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GET IT IN WRITING

***“CEOs use contracts to protect their businesses and clients.”
– Apryl Beverly***

A written agreement protects you and your clients. Bottom line. Now, I can name several reasons why you’d want to have a signed agreement BEFORE starting a writing project, here are a few of the heavy hitters:

- 1. It protects you from dirt-bag clients who refuse to pay what they owe.** Most clients pay up, but having a written agreement will protect you during those rare times when they choose not to.
- 2. It protects the client.** Agreements deliver much-needed peace of mind to clients too. With due dates, project scopes, payment terms and other details in writing, the client can rest knowing exactly what to expect while working with you.
- 3. It outlines the project terms.** Ahhh, my golden rule “if it ain’t written, it ain’t hittin’.” For example, you and a client can hash out every aspect of the agreement over the phone. Yet, if you don’t have the terms in writing, the client can assume or imagine he/she heard something completely different – more words, more pages, more everything. Thus, leaving you swirling in a storm of he-said-she-said statements and keeping you on the hook for a much more complex project than you thought you were signing up for.

Today, we’ll walk section-by-section through the agreement template so you can create your own agreement template.

PROJECT TERMS CONTRACT

You can find a variety of writing service templates online. This is a version of the one I use and like because it hits on all the key points.

PARTY IDENTITY

The agreement intro identifies each party, the date of the agreement and provide a brief overview of the services to be rendered.

Be sure to include at least the first and last name of the Client, the company name and website address.

SCOPE OF WORK

This section of the agreement provides details on how the work will be handled. It also outlines the transfer of ownership and writer liabilities.

This verbiage reassures the client that he/she will own the content as long as all other project requirements have been met and confirms you will not use the content for other clients.

CONFIDENTIALITY

This section reassures the client you mean business and are willing to do whatever is necessary to protect the company's proprietary information.

While many writer agreements do not always include this language, I like it because it differentiates you as a CEO who knows and recognizes the importance of handling the client's information with care.

PAYMENT TERMS

This is the section where I outline the total cost of the project, payment terms, such as deposit requirements, along with acceptable forms of payment – check, credit card, PayPal, ACH and so on.

DEADLINES

I use this section to outline critical deadlines and to set expectations on how the project will run. The key portion of this section is the statement that revisions will not be accepted past a certain number of business days.

This ensures the project stays on track and lets me off the hook in the event the client chooses to go MIA for an extended period of time.

TERMINATION

This section details the agreement outcome in the event the Client terminates the project before the completion of the work.

CLIENT APPROVAL

This section is the CYA portion of the agreement in that it outlines client versus consultant responsibilities and relinquishes all “finger-pointing” in the event the client fails to review the content closely before approving the work.

So, let’s chat ...

Does your existing agreement include all of these sections?

If not, which ones are you missing? And which ones will you add to your agreement going forward?

Do you require all clients to sign an agreement?

P.S. I share “Service Standards” with clients whose projects total less than a certain amount and use the email approval as agreement to the project. A lawyer would likely frown on this practice, but it works for me because I require upfront payments on smaller projects.

MAKING THE SIGNATURE PROCESS EASY BREEZY

Long gone are the days of signing and faxing agreements. Heck, even signing and emailing has become obsolete. I like to make things easy for clients by offering a secure, easy-to-use online signature tool.

Now, I've heard tools like Dubsado and 17Hats offer all-in-one tools, [HelloSign](#) works perfectly for me.

I can store templates and finalize an agreement in less than 10 minutes.

Do you offer electronic signature options for clients?

If not, which tool will you test out to explore an easier, more seamless agreement signature process?

WEEK #4 ASSIGNMENT + WRAP UP

Your assignment for this week is to update your existing contract language.

You can use the template inside the Six-Figure Vault or create your own.

And WEEK #4 is in the history books! Be sure to claim your spot on the Block (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/writersblockmentorship/>) so you can ask questions and get feedback on tasks.

I ask that you share all questions on the Block so your fellow word sistas can gain the additional knowledge as well.

ONE-ON-ONE FEEDBACK

To qualify for the weekly assignment feedback, you must complete your assignments by 12 p.m. EDT each Friday and share inside the Facebook community.

While you are welcome to work at your own pace, we will not be able to review any “catch-up assignments.”

General questions are welcome throughout the mentorship. Be sure to hashtag your questions with #Question on the appropriate weekly thread so my team can easily find them.