

Ghostwriting Myths BUSTED! *Taking the Mystery Out of the Decision to Hire a Ghostwriter*

Some professionals and business owners dismiss the idea of hiring someone to write books, speeches or articles in their names. In many cases, they don't understand what ghostwriting is and how ghostwriters work. So, let's bust some ghostwriting myths right now!

➤ ***Using a ghostwriter seems like cheating.***

Yes, you had to write your own papers in high school and college. But you had to wash your own car back then, too. As a working adult, you can hire an auto detailer to bring your car to a luster far brighter than you could generate on your own. Hiring a detailer also frees up time for more productive or pleasurable pursuits than rinsing soap bubbles out of your eyes with a garden hose.

We hire experts to renovate our kitchens, manicure our nails, adjust our spines and teach our kids karate. These transactions are not considered "cheating." They are ways we use available resources to improve ourselves, our homes and our families.

A ghostwriter is just another type of expert—an expert at writing and capturing other people's voices. When a ghostwriter writes a book, speech or article on your behalf, *the final product contains nothing more nor less than your unique expertise, experiences and ideas*. Just as an auto detailer wouldn't commission a mural of the Grand Canyon on your vehicle's hood without your permission, a ghostwriter will not change your message.

The ghostwriter isn't *creating* your content (that *would* be cheating). He or she is a resource who puts your material into publication-ready form so your expertise can reach a wider audience.

➤ ***My colleagues won't respect me if I don't write my articles myself.***

or

➤ ***Only another expert in marine biology/vegetarian cooking/feng shui could write peer-reviewed material on my behalf.***

Belief in one or both of these myths usually leads to the same result: never being published.

The funny thing is, once you get to know other published experts in your field, you may learn that they used ghostwriters, too. For example, an estimated 50 percent of all non-fiction books are ghostwritten in whole or in part. The original content of your articles or book is yours and yours alone. The ghostwriter's role is to format your content into a publication-ready document that carries the unique stamp of your voice and style.

You want your published materials to be top quality. That means your writing project needs an expert *writer*, not another expert in your topic. Some ghostwriters have a specialty, so you can locate one with experience writing in your general category: medicine/health, the environment, the arts, etc.

In addition, ghostwriters, such as those at Lit Writing, have chosen their field so they can learn about as many things as possible in one lifetime. Chances are your ghostwriter will have a general understanding of your topic or one very similar. You may find the writer's learning curve is not so steep after all.

If you are really concerned about what your peers are thinking, consider this: without published articles, your peers will remain unaware of your expertise. Worse yet, someone could get your great idea in print before you do. Working with a ghostwriter avoids these less-than-desirable outcomes.

➤ ***I won't get full credit for my work if I use a ghostwriter.***

How you choose to credit your ghostwriter is completely up to you. Some book authors include a ghostwriter's name on the book cover:

- *Golf My Way* by Jack Nicklaus with Ken Bowden
- *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* as told to Alex Haley

In other cases, the ghostwriter is only mentioned in the book's Acknowledgements, and then in terms as clear or vague as the client chooses. The same kind of credit, or lack of credit, can be given for published articles.

Before any writing work begins, establish all terms between yourself and the ghostwriter. Important points to consider include

- the ghostwriter's credit, if any
- payment,
- critical deadlines and
- confidentiality.

A ghostwriter should provide a contract, that both of you sign, spelling out your agreements in all of these areas.

➤ ***Ghostwriters...they host séances, right? Or are they the guys wearing Proton Packs in the middle of New York City?***

OK, most people know that ghostwriters are professional writers, not spiritualists or characters in a campy 1980s movie. But misconceptions about ghostwriters are common.

Remember...hiring a ghostwriter is just like hiring any other expert. Working with a ghostwriter brings your expertise and experience one large step closer to reaching a wider audience than you likely could have achieved on your own.