

What does a Ghostwriter Do?

By Carol Adler, MFA

A professional ghostwriter's fees may often be misunderstood; to the lay person it may appear to be a huge sum of money until they realize exactly what is involved.

Following are the steps I take with my client after I sign a contract with them:

1. Set up a time to meet with them vis-à-vis to spend 4-5 full working days recording all the material for the book.
2. Request that the client collect all the documents, written material, graphics and other resource items that they wish to include in the book and deliver that to me during my visit (or they can mail it to me shortly thereafter).
3. Upon returning from my visit with the client, I transcribe the recorded sessions and start to organize the material into categories.
4. At the same time, I organize the supplemental material into categories that can be integrated with the transcribed material.
5. At that point, I can visualize the structure of the book.
6. I set to work organizing the book chapters or divisions.
7. I then "weave" all of the material together by moving through it categorically, sorting, discarding, making notes about areas where I need more input from the client, etc.
8. I proceed to develop the first 50 pages of the book, which I send to the client for their input.
9. I make the necessary adjustments and then proceed to develop the first draft of the entire work.
10. Upon completion (it will have been proofed several times already), I send that draft to the client.
11. The client reviews it carefully and then we work together to make the revisions. During this stage, often the client needs tutoring. I work closely with them, adjusting my schedule to fit their needs and often demonstrating how to effectively make these revisions.
12. The client starts to send back the revised material, either a chapter at a time, or in larger segments.
13. I make all of the necessary adjustments and then return the completed second draft to the client.

14. The client reviews the second draft and makes other adjustments and editorial changes.
15. After receiving the second draft, I make these adjustments, carefully proofread the finished manuscript several times and make the necessary corrections, then send it to the client. At this point it is considered a finished work.
16. If the client wishes to make additional adjustments, I charge an hourly rate until we have satisfactorily completed the process.
17. At this point, the manuscript is ready to be published.

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