

# Professional Writers Alliance

## Interview: Pam Foster

Speakers: Jen Adams, Pam Foster

### **Transcript**

#### **Jen Adams**

Good afternoon, everyone. I'm Jen Adams, joined today by Pam Foster. And we are going to be talking about bear markets. And then of course, how you as a writer can make this bear market environment into a boom time for your business. And I invited Pam to join us for two reasons.

First, many of you who are newer to the industry, and any newer listeners, it can be really over the last decade, have only experienced freelancing in one kind of market. And now markets have changed. And I wanted you to have the chance to hear some insights about how to adapt from a writer who has successfully navigated multiple market cycles.

And then second, as AWAI's learning chief, Pam is right on the front lines with working writers around the world to see what's working and kind of what isn't in the market conditions we have right now. So, by combining the wisdom of experience with being seriously plugged in, I'm hopeful that we'll be able to have a truly useful and inspirational conversation together. Together between us and with everyone here at PWA. So welcome, Pam.

#### **Pam Foster**

Hi there. Welcome and welcome listeners, nice to have you here.

#### **Jen Adams**

So Pam, you have been a writer for a number of years now. Can you talk us through what things were like when you first started and some of the market cycles you've seen since then?

#### **Pam Foster**

Yeah, so I graduated in 80, from college and bleep right into the writing world as a writer for TV commercials, radio commercials, locally in my city where I grew up, Portland, Maine. And, gosh, it was a lot of learning as you go, we didn't have any training programs that I knew of, like AWAI, not really. So we kind of learned from what we saw on TV or heard on the radio, it was kind of cliché and boilerplate, and we just went with it, as I went and learned. And then I worked for an ad agency and learned a lot from that. And then I've done a lot of corporate communications jobs. And I'll tell you, the cycles have been really interesting. For example, I was working for a bank in 1990, during the savings and loan crisis. And the bank that I was working for was taken over by the Federal Reserve. We had commercial lending problems, but my job was to communicate with bank customers on what was happening. So I was really, really, really busy. And I actually worked with the FDIC to create a q&a sheet and how your money is protected, what kind of accounts are protected, and all this good stuff that the customers needed to know. And so during the worst of times, you are needed even more as a writer to explain stuff to customers and calm them down and help them see, you know, what is going to be okay for them and alternatives for them. Like if they're used to one thing and the economy, the economy has changed it, how can you change and communicate that change in a good way so that they are feeling informed and armed with the right information to make decisions? So Boy, I've seen, you know, fluctuations the whole time. Another one was 2008, when the whole real estate market went down, and some other things happened. And again, I was part of a startup that year, in the industry. I know like, you know, what's cool about down times in the economy is for me, I've always seen opportunity, because a couple of things. One is they may lay off... their companies may lay off their full time copywriting or creative department staff, and then they're going to be hiring freelancers, because then they won't have that overhead that they have to worry about, you know, benefits and vacation time and all that stuff. They can hire freelancers to fill all the roles on an ad hoc basis, which is great for you. Because suddenly you're much more in demand. And that I've seen that. So I wouldn't think about this time in our financial world as a negative, I would flip it to the positive as a big opportunity for you to help companies that are going to, you know, dig in and ride the ride. You know, you can really help them shift their messaging, shift what they offer, explain things to nervous customers. You're needed more than ever.

**Jen Adams**

Right because well and that messaging really is so, so, so important. So with anything going on, and I mean 2008 was when I got started. And I was working in the financial industry before... I did HR for financial and we had layoffs, layoffs, layoffs, and it was like, Oh, my gosh, this world is evaporating. But then I started freelancing. And it was like, Oh, this is something this is, this is different. And there was a lot of opportunity. Even, you know, as I was starting out, but I guess we can go into that a little bit in a minute, I wanted to kind of talk about these up and down markets, from two sides, because there's kind of the mental piece and the financial piece. And for writers just you know, sometimes we're very practical people, sometimes we're a little woowoo. And we getting caught up in the emotion of the moment. So that that mental piece first, like beliefs and mindsets. So for writers, like what happens mentally to writers in uncertain markets or volatile markets?

