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Dear First-Time Author –

Congratulations on completing your manuscript, or getting a jump on hiring an editor to help you complete it! Either way, you have a great idea for a book – and by downloading and reading this special report, you’ve taken a great first step toward making your book a reality!

How do you know you need an editor? Simply put, if you’ve written something you intend to publish, you need an editor, particularly anything as significant as a book – but even an eBook, instruction manual, article, or Web copy needs another set of eyes to review it before you print and publish. The goal of this report is to arm you with enough information to hire the right editor for you – a skilled expert who will bring out the very best in your cherished manuscript or writing.

Choosing the editor to whom you will entrust your life’s work isn’t easy.

Why? Because unless you’ve been through the publishing process before, you are more than likely overwhelmed right now, first trying to decide whether you *really* need to hire an editor, and if so, which one to hire.

There are hundreds of editors on the Internet vying for your time, attention, and money. Unless you’ve got a personal recommendation from someone, how are you supposed to know which ones are good, which ones can live up to the claims they make on their Web sites, which one is the right editor for YOU?

Well, you can start by reading this ***First-Time Author’s Guide to Hiring the Right Editor for YOU***. In this fact-filled report, you will learn how to avoid being ripped off by so-called editors who really don’t know much about writing or the first thing about any angle of the publishing industry. You will discover 5 mistakes to avoid when hiring an editor. And you will walk away with a fresh perspective on the role of an editor and the confidence to hire the right editor for YOU.

With a degree in Nonfiction Writing from the University of Arizona, I have been a professional editor for more than 20 years. I’ve owned my own full-service editing business for the last 7 years, during which time I have dedicated myself to helping socially conscious speakers, authors, and coaches hone their life’s work – the manuscripts they entrust to me – and get their important messages out to the world.

I welcome your inquiries and will gladly answer any questions you may have over the telephone. My goal in writing this guide is to help you better understand the editing process so that you can make the best decision when it comes to hiring the right editor for your most precious work. Now, armed with this information, you can make an insightful, intelligent decision, free from worry about whether you've hired the right editor or not.

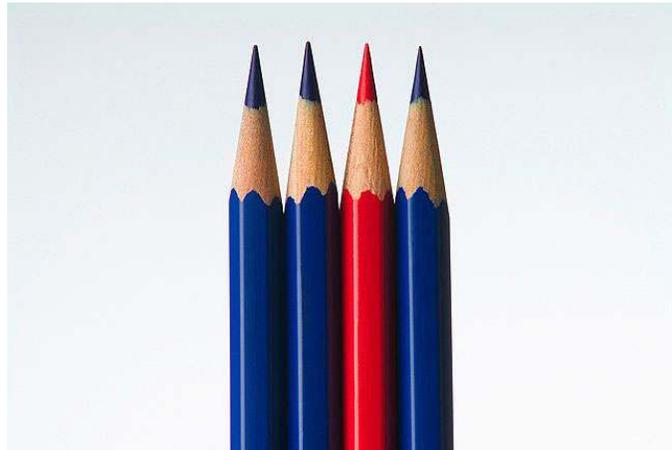
Please phone me at 602.518.5376 anytime with your questions. I will do my best to answer and address all of your concerns and give you the peace of mind you need to take the next step toward making your book a reality.

Best regards –

LAURA

# HOW TO AVOID 4 COMMON EDITOR RIPOFFS

**RIPOFF #1: UNBELIEVABLY LOW PRICE** – Here’s the thing. A good editor does much more than read your work for typos. A well-trained, experienced editor is going to examine every aspect of your writing and make it better as a whole. To have such specific skills, they are likely well-trained and should have much experience. As a result, you should expect them to charge accordingly. You can certainly find “editors” who are willing to work for rock-bottom prices, but anyone who is willing to work for 1 or 2 cents per word – or less – is likely an inexperienced novice, and could wind up performing a real hatchet job on your manuscript. You’ve heard that saying, “You get what you pay for.” Never has it been truer than in the world of editing. Some editors claim they can charge less because they are fast. What they don’t tell you is how often fast = sloppy. The last thing you want is a sloppy editor! I’ve had clients come to me after hiring a “cheap” editor, complaining that their work was returned to them with more mistakes than when they first gave it to the editor!



**RIPOFF #2: BAIT AND SWITCH** – You’ve heard of this with regard to mattresses, tires, and hard goods – but believe it or not, it occurs with services like editing, too! You are promised one thing, but receive another thing entirely. This usually comes in the form of the promise of complete satisfaction – until you decide you’re not pleased with the first edit and ask the editor to take another turn with your manuscript. A good editor will interview you first, perform a sample edit for you, and make sure that the two of you work well as a team. As a result, he or she will quickly become familiar with your writing style and intuitively understand how to best get your message across. A less-skilled editor reads the words only, and makes “corrections” that may or may not preserve your original meaning. I’ve lost count of the number of writers I’ve spoken with – both clients and non-clients – who’ve had their first editor hand back a manuscript that sounds nothing like their original work. Don’t let this be you!

**RIPOFF #3: UNSUPPORTED CLAIMS** – If you have concerns about anything an editor tells you, do your research, and get it in writing! Whether it's price, length of time to turn around your work, or the caliber of their previous clients . . . perform your own due diligence. Research them on the Web. Contact their previous clients. Ask about professional degrees and affiliations. And if anything sounds fishy to you, follow your intuition. This is your life's work – your valued message. While your editor may have strong language skills and knowledge of the publishing industry, trust yourself when it comes to knowing whether this person is the right editor for you. If something feels wrong before you even begin the editing process, it's not likely to get better as you move through the project.



