

What do I do special as a writing coach?

I just woke up to a question/discussion on LinkedIn's Promocave:

Carrie Golden, Citizen Journalist/Poetry Consultant to filmmakers at Motionpoems, Inc., asked:

Writing coach...

Not sure if this group [Promocave] is the right place to post this question but...what exactly does a writing coach do to help writers?

I wear two hats (on one head): (1) **"court-of-last-resort" editor**, providing a last-chance no-nonsense review of what the writer is about to submit (the final final draft) for book publication and (2) a **first-step writing coach** (before much writing). So here was my contribution to the discussion that defines my view of what different do I offer as a writing coach—and why.

[As a writing coach] I think of myself as a nonfiction "what" coach. I prod the souls [rather deeply] through six or so what's (?), then the "how's" make sense (and cents). I'm there if they need me later, more as an action guide and (sometimes) a silent co-planner of their future empire.

Here's a longer explanation of (2), if you are interested and it helps you (*sans* me) do your own early nonfiction book planning, writing, and publishing.

There's not much mystery about the steps a nonfiction writer can and usually takes to prep and submit a book for

publication. See a hundred books in libraries worldwide that address that, and I have two books that address it too: [How to Get Your Book Published in Minutes and Marketed Worldwide in Days](#) and [How to Pick the Right Kind of Publisher](#).

What distresses me most is the number of smart, organized, diligent would-be book writers who wander about, with perfectly good words and spelling, looking for something to say and, mostly, a reason to say it. Bewildered souls with hundreds of pages (at least it reads that way) of “what’s that?” copy that has no clear (or any) purpose (or buyers) presented in sweet-reading, grammatically correct prose. Their command of English is strong. (It’s worse if it’s not.) What’s missing is their grasp of elementary common sense about what a book must do to become a book...

The saddest thing is how easily that could have been prevented if they hadn’t been in such a damn hurry to see themselves and their brilliance in print (everywhere), with assumedly a fat advance almost in hand and many years of fatter royalties following assuredly behind.

About six questions will create the structure and map, plus point the writer to the most likely reader, why they would read it, what they would do with it, and how they just saved themselves about 75% in misdirected (or undirected) research, “what’s that?” writing, and the one thing they can’t get back, wasted time. Of course each question leads to deeper, related sub-questions which, in turn, lead to a dozen related books written (or waiting for you to write) that, combined with speaking, consulting, focus book series, perhaps audiobooks, and so on, can rather quickly create an empire based on their acquired expertise (which began with book one and is further proven and strengthened in subsequent products.)

So I guess that really makes me a **pre-writing and empire-building coach** (if being an emperor or empress is your thing).

That's the longer overview of what my kind of writing coach does. (Most of the others start when the writing itself appears. Bless them.)

Best wishes,

Gordon Burgett

Leading your idea in print down its most profitable path...

So you've got an **article** or **book idea** that you want to turn into both **big money** and widely-seen **expertise presence**. That's the way to think! I'd also add that the copy needn't be completely rewritten again and again, so also think **reprint, rewrite, reprint of rewrites, and more...**

Let's say you want to write about the 2016 Chicago Cubs and their playing in the coming National League baseball playoffs—and perhaps for the pennant, of all things! But, if you can't tell, or wouldn't want to tell, a baseball from a ball of wax, your idea and copy to sell again and again could be about the Trump-Clinton presidential election, kumquat delicacies from the kitchen, or driverless autos driving nonetheless on the streets!

Alas, I've been a baseball fan from/in Chicago almost since the Great Fire and the hapless Cubs haven't won a pennant for 107 years. You know us by the fetching blue, red, and white

“C” hats that we have had to hide in our cupboard for generations. Alas, this is our year, so we dusted them off and wear them on our heads for breakfast, lunch, dinner, and almost all the hours between—until October when we will know if the hex of the billy goat is true. **So I’m picking the Cubs for this empire-building article writ long...** (But if you’re reading this in the Philippines, on the Pyrenes, or in Peru, kumquat delicacies might be easier to understand...)

Let’s start with an **article** about the “plight of the Cubs” (or any fetching topic) for an American magazine. You do the usual things: some basic research to find the most interesting angles or slants, pick the best approach, and subject that idea to a two-pronged **feasibility study**—is it feasible to write and is it feasible to sell? (Go to the search box in the upper top right corner and type in **feasibility study** to see how the magazine approach works. The blog copy comes from either [How to Sell 75% of Your Freelance Writing](#) or [The Travel Writer’s Guide](#). To read those books, used and sold for a pittance, check the [Amazon catalog](#).) The feasibility study tells how to test magazines vs newspapers, who are the most likely readers, the querying process, and (for magazines), should you get a “go-ahead,” how you best present the copy for sale. (If it fits newspaper freelance buying fields too, submit the written article in final form, without a query and sent in ready-to-go fashion.) If the idea is a “go” as feasible to write and sell, send your articles to the best markets in both categories.

If the **magazine** buys your submission, you can use much of the article’s contents again (at least slightly rewritten) two ways: as a **reprint** or a **rewrite**. Then if a rewrite is bought, you can send that off to a still-virgin magazine as a reprint. With cunning, you can have several of each of these three partially-completed masterpieces filled in (completed) and in print, all paying you! (Again, go to the Search box above and write in reprints or rewrites to see step-by-step blogs with

more details.)

With **newspapers**, there are two paths: (1) you can literally sell the first copy to as many newspapers as will buy it as long as they aren't "national" newspapers (like the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, or the *Wall Street Journal*—sell them one at a time, and, after it is sold, thoroughly rewrite the piece before selling it to another "national") and (2) don't simultaneously sell it two or more regional newspapers within 100 miles of each other ("distribution ranges"). Otherwise, you can sell the very same newspaper article(s) to any other newspaper (except the "nationals") as long as they don't overlap. Just tell the newspaper editor yours is a simultaneous submission and you are selling it outside of their 100-mile circulation orb.

What more can you do with reams of unused copy parts shouting to be read? Throw all the used copy into a cauldron, add the unused gems, mix them up again, and "**topic spoke**" them to find as many of the other potential eager buyers as will shriek and pay, delightfully, to use your genius and make you rich. Check the blog search for items about "topic spoking" in the 400+ blogs waiting to be used!

How many **books** can you pluck from that cauldron (adding in other sources still untouched)? You could write/publish a book for all kinds of Cubs' *aficionados*: one for kids/young adults, one for the regular folk, another for seniors (some praying for the Cubs to win, others incredulous that they are anywhere near the top), another for the Cubs fans focusing on this year and the past two, another putting all 107 years in perspective, and so on.