### **Pam Foster**

Well, I think those writers who look at it again, as an opportunity, and we have an article on AWAI.com that was written I think, just a month or so ago. Shawn McCool is a great example of someone who launched during the 2008 madness and did really, really well. So mindset, thinking about panic or fear, I just want to reiterate that this is a great time to help companies who are going to ride the wave and they need... so in every industry, every kind of business that's going to stay with it and do their best... to capitalize on what's going on and help customers who are scared. They need writers, they need people who can communicate everything. And that's you. So I would never, boy, I wouldn't discourage you from being worried about it and encourage you to look into it and follow what's going on. Like, I was on LinkedIn the other day, and I typed in the word content for in the job section. And right now, there are 227,000 jobs related to content. I'm not kidding you. And yes, some of those jobs have nothing to do with the writing part of content, it could be more managing or strategizing, or, you know, but so many of those jobs are and companies are eager to find writers who can do all kinds of writing. And some are remote jobs, some are freelance some are full time. And by the way, you might want a full time job as a writer. Listen, I joined Awai full time because I love that community and study, you know, aspect, right?

### **Jen Adams**

Right. And if you're feeling nervous, I know, we talked so much about freelance, like go freelance, like live in that, I don't know, the wild energy or freelancing. But sometimes when you're like, you know, I'm a little freaked by headlines, and what

should I do? It's like, a full time job is amazing. Yes, you're desperately needed. Right? If you have that security. I mean, as much as anything is secure, but like, right,

**Pam Foster**

I really do want to steer you guys to an article on AWAI.com. Just search with the word recession. It's called starting a writing career in a recession. And Rebecca wrote it, and it's wonderfully uplifting, and with the Sean McCool story, and I won't go into that right now. But we have a lot of stories where people launched during a strange time when the stock market was down and gloom and doom everywhere. Interest rates rising, oh my gosh, what do we do? You know what? Companies need you because they need to stay in business. And the only way to stay in business is to communicate why they're awesome. And what they offer. And like you just said about financial marketing, you have shifted. Actually, we were talking before the call started about how all right, yeah,

**Jen Adams**

For our listeners... we chatted before we started and then we get going.

**Pam Foster**

Yeah, tell us what you said about the re-leads.

**Jen Adams**

Yeah, so you know, I've written a lot for financial markets. But one of the things that happens in financial markets is of course the market changes. And so if you have a successful campaign, or if you have some content that's really popular with people, you know, obviously you have pieces within that copy that talk about current market conditions. And so you have the challenge that when you're going to market, you want things to seem as current as possible, but sometimes you don't want to redo the whole thing. Right. That's a lot of work and it's time and it's expensive from the company's perspective. And so they might ask for a re-lead. And a re-lead is just redoing kind of the first part, or touching up something so that it feels a lot more current, even if it's the same offer and the same products that they were using the previous year. So like a lot of the work that I've been doing lately, because the market has kind of, I don't know what even the most accurate phrase is, everyone's like, Oh, it's just awful. So, I've been working on making things that worked for the company during the bull market also work for them during the bear market. Because you know, the core newsletter is the same,

the customer support is the same, the offer is the same, all that has changed is the frame around it, but companies need to have their communications updated, and to keep everything really feeling like they're plugged in, and like they're listening to their customers, and they don't get there without writers who can help them.

**Pam Foster**

Yeah, and that's not just for sales letters. That's for everything. For example, you know, when pandemic hit, and everything had to be online and delivery and contactless payments and everything had to be addressed immediately. And companies that were clever, said, okay, writers, we're going to change our web homepage, because we want to address you know, the different things we offer now online, when you change our entire conference to being a virtual conference, we don't have to cancel it, we're still going to have it. And we need to tell everybody, we're still having it. And we need to get them to that conference online and still be excited about it. Think of the copy that was written to ship for the pandemic tons and

**Jen Adams**

so much of it so quickly to, like, from the financial side of a bear market, you know, as a writer, you're like, oh, all my work is going to dry up. And I think for the pandemic... for people to you know, those first couple of weeks are like, Well, what's going to happen, you know, all the work is going to dry up. And then instead, it was like, I am the busiest! Everyone wanted stuff so quickly. I mean, I was charging rush fees. It was, in some ways it was, it sounds terrible to be like, oh, man, the pandemic was great.

**Pam Foster**

Oh, that's nice. Oh, I mean, whenever there's a shift, clever companies jump on it and shift their messaging. And they need help to do that. Most companies, even tiny businesses, they can't just sit on what they've always been saying. They can't, or they'll be left in the dust and their competitors, believe me, are jumping on the opportunity to shift their messaging and be there for customers who need guidance on okay, what do I do now? Just think of travel companies. You know, in the last couple of years, everything's changed, right? So I think, you know, clever companies will shift the messaging to help people ride the storm, if you want to think of it as a storm, actually, you know, again, think of it as a positive thing. Think of it as a rainbow. For your writing career, because obviously, you know,

with, again, the jobs are there, they're still there, companies are recognizing that content marketing and other types of copywriting are more needed than ever to get their message across in an uncertain time.