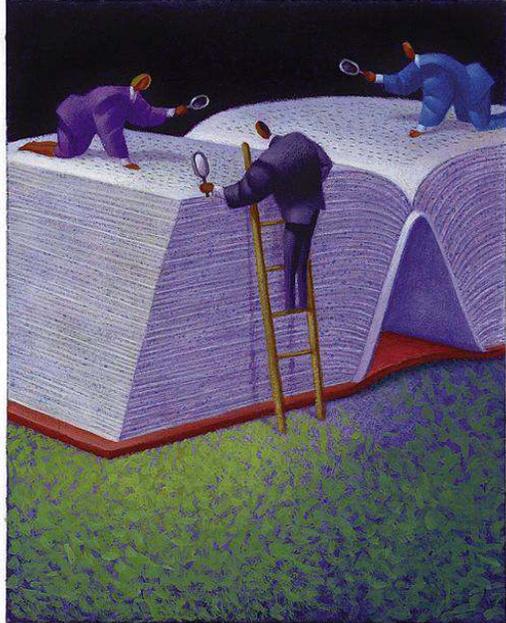
**RIPOFF #4: MAKING CHANGES THAT ALTER THE MEANING OR VOICE OF YOUR MANUSCRIPT** – The first job of the editor is to improve a piece of writing, wherever possible. The second – but no less important – job of an editor is to preserve the voice of the author. This means that when your editor hands your revised work back to you, it should sound like you wrote it, only better. If you employ short, declarative sentences in your writing style, but your work comes back with long, effusive, multi-clause sentences, your editor has probably taken liberties with your work that were not his/hers to take. If you tend toward lyrical descriptions, but your manuscript comes back half the length, with large swathes of it cut to shreds, your editor has not honored your writing style. If your goal is to motivate your readers to take productive action with rousing anecdotes, but your work comes back sounding dour and angry, your editor has not preserved your voice. Editors are usually smart and often right when they suggest changes, but they are not God. This is your work – and it's up to you to protect it by making sure you hire the right editor for YOU. **Read on for recommendations about the kinds of questions you should ask any prospective editor before deciding to hire them.**

***To receive a complimentary revision/critique  
of your manuscript, personally reviewed  
and hand-marked by Laura, please visit our Web site:  
<http://www.writemarketdesign.com/Free%20Critique.htm>***

## 7 COSTLY MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT EDITING YOUR MANUSCRIPT

### **MISCONCEPTION #1: I'm a good writer . . . I have a degree in English . . . I got A's in Language Arts . . . my mom's an English teacher . . . so I don't need an editor.**

FALSE. Michael Jordan, arguably the best basketball player who ever lived, was asked once what made him such a great player. His answer was simple: "I had the best coaches." No matter how good your writing is, a skilled, experienced editor who understands you and your work will make it better. They will hone and polish your words to bring out the sheen and help you deliver precisely the message you intend for your audience.



### **MISCONCEPTION #2: I can edit my own work.**

FALSE. An editor will bring an objective eye to your work. He or she will notice things that you cannot see because you are simply too close to the writing. You may have been working on this book for a year or longer. You've come to know it like a lover or a child. But how often do you overlook the faults of your lover or child? The same is true of your manuscript. Your editor will point out (hopefully gently) the places where sentences, paragraphs, or chapters are wordy, misguided, misplaced, or simply unnecessary. Because they are not emotionally attached to the writing, they can offer objective guidance that will help you shape your manuscript into the best book it can be.

### **MISCONCEPTION #3: All an editor does is find and correct typos and grammar mistakes.**

FALSE. An editor does MUCH more than simply find and correct typos and grammar errors. While these certainly are important functions of a good editor, they are small ones, comparatively. Essentially, an editor's job is to make your words sound as good as they possibly can. An editor reads

for five basic components within your manuscript, making sure it is: clear, concise, correct, consistent, and compelling. We look at tone, word choice, syntax, and grammar. We double-check that what you wrote is what you really intend to say. We check for consistency in your voice and holes in your manuscript. We point out gaps in research, timelines, or explanations that may be transparent to you, as the author and expert. Our goal is to enable you to deliver a quality piece of writing that speaks directly to your audience and represents you and your message as well as it possibly can.

**MISCONCEPTION #4: The editor is always right.**

FALSE. This is your work – and it is up to you to guard it and protect it. Any editor who is dogmatic or bullheaded with you – who insists they are right, regardless of your feelings, opinions, or expertise – is not the right editor for you. I had a client once who wrote a book about his experience growing up with a learning disability. His goal with his book was to encourage young adults to persevere, because while he did eventually achieve a large measure of success, he felt he'd have gotten there much more quickly and easily if someone – anyone – had encouraged him. His story largely focused on his challenges in school, particularly with teachers who constantly told him he was stupid. It was his story, told from his perspective. By the time he came to me, he was almost in tears because his first “editor” had so badly damaged his manuscript, making sweeping changes and actually cutting huge portions of the text. When he finally got her to explain why she'd made such blatant changes to his work – this was waayyyy beyond editing – the editor told him that her daughter was a special ed teacher, and she felt he'd misrepresented the teachers in his story. Based on her own life experience, this editor had **changed the author's words, message, and intent**, with reckless disregard for his original meaning. If there was such a concept as editorial malpractice, this would definitely be a case of it! And I hear this scenario described to me again and again from many authors I meet.



The editor is not always right. In fact, the editor's job is merely to offer suggestions which you, as the author, should feel free to accept or reject. It's your work. You know, fundamentally, what you want to say and how you want your message to come across. The right editor will understand you and your message. Working with them will be a partnership where you are equally invested in creating the best book possible.