And because each book requires a mound of research, interviews, anecdotes, photos, and more, you can turn this into new wealth of found and reworked copy and pluck out more **articles**, and thus more **rewrites**, **reprints**, and **reprints of rewrites**. You can also sell related **photos** where you sell copy

(check photos in Search), often the same photo repeatedly since they are almost always sold on one-time rights.

Lost in this pile of print are the **directly related spin-offs**, like **audiobooks** of any or all of those books just mentioned; **focus books** about specific elements of baseball for the truly absorbed, of the past year or two or of all time, like the pitching, the records set and broken, ERAs, a projection of future years and records of new(er) players emerging in the 2016 excitement; even **videos** and **movies**, all being in print before being converted to other media. Then using the most visible of the platform builders, authors speaking about their (new) specialty from the platform: see **rallies**, **speeches**, **how-to workshops**, **seminars**, **talks**, and so on...

Every time your champion copy has your by-line attached to your super writing in a newspaper, magazine, or book, you are solidifying yourself as an **expert** in that field, building a following, and making yourself more wanted by **information and product producers**. They want to get more good items from you, a recognized “valuable and prolific source” of, in this case, baseball, Cubs, and sports ideas, information, and articulation.

The point here is that **almost any word or idea has lots of legs (and ears) and can be multiplied very profitably many times by many means**. The trick is to create interesting copy about ideas that others want to know more about that is spelled properly and has the facts, quotes, and anecdotes artfully blended into more good ideas. Most exceptional writers don't stray too far from what others want to know, and they churn a fair amount of interesting text into many articles, then books, rather than just making one sale or two before wandering off to find unrelated subjects for articles that are also sold a few times. **It's wiser and fills your coffers faster by turning your related ideas and copy over and over.**

Best wishes,

Gordon Burgett

[More how-to writing, publishing, and speaking stuff
at www.gordonburgett.com/order3.htm.]

How to make your friends smile gratefully all day long...

If this were addressed to you, how would you feel if it
arrived unexpectedly in your email box ?

This year (2016), I've decided to send one email each day
thanking someone who has enriched my life.

It could be someone who is close to me, like a family member
or a friend.

It could be someone I have only met once or perhaps admired
from afar.

It could be someone I have known for a long time or only
momentarily.

**TODAY YOU ARE THAT PERSON.
I APPRECIATE YOUR BEING IN MY LIFE.**

Allen

P.S. Please know that there is no hierarchy here. In the past

few days, your name and who you are in the world came to mind. When that happened I realized that I wanted to honor and thank you for enriching my life.

My reaction was delight and total surprise. So rarely is unsought, free kindness sent our way! If you want to use this model or concept, just do it. Change the names, of course. There are no copyrights or restrictions at all.

If your curiosity is stirred, here's a pinch of background. Allen Klein and I are veteran writers/speakers who have met, mostly in passing at presentations, for years. He's very funny and has written many books that I have enjoyed and shared, so I was indeed honored—and quite surprised—when it arrived. The next day it occurred to me that others may want to say the same or something similar to those they know. So I emailed Allen, thanked him for the thoughtfulness, and asked if my sharing the idea with others would be okay. His reply, almost immediate, was “Yes, please *do* share it. Imagine if we all did this! What a great world this would be.”

So now it's in your hands to use as or if you wish!

(Allen Klein's most recent book is *You Can't Ruin My Day*. See more at humor@allenklein.com.)

Best wishes,

Gordon Burgett

www.gordonburgett.com

Name(required)

Email(required)

Website

Comment(required)

[Stretch one skinny article into five with minimal effort](#)

How would you like to design one article to appear in five different magazines or newsletters that explains the benefits, through example, of **your firm's specialization** and why they may want to know more about your services? The best thing: it's pretty much the same article with a similar message, and the five articles will probably take far less than 40% of the time and effort!

Let's say you consult in the first-contact field, to help improve relations and create more business follow-through between receptionists and front-desk employees in small to medium-sized businesses. You can outwit your competitors by using the same basic idea five times through a popular **reprint and rewrite concept** familiar to journalists.

Perhaps your consulting would work well for offices that deal in insurance, real estate, loan processing, titles, and interior designing. What you must do is **create a master article** that will work well in publications to each of those five fields. Let's say the creation of a telephone answering approach and basic script that would make all who phone (1) feel welcome and reassured by the professional message content and tone, (2) would be promptly directed to the person best prepared to answer their question or give advice, (3) or would be sent to the department or desk that handles their needs,

and (4) would experience the properly directed pass-off smoothly and courteously.

That master article (probably about 650-900 words long) would give an example of how the greeting program you would design would function, with now-and-then examples and benefits clearly visible. But it would be niche-tailored to meet the needs in the five fields just mentioned. To do that you might **interview a first-contact person** or two in firms in each field, so the article has the right tone and vocabulary, and meets the unique needs in the different niches.

For example, you might call the office manager in, say, a loan office nearby and tell that person that you are ___ and you are writing an article about greeting solutions in the loan field and could you interview her/him for 15 minutes in person or by phone to have a better understanding of how greeting is handled in the loan office field. **It's surprising how eager others are to be interviewed.** You could do the same to the other four fields too. What you need for all or most of the niche articles is inside, hands-on, how-to information from an experienced practitioner.

Later, you might call the same person again, thank them once more, and ask if they could suggest the three niche magazines in their field they think might be interested in sharing the short article—that you will handle the placement but thought it prudent to see what is most read right now.

Since you already know how positive greeting programs can be designed, you can then take the problems mentioned in the interview and design a program that would **provide significant benefit.** (And do the same in the other fields too. The second article will be much faster; the fifth, about as fast as you can type.)

Then you use the usual submission procedures to the target magazines, in this case a **query letter** suggesting the article

or a **direct submission** of the finished article with a cover letter. When accepted and submitted remember to include a “**bio slug**,” a 20-35-word short that tells about you, the author, or the firm, plus the address/phones/email info so the readers can contact you for business!

Why would you do this? To make local contacts through the interviewees, get your firm’s beneficial suggestions in front of readers nationwide in five different fields, and to have copies of in-print articles to use for your p.r. or direct promotions. **What I like best is doing five while you do one.** As long as you are thinking this way, why not think a bit deeper and get a much better return?

Best wishes,

Gordon Burgett

P.S. To see other blogs about **reprints, rewrites, query letters, and selling freelance writing**, just type those words in the **search box**, upper right, and the other blogs will appear after this article.

