



Just One More...

By Linda Formichelli
Freelance Writing Success Coach

You'd love to pitch that major newsstand magazine, but you need just one more clip to show them...

You're dying to write for that big nonprofit whose mission you're passionate about, but you feel that just one more pro bono job with a similar-but-smaller nonprofit will clinch the deal...

You're launching a service ghostwriting blog posts for corporate execs, but you're pretty sure you need just one more blogging class before they'll take you seriously...

You'd totally email all your friends and former employers right this second to let them know you're freelancing now and looking for gigs, except that you need just one more testimonial for your website...

What I want to know is: *Exactly how many clips do you need before you feel you're cleared to start pitching your writing? How many credentials? How many classes?*

YOU JUST CAN'T WIN

If you don't have an actual number in mind, congratulations! **You've just uncovered an excuse.** Chances are, no number of clips, testimonials, classes, or other credentials would assuage your fear of rejection. (Because that's what it is.)

Don't feel bad, you're not alone: Over the years, I've coached professional writers who wanted to move on to another field of writing, or to bigger clients. They'd written for trade magazines...contributed to anthologies...done pro bono writing for nonprofits...had books published by major presses...and won awards...and they still felt they needed "just one more thing" before they were qualified to pitch the markets they wanted to write for.

And if you *do* have a number in mind, **it's mostly likely based on some bogus rule you found on the internet**, like "You have to have written for 15 regional parenting publications before pitching the consumer parenting magazines." (Yes I've heard this one.) Or "One clip in your portfolio makes you look like a loser, two makes you look a little less like a loser, but three is just enough to seem like you're a pro writer."

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PURE B.S. IN ACTION

I'm not sure who makes up these rules, but **I am sure no parenting magazine editor has ever thought, "She has 14 amazing clips from regional parenting pubs, but if she had just one more, I could hire her."** No marketing exec has ever said to himself, "This writer came to me with the perfect pitch, but I see he has only two clips in his portfolio. If there were *just one more*, I'd be ringing him up right this instant."

When you hear someone spout exact numbers like this, understand that they're actually attempting to either (1) look like an expert without doing the work (numbers are impressive!), or (2) mind-read an entire population of writing clients, because you know how we all hate uncertainty.

When I was just starting to pitch in 1996, I landed an assignment with what was at the time the biggest business magazine in the country. My clip? A review for the MLA journal *Language* of the book *Speaking in our Tongues: Medieval Dialectology and Related Disciplines*. My sample featured such scintillating prose as, "This volume contains edited versions of the papers and transcriptions of the discussions which took place at the Colloquium on Medieval Dialectology and Related Disciplines hosted by the Institute for Historical Dialectology, School of Scottish studies. This conference examined the place of medieval dialectology not only within the fields

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of dialectology and medieval history, but also within the broader, non-linguistic framework of medieval studies."

I then used that business magazine clip to break into *Cats*. And used that *Cats* clip to break into *Family Circle*. I went on to write a dozen clips for Family Circle and became their highest-paid writer. Imagine how differently my career would have turned out if I had decided I couldn't pitch *Family Circle* until I had written for X number of regional women's pubs. **It's not that I was particularly brave...it's just that there were no self-styled writing experts around to tell me I was overstepping my bounds!**

REJECTING YOURSELF FIRST FEELS BETTER

The reason these *numbers* — the exact number of clips we need, or classes, or credentials — grow to such monumental importance for writers is that **they allow writers to pre-reject themselves.** That feels a lot better than getting rejected for real by a prospective client!

But you know what? Writers I know who have put themselves out there have discovered something very interesting:

It's never that bad.

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While you may see yourself as a supplicant begging for crumbs, and expect to be treated that way, potential writing clients see you as a professional providing a service they may or may not need at the time.

Where you see only a lack of clips, editors see the great job you did on the two clips you included with your pitch.

Where you see the need for just one more writing class before you pitch your blogging services, because your experience is in textbook writing, your prospect sees you sent a captivating pitch and have an impressive background in educational writing. And make no mistake, the prospect is smart enough to connect the dots and know you'll be able to ace that blog post.

IF YOU CAN'T HAVE THE ONE YOU LOVE...

...love the one you're with. If that song makes you want to claw your ears off, we're going to be very good friends. But we still need to see the value in being satisfied with the amount of clips, experience, degrees, testimonials, contacts, or whatever we may have, instead of always chasing after "just one more" before we dare to pitch our writing.

See "just one more" as the excuse it is, and banish it from your life. Love what you have, and that pride will shine through in all your communications with potential clients.

If you make the leap from "just one more" to "loving what you have now," please email (lindaformichelli@gmail.com) or text (508-207-5275) to let me know how it goes!

Your Freelance Writing Success Coach,

Linda Formichelli

P.S. Tired of the overwhelm, and just want to know what steps you can take right now to earn more money faster as a freelance writer? Looking for support, accountability, critiques, and advice from a veteran freelancer? [Contact me](#) to set up a Freelance Writing Success Coaching session today!