

The
Wow

e-newsletter

Principles

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Introduction to GHOSTWRITING

A few years back, I tried to explain to our son Shawn, age seven, that I was a ghostwriter. His eyes slowly widened and his jaw dropped, as if he had actually seen a ghost. An explanation was quickly required, so I shared with him that a ghostwriter was someone who pens others stories for them, in their voices. I'm not sure he quite understood, as he later told his friends that I wrote ghost stories, for ghosts!

Between Ken and myself, we've ghostwritten over one-hundred stories and articles for many elected officials (including a former US president), governors and CEOs. What we have learned is that writing in another's voice can be difficult; their choice of words, phrasing, thought process, passion about a topic and myriad other things come into play, especially if the person is an established public figure. Public figures already have a persona to maintain and are considered "experts" in their field. To write in their voice, you would either need to have a strong command of the subject they would like to write, or have easy access to material.

This introduction is a quick overview, something to whet your appetite if you're interested in this type of writing opportunity. So I'll go over a few of the basics:



First person – you must write the subject's story in first-person, using their voice. For example, let's say the subject is a professional runner who wanted to share a story about how she started in the sport. You wouldn't write, "Beth first realized she wanted to be a long-distance runner when she watched the summer Olympics..." Instead, you would write, "I first realized I wanted to be a long-distance runner when I watched the summer Olympics..."

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Introduction to Ghostwriting



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Research – during many of our projects, research is a huge undertaking. It's much easier to get it right the first time, then to have a draft returned with red lines and “I wouldn't say that” or “That doesn't sound like me” comments. Before you start a ghostwriting project, ask the subject if he or she has any recorded or written speeches, journal entries, past press material—you can get a good feel for their speech patterns and word choices by doing your homework first.



Ego – keeping your ego in check is probably the biggest hurdle of all. In most cases, you'll be contractually signing away all your rights to the material when you take the job (work-for-hire), but more importantly, you'll also be bound to keep quiet. Integrity and tight lips are two keys to obtaining great references and better-paying, future work.

There's also another form of ghostwriting, commonly referred to as “with” writing. I'm sure you've seen tons of “with” books; on a book's cover, the known person or celebrity's name is listed and a “with” person's name is listed below. More times than not, it's the “with” person who did all the writing. This type of writing can be more lucrative and is worth pursuing once you have several regular ghostwriting projects, and those great references, in hand.

I'll share more tips on ghostwriting in future issues. If you have questions, please send them to Dahlynn@PublishingSyndicate.com and we'll answer them in an upcoming newsletter.

Dahlynn



Another Jonny Hawkins cartoon classic! If you need great artwork for your project, contact him: jonnyhawkins2nz@yahoo.com.

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HOT STUFF! HOT STUFF!

Chicken Soup for the Red Hat Society Soul

SUBMISSION DEADLINE EXTENDED TO JANUARY 1, 2007

To date, most of the 1,000 stories submitted for this title DO NOT meet Chicken Soup story-style standards. Most submissions thus far have been very long essays or short, non-descript vignettes, both of which typically aren't used in Chicken Soup books. We are looking for heartfelt, humorous and inspirational stories, which have a beginning, middle and end. Stories must relate to the Red Hat Society, and they must be true and written in first-person (written in the author's voice). Your story should touch the souls of our readers, making them laugh, cry, sigh or just say, "Wow!" Stories should be positive, hopeful, universal and non-controversial. The point or message should be clear without preaching; essays, eulogies, tributes, sermons or biographical pieces will not be considered. Also, we will not be using photos in the book, so please do not send them. For more information, please visit www.PublishingSyndicate.com, follow the required Submission Guidelines and read the posted sample stories. Thanks.



**We're coming to
the Nashville area!**

Come meet the McKowens! Dahlynn will be in Tennessee with Ken and the family to promote *Chicken Soup for the Entrepreneur's Soul*, signing her latest book with some featured entrepreneurs from the title: Dippin' Dots founder Curt Jones, Joel and Trent Hemphill of Hemphill Brothers Coach Company, and other entrepreneurs. Dippin' Dots will be giving away free ice cream and the Hemphills will have one of their luxury coaches open for tours. What better holiday gift than an inscribed, autographed Chicken Soup book! Come join the fun!

Date: Friday, November 24, 2006 (day after Thanksgiving)

Place: Borders, Brentwood (outside Nashville), 330 Franklin Road -- 615/221-8804

Time: 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

Who: Dahlynn McKowen, Curt Jones, Joel and Trent Hemphill, Chicken Soup cartoonist Lahre Shiflet and other entrepreneurs TBA

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