

10 TIPS FOR HIRING A GHOSTWRITER

A great way to build brand awareness and subject matter credibility is through speaking opportunities, blogs, bylined articles, op-eds and more. If time isn't on your side or if writing isn't your specialty, a ghostwriter could be the right solution. Collaborating with the right person is key to a successful and trusting relationship.

A good place to start is with your communications or PR partner. They may offer content services or can provide a good referral. Remember these tips as you start the hiring process:

Before beginning your ghostwriter search:

1. **Do a reality check.** Are you really looking for a ghostwriter? A coauthor is another option to consider. If you partner with an industry influencer, it may increase your credibility and raise brand awareness among a new audience. Make sure you've weighed all your options before choosing a ghostwriter.
2. **Know your project.** Ghostwriters can be used for many different projects including books, blog posts, and magazine articles. Have a good handle on the details of your project so you can ask the right questions and ensure you're hiring someone that will be a good fit. Some of these details may include length of time you need them, expectations of the final product, and your time commitment.
3. **Your job does not end at the hire.** Set aside time to familiarize the ghostwriter with your project, as well as the time it takes to find relevant documents or to perform interviews.

While in the process of choosing a ghostwriter:

4. **Pick the popular one.** High school flashbacks aside, if they've had many clients, they likely have serious writing chops. You may have to sign an NDA (Non-Disclosure Agreement), in order to see writing samples or previous work.
5. **Choose someone you like.** A ghostwriter isn't your next coffee date, but they should be close. Their goal is to mimic your voice and in order to do this, they need to know you well. They should make you feel comfortable so you're able to convey any information they need.
6. **Get on the same page, literally.** Style is key, and greatly changes the voice of the project. This is harder to achieve, but a close relationship with a ghostwriter coupled with clear expectations will increase your chances of them landing on the style you want.

Things to keep in mind when hiring a ghostwriter:

7. **Fees can vary.** Payment can differ from hourly to a flat-rate fee. Create a budget range before talking with a ghostwriter and stick to it. If you're using someone who is part of your PR or communications firm, you may have project or hourly fees already established.
8. **Ghostwriters are not journalists.** While the writing could be similar, the recognition is not. A ghostwriter doesn't receive the credit that a journalist does, and because of this, they receive a higher rate of compensation in exchange.
9. **Good writing takes time.** Prepare for some revisions. Even with a clear plan, you may find your project evolves from what you originally wanted. Plan for this adjustment instead of pressuring a ghostwriter to jump into a last-minute overhaul.
10. **Be open to suggestions.** While this may be your first time using a ghostwriter, they do this for a living. Be open to their feedback, as an experienced outsider perspective could benefit your project.

Contact Chris Cherry, Chief Engagement Officer at ccherry@jconnelly.com or call us at 973-850-7329 to see how we can help.