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The quarterly newsletter of AMWA-DVC

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Summer 2016

Opportunities in Managed Markets

By *Lori De Milto*

In today's evolving, dynamic, and complex healthcare landscape, managed markets present tremendous opportunities for medical writers. Jacque Fisher, BA (Hons), EVP, managing director at Maxcess Managed Markets, provided an overview of opportunities for medical writers in managed markets at the 14th Annual AMWA-DVC Freelance Workshop, held March 12, 2016 in King of Prussia, PA. The market access agency within Publicis Healthcare Communications Group, Maxcess Managed Markets helps pharmaceutical and biotech clients prove the value of their products to drive business growth.

Meaningful, Customer-Focused Messaging

Customer centricity is the key to effective writing for managed markets, says Fisher. The customers, business decision-makers, have expanded to include health plans and pharmacy benefits management organizations, health systems, large medical group practices, employers, specialty pharmacies, group purchasing organizations, and government payers (Medicare, Medicaid, and the Veterans Administration). Healthcare providers and patients are a secondary audience. Managed markets writing focuses on giving the customer the information necessary to make decisions at each stage in the process: environmental assessment and market shaping, access and reimbursement, and pull-through.

Opportunities for Medical Writers Who Understand Managed Markets

"Medical writers are fundamental to creating rigorous managed markets communications," says Fisher. They must understand each customer's point of view and cut through the clutter to get the customer to pay attention to the message. Fisher highlighted the following key characteristics of medical writers for managed markets.

Medical writers must have a critical understanding of the customer's points of view:

- Recognize how decision-makers perceive and respond to communications.
- Describe the healthcare landscape surrounding managed markets and health policy.
- Consult with outside experts (physicians, nurses, and pharmacists) for input on strategy and/or delivery.
- Develop insights to reveal motivations and contextual drivers for healthcare decisions.

Medical writers must know how communications affect patient care and treatment decisions:

- Create quality and focused communication tools that target payers (medical and pharmacy directors), healthcare professionals (including physicians and pharmacists), relevant staff within health systems, and occasionally consumers.
- Target communications to economic decision-makers to support appropriate formulary management of pharmaceutical products and market access.

Medical writers must ensure clarity and rigor:

- Lead research, content development, and the editorial review of communications.
- Apply specialized customer and therapeutic area expertise.
- Interact with medical and regulatory departments (consisting of physicians and pharmacists) of pharmaceutical companies to gain approval on promotional pieces that will be delivered to the market.
- Communicate clearly and effectively, and adapt communication style, tone, and language to a particular audience.

Succeeding in managed markets "takes a love and drive to deliver an excellent customer experience," says Fisher. At Maxcess, medical writers, whether freelancers or staff members, are part of a team that creates customized solutions with meaningful messaging using a creative, collaborative and fun work process.

Fisher has almost 20 years of global and US medical and pharmaceutical communications experience. Before joining Publicis, she spent 10 years building a start-up agency and leading healthcare communications businesses in the US market. Through leadership roles at Thomson Healthcare and PAREXEL International, she built and implemented client programs maximizing the global offerings of healthcare information resources, publications, Phase 4 studies, HEOR, reimbursement, and market access services.

Lori De Milto, MJ, delivers targeted content for healthcare marketers and health organizations. She lives in Sicklerville, NJ.

The Six-Figure Freelancer

By Nancy Malaga

So you want to be a freelance AND make six figures? Making the dream of a six-figure income a reality was the subject of the University of the Sciences Biomedical Writing Programs Keynote Presentation, Debra Gordon's talk, "Reaching Six Figures in Freelancing: 10 Steps to Freelance Success" at the 14th Annual AMWA-DVC Freelance Workshop, held March 12, 2016.

Gordon, president of GordonSquared, Inc., a medical and health writing service based in Chicago, knows from experience what she is talking about: With an English degree from the University of Virginia and an MS in Biomedical Writing from the University of the Sciences of Philadelphia, she has been freelancing for 15 years. "I have been making six figures for 13 of those 15 years," she said. "Through the dot.com bust, through the great recession, my income has either stayed the same or has gone up. Even the year when I took the summer off. . . my income actually rose that year."

"What is preventing you from reaching six figures?" she asked attendees, as they finished breakfast and were pouring their second cup of coffee at the Crowne Plaza Valley Forge, in King of Prussia, PA.

