



Why You Should Be Happy When a Client Quits

By Linda Formichelli
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You know what's the worst? When you go to pitch a client you love, and you find out that they've left the company...and in their place is someone who doesn't know you from Adam.

Except this is actually not the worst—it's the best! These stories will explain why.

Early in my career, I wrote for *Psychology Today* magazine and developed a relationship with the news editor. Let's call her Julie. Julie then became an editor at parenting magazine. Her replacement at *Psychology Today* continued to hire me to write short pieces, and Julie hired me to write features at the parenting magazine. Then Julie left the parenting magazine to work at a women's magazine. Her replacement continued to hire me at the parenting magazine, and I also went on to write for Julie at the women's magazine.

So while it *could* have seemed like I lost one good gig, what actually happened was that **I ended up turning one good gig into three!**

Another example: In the last couple of years I've done little writing for clients, because I've been focused on my teaching and book authoring. But I miss writing! I love pitching and the thrill of the chase...working to fine tune my words for a client...and cashing a nice paycheck at the end.

I told a new writer friend that I wanted to get back into client writing, and she reminded me that I

already have a lot of previous custom content clients. She suggested I find out where they are now and reach out to them.

So I did. First, I used LinkedIn to discover where my old clients are working now. Then, if they had moved on to another company, I also sleuthed out who their replacement was at their old company. (What's funny is that a lot of clients had moved on to other custom content companies that I had also worked for in the past!) I emailed my old clients with the subject line "A voice from your past," and their replacements with the subject line "A voice from Company Name's past."

The result: Many of my old clients offered to send my info and clips around to the editors at their new company...**and I also heard from some of their replacements at their old companies with the same offer.**

You're probably wondering how you can make this happen for you, because right now when a client leaves it is a sob-worthy experience. Here's how you can turn a loss into a double gain:

1. Do your absolute best work for *every* client.

I guarantee that none of these previous clients would have offered to send my information

around to their fellow editors at their new employer if I had produced shoddy work, acted like a diva, or blown off deadlines.

You should do your very best work even for low-paying clients! Don't accept low-paying assignments and then passive-aggressively do cruddy work because you don't think the client is paying you enough to bother. **Do good work because you're a pro and that's what you do—and also because you never know when a client at a meh publication will move on to work at your dream magazine.**

A long time ago I poured my heart and soul into articles for a trade magazine in the printing industry that offered very low pay. That editor went on to start his own publishing company that published books for writers, and it's because I did my best work for him that you can now enjoy the third, completely revised and updated edition of *The Renegade Writer: A Totally Unconventional Guide to Freelance Writing Success*, which came out earlier this week! Those little trade magazine assignments truly launched my career as an author and coach.

That attitude is also why, when I sent out notes to my old clients, I got responses like "Of course I remember you...you are one heck of a writer" and "I will remind everyone that you're the real deal and to hire Linda Formichelli if they need content marketing talent." **That's the kind of**

reaction you want to get from your old clients—and it comes from good old fashioned hard work.

2. When a client moves on to another company, find out where she went.

When your pitch bounces back with an automated note saying your client no longer works for the company, instead of crying that you just lost a gig, **find out where she went and send her a note of congratulations.**

Most often, your clients move on to new jobs because they are being offered more money or a promotion, and that's definitely an occasion worthy of celebration! (Just do some research to make sure that really is the case before you offer your congratulations. Nothing is more awkward than sending a "Woo hoo!" note to a client who got fired from his editor-in-chief position and ended up sweeping the floors at a no-name pub.)

3. Find out who your client's replacement is and send them a note.

If you're lucky, that bounce-back email will say something like, "If you need assistance, please contact Sam Jamison." Score! Sam is most likely your client's replacement, and you can **reach out to him with an introduction and a few links to the work you've done for the company.**

Otherwise, call the company, say you wrote for client X, and ask who her replacement is. Then, contact that person via email, phone, or LinkedIn to introduce yourself.

That's it! Easy, right?

Note that the key to getting repeat work of any kind is to be good at what you do. But beyond that, **you need to keep track of where your clients are going and be proactive in reaching out.** Often when a client moves on to a new company, that company already has a stable of freelancers—so chances are slim that they'll think to take you along unless you ask.

Stop crying when a client quits, take the steps outlined here...and rejoice when you have two clients instead of one!

Your Freelance Writing Success Coach,

Linda Formichelli

P.S. On Wednesday, April 12, Carol Tice and I will be offering a red-hot free webinar on one of the most-asked questions in all of freelancing: "What Should I Charge?" [You can join us by registering here.](#) (The replay will run through April 17.)