[Some thoughts about interviewing...](#)

*This is an excerpt (part of a chapter) from my coming book, **Interviewing**. I talk about tools and means used to interview:*

Interviewing is mostly you asking questions to a person or, rarely, a group, and receiving an intelligible response in return. When you record what you asked and what they replied, that is the thinnest skeleton of a completed interview.

That's a bit simplistic but most of the rest just adds bulk and hope to the process.

A huge percentage of my interviews have involved direct communication with my target person. **More than half were done eye to eye (really mouth to ear)**, and most of those were done when I was learning how, usually on the road last century gathering travel material. I asked and they responded, and I translated and wrote what they said into a notepad, in a kind of shorthand that spontaneously evolved (nouns mostly, other key words underlined.) It was give and take, staccato fashion, one question/a reply, segues... My goal was about five minutes, which was a long time for them and for me. It rarely lasted 30 minutes; an hour interview never happened.

Well, that sense of brevity may be somewhat misleading because many "interviews" became conversations, and ended when it was comfortable or necessary to do so. If the other person wanted to keep talking I was usually game to do so (unless I absolutely had to be somewhere else right then—sometimes we resumed the exchange later over lunch or coffee.) Other times they just wanted someone to talk to, or were lonely, or were proud of what they had done or seen and wanted to share more of it. That was fine. Often it gave me more, better information and a deeper interview.

Occasionally I was drawn to an interviewee. I wanted to know them better, and (hard to believe) that seemed mutual. They were interesting, often passionate about some cause, and they almost always bubbled or bristled with humor. What they said was worth sharing; it was fun; they were worth knowing. A few of those contacts became lifelong friends, particularly those still living.

But mostly interviewing is fast and focused. It's kind of a dancing duel: you extracting what you need (and hoping for more); them telling you what they want you (and your readers) to hear, hoping they didn't say too much.

In my mind, first interviews should be courteous, painless, and fairly fast, leaving open the possibility of a later follow-up. But I don't mention that before or during the first interview other than asking them how I might later contact them should I run into a fact or a phrase that needs clarification and asking for or verifying an address where I would send them a copy of the printed article. (If you offer, do send it.)

Most of my interviews not done eye-to-eye were done by **telephone**. Those weren't as satisfactory because you couldn't tell how much of what they were saying was true, a greased lie, or something in between. Nor did you ever know if the voice you were hearing belonged to the actual person you had called. (I don't think I ever interviewed a stiff or a stand-in, but surprisingly often they grilled me to make sure I was the journalist they were supposed to be talking to and that I was writing an article for such-and-such a publication. Everyday people took me at face (or voice) value, happy to be the one being interviewed. The higher ups were more likely to have their assistant or caretaker vet or check me out first).

Another telephone problem: the tenuous connection between you and the person you are interviewing—one wire—almost invites the other person to simply hang up or disconnect when they have said what they think you should (or need to) hear. It's a true test of your interviewing (and inventive) magnetism to be able to keep the other person focused and actively responding. Some of that is created before starting the actual interview by getting the respondent's buy-in to the importance of the exchange so what they say can reach their target listeners' or readers' ears.

My restraint to interviewing by phone was personal—and, in my dotage, still is. I grew up weaving waggish humor and pun-riddled, antic wordplay into my everyday conversation. It drove my few friends crazy. But all of that tomfoolery had to be excised when phone interviewing strangers for print,

particularly when they envisioned sparks or bolts of radiated global fame emanating from the article (or even book) they would be in. It was their big moment and they didn't expect mirth or frivolity—any humor at all—then, particularly over the telephone where smiles are never seen and barely heard. So half of what I normally might have said, or how I might have said it, was verboten and probably dumbfounding. However funny, they never, ever would have laughed. They were expecting to be asked to share gems of wisdom, poignant observation, Christian guidance, and household tips. Out the telephonic window flew my witty high jinks, which left the interviewer, me (or you), nearly speechless, jocularly disarmed.

Alas, nothing is incurable when regular eating is at steak. I immediately reverted to my telephone high school date-getting scheme of imploring (or interviewing) by script. My first 100 or so interviews (it may have been 500) were very, very tightly structured, almost every word written or typed. It looked something like this, although where you see ideas below I had complete sentences, short sentences to give them time to respond:

- * wee introduction
- * reminder of why I was calling and where their words would be shown to the world
- * a question
- * a second question—these were the most important answers in case something else interrupted the call—it happens often—and there would be no chance to finish... [more on this later]
- * [if something relevant in their reply to my questions was said or hinted at I would ask more, prodding queries about it, to provoke more facts or brilliance]
- * a third question
- * [if they verbally wandered off and what they said would also interest my imaginary readers I let them wander. I only reherded them back into my imaginary readers' corral of

interest when they wore out or I still had a final question to ask]

* fourth question (or more) if needed. See above.

* anything else, Mr./Ms. _____, that I should have asked but didn't?"

* "is there a phone number I could use to reach you if I find something I need to verify later?"

* "I'll gladly send you a copy of the printed article as soon as it appears—remember, printing can sometimes take months"

* "is _____ the address where I should send the article, in your name?"

* "thank you again, Mr./Mrs. _____, for the information and your time"

* "it sounds like a very interesting article. I appreciate your kindness and your sharing"

* (hang up softly, breathe deeply, wipe brow, hydrate rewardingly, and type out the whole interview then or before nightly repose)

Interviewing by **email**, or even by **social media**, is fast, sometimes too public too soon, and a whole lot less expansive. Combined with **Skype** or other computer-to-computer linking, it's fairly easy and much faster to talk with others now—if they agree to talk with you.

For example, ...

This is an unedited extraction of part of **an early chapter of a book called INTERVIEWING**. Check future blogs for more copy about the topic.

Best wishes,

Gordon Burgett

Writers: How to Write in Financial Comfort Even in Old Age!

There are ways to do what the title says—and about 1000 other ways that guarantee writing penury, most about as lucrative as begging for or selling writing pencils on the street! I'll not foul this blog by describing how you can find cliché distress or dangling destitution—poverty you can find on your own. Or it will find you, particularly if you're lazy or wreyete horribly!

For the rest of you wordsmiths overflowing with words, wit, proper punctuation, vivid imaginations, and computers that spell well, here's what an old writer thinks are the most likely paths to help you at least end up paying your own bills—and comfortably at ease between now and then.

We can **eliminate some kinds of writing** at the outset, like **essays** and **poetry**. Verse may be the showcase of a mastermind, but 99%+ of the poets, bless them, even when in rhyme don't have a dime.

Let's focus on the **four paths** that make the most cents.

Geniuses could secure comfort if they could express their wizardry in lucid, sought prose, then link themselves to vendors who could harness, package, and sell their brilliance. (So much for geniuses.)