### **Jen Adams**

Yeah, I mean, if we look even over the last, say, 12 to 24 months, I mean, web writing. There's not even words for the level of growth that there was and the demand that there was in part because companies could see that it worked. And then it helped them get results. I mean, to me, if anything is going to get cut in the writing world, in the near future, it's going to be things that don't have a clear path to a customer, right? So maybe some brand awareness campaigns are... but even that... you know, I'm in direct response marketing, so much of what we do is to drive that click to get a light or an engagement or a subscriber or sale and we can say, with a high, a relatively high degree of accuracy like okay, we did this blog post. Web traffic to the post was 4000 people a day are reading this post and 200 of them are clicking the link and then 12 of them are buying. Fantastic the product is \$1,000. To me, getting \$12,000 a day from this blog post, like, yeah, you know, the company is going to say, you know, paying someone \$500 to make us 10 more of these blog posts is gonna really work out for us.

### **Pam Foster**

I have a concrete example. So a few years ago, I was writing for a veterinary equipment company, they manufacture, exam room tables, and tubs and cabinets and all that stuff for VET practices. And we started a blogging campaign and did two blog posts a month on a different feature, or a different product and why it's amazing in the market. For example, we did an article on Americans With Disabilities act friendly grooming tubs, so people who work at a shelter and happen to be in a wheelchair can still wash the dogs and all that stuff. So we would start blogging on the efficiencies and the patented improvements that this company made on different equipment that that practices look for. And over a very short time, they would get leads on every blog post we did, because we were very specific about you have this need, we have an amazing solution to help with efficiency, staff happiness, keeping their backs from breaking, you know, all that good stuff. And they were able to stop printing a 24 page full color catalog that they had to print and mail every year. And by the time they mailed it, it was kind of obsolete because they had a new product to introduce and stuff. We just started blogging, and they got rid of that whole thing, because the blog was doing so well. So, you know, in every industry, companies are still running. That's why b2b is so

amazing as an opportunity, business to business, because the suppliers to the business industry are supporting that, that humming machine are out there. Whether it's a software company that helps with cybersecurity or another company that might help people figure out what to do about the mortgage interest rate changes, I'm just throwing stuff out there. But things are changing so much that communication has got to keep up. That's where we come in. superheroes wearing capes and, you know, help companies.

### **Jen Adams**

But I mean, it's true. We are kind of the secret because people say, oh, man, I have this business problem. Yeah. And you're like, great, I have a writing solution to your business problem.

### **Pam Foster**

Exactly. And people are asking questions. I mean, even if you just said to a client, what kind of questions are you getting right now with all the changes going on? Oh, I've got a list of 32 questions. We can do blog posts that answer each question one at a time. And then they'll sit on your website for a while and bring in traffic again and again. Bada boom, Bada bing, bada bang. Yeah, and for every one of those blog posts, you know, I just started with the blog post as an example.

It's like, Great your blog posts can have a social media post that goes with it. I know, you're doing two new blog posts a week, you could have five or six social media posts about those blogs. This one's for your Twitter feed. This one's for your Instagram, this one's for your Facebook, you know, now this is the article that we're going to put up on LinkedIn, maybe it's a mirror of the blog, maybe it's different. This is how we're going to run a sale on the weekend that ties in with the blog posts that we put up this week. This is what we're going to put in the newsletter you can build so much. So yeah, just around the communication. And I mean, that just what I described there as a full time workload for a single writer. And so probably three or four writers are going to be working with that company.

So here's another example. In my real life, I still do freelance work all the time, because I want to stay in the game and talk about what clients are needing and everything. So I have an accountant that I've been writing for for 27 years, my accountant, and I do their newsletter every quarter to clients. Now, do you think they're going to stop printing that newsletter right now? Because the economy is changing? Oh, no. They're going to be the go to heroes who explain what the

heck's going on, and offers tips to ride through it. And then of course, the call to action is if you want help with your personal financial situation, give us a call. We'll sit down and go over it with you. That's business for the accountant. That's reassurance for the audience. I am very busy with them, helping them with their communications. And that's just a small, you know, like five CPA firm here locally. So, small business, medium business, b2b, b2c, nonprofits, they all have to pivot and you can help them do that.