According to Gordon, there may be several issues stopping a freelance from achieving a six-figure goal, such as fear of marketing, project pricing, networking, and time. But one of the biggest parts of getting to six figures is "valuing yourself and what you provide." For Gordon, valuing yourself means investing in your business and yourself.

Know Yourself

Freelancers should ask themselves why they want to freelance. Is it to earn more than working for a corporation? Or is there a need for the flexibility for family reasons? Is the goal to be full time or part time? "It is important that you are clear about what you are doing and why," Gordon said, "and the first thing I tell people to do is a Gap analysis to identify the obstacles preventing the goals from being achieved," she said.

"Know what the gap is," Gordon said. "What do I need to do to get where I want to be?"

Gordon also recommended doing a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis to help identify strengths, or a particular niche or products the freelance may want to provide.

Build Your Business

"Treat your business as a business and treat yourself as a CEO," Gordon said. That means a business plan, a budget, and a marketing plan. To grow your business, Gordon recommends, "invest in yourself and your business."

In conclusion, Gordon offered these "**ATTRACT**" five pearls to become a six-figure freelance:

Ask everyone you know.

Tell everyone you know.

Troll for client's everywhere.

Research potential markets.

Assess your progress.

Clients - follow up follow up follow up.

Track your results.

Gordon's 5 Questions for Freelance Success

Consider these five questions and how they can help you become a six-figure freelancer:

1. Why am I not making enough money?
2. What are my goals?
3. What is my company's business plan?
4. What kind of business entity do I want to form?
5. Do you want to do this?

Nancy Malaga is an editor and writer in pharmaceutical advertising and marketing with regulatory experience.

What Should a Freelance Charge?

by Kathy Molnar-Kimber

In today's competitive medical writer's market, a freelance's bottom line is directly dependent on the ability to quote a fair price that lands the client and provides a reasonable workload for the price. Brian Bass, MWC™, and Cyndy Kryder, MS, CCC-Sp, led a lively, interactive session on "What Should I Charge?" at the 14th Annual Freelance Workshop, held March 12, 2016 in King of Prussia, PA. Both Bass (Bass Global, Inc.) and Kryder (Medical Communications Specialist) are veteran freelancers who co-authored the book, "The Accidental Medical Writer."

After reminding all attendees of the "pick any 2 of 3 choices" (good, cheap, fast), they began with a project to quote: a 25-page sales training manual for a rare disease, print module, annotated, highlighted references, 1 round of revisions, no

rush, reasonable deadline. Conference attendees suggested quotes, which Bass and Kryder discussed. Then they revealed their quote and their writer's quote (which were the same). But the nonprofit organization went with a lower bid.

To hone our quoting skills further, they presented a second project with two parts from a second potential client. Part 1 consisted of lay-language summaries (1,000 words) of 11 conference sessions. Each conference session included 3 to 6 presentations of 20 to 40 minutes in length each. The project included two rounds of revisions. Resources included abstracts, session audio recordings, and summaries written for professionals by another writer. Part 2 consisted of 500-word summaries in lay-language of 8 discussion sessions of 6 hours total. The project had a 3-week turnaround time with 2 revisions. Quotes from conference attendees ranged from about \$8950 to \$25,000. The potential client hired a different freelance who quoted a lower bid than \$8950. Both Bass and Kryder felt the accepted quote was too low for the amount of work involved in the project.

Their motto: "The only thing worse than not getting a job because you overbid is getting a job you underbid!"

Bass and Kryder listed and discussed many details of the document to consider during the quoting process: type of deliverable, size and length, writing level of expected audience (professional vs lay), need for annotating, number of revisions and reviewers, and the logistics-number of meetings, interviews, teleconferences. These specifications are written into a contract so that it is easier to determine if the scope of the project expands. Another factor is the value of your expertise to the customer. The easiest way to quote is to have data on how long it actually took you to complete a similar project and your desired hourly rate.

The duo also addressed queries ranging from charging for travel to handling difficult clients. For example, to compensate for the more challenging (time-consuming and demanding) working styles, Bass and Kryder suggest an adjustment for customers with challenging working styles.

Bass and Kryder have developed a free estimating checklist for freelancers to assess the important details of a project and expected company interactions. Freelancers can obtain it by signing up to receive their free newsletter at www.theaccidentalmedicalwriter.com .

Kathy Molnar-Kimber, PhD, (Kimnar Group LLC) edits, and writes scientific manuscripts, reviews, continuing medical education, and reports for professional audiences. Her therapeutic areas span immunology, inflammation, oncology, infectious diseases, rare diseases, and radiology.

