

Michelle Medlock Adams, GCWC 2003 Faculty member

www.michellemedlockadams.com

iufan@imagin.net

Friday Night Footnote Session

FINDING YOUR FREELANCE NICHE IN THE MARKETPLACE

1. Write What You Know and Like: We've all heard the advice; "Write what you know," right? Well, that is definitely good advice when talking about finding your freelance niche.

2. Sell Yourself As an Expert in your niche: In your query letters to various publications (newspapers, magazines, e-zines, newsletters), you need to play up your expertise and experience in your niche. (See handout #2 with the sample query letter.)

3. If You're Not an Expert, Hook Up With Some Experts in Your Niche: You don't have to be an expert or even have experience in the area that you wish to specialize in, as long as you quote people who do specialize and have experience.

*I've got one word for you "Profnet." It's the greatest service ever! It's free, and it's a wonderful way to connect with major experts in most every field.

*Then, after you have guaranteed a few interviews with these high-profile experts in your niche, you include that in the second paragraph of your query. It might read something like this: “In addition to my own experience with gardening triumphs and failures, I’ve been able to interview Mrs. Green Thumbs from the popular TV Show ‘You Grow Girl!’ and will share her top ten tips for growing beautiful begonias.”

*The other great thing about interviewing these experts is this—you gain access to them and build relationships with them.

4. Research and Study Who is Buying Articles in Your Niche: Take a lot of magazines and study them.

*From studying these publications, you will learn what magazines are publishing the kinds of articles you wish to write in your niche.

*In addition to taking and studying lots of magazines and newspapers, use the Writer’s Market Guide—both Sally Stuart’s Christian Writer’s Market and the secular version of it—because they each have markets the other one doesn’t. Find your niche area and then go through these guides, finding publications that publish that kind of work.

*Also, use the magazines not only to learn a various magazine’s style and text, but also to get ideas for future articles in your niche.

5. Watch for Trends, “Newsworthiness” and Evergreen Tie-ins for Articles in Your Niche: This type of thinking will lead to lots of sales in your niche because most writers don’t know to do this. You have to think like a newspaper editor who wants to fill his paper’s pages with the latest, greatest news that pertains to his paper’s coverage area.

*Trends: Identify trends in your niche.

*Newsworthiness: Now, you’ve got to prove to this editor that your article idea is newsworthy and that his readers will benefit from it.

*What is meant by Evergreen, you say? Evergreen topics are ones that roll around every year. For instance, holiday tie-ins are evergreen stories.

6. Apply the “Ten-In” rule: So, what does this mean? This means have at least 10 query letters in the mail—all the time.

*So, if you get a rejection letter back from *Today’s Christian Woman* on Monday. Sit down right then, grab your *Writer’s Market* and find another magazine to send your query to. Then write a query to that publication. Then, send it out on Tuesday! I’ve found that if I don’t do it right away, I won’t do it.

*You see, it doesn’t do any good to specialize if you aren’t sending out query letters to market yourself as an expert who is simply full of great article ideas in your niche.