



Freelancing: Challenging but rewarding!

People often say they stumbled across medical writing as a career option, not really knowing what it entailed but having skills to be able to perform various medical writing tasks. The same can be true about freelancing. More often than not, people end up in a situation where freelancing becomes an option or a means to continue their career in medical writing.

Freelancing is becoming an increasingly popular option for medical writers and communicators, but it's not as straight-forward as finding a few clients and getting paid. There's so much more involved. Freelancers are business owners and to be successful, they need a plethora of skills; they need to be self-motivated, driven and adaptable; and take the highs with the lows.

In this issue, we sought out experienced freelancers who have done just that – transitioned from being medical writers to becoming business owners. They share their

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experiences and knowledge to offer our readers insight into becoming a freelancer, or for those who already are freelancers, tips on how to improve and boost business.

Towards entrepreneurship

We had the pleasure of working with many freelancers from around the world in this issue. We start in South Africa with **Rebecca Tadokera**, who discusses the transition from academia to freelance medical writing, and how to navigate the shift in career. We then

jump across the pond to America, where nurse-cum-medical writer **Allison Demajistre** explores the soft skills needed to get into freelancing.

Back in Europe, Portuguese-based freelancers **Sara Ferrão** and **Fernando Oliveira** compile a list of the obstacles that they jumped over and through to become freelancers. Hopping to the UK, a MedComms mentor herself, **Eleanor Steele**, gives an overview of coaching and mentoring for all levels of freelancing, and how it can benefit your career. Staying in the UK, **Peter Llewellyn**, the man who loves to get medical writers together, discusses the importance of networking by speaking with many of the local medical writers' groups in various countries.

A growing trend among medical writers is that of hybrid freelancing, where they keep some freelance work but opt to have a percentage of fixed contract/employment



work as well. **Kfir Lapid**, based in Germany, explains the advantages of hybrid working from his and other hybrid workers' experiences.

Perusing in the Parisian cafés with a book in his hand, **Trevor Stanbury** gives the reader a review of the various books that could support their medical writing journey. We then head to the Netherlands where **Namrata Singh** and her colleague **Shruti Shah** give their insights into the symbiotic relationship between the medical writing agency and the freelancer.

Jumping back over the pond to Canada, **Sophie Ash** summarises her vision of the 12 major milestones in freelancing. The freelance features then conclude with an analysis of data gathered during the 6th and 7th Freelance Business Surveys conducted in 2018 and 2023, respectively, by **Johanna Chester**, **Shaniko Kaleci**, and **Laura A. Kehoe** of the Freelance Business Group subcommittee.

We would like to offer a huge thanks to all the contributing authors and the freelancers they reached out to for quotes and insights. It has been a pleasure to work with you all and we hope readers enjoy each article and are able to adopt some aspects to their own freelance work. Happy reading!



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About the guest editors

Laura A. Kehoe has been a freelance medical-scientific writer and editor for over 6 years, based in Neuchatel, Switzerland. Since completing her PhD in Neuroscience, she has transitioned into the MedComms world, where she has worked in various medical disciplines from hepatology, psychiatry, and infectious diseases to orthopaedics and women's health. She is active in her voluntary work supporting other medical writers.



Satyen Shenoy is a medical writer based in Germany and a long-standing EMWA member. Following a long stint in basic and translational cancer research, he switched his career track to medical writing 13 years ago. He is currently working in the hybrid mode, half time as freelancer and half time as a clinical research associate with the Interdisciplinary Breast Centre at the Kliniken Essen Mitte.