### **Jen Adams**

That's very true. Well, and so we've talked to web content blogs. Are there some other projects that you think will be particularly in demand over the next six to 12 months like a press release advertorial? I think, are your clients asking for anything new or different. I mean, for me, it's been more work because we're extending the life of campaigns through a changing market cycle. But you know, I have a ton of sales letters. So that's specific kind of to my corner.

### **Pam Foster**

Right? And yeah, and I don't work in the sales letter world. So what I'm being asked to do is, for example, I write for a veterinary journal, today's veterinary business, and the editor recently asked me to do a couple of articles on affordable vet practice lobby makeovers. Now there's a topic you don't hear every day. So because of the economy, now, they're looking for affordable solutions. So I was able to interview a couple of veterinary practice architects. And there is such a niche, by the way, very specific. And it's a blast, because they're like, Well, you know, they want the big projects, of course, but they also want visibility, and they can help advise practices on small changes they can make that could make a huge impact. So my point is that blogging is still huge, help any kind of helpful content.

So listen to this, Google, about a month and a half ago did something called the Google Health update. And it's about time! What they're doing is clamping down on articles and other content that are just keyword stuffing, blah, blah, blah, and focusing on quality content. And they call it people first content, not keyword first content. Now this might be getting too technical for you guys. But basically, SEO writing is a balance of two things... using the right words people use in search, like Google to find whatever your client offers. So that's where the keywords come in. What words did they type into Google, you want to make sure your content for your client matches that phrase. So let's say they're looking for, I don't know, let's see how to put up wallpaper. If your client sells wallpaper or interior design or



anything. They should put together an amazing blog post on how to put up wall paper. But the second part is amazing content. That how to put up wallpaper page has to be frickin great. Or people will click to it and go, Oh, it's just a bunch of yapping about, I'm gonna go back and look for a better one. And there's so much like, okay, Jen, have you ever looked up a recipe online?

### **Jen Adams**

I was gonna say it's like, with recipes. You look up how to make a dish. Yep. And you click on Like three or four. And some of them are done well, right off, some just pull you in. And others are like, Oh, God, a story of this person's life before the dish?

### **Pam Foster**

Yeah. And it's like, you know, well, so Google favors 2300 words a copy, I'm gonna do you know, 1800 words on my life story with bok choy. And then I'll give you the bok choy recipe. Well, people have had it with that. And so has Google. So they're like, no, no, no, no. Must be quality content. Now this is gonna take a little bit... but like what can I do with bok choy, chicken, carrots and celery in an hour?

### **Pam Foster**

Because we don't need to know where the celery came from, or your dad used to grow celery in the garden? No, none of that. So the essence is that Google wants you to stick to the point, provide amazing content and stand out with some unique helpful solutions or something that is going to rank well for that search. So that's an opportunity. That's a huge opportunity, it's going to take time, you'll still see some crappy recipe things rank first. But over time, you can help clients climb up in the quality factors. And I'm getting way technical, but so

### **Jen Adams**

I think there is a great point to be made in that Google is going to reward quality, that your clients are also going to pay for quality. Because, you know, as resources may be more constrained, or where they're just trying to be more intentional about what are we spending and why. This was a thing that was funny to me and some of the previous, you know, I got started in a downturn, and people would say, well, our marketing budget last year was \$10,000. And we don't know if we want to spend that much. And by the time we would get all done doing the project, they would have spent \$12,000. And they still felt like they got an incredible value. So it's more about do they feel like they're paying for something

that is good, and that is going to help them? Because that's a whole different where people are like, well, great blogging, fantastic. Let's get a fresh post every day. I don't care what it costs, you know that that might have been three years ago for you. Yeah. But now people are like, No, seriously, like, what is our blog strategy? Right. And so, I think also being able to charge for some of that strategy per se, saying, "You know, I can help you with your blogs, but I can also help you plan an editorial calendar that you're not spending any more than you need to uncover. And people are like, Wait, we're not spending more than I need to! Tell me more about how I can effectively deploy my resources.

