

# The Write Plan, LLC Newsletter

- A Technical Writing Solutions Company

What To Do With "Found" Time and Keeping Time Records  
November 2012

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November ...

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Election and Veterans Day all in the same month!!! I do not prefer to get political so let us say **THANK YOU** to each and every veteran that has served our country keeping it free.

Any time I know I will be experiencing a conversation with a veteran on any day of the year I always let them know how much I appreciate the things they have done. I never served and very grateful to those you do.

Not looking to have the eyes water talking about the subject so I will leave my "what's new" comments to those above for this month and nothing more! :o)

Happy Networking!

*Chad*

"The NetworKING of Pittsburgh"

## About Us

To encourage and promote the growth and success of other business owners. We offer the benefits of years of experience creating the solutions to the problems that are often roadblocks on the path to success.

Instead of enjoying their professions, many business owners are feeling overworked and understaffed. **The Write Plan, LLC** can help you reclaim your original vision by offering friendly, collaborative assistance on large and small projects.

### NEED HELP PROMOTING A NETWORKING EVENT?

If your event would be of interest to entrepreneurs and small business owners please submit your event information for inclusion on the monthly networking events calendar by [clicking here](#).

### HAVING TROUBLE TELLING OTHERS YOUR BUSINESS EXISTS?

If you would like **over 2,740** other businesses to find your business monthly, why not [advertise](#) within this newsletter.

### HOW DO I SIGN-UP TO RECEIVE MY OWN COPY OF THE NEWSLETTER?

If you are looking to receive your very own copy of this newsletter each and every month please submit the form on our webpage [http://www.thewriteplanllc.com/Monthly\\_Newsletter.html](http://www.thewriteplanllc.com/Monthly_Newsletter.html)

### FEEDBACK, QUESTIONS, OR COMMENTS?

Please submit feedback, questions, or comments on the Request Form webpage [http://www.thewriteplanllc.com/Request\\_Form.html](http://www.thewriteplanllc.com/Request_Form.html)

### GUESTBOOK

Tell us what you think of our services, newsletter and networking calendar by [clicking here](#).



Like many consultants, business is a little slower these days, but is looking up a few months from now. Instead of ramping up selling activities, which I am not sure I need, what else could I be doing with this "free" time?

In previous Tips, I have suggested that it is always prudent to have a list of activities for your "found" time. For example, if a client defers the start of a project for a month, what will you do with the hours spread over the next four weeks? What we didn't mention is that list needs to be updated occasionally, since priorities will change with market conditions. A list you created last year is probably seriously out of date now.

What are your priorities over the next two years? What do you need lead time for? What will you miss most the next time you get really busy? Are your marketing materials getting a bit dated? Is your website in need of an overhaul? Do your past clients need a visit for a meal or a conversation to catch up? Have you always wanted to get started on a book but never had the 30-40 hours in one block of time to think through a good outline? Have you wanted to develop a new service with a prospective partner but needed to travel to their city and work out the details? What about taking consulting courses or attending conferences that you put off because you thought an hour of education meant an hour less billing? Not planning how you would spend a few hours, a few days or few weeks suddenly thrust on you will likely lead to you wasting them. Even if you decide to take a vacation with your family, you'd be wise to have thought it through.

**Tip:** If times are slow for your consulting practice over the next year, then make this time count and invest it. Once business picks up, you will wish you had it back. If your business is going in overdrive now, there is no better time to reflect on what you wish you had time for. Write it down. No, really, write it down in different length blocks of time and make sure you have all the arrangements to get started.

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**My client just wants me to track my hours on a weekly basis and submit totals with my monthly invoice. How good should my records be to track time for a client?**

Tracking your work is for your benefit as well as for your client. **Just because your client only wants a number of hours does not mean you should settle for this level of detail.** More important than the hours you are tracking is what you did during that time. Many consultants will write on their time record nothing more than the hours worked and a cursory "interviews." This is insufficient to help you recall what you did, why or where the products of that work are now. Also, it won't help you evaluate whether your time was estimated correctly or whether you are working on the right tasks. You and your client are best served by a full accounting of work and the context for that work.

**Tip:** Create a tracking sheet for your own use that records five items:

- (1) time
- (2) where you did the work (your office, client site, or other location)
- (3) what you did (description of the nature of the activity)
- (4) what value this provided in terms of the project deliverables (tie to milestones, project task, or deliverable)
- (5) reference to work product produced (briefing, analysis, interviews, slide deck).

You can share these with your client or not (they are sure to be impressed with your professionalism) but these make a good record for your own. Also, use them to better understand how accurate your estimated times for future tasks.

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