**MISCONCEPTION #5: I should hire the editor who comes in with the lowest bid.**

FALSE. In the next few pages, I will make a few recommendations to you about hiring a quality editor. One of those is to hire the best editor you can afford. No one can tell you how much money you should spend to have your book edited. However, a good editor is going to charge accordingly. The best thing you can do is stop viewing this as a cost, like you would a commodity such as new tires for your car, or even a pair of new shoes. Your writing is not a commodity. It is your life's work – your mission and message – and likely the thing that will get you the recognition and renown you deserve as an expert in your field or industry. ***What is that worth to you?*** Do you really want to waste your chance by cutting corners and hiring the cheapest editor you can find? Most editors I know are good, decent people who want to see their authors succeed. While they won't work for free – ***nor should they!*** – many will be willing to work out a payment system that works for you. You get what you pay for. If you're paying someone what amounts to \$12 an hour, how good can they really be? How much will they improve your work – or how much will they damage it? ***STOP viewing the price of editing as a cost and START thinking of it as an investment in you, your message, and your marketing.***

**MISCONCEPTION #6: An editor will jump at the promise of a share in the royalties/profits from this book that hasn't even been written yet.**

FALSE! FALSE! FALSE! If I had a dollar for every prospective author who was sure theirs would be the next bestseller, if I would only agree to work for free until they hit it big, I'd have an extra million bucks in my bank account. You're excited about your book, so I don't want to rain on your parade – but perhaps you didn't realize that there are something in the neighborhood of 117,000 new titles released every year. Unless you've already got a dynamite platform, a wealthy investor, or some other übersecret trick up your sleeve, it's a very dicey bet that you're going to see a huge profit on your book. And for me to do the work it would take to get it in shape to become that bestseller is going to take a significant time commitment. Make no mistake – I'm not in any way saying you can't or won't do it. I'm saying it's unlikely – and that doing so is going to take an enormous amount of organization, dedication, energy, time, and money. I'm just not able to gamble that every author who asks has the commitment it will take to ever see the monetary return they're envisioning.



Have you ever heard of a patient asking a cardiovascular surgeon to go ahead and perform the open heart surgery – and when he's better and can get back to work earning the big bucks, then he'll pay the surgeon? Of course not! It's a ludicrous thought. And yet, that is precisely what is asked of editors every day. "Please edit this. Make it beautiful and perfect and turn it into a book that could be a bestseller. Then, I **promise** I'll pay you." The problem is that even though I'm a rock star at marketing, I have no idea what kind of marketer this author might be. And while I have no doubt about my ability to get the book into tiptop shape – I'd be gambling on Mr. or Ms. Author's ability to go out and sell it. It's called working on spec, and I just don't do it – nor do any editors worth their salt. So please don't insult us by asking us to work for free. If it's important to you, you will find a way to make the project a win-win, and that includes **paying** your editor a fair fee in return for high-quality work.

**MISCONCEPTION #7: It's such a great book – it will sell itself.**

FALSE. Many writers finish their manuscripts. For most, though, that is the end of the line. Few actually see their work in print, and of those who do, even fewer ever sell more than a handful of copies. One of the main reasons for this has to do with marketing. Of all the mistaken beliefs held by new nonfiction authors, the most difficult one for most to grasp and correct is an understanding of the time/money/energy commitment involved in **marketing** a book. Many writers envision themselves as creative geniuses who believe they should be left alone to write while someone else handles the marketing and promotion. In the sphere of traditional publishing, some publishers may provide significant marketing support, but that is mostly a thing of yesteryear. Today, most publishers offer very little in the way of marketing assistance; virtually every publishing house — from the smaller, little-known shops to the behemoths of great repute — leaves it to the author to promote his or her own book.

If an author is unable to clearly define the market for their book and cannot provide any marketing support, publishers are unlikely to be interested at all. This should be a red flag to those pursuing the self-publishing option. Know your audience, and shatter that ubiquitous box, in terms of your creative marketing concepts. Who will read your book and where can you find them? These are the questions you need to keep at the forefront of your mind, even as you write the book, print it, and design your Web site.



There are hundreds of writers, columnists, and experts in myriad fields who could write books. What differentiates them is not their writing talents, as much as their ability — or inability — to sell their books. The thing you need to realize is that publishing is a business, and publishers will always go with the books they anticipate to be the biggest sellers. You must keep this same attitude and vision, even if you decide to self-publish. If you lose sight of creating a book that will actually sell, you may find yourself in an uphill battle once it's done. The last thing you want is to take out a business loan to get your books produced, only to have 30 cases of them stacked in your garage for the next dozen years.

Be ready and willing to market yourself and your book. Become a media darling. Look for opportunities to appear on local, regional, and national radio and TV. Yes, this means you, even if you are shy! Take an acting class or join [Toastmasters](#) if you have a fear of speaking in public. You are going to sell this book — no one else is. That means you must be as available and open as possible. If someone from the media calls to invite you for an interview, drop everything else and get to that interview. Spread the word about your new title on the Web. Send preview copies to select reviewers and/or celebrities or personalities with long reach. You went through all the other steps to get here. Believe in yourself, your book, and your market, and be fearless in promoting it to the world.

***For information about our 6-month training  
for first-time authors, please visit our Web site:  
<http://www.writemarketdesign.com/Write%20Now.htm>.***

## 5 MISTAKES TO AVOID WHEN HIRING AN EDITOR

**MISTAKE #1: Hiring an editor based on a Web site alone.** No question, a strong, well-written Web site is a good first step. But your editor needs more than the glitz and polish of a pretty, shiny Web site. He or she needs to demonstrate an understanding of your mission and message, and true skill at editing YOUR work. Just because someone says they can do something well doesn't mean they can.