### **Pam Foster**

Yeah. And you know, so E newsletters is another opportunity. If you have a client that has a list, like people bought their products, and they had to get their email, but they're not really mailing them. But emails and E newsletters, huge opportunity, because email as a category has one of the biggest return on investment numbers than any other marketing approach. Because that's an audience who opted in, who signed up to hear from you, a lot of times, they're fans of that client. And so, you know, they want to hear from the client on new things, or great tips or insider discounts or anything. So using email and newsletters as your way to help the company pivot their message, help them offer better things for now, what's happening now? Gosh, I have a mortgage with pennymac. If I may say so. And they send me stuff every day about all these things. Yeah, rates are going up. But we can help you get it out. And under that they're so smart that way they're ahead of what's happening. They already anticipated my fear. And so that's the coolest thing is with an editorial calendar, you can sit with your client and say, All right, what are the top questions people are asking right now? Or what are some of the things that you can change? Right now to help clients in uncertain times, let's blog on each one of those, or let's do our April newsletter on this focus, or let's send out some emails this month on that.

### **Jen Adams**

So I'm going to help your clients kind of tie it all together. You know, even as a beginner, if you're doing blogs for a company, say, Well, how does this match with your marketing? Do we need to pull anything into this blog? To go along with the sale that you're running? You know, what's going out on your email list? What's going out in your newsletter? How can we make these conversations feel like they all go together? So that's it. I mean, you get an email from pennymac that says,

you know, hey, rates are going up, you could still refinance, even if your mortgage is less than a year old, you know? And then you click on their website, and they're still talking about the bull market. And you're like, yeah, there's a big disconnect here, because they didn't coordinate the conversation all the way through, which, you know, it goes into user experience, and some of that, but yep.

**Pam Foster**

You know, right. Or you can ask these questions and uncover opportunities

**Jen Adams**

In the PWA series we did where we talked about emails, and then the next week, we talked about affiliate marketing, you know, helping people make the most out of their mailing calendar. Some businesses have something to say every day, or they have a product that they can offer every day, and some businesses don't. And then you can say, well, you know, you're selling pet supplies. And maybe you could also talk about pet food for a couple of days with a partnership. And I'll still write all the emails for it. So you don't have to worry about a thing, dear client, I'll take care of everything, and you just pay my retainer in the month. But you can help them find new opportunities for revenue and new ways to get names and give names and, and just keep their business going during this time. So

**Pam Foster**

yeah, I mean, the top... I think if you research HubSpot, or anybody, they're going to list the top most effective marketing approaches that they've surveyed business to business and business to consumer companies and observing what are the top things that are working for you. And so that's where you maybe want to focus your conversation with clients. For example, Is your website mobile responsive? Is it looking well, on the mobile phone is showing you Jen? Like you can see me? Y'all can see me. But a lot of websites are still dreadful on the mobile experience. Like they just have a big old picture. And the copy is something like "glow from within". I'm like, What do you sell? And where are you?

**Pam Foster**

Are you know, what do you even do? It's amazing how many websites are really terrible. So offering a website audit, for example, and helping them pinpoint their missed opportunities and their gaps, showing them what the competition is doing. That's a big eye opener. This is your time to be more than a writer. You can be a consultant, a guide, you make a huge difference to clients by offering your

knowledge as a writer. Like, I'm not talking about the technical aspects of a website I'm talking about what's the message, that instant impression message people see when they go to the site? Is it a big beautiful photo with some vague statement? Or is it we've got the solution for your needs in this particular category the person was searching for. I mean, it's that basic, like, how is the messaging across the board? Is it relevant? Is it prospect focused, you could do an audit of all of their messaging, not just the website and

### **Jen Adams**

just say, like, you know, here's where your conversation is breaking down, here's where people are jumping off. Or, here's where people searched for adaptive grooming tables, and they couldn't find it on your website right away, or you didn't show them any content for that after your ad like, this is where they're jumping off, because they think they've gone to the wrong place.

### **Pam Foster**

Well, even in the search results page, there might, they might not even be showing up at all, like I have local clients that forgot to put where they're located on their website. So like, if you do a search for whatever, near me, all their competitors show up. And the clients like, why am I not showing up? I'm so upset, you know, these guys aren't even a good company. And they're showing up first, like, because where are you can't tell where you are. And it's missing on every page of your site, except the contact us page in little teeny texts. So seriously, you can be such a hero and a guide. And you can charge more for that, by the way, than "just" a writer.

### **Jen Adams**

Let's talk about billing and fees right now. Okay, because I know people are like, oh, you know, the economy. And you know, I'm trying to get started, maybe I need to charge less. Or maybe they won't pay me, you know, just those fears coming out of like, yeah, where's my money.

