



How to Get Hired with Zero Writing Experience

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How do I get hired with no experience?

That's a question I asked myself all the time when I started freelancing.

Most of the job descriptions I read wanted at least two to five years of work experience. Those that needed little experience paid less than 10 cents per word! And the clients I had reached out to wanted someone who had worked on a few projects.

It was not going as well as I'd pictured.

Thankfully, through my network of family and friends, I got two potential leads. Despite their positive and glowing references, it still required me to pitch my services to the clients and prove my worth.

Previously, I tried to impress clients with detailed presentations and different service packages to gloss over my lack of experience. I'd provide a detailed breakdown of the service costs, so if I was outside their budget, they could still hire me for the parts they could afford. And I would talk nonstop (at times) about what I could do for them and why hiring me was their best option.

If the topic of experience came up, I'd spout that job hunter's cliché, "What I lacked in experience, I make up in enthusiasm and hard work."

But I wasn't getting hired, and this approach wasn't working.



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It was time to change my method if I wanted to get work. I had to focus on areas that made me stand out as a copywriter.

Playing to Your Strengths

I realized I was **selling a solution** — not a product. I had to stop thinking in terms of pitching for a sale but rather providing an answer to their problem. Instead of, “This is what I can do for you,” I should be asking, “How can I help you achieve your goal?” Having an open conversation with the client about their requirements was the only way to get hired.

I decided to play to my strengths and focus on five key areas.

Communication

As I mentioned earlier, I used to do all the talking and very little listening (*a rookie mistake, I know*). I realized I needed to flip that around and instead spend 70% of the conversation listening to the client. I’d take notes and focus on their goals and strategy using Joshua Boswell’s three golden questions:

- What do you want?
- Why do you want it?
- What does it look like when you have it?

Using these questions and variants of them, I’d get the client to disclose their *pain points*, their *goals*, and their *schedule* to achieve this.

Efficiency

I highlighted my efficiency and became familiar with their industry and their competitors. I stopped talking “freelancer” and started speaking the “client’s language” by focusing on strategy and results.

When I used to be in corporate sales, my boss would tell me he didn’t care how I met my numbers, just as long as I hit them at the end of each month. Most clients are like my former boss in that way. They don’t care how you get them there, they just care that you do. **On time and on budget.**

Without the burden of an existing workload, I could focus all my time and effort on their project.

Availability

My biggest asset to the client was availability. Most experienced copywriters would have multiple projects in their pipeline. Their completion date would depend on the overall amount of work, deadlines, and effort required.

With me, they wouldn’t have that problem. I could start immediately and most likely complete the work within their desired time frame, if not quicker. I’m easily reachable, quick to respond to any queries, and undistracted. I could even offer to be a sounding board for other projects they had running if they wanted a second opinion.

Rate

I decided to stop providing a breakdown of my rates. We don’t ask how much each part of a car costs before we buy one, so why would I tell them how much each of my services cost? Instead, I’d provide a price range based on the overall project and see their response. Since I wanted to get hired, my rates were at the low end of AWAI’s Pricing Guide.



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If they found my rate was over their budget, my first round of negotiations would be to suggest a change to the deliverables. Reducing the deliverables to meet their price point might work. If they still insisted on a discount, I'd counter for a commitment to a longer project period.

However, my goal at this moment was to build two things — **social proof** and **positive reviews**. So, if I needed to go lower on my pricing to get hired, I would take that hit on the fees. I was playing the long game.

Tailored Samples

To a client, a portfolio proves you have the right work experience and can do the job. It allows them to see your quality of work before hiring you. Before joining AWAI and learning to use samples as replacements for a portfolio, I met clients with nothing to prove my skill. My logic was simple. If a fresh graduate can get hired by a large corporation with no work experience, I don't see why that can't apply to freelancer! (Like I said: *NEWBIE*.)

After the AWAI training, I'd show clients all my samples — blog posts, emails, sales letters, landing pages, social media posts, and e-books! This was me saying, 'Look, I'm qualified NOW and I can do everything. You HAVE to hire me!'

It still wasn't working, though.

Remembering that I was providing a solution and not selling a product, I decided to show them what they needed to see — a tailored sample list. If the client wanted blogs written, I'd showed them three different styles of blogs — how to, listicles, and the why post. If they wanted web page content, I'd provide three different samples with varying degrees of voice and tone.

Tailored samples answered their question — *Can do you the job I need doing?*

It's Not Really About Getting Hired

Since they were potentially my first clients, I was anxious to have a good meeting and get hired by at least one of them.

By being an effective communicator who is attentive and accessible, and offering a competitive rate, I wanted to prove I was an attractive alternative to a busy expert.

I got both jobs. The first one paid me one-eighth of my initial quote for a three-month project. And, for the second, I got paid my quoted rate, but I had to throw in some freebies.

It didn't matter — I got the **work experience**, **social proof**, and **positive reviews** in the end.

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