**MISTAKE #2: Hiring an editor based on low price.** The lowest-priced editor could be a problem in 3 ways:

1. Low price can be the bait that attracts your phone call. But once the editor begins to put together an actual bid for your project, he or she starts to add extra costs, tell you it will take longer than they originally estimated, or pressure you into a higher price.
2. Low price can be for only a partial job – like a superficial read that entails no real revision of your work, merely grammar and spelling corrections. Rarely does the author have a full understanding of the scope of an editor's job – until it is too late. They've handed the work back to you, having fulfilled their end of the deal, but just barely. Now you're out some money (perhaps a lot of it), and must contemplate laying out even more cash to have another editor do a proper job with your manuscript.
3. Low price can be the sign of an inexperienced editor who is green and unable to give you the best advice possible to get your book into shape for publication. You get what you pay for. A highly skilled editor is going to charge a lot more than a novice will. It's up to you to determine how much you value your manuscript and your vision for the final book that results from it.

**MISTAKE #3: Hiring an editor based on a single telephone call.** Rather, make sure to get a sample edit from them. Any editor who is unwilling to provide you complimentary sample edit of your work is probably one you'd be better off not hiring.



**MISTAKE #4: Hiring an editor who doesn't offer a money-back guarantee.** In my view, every editor should be fully accountable for his/her work. And if you aren't pleased with the job in every way, you shouldn't have to pay for it, period. Ask the prospective editor if he/she offers a money-back guarantee, and then make sure they include that guarantee in their written estimate.



**MISTAKE #5: Hiring an editor without getting feedback from his/her former clients.** Any editor can say good things about his past experience. Sadly, though, some of what they tell you may or may not be true. Make sure you ask for references or read comments from his/her past and current clients so that you can be comfortable in trusting the editor to excel at the work you hire them to do.

***To receive a complimentary revision/critique  
of your manuscript, personally reviewed  
and hand-marked by Laura, please visit our Web site:  
<http://www.writemarketdesign.com/Free%20Critique.htm>.***

## 8 REASONS TO HIRE AN EDITOR

**Reason #1:** You've written a manuscript (or other document) you wish to publish.

**Reason #2:** You need a written critique of your manuscript to determine whether it is ready for publication, and if not, where it needs work.

**Reason #3:** You want to polish your manuscript in preparation to submit it to a publisher or a contest.

**Reason #4:** You want your work to stand out among all the vast competition for a traditional publisher's attention.



**Reason #5:** You want your work to survive the slush pile.\*

**Reason #6:** English is not your first language and you want to polish the writing and word craft of your manuscript so that it is easily read and understood by your audience.

**Reason #7:** You've secured a publisher who has requested revisions before publication.

**Reason #8:** You've secured a small publisher who will not fund the editing.

\*The "slush pile" is publishing parlance for the stacks and stacks of unsolicited manuscripts that publishers and literary agents receive on a daily basis. Many larger publishing houses do not even accept unagented/unsolicited submissions – if you mail it to them, they will simply reject it and send it back unopened. Many smaller houses do accept unagented/unsolicited manuscripts – but they usually get tossed onto the ubiquitous slush heap, and you're

— by Laura Orsini —

essentially crossing your fingers and performing incantations that the person reading yours will like it enough to pass it along to a decision-maker who might actually make you an offer.

I assure you from personal experience (I spent one summer interning at a friend's Manhattan literary agency where I was the one reading the slush pile), most work in the slush pile is atrocious. Yours will stand out if it's good – but only as long as you are fortunate enough that your manuscript finds its way into the hands of someone who cares to actually read a few pages. A good editor is your best line of defense to survive the slush pile, if this is the route you choose to take.

***For information about our 6-month training  
for first-time authors, please visit our Web site:  
<http://www.writemarketdesign.com/Write%20Now.htm>.***

## THE LEAST YOU SHOULD EXPECT FROM A SKILLED PROFESSIONAL EDITOR

- Listens, hears, and understands the author's concerns, vision, and intent.
- Makes suggestions in a way the author can hear and appreciate without being made to feel wrong, criticized, or patronized.
- Identifies and understands the needs of the reader.
- Has a very strong sense of structure and excellent organizational skills.
- Has excellent writing, grammar, and copyediting skills.
- Has an ear for language (e.g., diction and idiom).
- Can quickly familiarize themselves with virtually any subject.
- Makes technical passages and complex concepts accessible to the average reader.
- Keeps the text focused on speaking directly to the reader.
- Corrects unclear writing and/or faulty logic.
- Checks for consistency throughout the work, in voice, tone, message, and more.
- Knows when it's necessary for the author to rewrite and/or add text.
- Will unabashedly write new text when appropriate.
- Can emulate the author's usage, style, and tone when rewriting.
- Catches "isms" and prejudices without a compulsion to be politically correct.
- Treats author's writing with detachment and objectivity, never inserting or superimposing their personal beliefs/positions into the author's work.
- Knows how and when to use humor, analogies, examples, and literary devices to maintain and increase reader interest.



- Can create appropriate chapters, subsections, bullet lists, sidebars, and graphics to improve flow and readability.
- Is readily available for author questions and consultations.
- Can determine and explain the appropriate depth of editing.
- Develops a strong author-editor relationship.
- Challenges the author to give his or her best.
- Is compulsive, but not overly.
- Is flexible, but not overly.
- Can spot legal problems with trademarks, citations, etc.
- Reads, reads, reads, and reads — any and all types of material.