### **Pam Foster**

Well, I mean, as a freelancer, you should always be paying charging at least 50% up front anyway. So you're not doing any work for free ever. So if you don't get that 50% deposit check, you are not writing for them yet. Okay, you hear me all everybody? Because that's the number one thing. I mean, that shows that you're serious. And the client is serious about doing this work together. The other thing

is, well, there were two other things like Jen said earlier, if you can talk to them about the investment and the return on the investment in you, like Yeah, sure, I wrote a blog post for 500 bucks. How many leads did you get for your \$120,000 grain sorter equipment? You know, I'm just making that up. But they're like, oh, yeah, we got like 20 leads, okay, and if you close two of those, you've made \$240,000. So am I worth it? You know, yeah. And then the third thing is you can offer a retainer. And to lock in, for example, for 12 months, I give a slight discount, because I like to know, I'm gonna get paid every month for this project, I'm doing like four blog posts a month, if you lock me in for a year, I'll discount my rate by 5%. If you pay all cash up front, I may discount a little bit more. But you know, so I wouldn't worry so much about that. Because there are 227,000 content jobs on LinkedIn right now. You know, they're gonna pay, they need this content, they need emails, they need to keep their business humming through messages that connect, and they don't know how to do that. They need you to do that. So

### **Jen Adams**

that's something to where people, they're like, Well, I can't find work, or I can't find a job. It's like, there's so much. There's so much. And sometimes it's just a matter of switching your geography or looking a little further afield. Because if you're, you know, trying to win business from somebody, and they just are disinclined to pay for content or to pay for marketing or to pay for advertising or to pay. Some businesses just don't like to pay for things. It's not just you.

### **Pam Foster**

And those are NOT your clients, by the way.

### **Jen Adams**

It's like just go work for somebody else. Yeah. Even in a down market, there is plenty of work to be done and plenty of clients who will pay and are happy to pay for something that's going to help their business stay open and get sales. Yep. Oh, yeah.

### **Pam Foster**

I mean, again, you know, we have case studies on AWAI.com. If you just go onto our website and blog and put in case studies, all of these people, they all tell you how they got their clients. And I would say every week I hear from a member who got a client and I go, Oh, who was it? Someone I already know. So who do you

already know? Who is either working for a marketing department working for a marketing agency and by the way, Jen Adams did an amazing inside AWAI session on getting work with agencies. Now what's cool about that is they already have the client! If you don't have to get clients, you just they feed you the work. So go over to Awai.

### **Jen Adams**

Put agencies and with Les Worley and I, and there's a ton of additional content to within the PWA site about that you can search for retainers within PWA. You know, Pam has brought up, you know, offering that retainer deal and some stability, you know, some of your clients that you've been working for month to month, they know you, they like you say, Hey, Gary, and go for it. Sometimes people are like, oh, you know, talking about money, and I get really nervous. It's like, sometimes locking in a retainer is such a relief for the company too Oh, yeah, they know what they're going to pay for their marketing for the next six months. And you know what, you're gonna get paid for the next six months. And both of you can relax a little bit?

### **Pam Foster**

Well, they know they're gonna get great content to for the year, they don't have to sit there and go, What are we going to talk about next month? No, you already worked through an editorial calendar, you're on it, they can come on you, they can go run their business. So yes, retainers are beautiful things.

### **Jen Adams**

And they're beautiful things in a bear market, too. Yeah. So yep. So I mean, that might be something just if I was gonna give advice to somebody just starting out now or like changing niches and kind of starting over right now, I would go for retainers. Or Email, because it's just such a high return and the communication piece is so key. So what would you tell somebody who is just kind of starting out. Now.

### **Pam Foster**

My number one, people are like, where are the clients who's gonna hire me? People, clients are looking every day for someone with a bit of knowledge in their industry. So my advice is pick a niche, focus on marketing yourself to that market. And it can be any industry, you're interested in it, you don't have to have had a whole career in that industry. For example, I love dogs. I've been a dog owner, I

could write for the pet industry, because I understand what dog owners need and look for every new puppy owner needs tips on how to raise this puppy and stop getting it from chewing everything. You know, sleep at night, and there's crate training and all this other stuff. What to feed a new puppy. That's evergreen content, every single pet owner needs to know when they have a new puppy. So even if you've never worked in the pet industry, but you love animals, and you've had dogs, you're perfect for them and just tell that to your potential clients. I'm a pet industry copywriter and content writer. I am a lifelong animal lover, and I know what buyers what your audience wants and needs. Kedah, you don't have to say anything more. They're like, Oh my gosh, I finally found someone who gets the pet industry, or the guy was talking to them.

