (I also realized I needed to raise my rates!)

Convinced that I could turn my solid writing skills, excellent customer service instincts and positive attitude into a successful freelance writing business, I wrote letters, made phone calls, and scheduled meetings with local writers, agencies, and business executives. I asked friends for referrals and contacted the organizations where I'd done gratis newsletter work. I sent a thank-you note to anyone who talked with me.

To boost credibility, I built a Web site. I searched Seattle, Portland, and Los Angeles job postings online and answered any that mentioned telecommuting. Whenever I saw marketing material with poor writing and grammar errors, I sent a polite note and my business card to the company.

The first year was tough. I got a few small jobs in the beginning: a brochure, a press release, a newsletter article, but nothing steady. I wrote more letters, made more phone calls, and scheduled more meetings. And I wrote more thank-you notes to the people I'd done work for. Soon, those people started calling me back. And they told other people about me, and soon those people started calling. My best marketing strategy turned out to be simple and sincere—taking the time to say “thank you.”

When I started out, I made the mistake of thinking that what I had to offer wasn't enough. Because I (and a million other writers) had been doing it for so long, the oh-so-familiar newsletter segment of the industry didn't seem worth pursuing. Instead of positioning myself as a newsletter expert, I spent a lot of time planning and researching different areas of the copywriting business. I tried a little of everything (and I was feeling more than a little desperate).

Learning is never a bad thing, but in this case, it kept me from moving ahead with my business. What I've really learned is the value of specializing. It's good to be an expert! I'm now targeting the newsletter niche while I gain experience in the other areas that interest me (and show economic promise). Lesson learned: Start with what you know and build from there. You can always learn more later. (And remember, you probably already know more than you think you do.)

I now have several monthly newsletter projects in place and happily work with a very busy local marketing agency that sends clients my way. That regular newsletter work has also opened the door to new opportunities for Web design work. I love it! When I started out nine years ago, I naïvely charged \$25 per hour. In time, I mustered the courage to ask for \$35 per hour. Now wiser and well fed, I don't hesitate to charge \$50 per hour. Ask and ye shall receive.

I have enough professional experience (and great feedback) to know that I'm a talented writer, but I also know that's not the only reason my clients continue to work with me. I earn their business by solving their problems. Sure, I write clean copy, but more importantly, I consistently do what I say I will do. I know that if I miss an appointment or a deadline, I am creating a problem, not solving one. And I know that if I solve their problems, my clients will continue to call. For me, that's the nicest way they can say “thank you!”

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## At-Home Mom Perseveres To Make Dream Lifestyle A Reality

I am the mother of two young boys, 11 and 13, and within a period of six months, I was widowed and lost my father, who we were caring for. This left me in the position of either going to work at a 9-to-5 (I had always been an at-home mom for my boys) or finding something I could do and still be at home with my boys. Due to the tragedy that had filled our lives at that time, I really felt the need to be home with the boys, for us to be together.

Having worked for over 15 years in the medical field assisting in writing medical journal articles and books, I decided to freelance at home so that I could be home with my sons. This was something I had always dreamed of, especially after losing our first son. We had been told that I could not become pregnant. We plunged ourselves into our careers: My husband Mike was at the top of his ladder working as a biomedical technician and pc specialist, and I had my degree in psychology and computer science.

That was when Mike was diagnosed with diabetes. We had tried everything the doctor recommended, but his sugars would not stabilize. We were introduced to naturopathy, so we added that to our regimen. Mike's sugars started to stabilize, and I became pregnant—twice. After the boys were born, I became an at-home mom. My elderly father needed someone to look after him, so we gladly accepted the challenge. I thought I had the near-perfect dream life.

Instead of my father passing, the diabetes claimed its victim; Mike passed away due to complications of diabetes very unexpectedly. This was followed within six months by the passing of my father. I no longer had my dream life. My anchors had all disappeared. Decisions had to be made in a hurry. All we had was a small life insurance policy. I didn't want to have to return to a 9-to-5 and put my children in daycare. I didn't see any other option but to find something I could do that would allow us to keep our lifestyle and allow me to be at home with my boys.

The main challenge I faced was doing it alone with two children to support. I needed to find an income that would allow us to maintain our lifestyle, if not improve it, and allow me to continue our home schooling. We also faced the challenges of establishing schedules and routines. I didn't want my boys going through anymore rough changes.