BONUS – An editor with a sense of humor will make the sometimes tedious process of editing your manuscript easier and lighter, particularly if you are struggling with some of the changes he/she suggests or are finding a particular aspect of a rewrite challenging.

***To receive a complimentary revision/critique  
of your manuscript, personally reviewed  
and hand-marked by Laura, please visit our Web site:  
<http://www.writemarketdesign.com/Free%20Critique.htm>.***

## 4 TYPES OF EDITORS

In book publishing there are four major editors, two of whom work extensively on improving the content and tone of the manuscript.

**The acquisition editor** sometimes works with the author to decide and develop the broader themes of a manuscript, although the acquisition editor's primary job is to analyze the book market and find and sign authors. [This is a position within a traditional publishing house.]

**The content editor (also called the developmental editor)** works extensively with the author to ensure clear development and expression of the whole manuscript. The content editor then hands the manuscript over to the production editor.

**The production editor** schedules and manages the entire production process, which includes preparing the manuscript for typesetting, finding a printer, and hiring and supervising workers, including the fourth editor, the copyeditor. [This is a position within a traditional publishing house – although some freelance editors offer a version of this service to self-publishing authors.]

**The copyeditor (also called the line editor)** goes through the manuscript line by line to check for proper word usage, consistent style and tone, correct grammar and punctuation, and correct cross-references. The copyeditor creates parallel structure within the text, changes the passive voice to active, eliminates wordiness and jargon, and smoothes out sentence and paragraph transitions to improve readability. Copyeditors are the last line of defense against poor writing.



[While not an editor, per se, **the proofreader** has an essential role in the process, rereading the final version after typesetting for typos, misspellings, and grammar errors. The proofreader makes no notes or changes on the content of the manuscript.]

The four editors are responsible for moving a book from raw manuscript to bound book. But it is the content editor and copyeditor who substantially improve the actual text and bring the best out of any manuscript. Most manuscripts NEED these two professional editors.

No one, even the seasoned author, should publish his or her material without these two editors. At a minimum, have a professional copyeditor go through your manuscript. This is imperative if you are self-publishing. Proofreading is NOT copyediting, and will seldom bring the best out of your manuscript.

At this point, the book should be ready, either for self-publishing or for the author to begin the process of seeking a traditional publisher. The next step, in either case, should be the Book Proposal – but an author who is thinking like a marketer will be building his/her platform throughout the whole process.

***For information about our 6-month training  
for first-time authors, please visit our Web site:  
<http://www.writemarketdesign.com/Write%20Now.htm>.***

## YOU'RE A GOOD CANDIDATE TO WORK WITH A FREELANCE EDITOR IF . . .

- You want to publish or submit the best manuscript or copy you possibly can.
- You have a strong vision for your book or manuscript and have clearly identified your audience.
- You are coachable and can accept advice and/or criticism from a professional who has your best interests at heart.
- While you are coachable, you also are not afraid to push back and tell your editor they are not taking your work in the right direction.
- You are interested in forming a partnership with a skilled expert who can give you precise advice about strengthening your writing to create a book you will be proud of.
- You want your manuscript to stand out among all the others that prospective agents and/or publishers will be reviewing.



## HOW EDITORS CHARGE

There are loads of editors out there and each will charge differently, so it's sometimes challenging to find a dollar-for-dollar comparison on costs. Ultimately, it's not the cost that should concern you as much as knowing you've hired an editor who understands you, your work, your mission, your message, your vision, your audience, and how best to work with you.

**By the Word** – Some editors charge by the word, anywhere from 1 cent to 12 cents a word. Yes, the range is huge, and so is the quality and caliber of the work they provide. Regardless of an editor's rate, this is a relatively easy way to gauge the cost of your project.

**By the Page** – Some editors charge by the page, anywhere from \$2.50 to \$35 per page. Again, it's a huge range, and is the quality and caliber of work they provide. A typical manuscript, double-spaced and formatted in 12-point font, contains approximately 250 words. When you provide the editor a word count for your manuscript, they likely will divide that number by 250 to arrive at the page count by which they will charge you.

**By the Hour** – Some editors charge by the hour. This is a more amorphous method of billing that leaves many authors uncomfortable, because they feel it's too difficult to gauge whether they are getting their money's worth. It may helpful to know that a very average estimate is that

a good editor can usually read from 5 to 10 pages an hour. This, however, is largely dependent upon the difficulty of the text, how clean the manuscript is to begin with, and the type of editing the author seeks. Again, there is a range of hourly editing fees from about \$12/hour to upwards of \$50/hour.



**By the Project** – For projects where the author seeks more than simply a straight content or line edit but also requires services that include design, consulting, marketing, and/or shepherding the author through the publishing process, a project fee makes much more sense. This should involve some estimate of the editing fee, as well as the fee for the services beyond the editing. For the protection of both the author and the editor, a contract spelling out the full scope of the project should be agreed upon in advance of commencement of the work.

The fact of the matter is while prices vary wildly between editors, the method of pricing generally shakes out to be about the same, regardless of whether they bill by the word, page, or hour. Project fees are where you will likely see the biggest variation, primarily because the project fee typically involves work beyond straight editing.