### **Jen Adams**

I would be faking my way through that conversation. Because I don't own pets. Like I'm allergic to animals. It's great things for people like hyper allergenic solutions for your home and the best people who have sensitive skin, like,

### **Pam Foster**

hey, my point is, we have you know, a free inside AWS session on choosing a niche but today if you're just starting out, just start there start with what's something you know, do you know garden? Do you know how to raise chickens anything? Do you know how to navigate Medicare? I don't know what it is. But you know something, and you are a match for clients in that industry who need you to know about that world? That's so I mean, you could position yourself today on LinkedIn as the copywriter for the fill in the blank industry and clients are going to start finding you I promise you that because if searching you know the boating industry, I've seen so many examples where jobs are posted and they put in preferred if you have experienced in our industry, whatever it is jewelry, fashion, winemaking, you know gaming

### **Jen Adams**

Chuck Warren talked about – one of our interviewed members -- about writing for trade magazines and how has that boating background? And it's like, wow, that's super niche. Like, is there enough work there? And he's like, I'm in 100 magazines a year. Today's veterinary business yes, their trade journal.

### **Pam Foster**

You know what I love writing for geeky trade journals. And because I worked for a veterinary equipment manufacturer in my last corporate job I can write to that audience till the cows come home haha no pun intended. But you get there, believe me. I mean, we have there every industry has a trade association at a conference at least one a year and they're not going to stop doing that because the economy's down. No, they're going to help Their members grow and thrive

### **Jen Adams**

in some ways, they're going to double down because yes, marketing and they're like, Okay. It becomes a numbers game, the more people I can get interested in my business, the more people who will buy from my business, the more money I will make up or maintain my standards. If I know that I need to work extra. Yeah, if if people need a little more convincing? Well, great. Now they need more case studies, they need more live events. proof that this company is real, that this business is viable that even first of all this is we're still here, we're still open, we're not going anywhere.

### **Pam Foster**

And what's cool about trade associations and conferences is that's where you as a niche focused writer, can really stay up to speed on trends. And what's happening in the industry. For example, if you want to be a financial writer in the mortgage world versus financial publishing promotions, boy, oh, boy, there's a head spinning friend in the house, buying world and the housing market, so who's going to write all this stuff that explains what's happening now and what to do now? If you're if you're, you know, a client that is a mortgage company, you got to be pivoting right now. And what's your message? That's where copywriters like you will come in and help them with that. So just name any industry that you like, and your ascension path can be bery rapid? Because you're like, Oh, you're an expert in this space. Fantastic.

### **Jen Adams**

I mean, Liz Farr. When she first started freelancing, I think she tried some other niches, but she was coming from accounting. And once she started writing for accounting journals, and accounting people, she started writing for some of the biggest names in her industry. And it was like, boom, boom, boom. You know, it says there would be like, and then she could name drop a little bit. People are like, Oh, you're writing for Quicken. I know, Quicken would you run up for me like,



**Pam Foster**

well, and I think she's booked through next year. I mean, it's insane. focused on what she knows. And so yes, she's a CPA that as a professional,

**Jen Adams**

to say, you know, this is where we've been, and this is where we're going. And even if you're, you know, if you collect training cards, or you're doing comic books, you can say, well, this is where we've been, and this is going and this is where we are now and here's what you need to do. And that's what people want sales content and out of their content content. And by the way, my business can help so

**Pam Foster**

yeah, you know, it might be your lifestyle to like if you're a new mom, or you're about to retire, or you're in your, your, I don't know, whatever your lifestyle is, you've decided to go completely vegan, or eco friendly or whatever. There's a market for that. You know, you're learning guitar, you buy some gear from Sweetwater catalog, you're gonna get bombarded with companies sending you

**Jen Adams**

because my husband has his own Sweetwater consultant, he has, bought Oh, wow, so much over the years,

**Pam Foster**

I bought a guitar a couple years ago, and I've never been bombarded with more marketing stuff from the all the gear and the lessons in the online things in the go to Cleveland and learn with, you know, some greater talent

**Jen Adams**

Pam, you could have an amazing time I was there. And it's the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. I mean, for a marketer, it's just,

**Pam Foster**

oh, yeah, I could live with the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, by the way. But anyway, I digress. But the point is anything you know about and are passionate about and not even passionate about, you just enjoy. You could get up every day and write about it. Here's an example. I had a nurse who wanted to become a writer. And she said, I've been nursing for 30 years. I don't want to write about medical, anything, I'm burned out. And I said, alright, well, what do you do in

your spare time for fun? She goes, Well, my husband and I are part of an RV club. And we go camping and we go to these resorts. And we're part of this organization that is all about RVing. And I'm like, That's totally a niche. Think of all the gear and the events and the in the RV shows and the resorts, and she went, That's a niche, I can do that. And I'm like, yeah, man, you can do whatever you want.