I had always loved to write; My dream career would pay me to write. I found *The Well-Fed Writer* and devoured it. I could do this. I had discovered copywriting. I took a course and followed that with an intensive coaching program. During the coaching program, I landed my first real client. Previously I had had clients but none that ever paid this well. By following the ideas presented in Peter's book, I have had a lot of success in consistently finding clients.



While others have claimed getting their first clients was a challenge, I found that if you let others know what you do and get out there, you will get the clients. I come from a very small town, and this would be a challenge to some. You just need to learn how to market yourself. I have a pretty open background with a lot of experience in the medical field, nutrition, alternative medicines, and home schooling. I do work in other fields, as well. I tend to put passion, compassion, and empathy into everything I write.

If I can do it, so can you. Set a goal, stick to it, and don't give up. Don't give yourself a backup plan. Leave no room for failure. Do it. There are times when it can be difficult or challenging, but you have to stick to your goals and dreams. Study copywriting from the major players. Read everything you can on marketing trends. Join forums. Get a Web site. Join groups you are interested in on the Web. If there is a company you want to work for, go ahead and write them; You never know what will happen. Tell everyone what you do. My first client resulted from telling a neighbor what I did. You have to get your name out there before the prospective client.

Furthermore, always charge what your work is worth. Don't undersell yourself. Too often, newbies set a low price figuring they will get their first job easier. This isn't a good idea. You need to set your prices. Check out other copywriters' Web sites to learn what they charge. Pick up *Writer's Digest* and see what the going rates are. As you gain more confidence and experience, you can raise them. You can easily make a six-figure income (I charge approximately \$125 per hour for consulting). Follow the old maxim of under-promise and over-deliver.

I am most proud of being able to provide for us the lifestyle we wanted and still be an at-home mom as a freelance commercial writer. When all I wanted to do was hide in a closet and cry, I managed to pull myself together and find something inside I didn't know I had. From that I was able to move forward and build a career that I love. Now we have the lifestyle we dreamed of, and I love being able to be here for my boys.

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## **At-Home Mom Focuses On Family-Friendly Non-Profit Niche**

I began my business, Merocuné Marketing and Public Relations, after the birth of my daughter Kaila. I came from a strategic marketing background, one focused on the more analytical side of consumer understanding, but I found myself in the process of returning to my creative roots as a writer, photographer, and desktop publishing specialist.

In the two years prior to starting my own company, I worked as a more-than-full-time consultant and business partner in a start-up business called The Understanding & Insight Group, which provided me with some of the entrepreneurial knowledge I needed to get started. I developed my creative portfolio and business building skills in the year and a half after my daughter was born by identifying nonprofit organizations with missions I was passionate about and who had a need for marketing, writing, or design expertise. During that year and a half, my priority was not making money but applying my skills in a more appreciative market and helping the community in the process (two things that were severely lacking in my corporate life).

When our family savings fell to uncomfortable levels, and I learned I was pregnant with our son Nathaniel, I found a full-time public relations position in real estate. Three months after the birth of my son (a month earlier than expected), with only five months of time at the company, my position was eliminated, but I was able to turn my former employer into my first paying client. My second paying client was a sister company of the first. I took advantage of the opportunity to pursue entrepreneurial training assistance through the state unemployment office, and I officially registered my company.

As a writer, mother, wife, and house manager, day-to-day priorities shift constantly. I rely heavily on a “to do” list. I am careful to overestimate the time needed to deliver, reserving time for unexpected family needs, periods of lagging energy or illness, household chores, and the daily routine of taking children to school, making meals, visiting doctors, and running errands.

I’ve had to teach my children never to answer the phone and to be respectful and quiet when I’m doing “business” or speaking with a “client,” and scheduling meetings is always a bit more tricky. But my children are a good reminder to me to step away from the work, take a bathroom or food break, or simply get outside for some sunshine, exercise, and fresh air.

Seeing how energetic my children are, most of my friends ask how I do it. I just tell them how fortunate I am to have the opportunity to use both my creative and nurturing instincts at the same time. After all, my life didn’t feel complete until my daughter came along, and I’ve never been able to imagine myself doing only one side of the coin.

Since 2005, I have established a reputable and consistently growing company with more than 20 paying clients (plus several *pro bono* clients)—all repeat customers—located across the United States and in some international countries. My company specializes in developing marketing and development communications that build community awareness, brand equity, and financial sustainability for nonprofit organizations and entrepreneurial businesses seeking to make a difference in their community.

