



# How to Charge for Freelance Copywriting Services

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## Start here: How much money do you need to live?

Sadly, many freelancers never address the “how much do I need to live” question. I’ve seen freelancers charge \$10 a page just to get business in the door – without realizing the long-term impact of that decision.

Think about it: If you charge \$10 an article and you have a \$750/month rent payment, you need to write 75 articles a month just to make your rent. That’s not counting food, electricity, gas, and taxes.

So, it’s important to get this part right.

To determine your “how much do I need to live” number, you’ll need to know what your business and personal monthly expenses are, Then, increase that number by 35%. This percentage represents what you’ll want to set aside for taxes.)

$$\text{monthly expenses} + .35 (\text{monthly expenses}) = \text{bare minimum income}$$

**Your goal is to make much more than this.**

I would recommend adding another 10-20% to your bare minimum income amount. That way, you can put money aside for a new computer, travel, or other business expenses. It’s better to put that money aside now than put a purchase on a credit card later.

Once you’ve determined your “must-make” income, you can figure out your minimum monthly work. For instance:

Say you need to make \$2,500 to meet expenses, plus a little extra. If you charge \$100 per blog post, you would need to write 25 blog posts every month.

If you raised your rates to \$150 per post, it brings the number down to 17 blog posts.

Remember, these are your minimum rates. If you can charge more, go for it!

## How can you make more money?

The more perceived value you bring to the table, the more money you can charge. Here's how to increase your perceived value with prospects:

- Create case studies and testimonials, especially those that show how much money you've made for a client, or indicate how much new traffic you're driving to their site.
- Specialize in a niche (like copywriting for B2B technical firms,) and be the go-to person for that kind of writing.
- Learn new skills, such as A/B split testing, keyphrase research or sales page writing.
- Further your education, such as taking the SEO Copywriting Certification training.
- Write an e-book that you can give away (or, better yet, sell!).
- Speak at local or national events.

## Common ways to charge clients, pros and cons:

### Hourly pricing

Some freelancers love hourly pricing. On the surface, it looks like a great way to make sure that you're getting paid for all your research and writing time.

However, this approach can backfire.

First, charging by the hour works against you as a writer. When you first start out, it may take you five hours to write one page. A year later, it may only take half of that. That means that the better and faster you write, the less money you'll make.

Additionally, hourly pricing doesn't showcase the value of what you offer. Since clients don't know how much work goes into writing a page, they'll often ask you to "only spend an hour" or "just a few minutes" to save time (and money.) That means you'll be turning in sub-standard work and making less money.

### Per-page pricing

Most freelancers I know operate on a per-page basis. This structure is easy for clients to understand – they know that every web page you write is going to cost X. It also allows freelancers to charge for the value of their work. After all, if you spend 10 minutes writing a page – and that page results in \$10,000 worth of sales – charging \$300 is a pretty solid investment.

The challenge with per-page pricing is that you need to have very clear boundaries. Your contract should include information about how many revisions are included, how long you'll spend on the phone with their team and what work is considered in and out of scope.

Be warned – a client who needs to chat with you 30 minutes a day to “make sure we’re on the same page,” will eat up your budget quickly – so make sure that you set expectations up front.

When you set a project-based fee, keep your minimum fee in mind. You don’t have to charge your minimum (in fact, you shouldn’t.) But you should never quote a price below it.

### **Project-based pricing:**

Rather than outlining your services and how much they cost, you’d quote a price for the entire project.

The challenge with project-based pricing is you may underestimate the time you’ll need to spend – so what you think will take you 10 hours may take you 25. Sometimes, you can go back to the client and ask for more money...but usually only if you’re already addressed this in your agreement. Otherwise, it looks like a bait-and-switch.

Like per-page pricing, you’ll have to set clear boundaries. If this is your preferred pricing method, just make sure that the client understands what’s included – and what may trigger an additional fee (with the client’s approval, of course.)

### **My final piece of advice?**

Don’t sell yourself short. You provide your clients an incredible amount of value — and that’s worth money! It’s tempting to charge a rock-bottom rate just to get business in the door — or be too afraid to raise your rates.

As my father used to tell me, “If nobody is complaining that your prices are too high, you’re not charging enough.”

Good luck!

*Thank you!*



Forbes Magazine named **Heather Lloyd-Martin** as the pioneer of SEO copywriting. A 17-year industry veteran, Heather has trained in-house and freelance writers all over the world.

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