

## The Write Stuff



### Are you my Mommy?

by Ursula Schoenberg

When I quit my agency job and began freelancing last year, I decided I wanted to join some sort of professional organisation. Little did I realize that this simple decision would lead to some heavy-duty soul-searching and almost to an identity crisis. I assume for many of you this sounds like an easy task: I am an X, so I join the X Organisation, right? My problem lay in defining the X.

I am a biologist and worked in communications agencies for many years. At the moment, I offer copy writing/editing, translation and strategic communications solutions for clients from science, technology, environment and healthcare. A good amount of my work is for pharmaceutical and/or medical clients, but not exclusively.

*Was I some sort of woolly sow that lays eggs and gives milk?*

Taking my virtual surfboard and launching out into the Internet, I soon stumbled on the EMWA. Did they tally with my X? Well, sort of. Am I a medical writer?

Yes, I write for the medical and pharmaceutical industries. But no, I don't write study and grant reports etc. Oh dear, I thought. So I foraged off in other directions. There is a German organisation for advertising copy writers, but that didn't really fit, because I rarely write ad copy. The German public relations organisations didn't appeal to me because they don't have a strong freelance base, and besides, I wanted something European.

I was becoming depressed. Having spent some time and effort in deciding what I was going to offer the market, it seemed I fitted into no niche. Was I some sort of exotic "Eierlegendewollmilchsau", as the Germans say, not always approvingly (this roughly translates as "a woolly sow that lays eggs and gives milk")?

*I returned to the EMWA website. And I thought "What the heck!"*

Now, I should be used to this "displaced" feeling, because I grew up in two countries and have been fielding questions like "Well, do you feel more American or more German?" for several decades. Still, I felt a bit like the baby bird in the story I was just reading my 3-year-old daughter, that falls out of its nest and runs around asking cats, dogs and cows "Are you my Mommy?". The final twist being that it is scooped up by a bulldozer and dumped back in its nest, where its Mommy is waiting for it. I know it's ridiculous to be wanting your Mommy (professionally speaking) when you are rapidly nearing your mid-life crisis, but there it is.

Having exhausted many other options, I returned to the EMWA website. And I thought "What the heck!". Some of what I do fits their profile. And most of what they do sounds pretty interesting and might be a challenging area to explore when my own responsibilities as a Mommy have waned a bit more. So here I am, in the EMWA "nest" and looking forward to what the future may bring!

#### Ursula Schoenberg

Creative Communications Solutions, Frankfurt/M, Germany

Email: [u.schoenberg@t-online.de](mailto:u.schoenberg@t-online.de)

Web: <http://www.sci-tech-specialist.de>