My average rate is \$50 to \$75 an hour but can go as high as \$100, depending on the type of client and type of work. I work with a range of clients that includes start-up and established nonprofits and both large and small businesses—each at a different stage of development. The work may include research, editing, writing, design, or consulting. Much of my work is charged at a flat rate derived from a combination of the hourly base rate and the expected time for the project. For some of my grants work, I also earn bonuses.

As the company has grown, I have had to make critical decisions about which clients (paying or *pro bono*) to support. I have prioritized the groups for whom I feel my efforts can make the greatest difference, whether in the management of the organization or in the organization's success in achieving its mission and having a positive impact in the community. Those projects that become stalled or are a serious resource drain must be archived.

I feel fortunate that our company's Web site has connected me with well-qualified potential clients with a built-in preference for my style of writing and partnering, as well as a penchant for working with family-friendly enterprises. I have leveraged online PR and other social networking tools to increase visibility. As our revenue increases, we are committed to providing mini-grants to organizations focused on our areas of special interest (youth and families, volunteering, literacy, affordable housing, and cultural arts, among others).

In addition to my business-oriented writing, I am also a children's author. Ideas for growing my business range from my creative writing to a line of family-friendly marketing and fundraising products for the nonprofit organizations I work with.

Merocuné Marketing and Public Relations has become a well-mixed blend of my strategic, analytical, and creative roots. I love what I do every day, and I am inspired by helping others make their charitable missions come true. Being able to make a difference from home while I enjoy the company of my children, now ages 5 and 3, is a gift.

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## **At-Home Dad Builds FLCW Career From Creative Roots**

I was a stay-at-home dad looking for a way to generate part-time income from home. I needed to be there for my kids, but after twelve years of running my own business (before the kids were born), I also felt a need to do more. I had always enjoyed writing and had even published several short stories, but wasn't making any money doing that.

Then, nearly four years ago, I attended the North Carolina Writer's Network Fall Conference and met Peter Bowerman. His presentation at the conference showed me how I could apply my writing skills to commercial writing. I bought *The Well-Fed Writer* and read it that same night, growing more excited with every turn of the page. Here was the best of both worlds: making money doing something I enjoyed and being able to do it from home on my own schedule.

The first thing I did was look for good ways to develop a portfolio, since I didn't think businesses were going to be interested in my short story credits. So I dusted off a few things I had written for my own business years before; I volunteered to rewrite and reorganize the very out-dated Web site of a writers' group I belonged to; and I offered to write brochures for several local retail businesses in exchange for store credit—anything to get some practical experience. Ironically, the most effective thing I did was to simply put the word out through my network of friends and business contacts that I was available for work.

A few months later, one of those contacts asked me if I would be interested in writing the cover story for a new quarterly regional business magazine. Writing magazine articles wasn't really the direction I was looking to go in, but I said yes anyway. At least it was a business magazine. Several months later the editor of that magazine decided to step down, and the publisher, who had liked my article and the fact that I had a background in human resources, asked if I would consider taking on the role of executive editor on a freelance basis. That was three years ago.

Today, as a result of the contacts I made working on that magazine (as well as occasionally handing out some business cards), I have landed a wide range of other projects working with graphic designers, ad agencies, and other businesses in my area. I write and edit Web sites, flyers, handouts for trade shows, executive summaries, newsletter material, etc., charging between \$65 and \$75 per hour depending on the size of the project and the client's turnaround time. Sometimes I charge a flat rate for the project if that's what the customer wants and if I think I can do it fast enough to come out around the \$65 mark.

I have a freelance Web site that is primarily designed to show prospective clients samples of my work. I have also found that I can generate a good deal of add-on work after writing new material for a client by offering to go back over their Web site or other older printed material and make sure that it is free from errors. It's a simple idea that most clients are very receptive to.

I still work part time, though there's certainly enough work out there that I could do more if I wanted to. I laugh when I tell people that I turn into a pumpkin at 3 p.m. because that's when the school bus drops the kids off. And I slow down a bit in the summer when the kids are home from school. But I can, because it's *my* business. I make the rules. And that's exactly what I was looking for.

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## **At-Home Mom Commands FT Salary Working PT Hours**

I was an agency Web producer working 70 hours a week when my three-year-old daughter was hospitalized with viral pneumonia. My daughter's illness left her with ongoing health issues. A few months later my daycare provider announced her early retirement. I had to find a quick solution to stay home and still bring in extra income.