When you are discussing fees with your prospective editor, make sure you know everything you will get for your money:

- How many rewrites and/or revisions
- Whether they provide a version of the edits with revision marks
- Whether they provide feedback and suggestions beyond the revisions
- A time estimate for the project – and any contingencies if it goes longer or shorter than estimated.
- Whether you have regular e-mail access to them for questions

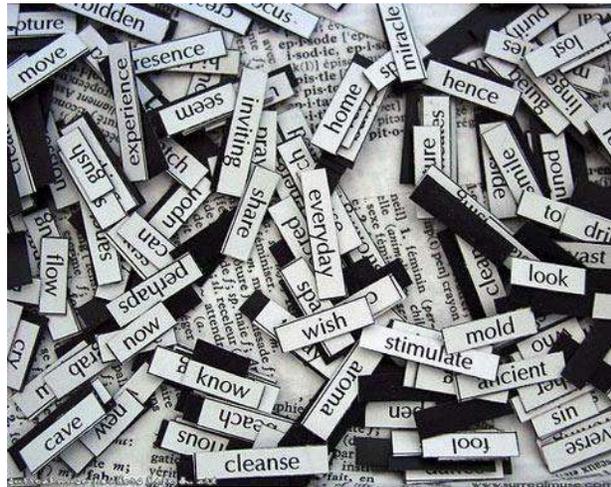
***To receive a complimentary revision/critique  
of your manuscript, personally reviewed  
and hand-marked by Laura, please visit our Web site:  
<http://www.writemarketdesign.com/Free%20Critique.htm>.***

## IF YOU'RE GOING TO TRY TO DO IT YOURSELF

It is my opinion as both an experienced, professional editor and as a writer, that it's a fool's errand to attempt to edit your own work – particularly anything as important as a book manuscript. I make the analogy that self-editing is a lot like performing a medical procedure on yourself. It's just not possible for any author to bring an objective, critical eye to his or her work. You're too close to it and, understandably, protective of it. In the long run, it's unlikely that you will be able to see all the intrinsic changes necessary to make it the best book possible.

However, for those of you who remain unconvinced of the benefits of getting a professional on your team to elevate, enhance, and improve your book, I offer the following tips for self-editing.

- 1. Find the right synonyms.** Buy the best thesaurus you can find. It helps if it has a “category” section that allows you to browse by large ideas. Read your creation and look up synonyms wherever you feel a better word might more accurately describe your ideas. Be careful though: keep in mind that your audience has a certain level of sophistication and might be turned away from words that are overly complex.
- 2. Be selective with your similes and metaphors.** Add them sparingly, and try to be appropriate within the context of your descriptions. Sometimes too broad a metaphor (or too flashy a simile) can distract from the actual thoughts of your message. Don't mix metaphors by comparing something to a teapot only to compare it later to an automobile.



3. **Use positive language.** Occasionally the word “not” is useful for emphasis. Most of the time, though, a sentence is stronger when positive; use your word processor to search for the word “not” and rewrite the sentence using other positive descriptives. Example: Rather than say, “He was not in the mood to work,” you might say, “Shawn’s lazy, contemplative mood leant itself to lying around the house.”
4. **Write action and use the active voice.** Your writing will be clearer if you structure your sentences as subject-verb-object; employ action rather than describing situations. Use your word processor to search for words ending in “-ed” — if you preceded this word by “is,” “was,” or similar verbs, the phrase would likely be better rewritten. Also check for instances of “there is” and “there are” and eliminate them as much as possible. Example: Rather than write, “After chasing the ball for an hour, the dog was tired,” you might write, “The tired dog collapsed in a heap after chasing the ball for an hour.”
5. **Check for verb tense consistency.** This is a basic one, but a mistake almost everyone makes at one time or another. Make sure that your manuscript is consistently present tense or past tense – or that if you switch tenses, you have a very good reason for doing so that is absolutely transparent to your reader. Confused tenses are another easy way to confuse your reader.
6. **Be consistent with your voice.** Decide at the outset of your writing whether you will write in first person (I/we), second person (you), or third person (he/she/it/they). It’s essential that you maintain consistency in this regard, and not switch back and forth – as this can seriously confuse your readers! An amazing number of people start out in one voice, and then inadvertently switch at some point.
7. **Use caution with commas.** A comma followed by the word “but” is okay. Commas separating a list of things are okay. Commas setting off parenthetical expressions are okay. Other commas, however, need careful scrutiny — should it be a semicolon, a colon, an em-dash, or parentheses? If you’re still confused, go get the great book, *Commas Are Our Friends*, by Joe Devine.
8. **Reorder your words and sentences.** Keep related words together — adjectives next to their nouns. The important words go at the end of the sentence; the important sentences go at the end of the paragraph. Avoid dangling modifiers, like “Taking a shortcut home from school, a giant boulder sprung up unexpectedly in Joe’s path.” Who was taking the shortcut, the boulder or Joe?

9. **Words have rhythm – notice it.** Sometimes reading can be awkward due to the “bumpiness” of the accented syllables. You can avoid this by taking the time to mark up your document with the accented syllables and reword singsong-y passages or places with too many accented syllables in close proximity. You can also use occasional alliteration and rhymes to punctuate your copy.
10. **Cut the cuties.** If something sticks in your mind as being ever so clever, that’s probably a good sign that you should remove it.
11. **Watch for repetition.** This may be something about which you need to consult an objective, third-party reader, as you might be too close to your work to notice. From little things, like reusing an odd word more than a couple of times in one book, to repeating descriptions and actual content . . . try to avoid repetition. Some authors use it as a literary device with great effect. However, if this is not a deliberate effort on your behalf – and you will know if it is! – all it does is serve to tire the reader and perhaps put them off your book.
12. **Pay particular attention to your references.** References require particular care. Keep a printed copy of your reference list and, while reading through your text, make sure each reference that appears in the text also is entered into your reference list. It is surprising how many references in otherwise excellent books are missing or contain inconsistent or incorrect details.
13. **Check the dictionary.** Go through your document and look up in a dictionary any words where you aren’t 100 percent sure of their meaning. I’ve surprised myself a couple of times when I have used a word repeatedly only to one day look it up and find it has another meaning entirely.
14. **Always read a hard copy.** Although we’re all very adept at using word processors for writing, it is virtually impossible for our eyes to catch everything on a computer screen that we notice when we’re reading printed versions of materials. Make sure you print at least one version of your manuscript for a hard copy read.



