

How to Sell 75% of Your Freelance Writing

Article writers, and others eager to be in print, seem to be forgetting the always-reliable ways to get their writing published.

Maybe they are blinded by the new electronic do-dads, social media, apps, and so on. They are rather spectacular new tools, as is the new [ancillary book](#) publishing process to put your book in print in days for only a few bucks. But so were typewriters in Mark Twain's day, as were computers and their magic printers when your Dad was a kid—or you were.

But what seems to be getting overlooked is that to get on somebody else's pages, like on one of those 20,000+ magazines now published in the U.S. or in the newspapers in almost every city or village, you have to get the gatekeeper's nod. That is, you must either convince the editor that you have something to write, or you must write it so they can see the idea and the words in final form.

I wrote about the process in the book **How to Sell 75% of Your Freelance Writing**. In the slimmest of summaries, it says that to sell to magazines you send a query letter to the editor that explains what you want to write about, why the readers would read it, and a bit about who you are (as a writer). The letter must show by its writing that if the editor says yes, you can write to that magazine's level about what you promise in the query. (If bought as a first rights purchase, once it's in print you can resell that article to any other editor interested. You send a copy of the actual article, with a cover letter, to sell second/reprint rights.)

Some editors don't want to be queried, so to them you send the potential article (written as it might appear in print). If

they buy it, again you can resell the text, often, as reprints. They are mostly newspaper editors or those who buy simultaneous submissions.

If photos or other artwork should also be considered, mention them in the query or cover letter, and if the editor gives a nod, send them with the manuscript. The new technology can be a big help here too. You can also post a half dozen of your best digital photos on a (free) webpage, and direct the editor to that link to see samples of the artwork or photos you can provide.

The key point is that you still have to gently convince the editor that what you have to say is worth occupying the non-ad space on their page(s), and that query letters or (much less often) the article with a cover letter—and perhaps sample jpgs—are the time-tested way to do that.

Digital mail to the rescue: many editors gladly accept e-mail queries. The rest still want snail mail. SASE's (self-addressed stamped envelopes) for replies have been replaced by an e-mail reply address.

The query and cover letters are still the best ways to unlock the editors' hearts, in the newest electric media or the stodgiest old-fashioned magazine. "Wow!" still works. That's what an eager editor says when a one-page letter honestly promises magic on their pages—and tells you to write and send it ASAP, with payment mentioned or implied.

There are books about querying: check Google. We have a \$5 digital [report](#) with 25 query examples, and my [Travel Writer's Guide](#) (\$10 or \$15) that explains the "75%" process. You can also send your articles to [ezinearticles.com](#) or [articlesbase.com](#) where they can appear, free, in e-zines.

Best wishes,

Gordon Burgett

P.S. Check my free monthly [newsletter](#) for more info about writing and publishing.