A harder path would be from the bottom up, **from stringer to city editor to editor-of-editors**. Theirs might be the bobbing path of nervous comfort while publishing mastheads sink into

the sea. Editing excellence may have to be mixed with the deft art of vessel leaping, derring-do in life preservers, afloat, preserving words and news while awaiting the calm. Still, in business and government there may be a million jobs that have a writing core. They pay well and keep the faithful comfortable during retirement. Some of the greatest writers had their day jobs there, and bloomed into fame from the product of their nighttime/weekend passions.

Fiction writers have the privilege of inventing comfort when needed, of living where their imagination takes them to find solace. But to have enough coin to eat and stay warm as needed requires that they cook up a tasty singular plotstew of people, purpose, and place that readers want, then keep that blend boiling until their culinary/literary fame makes them well rewarded. For most this is surely the hardest way to spend a life fed solely by writing.

The fourth path is obvious but its luster is so unseen by the everyday public that most miss its truly gilded glow. These are the folks who **write for close-knit bonds of workers**. They define their niches—surveyors, goat breeders, school principals—and write books or create how-to guides or give workshops transformed into BOR tomes about what every member of the group needs to know to do what they do better. Most also speak professionally about what they write. And if their primary field folds or changes form they reform their knowledge to match the new configuration, get the groups' email addresses and sell their solutions to their associations and their members. They have ready-made followers eager for every applicable word that they write or speak. When they write articles, they know specifically who will read them and what they need or want to read. Their blogs are avidly awaited, they use social media to enhance their expertise, and as they get known and grow older their demand grows proportionately. They're probably too busy to be too comfortable in their prime years, but they could have a self-

generating empire that would keep them very comfortable as they age. The downside? Who knows they exist (comfortably or at all) and who reads their chosen words, other than the tight circle of their followers.

That's it. Musing about how those fed by the flames of imagination and word-molding are most likely to be able to be comfortably closer to their preferred mode of creation longer and freer from debilitating or impoverishing distractions.

Best wishes,

Gordon Burgett

P.S. I write books and speak their messages, mostly. Some are published by others, while I also publish niche books, all of which I edit but are written by others. Here is a [list](#) of those books that are currently available. (Oh yes, I'm also old.)

[A visible punctuation error that gets writers unbought!](#)

You want to get paid for your wordsmithing by some deep-pocketed, eagle-eyed editor who refuses to rewrite your mistakes, here's something that can keep you poor and quickly rejected. Even worse, it's easy to spot before the editor reads a word.

Learn how and when to use the “en” and “em” dashes right every time.

Worse yet, do you know that there are em dash, 2 em dash, and 3 em dash decisions too? And do you put a space before and

after it or snug it up to the type every time it is used?

The dashes all get their names from their girth and volume. The “en” dash is the size of a hyphen and is the width of the letter “n”; the “em” dash is twice as wide (but all in one dash) because it’s the size of the fatter letter “m.”

“Look at me, I’m a simple en dash!”

The easy dash is the skinny brother, en.

You use the en dash all the time. It even has its own key on the keyboard, above and to the right of the letter “p.” And there are never blank spaces before or after it. It usually means “to” when you connect numbers in ranges, like dates (2001-2013), or months (June-July), or miracles, like the Cubs won the pennant game 9-1.

But you don’t use the single dash when the number or word is preceded by from or between (from...to, or between...and). Two examples: “The zoo is closed from November to February” or “It’s most comfortable when the temperature is between 65 and 77°F.”

The most confusing is when the en dash is used when joining compound modifiers where at least one of the words is an open compound (meaning not hyphenated) or is already hyphenated. Like, the Chicago-Rome connection, bridesmaid-approved dresses, or pre-election polling restrictions.

“No, look at ME, I’m a bewildering em dash!”

The em dash should look like —, but it still appears (in earlier typed text) as two hyphens without a space between (because that was your only choice on old-fashioned typewriters.) The em dash is so common that it is what most mean when they say “a dash.” It’s used primarily in informal writing in place of a comma, colon, semicolon, or parentheses to provide emphasis.

You most often see it used to set off parenthetical expressions like “When I hit the high C—or tried to hit, or at least reach, the high C—the students broke out laughing!” I could have substituted with parentheses, but not a comma because commas cannot be used to set off parenthetical expressions when there is internal punctuation (commas inside the expressions.)

Two uses where the em dash, usually used in pairs, might appear alone:

“Betty, How could—Why would you do such a thing?”

“Can I finish my—,” the husband pleaded.

It can also be inserted, alone, in place of an unknown value in a table.

Where do you find em dashes on a keyboard? Go to “Insert/symbol/special characters” and both the em and en dashes will appear. But most software programs let you type two consecutive hyphens (no space between) and as you type the next item the double hyphen will also convert into an em dash.)

Don’t forget us: we’re double em and triple em!

I’m double and you see me used to indicate missing letters in a word, either because material is missing or illegible, or to conceal a name. Like Sister M ——. Or “Two of the players, — and —, got thrown out for fighting.” (Notice that in blogs and computer text the spaces between the en dashes still appear? Imagine here they are joined, two in one.)

I’m triple em (didn’t you notice?) and I am much more formal. I am used in bibliographies when the author’s name is repeated, like

———. Adventures in Dashes. New York: Big House Publisher, 2015.

Finally, do you insert a space before and after an em dash? It depends. They seem to do so almost all the time in England, and some U.S. newspapers (and a few magazines) do too. I don't nor do I see it much where I publish (articles and books) and I think the trend is to join the em dash on both sides, like: "this is an example–albeit a bad one–of what..." I'd just be consistent throughout the piece and the editor will recognize and usually correct your weird style. But inconsistency, at least here, may drive the editor daft–or dafter. That will leave you–broke(r).

I hope this helps.

Best wishes,

Gordon Burgett

[Using humor to sell your magazine articles](#)

Funny you should ask!

One rule always: some editors/publications don't use humor, so don't even try. At best the editor may open her lips to chuckle (or groan), then reconsider and toss the query. I can't tell you which such publications to avoid because I don't read them. But it used to be that the AARP magazines were humor dry. That getting old must be grim stuff. (So when I did write for them I kept surefire rip-roarers, even tepid jests, out of my mind lest one slide down to my pecking finger and be read by the paymaster.)