- 15. Read in short sections.** Avoid reading large sections in single sittings, as you will likely miss a lot. Rather, concentrate on a chapter or several pages at a time, so you can focus your attention. Otherwise, the writing that is so familiar to you stays familiar and you fail to notice new aspects that need attention.
- 16. Read aloud.** Read the text aloud, as your ear will find clumsy rhythms, repetitions, awkward and complex sentences, missing links, and the like that your eyes can easily skip right over. You don't have to do this in front of other people. Surprisingly enough, even reclining on your sofa all alone you can immediately catch awkward phrasings and words that you are using too frequently.
- 17. Perform a spell and grammar check.** Finally give the document the good old SpellCheck with Microsoft Word. Remember, though, that you cannot rely on it alone. A word that is spelled correctly might not be the right word. The ones I often confuse are "your" and "you're." Since they are both correctly spelled, they will go unnoticed. Unfortunately, the GrammarCheck is wrong almost as often as it is right, so I'd forego that one in lieu of a living, breathing editor/proofreader/grammarian.

**A DOCTOR WHO TREATS HIMSELF  
HAS A FOOL FOR A PATIENT.**

**A LAWYER WHO DEFENDS HIMSELF  
HAS A FOOL FOR A CLIENT.**

**A WRITER WHO EDITS HIS OWN WORK  
HAS A FOOL FOR AN EDITOR.**

***For information about our 6-month training  
for first-time authors, please visit our Web site:  
<http://www.writemarketdesign.com/Write%20Now.htm>.***

## THE IMPORTANCE OF VALUE AND PRICE

Price is what you pay. Value is what you get for what you pay. When you hire an editor, you will be choosing from a wide variety of capabilities, specializations, and prices. Not surprisingly, hiring a professional editor costs a lot more than having your Aunt Mary, who is a high school English teacher, read and edit your manuscript. If you are going to use the cheapest editor to do the work, you may as well just follow my tips about how to self-edit on the previous pages and do it yourself. On the other hand, if you want your book thoroughly, reliably, and professionally edited, you must hire a skilled, experienced, well-trained editor.

## DO YOU WANT A BOOK – OR A **GREAT** BOOK?

If all you want is a quick, down-and-dirty book you can put your name on and you don't care whether it has typos, syntax errors, gaping holes, changes in voice, or a mishmash message, then you should hire your editor based on price alone and just get the book done. But, if you want to have a book you can be proud of, a book that will truly make you stand out among all others in your field or industry, then I invite you to call me at 602-518-5376. As you may realize by now, there's a lot more to the editing process than simply correcting typos.

## 100% NO-RISK GUARANTEE

My goal in serving you is that you are so pleased – in fact, delighted – with my editing work that you will wonder how you ever considered hiring anyone else. So every project comes with my ironclad, risk-free guarantee. What does this mean? Simply this: if you aren't pleased with my work, I'll happily rework it for free. And if you still aren't happy, you pay nothing – not one cent. Not many editors guarantee their work, but I feel that nothing is more important than your complete and total satisfaction. I stand by every project 100%. If you ever have any questions or concerns about my work, please call me immediately at 602.518.5376.



## 6 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HIRING THE BEST EDITOR FOR YOUR MANUSCRIPT

If you are thinking about hiring an editor, I encourage you to follow these five recommendations:

**RECOMMENDATION #1:** Make a commitment to yourself to hire the best editor you can afford. I'm not going to lie to you. A good editor is going to cost you some money. In fact, editing should be the most costly monetary investment for your book. A pretty book cover might get someone to take it off the shelf (or "take a look inside" on Amazon), but it's the content that will sell the book. Would you rather have a book where every page grabs your reader and holds them mesmerized, or a book that's simply correct? A well-edited book will make you look like the expert you are – and no amount of money can buy the prestige of being a sought-after expert, regardless of your mission, message, or industry.

**RECOMMENDATION #2:** Decide whether you want to work with an honest, reputable editor, or whether you are willing to risk working with the editor who offers the lowest price, knowing that you are putting your message – possibly your life's work – at risk, and the editor may not even return your phone calls tomorrow.

**RECOMMENDATION #3:** Ask the right questions before you hire an editor. Interview potential editors by asking the following 15 questions:

1. How do I know I really need an editor?
2. Do you have any specializations?
3. Are there any types of writing projects you DON'T work on?
4. How long have you been in business?
5. What is your training/experience?
6. Do you have references I can contact?
7. Can I see samples of your work?
8. How do you charge?
9. How long will it take?
10. How do you work?
11. Do you provide revision marks in the edited documents you return?
12. Do you offer notes and feedback?
13. Do you offer more than one reading?
14. Will you perform a sample edit on my work?
15. What is your guarantee?

**RECOMMENDATION #4:** Once you are satisfied that the editor you have selected is an honest, competent professional, ask for a sample edit. This generally should be either from the first chapter of your book, or the one you feel is most representative of your work – usually not more than 5 pages.

**RECOMMENDATION #5:** Get a written estimate for the work. Make sure that you and your editor are on the same page regarding all possible parameters of the project. How many rewrites does the quote cover? What kind of feedback is included? Do you have unlimited e-mail access to ask questions? Get it all in writing so that you won't be surprised if you ask for something down the road and he/she tells you it is beyond the scope of the project.

