Month 2 Agenda: Improving Your Skills

Now that you’ve had a moment to reflect on your freelance goals and have worked on your EFA member profile, we’d like to explore one of the EFA’s core benefits: continuing education and other professional development opportunities.

Reflection Starters:
How would you rate your skill level for the services you offer? Have you identified gaps in your editorial training that you’d like to work on? Perhaps you’d like to begin offering another service but are not as confident in what it takes to carry it out.

Keep in mind professional development also includes business skills. The more technical ability and business knowledge you have, the better off you’ll be. Honing these skills will increase your confidence as a freelancer—and we want you to set yourself up for success!

1. As freelancers, our skills need to be sharp. We need to be up to date on trends and issues our clients face (e.g., self-publishing basics, the importance of hiring an editor, writing query letters, different types of editing and their order, knowing when to call in an authenticity reader). The EFA’s wide range of booklets, webinars, and instructor-led classes are a great place to start. Check out a list of EFA member benefits here.

Tips:
- Many EFA webinars are free for members! Get the most out of your membership by watching these high-value webinars at no cost.
- Use your EFA member discount to buy a webinar or booklet through the EFA.
- Take advantage of the numerous reciprocal discounts such as with Editors Canada or for PerfectIt software.

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Learn more about the EFA’s Diversity, Equity, and Belonging initiative.
2. Another aspect of continuing professional development relates to knowing the patterns that help you complete your work while maintaining a work-life balance. When starting out as a freelance editor, it can be challenging to set limits and strike the right balance between seeking work and completing it. What are some “good habits” that you have been able to—or hope to—put in place? Do you have a favorite app or strategy that has transformed how you conduct your freelance business (whether it’s an accounting app or an editing macro)?

Tip:
- Reach out to a fellow EFA’er to see how they structure their day or if they have tips for managing their career as a freelancer. You can find members through the profile directory or on the discussion list.

3. Brush up on your editorial sensitivity. This is increasingly important as a professional who provides editorial services. Start by reading the Guidelines for Inclusive Language. These guidelines approach the subject from the linguist’s point of view and provide a good overview of inclusive language topics. Also, the booklet “Respectful Querying with NUANCE” by EFA member Ebonye Gussine Wilkins is a great resource (check it out on the EFA’s Booklet Page).

Action Items for Month 2:
- Consider developing a continuing education plan for your business. Are there books you want to put on your “to read” list? Twitter lists or forums you should join? A particular skill set you want to acquire? Plan for what you’d like to achieve. Whether it’s reading a book, sitting in on a webinar, signing up for forums, attending conferences, or enrolling in a class, identify at least one professional development item, put it on your calendar, and commit to doing it! Moving forward, it can be useful to periodically check on your professional development plan.

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Tips:
- Ask a fellow EFA member if there are any resources they would recommend.
- Start a prioritized list of resources you want to begin reviewing.
- It can be difficult to set limits, between work and life or with clients. The EFA also has resources on working from home, striving for balance, and avoiding burnout.
- Schedule a date next month to review this agenda and the action items you listed as well as a time to download and work on the Month 3 Agenda.

Feel free to follow up with us at diversitywelcomeprogram@the-efa.org with any unanswered questions you may have or general feedback you’d like to provide. We are always happy to hear from new members on how we can make the Welcome Program better!

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