I can't remember any editor who wanted truckloads of comedy

dumped on their desk. They bought humor in measured bits deftly worked into actual (or near-) truths. Except the **fillers editors** who seemed to weigh jokes by the word so they could be squeezed into advertising holes. They actually did pay a pittance, when they stopped laughing—but I don't ever recall them buying two jokes at the same time. I had a colleague who sold a joke to *Reader's Digest* and included the sale in his credits in every query. One editor wrote back, rejecting his idea, and added, "I bet that *RD* joke was the only thing you ever sold." Mean editors are rare, but they can be perceptive. It was about a third of his freelance bounty.

Puns sometimes worked, but if I used one I used two so they knew it was intentional. I've sold 1,700+ freelance articles but only once did I use a full-out joke in an article, and that was about 10 or 15 words long and the joke was the article's lead! (Alas, it must have been far below my personal humor standard because I can't remember a word of it!) On the other hand I wrote a travel short about 800 words long about eating guinea pig sandwiches that were cooked on the street in Quito, Ecuador. (At least they looked like guinea pigs.) I found out years later, through a Peace Corps kid stationed near Cuenca, that one of his projects was to help multiply the stock of domesticated guinea pigs to increase the meat available on the local table. (Whatever it was, it sure tasted good.)

Here was my system of weaving humor into an article's otherwise deadly prose.

(1) Mostly I lifted deadly prose appreciably heavenward by keeping the tone light and the descriptions spry (good synonyms adorned with festive adjectives helped).

(2) I relied a lot on word play, but you have to spread it out and only do that now and then. For example, I might refer to Buffy, a wee, yapping dog, as a furry feral killer-companion or a drooling pet growler. Or a woman's date as her knight of

the night. That's enough wit: the blog censors just told me to stop—they are thinking of your humor health.

(3) A funny, related thought to what is being said in a paragraph almost always ended that paragraph.

(4) It's hard to give isolated examples. Find an article that intentionally makes you laugh and highlight every funny item in it with yellow underliner. You'll see that the humor is discretely bundled in 93% topic-related facts.

(5) Just as the writer did in (5) above, if the subject had humor wanting to get out, I made the content worth reading, and let some of that humor escape.

(6) I always put some humor in the query letter, in the actual selling message, so the editor knew there would be humor in the copy that followed. I'm convinced that the humor helped sell the query. But you can't overdue it.

(7) As a friend who teaches journalism tells his wards: if you can't keep your humor in control, get a talk show!

Some loose how-to's but I hope it helps. Life's a whole lot more fun when you're part of the wit and mirth. It's even better when you get paid to share it.

Best wishes,

Gordon Burgett

Why was your article query rejected again?

Who writes **articles** in 2015?

At least **1,486,000** writers had a journal article published in 2010. Some were written by two or three authors. And that's just journals. And that was five years ago.

2,000,000 blog posts will be written today. **Today**. Another 2,000,000 tomorrow, and so on...

The difference is that articles must be accepted by someone to see light, while blogs can be your own and there's no stopping them. But if it's somebody else's blog you want to be a guest in, ugly acceptance (the kind side of rejection) rises again.

I've had about a zillion articles in print (I tell my grandkids) and I've been rejected .5 zillion times (I don't tell them). Mostly, from 40+ years, much as an editor, let me tell you why the editor wants you to go away.

1. 85 people contacted the editor wanting to be in the next issue of their publication. Only **one** will make it that day, or **8** in a magazine that month. For starters, the editor really wishes you'd just disappear.

2. But you probably won't. You think you're useless if you're not on those pages, and damnit... At least **contact the editor the way she/he wants to be approached**. If they want an old-fashioned query letter ("would you be interested in an article about...") sent by snail mail, half the war may be won by finding a stamp and a mailbox.

3. **Don't think the editor will make an exception for you if**

you send a query by email. You have to get his email address for starters (you can't just send it to info@publication), and if he/she doesn't want emails from the unwashed, getting that address will be harder to find than Harry Truman's middle name.

4. **Have you even read the publication** you are hounding? Did you wonder why the editor says (Read our publication first to see...) Read it to see what they use, how many words they want, do they use humor (if not, the joke's on you)...

5. **When was the last time the editor ran an article about the very topic you want to hawk?** See if there's an index you can find through Google telling what they've published. (Whenever I used a travel piece about Montana I got 10 queries in 10 days about Montana. We included Montana once a year because we had six subscribers from there. Did you wonder why there were almost no Montana articles in the index?)

6. If you **did read the last three issues**, did you get a sense of what the editor probably needed and wasn't in the index? Make that topic leap off the query letter for two paragraphs like an O'Henry short story (but give the ending). Just don't tell the editor that you know he/she needs that topic.

7. **Rejections come from these things:** no query, a query longer than one tight page, the editor has no idea what you will write about...or how you know that...or which three "experts" you will interview...if you've ever been in print anywhere...profanity and bad sex on their pages upset the advertisers...you forgot periods and commas...you signed, from your buddy!...there is clear evidence that you are insane...there is not a *goda* of appreciation for the editor giving your rantings full consideration...threats don't work before (or after) lunch...and the editor doesn't care (in fact, quietly applauds) that you will quit journalism forever if he/she doesn't give you a go-ahead.

Just in case you were wondering.

But don't give up—where will journalism be? There are still 1,485,999 article slots to be filled. (Also, spell the editor's name right and if you don't know about their gender, call them by their last name preceded by Editor... Editors need at least one laugh a day.)

Keep at it,

Gordon Burgett

P.S. You wonder what a legitimate professional query letter looks like? For \$5 we'll let you [download](#) 20+5 of them. Please at least rewrite these queries before you try to reuse them again!

4 proven ways to sell 75%+ of your freelance writing

MAGAZINES and NEWSPAPERS

1. Here is the two-item formula for selling nonfiction copy to **magazines** and **newspapers**: (a) You sell more than 75% of your freelance writing by writing *only* when you have better than a 50% chance of a sale, and (b) You have better than a 50% chance of a sale by either querying your prospective market, and writing *after* you receive a positive reply, or by writing

to markets where you can simultaneously submit the same manuscript.

2. You can also increase your sales percentage and income by simultaneously selling **reprints** or **rewrites** of the published material—or **reprints of the rewrites**[[Reprints, Rewrites, Reprints of Rewrites, and Resales](#)].

3. **Fiction** is excluded from this 75% claim in magazines, newspapers, and books. Nonetheless, if points made on these pages seem appropriate to selling your fiction, try them, but know that the selling ratio in fiction is very low.

4. The most important tool for selling to magazines is the **query letter**. [[25 Professional Query and Cover Letters](#)] You do not query to newspapers (except to their magazines); you need **cover letters** to sell to them. If you are selling to big-house book publishers, at least a query letter is required. If you are niche publishing and pre-testing, you will need a sales letter, a small note, and a prepaid response mailer.