Copywriting appealed to me because I had done a lot of writing over the course of my career, and I thought it would be a flexible work-from-home opportunity. I read Peter's books and Steve Slaunwhite's *Start and Run a Copywriting Business*, and got busy building my portfolio. Leveraging industry contacts, I had three paying clients two weeks before I quit my job.

I provide interactive copywriting and information design services for marketing agencies. Most of my projects are Web site redesigns, online media, and e-mail campaigns. Occasionally I'm asked to manage a Web project from start to finish, which is easy to offer given my background. Since I'm known primarily as a project manager, it's been challenging to reposition myself as a writer and interaction designer.

This is especially true with former colleagues who only know me as the person who used to nag them to stay on schedule. It's hard for them to view me as a fellow creative. So I've moved beyond them and market my services to other people and agencies in my professional network who are open to the idea of working with an established project manager who can also write.

My best advice to others is to plan ahead before you make the jump. Make sure you have at least three to six months savings set aside. Reach out to current and past colleagues and see if you can write something for them *pro bono* to build your portfolio. Look at your local marketplace and make sure there's a demand for your services. Model the success of others by reading available books and contacting established writers. They will give you a ton of advice for free. All you need to do is ask.

I think anyone who can write well and is organized can enter this field. Be curious, helpful, always willing to learn, and service oriented. A liberal arts background is helpful. The most important aspect of your background is to be comfortable reaching out to friends, family, and former colleagues who can give you positive references and help you build your copywriting practice.

Look to your own experience and industry to build your business. Build a starter portfolio from *pro bono* work and try to get some part-time assignments before you quit your job. Attend conferences where you know potential clients will be and introduce

yourself to them. You will eventually need to make cold calls, but starting with people you know will give you confidence to introduce yourself and partner with new clients.

I am amazed at how well my business has taken off from the very start. My rates are \$65 to \$85 an hour. I'm on track to make at least \$50,000 this year and haven't worked more than 20 hours a week since quitting my job nearly two years ago. My goal was to work part time from home, and I currently have more work than I can handle. The best part is my incredibly flexible lifestyle: my daughter snuggles up to me and my laptop whenever she wants; it's easy to schedule my work around her activities; my husband loves that I'm home; and I'm much happier in general.

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## **At-Home Mom In New Zealand Turns Hobby Into Thriving Business**

After having my third (and final!) child, the juggle of working full time, keeping the house tidy, acting as taxi driver for the kids, and making some time for me somewhere in between became too hard to manage. My job at the time meant a lot of travel away from home, and I was starting to feel like an outsider in my own family!

After a particularly bad week at work, I made the decision that I could no longer work full time. My family was suffering, I wasn't giving my job full attention, and I was miserable (oh, and my poor husband was feeling a little left out, too...did I mention him?). A few years earlier, I had completed a Diploma in Freelance Journalism and had written a few articles here and there for magazines along with a small amount of copywriting for friends in business. It was hugely satisfying, but I had no idea how to take it from a hobby to a career.

It all changed one day when I was flying to Wellington on business (feeling thoroughly resentful that I had to be away from my family again) and had a copy of *TWFW* in my hand luggage. By the time the plane landed, I was already planning my resignation letter from my sales job. It was September, and I planned to ditch my job after Christmas and declare myself in business as a copywriter in January.

Telling friends and family that I was leaving my well-paid, well-benefited job to take up writing for a living was a test of my self-confidence. Everyone asked the same question: "So, what is a copywriter, and who will *pay* you to write for them?" Down here at the bottom of the Earth, the term "copywriter" is not well known. After explaining it for the fortieth time, I had my own doubts about whether there would be enough demand from New Zealand businesses for my service. I guess my main motivation was the lack of options: I had to make this work, or we wouldn't be able to pay the mortgage!

Once I did a little more research, I could see opportunities at every turn: small businesses in need of start-up help, larger businesses who were already familiar with the benefits of outsourcing, other freelance consultants in need of writers for their clients, and, of course, the average business person who just didn't have the time or the ability to write effective copy. I just had to make myself known to them.

The first few months of being in business were terrifying; everywhere I looked there seemed to be writers who were far more professional and experienced than me. I realized that the reality of being a FLCW was a big step up from just thinking about it and making grand plans. I regularly felt pangs of embarrassment and panic, fearing that I was going to fall flat on my face and would have to find another job. For weeks there was no sign of work, and I got to the stage where I thought that if anyone did contact me, I'd run a mile anyway!



