



## Four Considerations Before Hiring a Ghostwriter

By Sallie W. Boyles

You are about to embark upon an exciting, collaborative journey. Following some often overlooked guidelines can make a big difference between reaching your destination and having your project fall by the wayside.

**No two writers are the same.** Just as two equally competent surgeons might perform a successful operation using different procedures and demonstrating dissimilar bedside manners, two writers may well accomplish your project but not with identical results.

You are likely to prefer one's writing style and way of interacting with you over another. Take the time to review work samples, to check references, and to understand how the writer works.

By doing your homework, you'll have greater peace of mind in the beginning and higher satisfaction in the end.

**A writer's value is relative.** A burger and fries from a fast food restaurant might satisfy your hunger just as well as a prime rib dinner from the finest eatery in the city. However, the price of the two meals and your satisfaction of each will be different.

Experience, quality, time and effort all influence writers' rates, which can vary widely. Also, the amount of time two writers would spend on a similar project—whether 50 hours or 500—can be quite different.

Proceed with an agreement only if you are comfortable with the cost of the service versus its promised benefit.

**A writer's word is not enough.** We like to believe that most people operate with good intentions, but all too often misinterpretations arise when conversations rather than written contracts guide writing agreements.

A ghostwriting contract should be written with specific terms. Both parties should concur with those terms before money changes hands and work begins.

Cover any items—scope of the project, deadlines, rates, expectations and other elements of significance—upfront to avoid misunderstandings and disappointment.

**A writer's tool is a pen or PC—not a crystal ball.** If he or she promises that your book will make you rich, famous, Oprah's featured guest, your writer is either too emotionally caught up in your project or too eager to win the assignment. Yes, you want to work with someone who believes in the project, but you also want straightforward answers and a realistic view.

Rely upon your writer to offer expert opinions along with skill, but be leery of huge promises.

In today's crowded, competitive world of publishing, the most one should offer is a professionally written manuscript that may open doors.

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