—-

Items in **orange** are explained in far greater detail in blogs from blog.gordonburgett.com. Go to the blog and insert the highlighted word in the search box, upper right, title page. Often the search will bring up many blogs related to the topic or word you seek. For example, if you are looking for more information about “query letter” (a good thing to know about) and you type “query letter” in the box, it will probably bring up a five or ten full blogs, one after the other. Please use all of the information that applies.)

Items in **magenta** are the subject(s) of related products. The product title is in brackets after the reference. There is more information at www.gordonburgett.com/order3.htm.

For more assistance, see www.gordonburgett.com and glburgett@aol.com.

NEWSPAPERS

5. Usually the copy (and accompanying photos) sold to newspapers will be about **travel** [[How to Sell 75% of Your Travel Writing](#)], editorial commentary, food, reviews, and (very rarely) **columns**. That's about all newspapers buy from freelancers. Mostly they buy travel.

6. You are more likely to sell to newspapers (particularly in travel) if your piece is **short** (600-1500 words; 1200 words is a good target) rather than long (to about 3000 words). The longer feature articles are usually written by the **section editor**, or one from another publication.

7. You can **simultaneously submit** the same material (copy and photos) to newspapers (unless they tell you no) if they are not "**national**" **newspapers**—like the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Christian Science Monitor*, and *Newsday*, where you submit to them one at a time—or where the newspapers overlap in prime circulation (usually within 100 miles of each other), where you submit to *only one* newspaper at a time in the **circulation radius**.

8. Study others' in-print newspaper articles in your target selections and write (and punctuate) like the original writers did to get in print. Focus on the **topics** [[Finding Topics That Make Your Articles Indispensable](#)], conciseness, **quotes**, timeliness, length of paragraphs, and the **writing voice** of the articles. The voice means: first person, I; second person, you; third person, he/she/it. (You mostly write salable copy in third person.)

9. Send your newspaper copy, ready to use, to the respective section editor with a cover note/page that tells the unique features in the copy, its timeliness, your **credits** (in a

phrase: "I've sold 600 newspaper travel pieces"—don't lie, say nothing if it's nothing or very modest), any exceptional photos, how to get back to you—email and phone, and that you are marketing simultaneously (no nationals; to you solely within a 100-mile radius). If you are sending to a national newspaper, submit to one at a time (until bought). To national newspapers (or those few that insist), you are selling **first rights** to them only.

10. If you have the respective section editor's newspaper email address, send your submission digitally—the **cover note/page, text, and sample photos** or link to a sample photo page. If you don't, snail mail your submission to that editor, and include an SASE (stamped, self-address envelope). If that editor replies by email, you then have their email address. Remember to write out the full address to the photo links.

11. Assuming your **salable photos** are .jpegs, in your cover note (a) offer to send them if they want to review them, but you can briefly describe one or two extraordinary shot(s) in the note, (b) include a b/w or color page with samples of the best 6 or so with the note, or (c) post the best you have, very best first, on a cloud or website page where they can link and peruse. Let them pluck what they want to use and pay as the piece and art are published.

12. There is no firm **photo submission protocol**, so use the publication's guidelines—or common sense. (Sometimes the guidelines are listed in *Google*—or the editor will tell you if you ask.) Let the editors decide if they will use the shot(s) in b/w or color. With the camera, seek clarity, get bright colors, focus on key items you wrote about. Remember, in newspapers, particularly for shorter submissions, the text is what they buy. (They might buy photo-first if you have an original shot of Napoleon—or something like that, or older.)

13. Newspapers pay from about \$100-225 for short items, \$200-500 for longer pieces. They pay after the submission is

published. For photos, it may range from \$35-150. But some may pay less for the items above and some of the larger newspapers will pay more. You have no bargaining power here but if you sell often to the same newspaper, the editor sometimes increases the pay as your value to them increases.

14. **Do you see how selling simultaneously to newspapers lifts you well above the 75%+ goal?** If you send a sharp article to six cities all distant from each other and four buy it (some with photos), you have sold the article 400%! It's hard to top that sales ratio. What a shame that the articles themselves don't pay much more...

MAGAZINES

15. Magazines do pay more. You usually know their **pay range** (several hundred to a thousand dollars and up) and the **size articles** they seek because most of the magazines that you will write for are found in the current-year **Writer's Market** (in print or online version). That and a ton more information is explained in **WM**, so you should have that source accessible where you write. Also, if you check *Writer's Digest Magazine* (in the library) it lists new markets every month—and updates current listings.

16. To get on the 75% magazine path find an idea you want to write about, then create a **feasibility study**. Think of the study as two boxes next to each other, both sharing the same idea. In one box you answer, "Is this topic feasible to write for X magazine?" In box two you answer "Is it feasible to sell an article about this topic?" If it's a "yes" to both, you will write a query letter to the #1 market. (See "**How to Prepare and Market Magazine Articles That Sell.**") [Travel Writer's Guide, ebook edition]

17. There is no need for a feasibility study for newspaper direct submissions because you will know if it's feasible to write because you will, in fact, write it and send the prose to one or many markets simultaneously. And if it sells, that's your answer to the second box.

18. To answer box 1, see if and **where magazine articles appeared in print** about your topic. Find copies of those articles and study what they contain. (See "**How to Study a Printed Magazine Article.**") [[Travel Writer's Guide, ebook edition](#)] You will likely need updated information, new quotes, or new examples to add to the information already in print. See if you have or can get access to that new information. If nothing has been in print, study the topic and list what readers would want to read about it. This should take several hours, not weeks or years. If you have a strong sense that if you queried an editor about that topic knowing what you can provide that he/she would say "yes, then move on to box 2.

19. "Who would buy an article about this topic?" is the focus of box 2. See the many categories of publications in the **WM** table of contents and list those where your topic might appeal to its readers. Let's say there are six such categories; list all of them. Then go to the listed publications in each category and write down the magazine titles in that category where you think the reader's interest would be greatest. Let's say there are two magazines in each category, so you would end up with 12 possible magazines to query before you write.

20. Because you can only query one magazine at a time from your 12 possible candidates, you must **prioritize** the 12. Put the most likely first and the least likely last, and sort the rest in between. What criteria do you use to prioritize the list?

21. If you want to top a 75% sales plateau, then when the editors of those magazines pay for articles is the most important criterion. So put all of those that "**pay on**

acceptance" (this information is in the **WM**) at the top of the list. Paid freelancers only query editors who pay on acceptance since that means if they accept your manuscript, you will be paid right away or within a month (when they churn that month's checks). The other editors "**pay on publication,**" which means your finished manuscript (and photos) will sit in that editor's "to use" pile until it fits, and then you will be paid after it sees print, which means another additional 60 days to get your reward. Even worse, those that pay on publication usually pay less, and a rare few forget to pay at all.

