



Why Write Now?

by Jane Mitchell

When a friendly graphic designer presented me with samples of new letterheads and business cards for my freelance medical writing business (*Medical Writing Services*), I was impressed. The improvement over my amateur efforts was obvious and finally I felt I had the right image for promoting the services I was offering clients.

This professional was good at his job and I was happy to do business with him. He was continuing to do his job well when, some months later, I discussed with him my ideas on issuing a newsletter (“Write Now”) to my clients and others interested in medical writing. Small businesses do this sort of thing all the time he reassured me and, of course, he was quick to point out that he could create the sort of visual impact necessary.

Marketing works, I reminded myself, and after some quick calculations I was convinced I could not dismiss my idea on the grounds of cost. As with good business stationery, I knew a decent newsletter would help to promote *Medical Writing Services*. Many businesses and professional organisations, large and small, were sending me their newsletters, or similar, but significantly no other medical writing business was doing so. Yet, our profession was showing a serious commitment to this means of communication, judging by the way the EMWA newsletter was continuing to evolve. I could see “Write Now” would be a valid way of communicating my views and I wondered why, as a writer, I had not thought of it years ago!

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Unlike the junk mail we all discard, I realised I treated some newsletters — be they from the local garden centre or my accountant — differently, often valuing them as a source of news and views. I first had to decide on how I could achieve this with my newsletter. With the

EMWA newsletter emerging as a substantial journal I did not feel the need to structure the content of “Write Now” solely with membership of our association in mind. I started to compile my mailing list and as it grew to twice the size of the EMWA membership I could see that many in my intended audience were unlikely to receive an EMWA newsletter. These additional readers would be my clients and their associates, and other writers who had not (yet!) joined EMWA. I wanted a style for “Write Now” that would appeal to my broad audience. It would have to compete successfully for attention with the impressive

The Write Stuff

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glossy material generated by many larger companies. “Write Now” needed to be short and it needed to be helpful. It also needed to give views other than my own. One enjoyable aspect of work as an independent medical writer is the opportunity to communicate with others from a variety of different organisations, and to benefit from their knowledge and experience. I felt I could add something of value to my newsletter if I could offer space for others to contribute. Finally I needed to create some humour. Inspiration for a regular cartoon was not difficult to find. Over the years many ridiculous situations have arisen and, with just a little exaggeration, could be captured to give some amusement to my readers.

It is now some 18 months since I produced the first issue of “Write Now”, and I am pleased with the investment of my time and money. Compared with the sums of money I spend on equipment, training and other essentials in running a business the cost is not great. Thanks to your feedback, the rewards I enjoy are primarily improved communications with those who have an interest in our profession. Additionally, I have established a broader client base with a greater amount and variety of projects for myself and my associates. My invited writers for the guest feature “Write Opinion” have added much quality to my newsletter and given many of you a greatly appreciated fresh viewpoint to consider. When I decided to go ahead with “Write Now” my hope was that it would be read and would be of benefit to others with similar professional interests. My hope now is that, along with the numerous newsletters from non-writers in my regular mail, in the future I will receive newsletters from other businesses and individuals who have chosen communication as their profession.

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If you do not already receive “Write Now” and would like to be included on the mailing list, please send your details to Jane Mitchell by e-mail or fax.