A few months down the track, a friend asked me to join a BNI (Business Network International) group that he was starting up. To be honest, I couldn't think of anything worse than being surrounded by successful business people who knew what they were doing. I had to overcome my lack of confidence and give myself quite a pep talk before I plucked up the courage to walk in the door.

It turned out to be the best thing I ever did for my business. The first person I met was a freelance Web designer. When she discovered that I was a copywriter, she just about hugged me with relief. Her company had been searching for copywriters and desperately needed me! I also met a mortgage broker who referred me to another 40 mortgage brokers within his association, who now all use me to write their regular newsletters. After being in the BNI group for less than a year, I had to leave because I was too busy. I'm now so busy that I often have to pass work on to other writers.

In the past eight months, I've never once had look to for work. I've made some excellent contacts with freelance marketing consultants, graphic designers, printers, and Web designers. Every time I get close to finishing an assignment, another two or three seem to land in my lap. My focus for my second year in business was to start actively seeking the type of work that I wanted rather than just taking anything that came my way.

I now make more money than I ever used to working full time. I love being able to walk my children to school and back every day, and I've been to just about all of their school events. It's not always easy; I have to be disciplined about switching off my computer while my kids need me and managing my time very carefully during my "work hours", but there's no way I'd ever go back to working for someone else. I hear friends complain about their poorly paid jobs, long hours, and childcare juggles, and I feel so relieved that I don't have those worries anymore.

My confidence has grown so much over the past year, both as a writer and as a business person. Sometimes I still have days when I wonder, "Am I good enough?" but I figure that if the work keeps coming, then I must be doing something right!

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## **FLCW and Internet Marketing Consultant Has Time for His Kids**

Being a full-time FLCW allows me to control my schedule fully, which includes being a “stay-at-home” Dad for my two boys. Totally awesome.

Back in late 2000, I had started a part-time business coaching business owners for a time on proper marketing systems in their offline businesses. But as any good marketer would do, I really started to listen to my market, and found out that a value-added service was being requested by my clients.

That’s when I started freelance commercial writing on a part-time basis, in addition to my coaching duties. At first, it was a little difficult to do both part-time, but I soon found I had a passion for writing marketing materials (and still had a passion for consulting).

This addition to my services menu inspired me to shift my focus towards more writing and less consulting. It also inspired me to “make a go of it” full-time in mid-2001.

In the beginning though, I had made a crucial error. I allowed my lead base to dry up, thinking I already had enough client leads to fill the pipeline, and had to start generating leads at a ferocious pace to “pay the bills.” Now, I had over 12 years of sales experience to fall back on, but with one crucial difference, I was NOT a fan of cold calling or cold marketing of any type to generate leads.

Then I reviewed a copy your first book, *The Well Fed Writer*, which inspired me to really “take the reins” and become a full-time FLCW). I started using the telephone to source new business where I had never been a “cold caller” before. Your writing style is so engaging, I have read that book over 20 times cover-to-cover for more inspiration.

For all who read this, you will find that this really isn’t cold calling at all, you are offering a valuable service needed by ALL businesses. For the most part they will welcome you with open arms. The ones that don’t won’t be rude with you, nor see you as an interruption, they just cannot use your services at this time. No big deal, just sweep them into your database, and market to them later.

This is really an easy business to start part-time, as far as starting businesses goes.

But back to the story...

As far as my initial “cold-calling” experience getting started, I landed 4 clients in my first week in transition. I ended up going full time in September 2001 working from home and have never looked back. The transition period was easier than I thought initially, and since there is so much demand for FLCW’s, I won’t ever have a work shortage.

And...as an added bonus, I will also never have to go back to work for someone else. Go to sleep when I want, get up when I want, work when I want, be there for my kids...it doesn't get much better than that. Cliché, I know, but if I can do it, anybody can do it.

Now, using more of the techniques from *TWFW*, freelance commercial writing makes up an average of \$5300.00 or more a month in my business (I still consult for internet marketers as well). My business is quite successful, full-time, and in part due to the information and engaging writing in both of your original *Well-Fed* titles.

Thank you, Peter, for giving me the "boot" I needed to put my business into high gear. I refer to both *The Well Fed Writer* and *Back For Seconds* quite often still.