22. So once you know when your 12 possible markets pay, list the pay on acceptance publications on top (say six of them), with the remaining six that pay on publication on the bottom. Now ask the second question, "How much do they pay?" The highest payer of the first six candidates goes to the top of the list, the lowest payer is #6. (Don't worry about the last six on the list right now.)

23. There are two more criteria that could move your target markets up or down. One asks, "What **percent of freelance material** do they buy?" The other, "**How many issues do they publish a year?**" Clearly, you'd rather be considered by an editor that uses 95% freelance copy than, say, 5%. The same with a magazine that comes out weekly rather than annually—it buys 52 times more copy! Resort the top six into their most desirable order—for you.

24. Now you are ready to query. You will write a **full-page letter** asking the editor of the top magazine on your prioritized list if she would be interested in an article about _____. (The query letter will make the topic jump with excitement and the editor jump with hope to get your writing genius on her pages.) If, in truth, the editor says "yes, let me see it," that's almost as good as putting the money in your bank because the "**go-ahead** (and write it)" is given seriously, with the expectation that you will provide ready-to-go copy

that fits in the slot saved for you. But if the editor says “no,” however kindly, you will move to #2 on your list, read its write-up in the *WM*, and send its editor a query letter (often adjusted some to meet that new readership’s needs). You keep moving down the top six until you are out of “pay on acceptance” rejecters.

25. Why not just continue down the list of publication editors for this new article? It’s not worth the time for the risk involved. You will sell your reprints (or reprints of rewrites) to the bottom six. That’s what they often, sometimes only, buy. Better yet, you can sell reprints (or second rights) simultaneously as long as you tell the others that yours is a **second rights** sale.

26. A couple more points. Let’s say the first “acceptance” editor wants your article. Have you lost the buying potential of markets 2-6? No, just approach the topic from another slant or create another article idea from that topic, and query about that possible article. In other words, you can **rewrite that first topic** and query letter and start it down the selling ladder to those “pay on acceptance” editors that are still uncontacted. And what if you do that all six times and all six editors buy their own unique articles? Bingo, you just sold the same stretched idea 600%, rather than 75%. (And you’re still not done because each of those six articles can be sold as reprints of the rewrites! Heavens, you may get rich with just five or six different, fecund ideas!

27. But we are getting the cart in front of the horses. All we have done is have a kindly editor say that he/she wants to see our article—**on speculation**, which means, no obligation. So we still have to write one or many excellent articles that the editor(s) must embrace, buy, and use. Still, a “go-ahead” from most editors means a sale as long as you provide (in the article) what you promised by the date agreed, and perhaps also with the promised photos.

28.. Which means enough late-night oil, **interviews**, **facts** found and verified, **anecdotes** generously inserted—whatever is needed to make the article hum in print. It also means close scrutiny of the target magazine to see what that editor wants on his/her pages before you write. Thus, if this query-led system is followed, **almost all magazine articles suggested and written will be sold** since you will not write them without a prior "go-ahead." And with the reprint and rewrite fall-back sales, you should be **far ahead of your 75% goal**.

BOOKS

29. It used to be that selling any percent of your freelance writing through book publishing was as likely as having your books come out of a cloud. Guess what? Now it's simple to publish 100% of your freelance book writing—you can just do it yourself. And it can sit in a cloud to sell once it's written and prepped. Who knew?

30. Less than a decade back the chances of the Big 8 or 5 or whatever the number was of the big-house publishing firms picking up a random freelance book was like 1:1000. Even with agents or even with a solid writing reputation. Then you sent query letters with attachments.. You may as well have been sending pick-up laundry chits.

31. These days it's hard to figure any strong case for going first to the big houses (which simply aren't so big anymore nor are they so appealing). They pay poorly, it can take months or years for the book to appear, and their bookstore allure has faded as the bookstores themselves have disappeared. It's kind of upside down now. **Freelancers publish the book themselves** [[How to Get Your Book Published in Minutes and Marketed Worldwide in Days](#)] and they earn a fast and

decent return. Then if it smells of success the big houses will get in line to pay for the product—and often all the additional products that writer/publisher can create. So why would a freelancer go back to the earlier days when a big-house sale meant a meager royalty, poor sales, payment a couple of times a year, and no control?

32. If we are talking sheer percentages, you write a book that others want to buy; get it **proofread**; hire artwork and covers and some selling postcards; **get the book designed**; print some in-house stock to sell directly; save the final copy in .pdf, and send it to **Create Space** and **LSI** to get it **POD** printed and sold commercially through their giant selling machines, like **Amazon** and **Ingram**. In the meantime, you convert the original text into .epub, modify the covers a bit, and you create an ebook to sell yourself, at **Kindle**, Nook, Kobo, **Smashwords**, and elsewhere. And all the while you worm your way into the social media world to churn up some fan interest.

33. There are two ways to sell 75%+ in the regular book world now. The new open publishing world I described in 29-32. And you can do it the old way too. You sell the book to the big houses or other publishers pretty much the old way: you send queries and packages and proposals, alone or agent-aided, and you don't write the final book until you are contract-protected, then you wait for the book to appear. **That's a 75%+ approach**. Hard to imagine 25% of the publishers wouldn't honor your contract.

34. But here's the problem, even if you freelance and produce one book and you have another produced by an established publisher under contract (which is 75%+ twice), there's no guarantee that any of that will make enough money to keep you fed, much less famous and prospering. So despite the fact that you bat 100% selling the copy that you create, and you do it many times with paperback and digital versions, all sold by **six different publishers** (plus you), most of the self-published general market books don't make much money. They

don't even do much to imprint a perception of your expertise. Stir in platform-building, branding, You-Tube, Facebook, and all the rest and can still be a big disappointment.

NICHE (BOOK) PUBLISHING

and EMPIRE-BUILDING

35. Let me share the **best way to sell 100% of your freelance book writing** and make reliable money **while you simultaneously build an empire** that will feed, clothe, and support you very well for a long time. It can be built around your book or books—or you may not have to write much copy at all. You might use others' expertise and writing, plus your editing, managing, and publishing skills, as the core of his **niche publishing**. [Niche Publishing: Publish Profitably Every Time]

36. It's not the writing or publishing, per se, that distinguish niche publishing. It's the existence of a **niche**, or tightly-linked group of people, that share common needs, interests, and lifestyle. For example, Chicago Cubs fans are a long-suffering niche. So are dentists, Norwegian ancestors in Wisconsin, and meat cutters. The niche often has a vocation, hobby, focus of interest, ethnic bond, social communality (like octogenarians or octogenarians in Tulsa), an ailment or cure (like prostate cancer survivors), or membership (in the Moose or in almost any thing or group.)