From Full Time to Freelance and Back Again

by Carol DiBerardino

You may not realize it when you look at me, but I have been around the block a couple of times when it comes to editing jobs. . . .OK, more than a couple of times. When I first started as a medical editor, I worked for a major medical publisher in Philadelphia, as well as working part time as a freelance editor and proofreader. At that point, I was totally "green." I had no idea what skills were needed for a successful freelance business. I felt confident that I was a good editor, and was satisfied with that.

Fast forward to 2001, when I was laid off and realized I was in over my head trying to make it as a full-time freelance editor. Fast forward again to 2014, when I attended my first Freelance Workshop, even though I was freelance editing part time. I learned invaluable lessons about being a freelance editor, and it was reasonably priced.

I have found tremendous support in the AMWA Freelance Workshop. It has turned something that was only a sideline into a major career strength for me. In many ways, this workshop has made me a much better editor in many ways. This is why I love the AMWA Freelance Workshop.

For those who could not attend the Freelance Workshop, we are highlighting some of the sessions in this issue.

Carol DiBerardino is a full-time and freelance editor of medical books and journals, as well as pharmaceutical promotional materials. She lives in Lindenwold, NJ.

Planning for 15th Annual Freelance Workshop Under Way

AMWA-DVC's 15th Annual Freelance Workshop will be held on Saturday, March 18, 2017, in King of Prussia, PA, at the Crowne Plaza. The 15th Annual meeting will feature three sessions in the morning, and a bevy of roundtables and interactive sessions in the lunch and afternoon sessions.

Call for Presenters and Roundtable Leaders

We are currently looking for volunteers for our morning and afternoon roundtables. For those who have not yet attended, this is a day-long program dedicated to the needs of freelance medical communicators and freelances-in-the-making.

Please email your interest to freelance@amwa-dvc.org.

Look for details about the Freelance Workshop in DVC announcements, future issues of the Delawriter, and on the DVC website's [Upcoming Events](#).

Planning for 2017 Princeton Conference Under Way

The Annual Princeton Conference has started planning for the 2017 conference and creating the 2017 agenda.

We need to hear from you!

- *What content would you like included?*
- *Any speakers you would like see?*
- *More workshops? More open sessions?*
- *AMWA Medical Writing Certification exam?*
- *What do you want in Princeton Conference 2017?*

The Princeton Conference is currently looking for volunteers to help with logistics, on-site registration, marketing and promotion, and for open session topic leaders.

If you're interested in sharing your knowledge or volunteering, please send an email to Princeton@amwa-dvc.org

Calling all Writers of CME Needs Assessments

by Kathy Molnar-Kimber and Don Harting

We'd like your insights on writing continuing medical education (CME) needs assessments. The [third annual survey](#) on best practices opens Sept. 22 and closes Oct. 9. The survey changes yearly. While five questions are kept, five new questions probe related or new issues (e.g. quality indicators, market trends, pricing).

If you have written several CME needs assessments, please consider [taking the survey](#)! The authors will provide raw results to participants by Thanksgiving and disseminate the analyzed results within 18 months.

To participate in the survey, click [here](#).

AMWA-DVC Business Meeting and Election Results

AMWA-DVC's annual business meeting took place June 23, 2016, at the Sandy Run Country Club, PA. Outgoing AMWA-DVC president Kent Steinriede welcomed incoming president Michelle Dalton, and newly elected officers Jennifer Minarcik

(president-elect) and Kavita Gumbhir-Shah (secretary). He noted the chapter is in good financial standing, and will be able to continue its mission of delivering quality education and networking events to the membership.

AMWA Conference in Denver

The 2016 AMWA Medical Writing & Communication Conference remains open for registration. Jam-packed with educational programming and networking events, there are workshops and open sessions galore, and registration includes free entry to several keynote addresses. Click [here](#) for more information.



Don't forget to sign up for AMWA-DVC chapter dinner at AMWA Annual Meeting in Denver. Restaurants include [Marlow's](#), [Range](#), and [Wynkoop Brewing Company](#).

For details, contact PastPresident@amwa-dvc.org.

ATTENTION: The Delawriter is actively seeking writers and editors to add to our already stellar group. If you're interested in showing off your writing skills, want to hone your editing talents, or just want to be a part of our quarterly publication, jot a quick note off to delawriter@amwa-dvc.org. Thanks in advance!

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