**Jen Adams**

How many magazines and pamphlets you'd have just in your house right now...

**Pam Foster**

Yeah, I'm a knitter. I could write for the knitting industry. I had somebody who walked up to me and said, I'm going to be a craft. Why I mean, a craft beer writer. Great. That's a huge industry. So I want to encourage you, because this is a time of opportunity. Just like try to sweep away the fear and the Doom. Don't even watch the news anymore. Seriously. Look for commerce. Look for exciting online articles about the biggest trends now in business. Look for markets that are hopping, because there are a lot of them. Have you ever been to Comic Con show? Oh, oh my gosh, you know, there are damn fan markets like that. Sports. I mean, gosh, I was at Fenway the other day the money spent on baseball alone, hello, gear

**Jen Adams**

like NFL ticket sales this year are the highest they've been in two decades. Well, there you go. You're like, I want to get out, I want to go to the I want to do this,

**Pam Foster**

right? I want to do this. So people aren't going to shut their doors and Hibernate because the economy is getting weird. No, they're going to find all kinds of ways to still enjoy life. And so all the companies that support that, need your help. So with that my positive message of the day is this is not a doom, this is a Rainbow, rainbow opportunity for you as a freelance writer.

**Jen Adams**

Well, let's find out like, Oh, I knew what you kind of got going. Because it's like, oh, this is what I believe. And I'll get Pam excited about it too. And then PWA members listening like you can borrow this excitement and whatever, you're feeling a little scared or a little, "I don't know what's going on!" Or "oh, my God, I

turned on the morning show and they said this and this.: There's plenty for you to do. Life doesn't stop because the economy turns and we're going to be okay.

**Pam Foster**

Yeah. And I'm thinking, you know, my secret to life, to staying positive in life is complete ignorance. I just don't watch any news, I have it on my app, I'm aware of what's happening in the world. But I don't just sit there and get fed negativity. All these terrible things happening. And that's my approach. You can have a whole different outlook on that. But I just don't read the fear and doom anything. I just stay positive. Positive Pollyanna Pam here. And you know, it's worked for me.

**Jen Adams**

Alright, right. Well, from Pollyanna, Pam, thank you so much for joining, if PWA members wanted to continue to follow you. You know, there's of course the other Awai events that you do there is LinkedIn, do.

**Pam Foster**

I, you know, I have I have like this double life. I'm really, really busy in my day job with AWAI. And that's really the best place to hear from me. Often. I write articles, I do live events, many of them are free. I don't do a lot of posting on LinkedIn, but you are welcome to connect with me there. I also have my own website, [www. contentclear.com](http://www.contentclear.com). And that is like the cobblers kids don't have shoes, because I don't really need a ton of freelance work right now. I'm so busy. But that's where my home base is for my freelance work. And oh, Katie and Rebecca know this, but I'm about to launch a new side hustle venture with two other people. And it's about Local Marketing, Local Business Marketing being found online, because boy, do they need help. So yeah, so lots of things cooking. We'll be announcing that later this year. But

**Jen Adams**

anyway, that's exciting stuff well, thanks for sharing that now. I'll watch for the new side hustle announcement and content clear for people who want to follow Pam there, connect with her on LinkedIn or watch for her Awai events. Because many are free, and they are awesome. So thank you. Thank you. Thank you so much for joining us and for reminding people that yes, doom and gloom headlines. That's great for the news, people, but the world that we live in, these are going to be good times. Terrible to say but we're going to have a great time.

**Pam Foster**

Well, opportunity, baby.

**Jen Adams**

All right, and then one last note for PWA members before I go. And this will be the last time except for maybe one emergency last chance mailing but like almost the last time that I remind you next week is AWAI's copywriting job fair Boot Camp success event. I just I don't even know what to call it anymore. It is boot camp. It lives legend in my mind because it changed my life. And it can change your life too. Just in the connections and the people you meet. It's a virtual this year, you can go from anywhere, and I sincerely hope that you do. Remember you can use your PWA dollars towards the registration for this event. That is one of the benefits of membership. So I hope to see you there and until then, stay safe, stay sane. Keep writing. We'll talk soon!