37. This might be easier to envision by using an example. To keep it simple, let's use ultramarathoners, and let's make that nationwide. And let me invent typical components of a niche and ascribe them to the poor sore-legged ultramarathoners (who share in common long-distance running, longer than a marathon, often 50-mile or 100-mile runs). They

can be done by either sex and any age, though it's not likely they are teens or under or very rarely 65 or older.

38. What makes niche publishing profitable is that members of the niche and supporters about the niche topic can be easily contacted. Core ultras, let's say, are members of a national association (UOA, Ultramarathoners of America) and smaller associations in, say, 40 states (Minnesota UOA, etc.) The associations have a national convention, 18 have state conferences, and they informally gather at the dozen major races a year. They also have a national newsletter, office holders in the larger units, a **membership address list** (digital and standard direct mail) and a surprisingly large group of ultra aficionados and supporters who sell products and services (like special shoes, attire, diet and health additive programs, insurance, and much more. And as long as I am creating a model group, let's say there are 25,000 members and possibly 2,000 others who sell products and services to ultras, plus many thousands of marathoners who regularly show interest in expanding their own running challenge.

39. To show you what a niche published book might be like in this niched setting, let's say Bob has been an UOA member for 10 years—and, in vocation, he's a life-style nutritionist. Over the years he has created an ideal diet-supplement-training program that has been very enthusiastically used by a dozen of his local group members, plus it has become widely applied by marathoners in his region. Let's just call it the DST for Ultramarathoners (or DSTU).

40. Bob wants to write a book, sell it to ultras and marathoners nationwide (he calls it DSTM for marathoners), and he'd like to expand the book into **classes**, perhaps **podcast/video** components, a practice logbook and **workshops**, **speeches**, and **breakout sessions**. He would also like to **expand his product base** to include distance-running shoes, attire, special caps, and related diet and supplement components.

41. His **strategy** is to create the book first, and in its distribution (and early promotion) he will quickly expand into making his video/podcast programs and logbooks available. From his niche book he will roll out his **empire** to include speaking widely once the book is printed and promoted, and from speaking spread into workshops and classes. As he creates his buyer contact base (mostly through free subscriptions to a bi-monthly ultra newsletter) he will promote his product base. His long-range goal is to expand these activities into the DSTM group, for marathoners nationwide (even perhaps worldwide).

42. An aside here. Bob in our example can both be the expert writing the key book that helps practitioners meet important needs or solve frustrations and then build his own empire from the expertise recognition that his book brings him. Or if Bob wants to create his own empire doing the other activities we've mentioned, including publishing the book, he can hire an expert to write the book (that Bob might also edit and distribute) that his new ultramarathoning publishing and product company can grow from. Thus Bob wouldn't really be using his running expertise—freeing any niche publisher to do the same about any topic. In fact, Bob could publish a string of ultra books using as many experts as members of his publishing family. How would the experts earn money? They would receive royalties (often 10% of the net received) plus they would get the speaking fees, and perhaps a special discount on their own books (or all the firm's ultra books) sold **back-of-the-room** at the programs. A last thought, he could run parallel publishing programs in the ultra and marathoning fields, allowing him to double or multiply his empire-building base while the experts create the core books.

43. But the most appealing element of a niche publishing book is that it can be **pre-tested** (the format, price, contents, author, and **purpose**) on a sample list to guarantee its financial viability before any part of it is written or major

production expenses are incurred. [[How to Test Your Niche \(Publishing\) Market First](#)]

44. Bob sees that the size of the ultra market (its contactable members) is 25,000, and that the three other ultra books have cost \$19.95, \$24.95, and \$49. He decides to conduct a direct mail pre-test with 210 Nth-selection addresses from the ultra association mailing list. He figures that the entire pre-test might cost him a maximum of \$700.

45. For the pre-test he needs a clean-looking **one-page information sheet** (with a reduced book cover on it) that includes the book's title, subtitle, table of contents, a small photo to accompany Bob's bio, an fact box (with ISBN, format [cloth bound], and the estimated number of pages and cost), and selling content copy that explains the book's purpose and its benefits to readers/users. He also prepares a **one-third page greeting note** and a **return postcard** with two key questions, each followed by yes or no: would the card receiver be interested in purchasing a book about... and if so, would he pay \$ X for the book. In this case X would be three different prices: 70 packets would have \$19.95 on their info sheet and on its mail-back postcard, 70 would say \$24.95, and 70 would say \$29.95). The postcards would be addressed back either to Bob or (better) the name of his new niche publishing firm (like Ultramarathoning Publishers of America). Bob would also prepare a #10 envelope for each packet, stamp them, and adhere the direct mail address to the outside of the packet.

46. So Bob mails all 210 packets and in 20 days he has almost all of the replies he will receive. By day 20 he has received the following responses from each of the three price levels sent 70 recipients: 13, 10, and 7. So the potential buy income would be, respectively: \$92,768, \$81,196, and \$74,875. (The calculating example in the 10-buyer case would be $10/70=14.3\% \times \$24.95 \times 25,000 = \$81,196$).

47. The most profitable rate would be \$19.95 which would bring

in \$92,768. Thus, if the preparation of the book and the mailing of the full 25,000 packets cost 50% of the gross income (here, \$92,768) this book would result in a profit of \$46,384.

48. It would be a modest empire with a kitty of \$40,000 or so. But remember that Bob intends to expand into classes, videos, logbooks, workshops and speeches, ultra accoutrement, and diet and health additive programs. Plus a **free digital newsletter** to control his customer list and for bi-monthly promotion.

49. But what isn't visible here is a huge market sitting right below the ultras: the U.S. marathon market, where indeed his book might apply as is or rewritten, and the other items should also be salable. How big is the marathon market? There were 541,000 finishers in US marathons in 2013 (despite the terror attack at the Boston Marathon). And the average entry cost is \$75, but trending up to \$100. A determined niche publisher might tooth on the ultramarathoners to test the market and response, then quickly back into the marathon world—and keep both going if there are common themes.

50. That's it. **How you can sell 75%+ of your freelance writing.** At least three systems (or four, depending on how you count them) that will keep you off the no-income paths and close to where money can be earned and multiplied by wordsmithing. All of this stuff works—if you do!

My best wishes,

Gordon Burgett