**RECOMMENDATION #6:** Come to a written agreement regarding the terms of payment. Many editors ask for half the projected fee up front, with the remainder due upon delivery of the work. Others ask for a fraction up front, with payments throughout the project. Or you may reach some other payment arrangement. Just make sure you get your agreement in writing.



By following these six recommendations, you'll learn everything you need to know to make an informed, intelligent decision about the editor you will hire. I will be happy to answer any questions you may have, and provide you an estimate for editing your manuscript, without any cost or obligation of any kind. You can reach me directly at 602-518-5376.

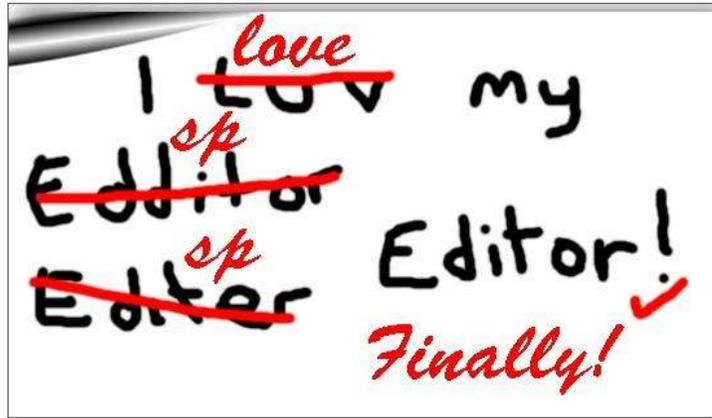
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of your manuscript, personally reviewed  
and hand-marked by Laura, please visit our Web site:  
<http://www.writemarketdesign.com/Free%20Critique.htm>.***

## IF YOU WANT TO HIRE THE BEST, YOU NEED TO KNOW HOW WE'RE DIFFERENT

My hope is that you now understand that while you *could* edit your own book . . . or you *could* hire the cheapest editor . . . you don't want to. You now see the value in investing in a highly skilled editor who can bring out the best in your manuscript. At **WRITE | MARKET | DESIGN**, we do so much more than simply edit your work – although we will do a stellar job with that aspect!

As a full-service editing/design/marketing provider, we offer the following services that you will NOT find with a typical editor:

- **Quarterback your project**, carrying you through the process from manuscript to having a printed book in your hot little hand
- **Design your cover and interior**
- **Teach you to think like a marketer** – and if you start with us early enough in the process, build your marketing into the book itself
- **Help you build your platform**, long before the book emerges as a finished product
- Help you make the **best use of the Web and social media** outlets
- Provide ideas about other ways to **repurpose the contents of this book** so that you can leverage your hard work and research as widely as possible
- Help you **find the best book production company and distributor**
- **Guide you through every step of the publishing process**
- **Help you with your book proposal**, should you be interested in landing a traditional publisher



— by Laura Orsini —

Thanks again for reviewing my *First-Time Author's Guide to Hiring the Best Editor for YOU*. I hope you found the information helpful. If you have any questions or comments, or you'd like to request a review or estimate for an editing project, please e-mail me at [Guide@WriteMarketDesign.com](mailto:Guide@WriteMarketDesign.com) or call me at 602.518.5376. I have dedicated myself to being the best possible self-publishing resource for socially conscious speakers, authors, and coaches. It will be my pleasure to serve you in any way possible. I look forward to hearing from you.

LAURA

***For information about our 6-month training  
for first-time authors, please visit our Web site:  
<http://www.writemarketdesign.com/Write%20Now.htm>.***

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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LAURA ORSINI has been trained as a writer her whole life, and has a full-service freelance editing and marketing consulting practice. Her mission is to empower others to enable socially conscious speakers, authors, and coaches to share their knowledge and passions with the world. Most of her authors choose the independent/self-publishing route, but she also preps those seeking traditional publishers. Her goal is to fuel as many people as possible to share their solution-oriented messages — and to dismantle the self-sabotaging belief that they have to be trained writers in order to communicate well. All they have to do is (a) know what their message is, (b) who their audience is, and (c) why they need to tell their story. The rest — the editing, book production, marketing, etc. — is the easy part. But no one else on earth can manufacture the passion and knowledge that they, alone, possess.



A professional editor, writer, and speaker with a BA in Nonfiction Writing from the University of Arizona, Laura is the author of several exceptional workbooks and courses, including the *Article Marketing Home Study Course*, *eBooks Made Easy*, *Words Made Easy*, *Niching Made Easy*, *Self-Publishing Made Easy*, *Car Buying Made Easy*, *Handwriting Analysis Made Easy*, and *1,001 Real-Life Questions for Women*. Laura is an accomplished and effective public speaker with expertise in networking, marketing, credibility campaigns, creativity, brainstorming, and visualization. Laura served as speaker coordinator for the Phoenix Chapter of [Shared Vision Network](#), Associate Editor of the new online magazine, [One Planet](#), and President of the American Business Women's Association's [Scottsdale Express Network](#); she received her Competent Toastmaster certification from [Toastmasters International](#); and is an active advocate for social change through her [Social Alchemists](#) movement.

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- ✓ Sunil Ahuja of [Integral Transformation](#)
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- ✓ Connie Kadansky of [Exceptional Sales Performance](#)
- ✓ Eileen Proctor of [Top Dog Business Boosters](#)
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- ✓ Joanne Tedesco of [Arizona Networking News](#) (holistic health newspaper)
- ✓ Scott White of [PersonalPowerTraining.net](#)

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- ✓ Arizona Small Business Association
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- ✓ White Mountain Regional Chambers “Gathering of Leaders”