



Show Notes

Season 3, Episode 8:

No-fail ways to write and work faster

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What's in this episode?

Hosts Rachel Smith from [Rachel's List](#) and journalist and content creator [Lynne Testoni](#) share strategies on working and writing faster so you can make more \$\$\$.

1. Outsourcing to save time

Outsourcing anything that will save you time obviously leaves you with more time to chase work or write. An obvious one is to outsource is transcribing – whether you pay a service like Rev (\$1 USD/minute) or try a free AI transcribing service like Trint (free) or Otter.ai (free for the first 800 mins/month). Or find a local transcriber to do it for you, which will be between \$1-1.50/minute depending on the recording.

Another thing you can consider outsourcing to save time is research. If you have a VA to do info-gathering for your stories, many writers find this a good time-saver.

2. Niche yourself!

If you're well established in a niche, with a good contact book and a large amount of knowledge, you're probably finding you're writing on the same topics a lot, which means you can write a LOT faster and take on more work.

So it's a good idea to seek out clients in industries you're very experienced in – whether that's health, entertainment, interiors, medical etc. Obviously it's great to dip your toe in new industries too but give yourself extra time to get your head around the industry, terminology etc.

3. Get everything done BEFORE writing

Every writer has a different process but for Rach, writing the piece never begins until all the moving parts are complete – like research, interviews, transcripts etc. Her process:

- Print out the brief, clarify anything with the editor early on
- Do all my information gathering, print out relevant research and circle / highlight everything relevant. Save ALL links as footnotes or in a separate file

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so it's easy to create your 'For subs' section at the end. If you forget to do this, you'll be in a world of pain later trying to track them all down.

- Do all the interviews, transcribe everything
- Have everything laid out in front of me to create the piece structure. I know some writers use mind-mapping – I haven't tried that but there's a great explanation of it on this [Ed Gandia episode](#).

Lynne's process is not to print anything out but pull everything together in a master document – the brief, keywords, quotes from interviews.

- Start massaging it and writing around the notes, tidying and editing as you go
- Pull together supportive material (usually emails) and copy them into a dropbox folder as 'info for subs' to use later for captions / fact-checking.

4. Be a fast typist.

Sounds basic but it's true! If you type fast often you can write faster, too. If your typing is slowing you down or you're a two-finger typist do an online course like [Typesy](#) or [TypingClub.com](#)

5. Create a skeleton of the piece or a structure

This speeds up things HUGELY, especially if you're struggling to focus or are really tired. You might job down a 'headline' / 'subheads' etc and dump quotes in the relevant sections. Once you have your skeleton and all your notes and transcripts in front of you, you can start filling it all in.

6. Just bloody write!

Sounds harsh but sometimes you just have to sit down and start. Don't agonise about what you want to say, how to word it, just pump it out. If you're putting writing off, sit down at my computer, turn off notifications and write. Often it's rubbish at first, but sentences start to form and pretty soon you'll be writing something decent.

7. Use timers to do first drafts

Rach uses a 50 minute writing sprint for first drafts with the online timer [Egg Timer](#). Timers are one of the most effective strategies I've tried for becoming a faster writer.



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You can also try [Write or Die](#) and the [The Most Dangerous Writing App](#) which can be helpful too (but also scary because if you don't write fast enough your words disappear).

Also don't edit when you're writing the draft. If you're missing anything put CHECK in bold to remind you to go back or use TK which means To Come. You can also highlight the text and keep writing so you can go back and fix stuff as part of the editing process.

8. Batch write articles

[Batch-writing](#) is a huge time-saver. If you have a series of articles on the same topic write them at the same time, when you're in the same headspace, and you have all the reference materials in front of you.

9. Edit, edit, edit.

Use [Hemingway](#) to help you pick up grammar gaffes you might have missed during the editing stage or to break up sentences to make them more readable.

Rach likes to print out the piece and walk around the house reading it aloud before filing it, to catch any last errors and make sure the flow is right.

If you're writing for a new editor, send it to a journo friend to read, preferably one who is kind and diplomatic but honest – sometimes hard to find!

Let it breath for at least an hour or two and preferably overnight.

That's it for this episode. Hope you've found these show notes useful.

Cheers,
Rachel and Lynne