



17th Annual Freelance Workshop

*Extraordinary Learning and Networking for Seasoned, New,
and Aspiring Freelance Medical Writers*

Saturday, March 16, 2019

8:00 AM–4:45 PM

**DoubleTree Suites
by Hilton Philadelphia West
640 Fountain Road,
Plymouth Meeting, PA, 19462**

Workshop Schedule

8:00 AM–8:40 AM: Registration and Continental Breakfast

8:40 AM Welcome and Introductions

8:45 AM–9:40 AM Laura Ninger “10 Essential Criteria”

9:40 AM–10:35 AM Monica Nicosia “Tech Tools”

10:35 AM–10:50 Break

10:50–12:10 Susan Morris “Mentoring Synergy: 4 Steps for Mentoring Success”

12:10 PM–1:30 Networking Lunch

1:30–2:00 PM Kelly Flaherty “Procrastination”

2:00 PM–2:45 PM: Roundtable Session #1

2:45 PM–3:00 PM: Break

3:00 PM–3:45 PM: Roundtable Session #2

3:45 PM–4:45 PM Interactive Freelance Sessions

- Opportunities in Freelance Medical Communications
- Freelance Jam Session

Special Features

Friday night networking dinner: We are organizing a group dinner at a local restaurant for people who are staying at the hotel (or live nearby). Each person will pay for his/her own dinner. See **page 8** for details.

Discount hotel rooms: **DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Philadelphia West** is offering a discount on Friday night to Freelance Workshop attendees. See **page 8** for details.

Morning Presentations

Ten Essential Criteria for Building and Maintaining a Freelance Business

Laura Ninger, ELS, President, Ninger Medical Communications, LLC

Earning a living as an independent contractor is an ongoing endeavor involving daily decisions about how to structure your business, allocate time and resources, enhance your skills, market yourself, deal with legal and tax issues, and manage clients—all while actually doing the work and getting paid. This presentation offers 10 key strategies for building, maintaining, and evaluating your freelance business. Both new and experienced freelancers can benefit by identifying recommendations relevant to their own businesses and applying these pointers to enhance their careers and grow their bottom line.

Streamline Your Work with Digital Tools

Monica Nicosia, PhD, Principal, Nicosia Medical Writer LLC

As freelance medical writers and editors, we have to be computer-savvy enough to complete our assignments, run our offices, and market our businesses. We have to juggle the demands of projects at different stages, bills to be paid, invoices to be sent, etc. Most of us can't afford an administrative assistant or tech support—we have to do everything ourselves. The time we spend on unbillable tasks or tedious billable work costs us money (and is often boring).

This interactive session will explore the myriad of digital tech tools (apps, online services, software, and hardware) available to help simplify business tasks and improve work efficiency. Come prepared to ask questions and share your experiences. We will use a web/text-accessible audience response system to boost interactivity. Topics to be covered include:

- Tools for backup, sharing files, accounting, invoicing, time tracking, transcription, reference management, document proofing, and screen sharing
- Considerations when choosing providers for services like email, website hosting, and cloud backup
- Tips for identifying viable, affordable options and narrowing down choices.

Mentoring Synergy: 4 Steps for Mentoring Success

Susan Morris M.Ed, ACC, CPCC Morris Consulting Group

This interactive workshop will guide attendees in articulating measurable mentoring goals, offer a checklist to perform due diligence in selecting a mentor and practicing the approach - the “ask” - so that you connect to the mentor you deserve to propel your career. Participants review and practice a four-step model for both the mentor and mentee to create a successful mentoring relationship. Participants leave with an action plan to make your mentoring experience impactful. The Learning Objectives for this session include:

- Identify mentoring benefits/challenges
- Define roles and expectations of mentor and mentee
- Explore roles of advocate and sponsor to achieve career goals
- Review and practice 4 step plan for successful mentoring partnership
- Discuss “red flags” mentoring challenges and how to overcome
- Leave with 2 tools to sustain successful mentoring

Afternoon Presentation

Procrastination

Kelly Flaherty, MWC, Adjunct Assistant Professor, Graduate Program in Biomedical Writing, University of the Sciences

A common struggle associated with medical writing is procrastination. It can contribute to self-esteem and anxiety issues in medical writers and can even lead to disasters associated with last-minute efforts. But what is procrastination? What causes it? Why does it happen? And most importantly, what can we do about it? This talk will help medical communicators explore the underlying causes of procrastination, identify opportunities to combat it, and discover ways to procrastinate effectively.

Roundtables

The AMWA-DVC Freelance Workshop will offer 2 sessions of the duplicate roundtables. Choose 2 roundtables on the registration form: one for the first Roundtable Session A and one for the second Roundtable Session B.

1. Negotiating a Contract: Legal Aspects and Best Practices (Mark Bowlby)

There are 2 perspectives to the contract negotiations process: the client's and the freelance's. This discussion will highlight what freelancers need to understand about both of these perspectives in their next contract negotiation. Learn how to:

- Draft a contract: Your template vs the client's
- Facilitate the negotiating process
- Mitigate disagreements when they occur
- Determine whether you need liability protection

2. From Bench or Bedside: Becoming a Medical Writer (Kathy-Molnar-Kimber)

When bench scientists, physicians, nurses, pharmacists, chemists, or technicians consider transitioning to a medical writer career, those initial jobs are often the hardest to land. These researchers and healthcare providers sometimes feel stymied by the one or more years of experience listed in most job advertisements. We'll discuss how to put together a portfolio of writing samples, and where to begin looking to find and harvest those jobs in your midst, like low-hanging fruit. These marketing opportunities are also great for established freelancers. Keeping clients happy so they continue to request projects is a win-win for both the client and the freelance.

Learning objectives: By the end of the roundtable, the audience will be more able to

- Apply 3 exercises to match participants' skills and interests with their ideal clients
- Identify 3 currently related projects that can be performed or used for portfolio writing samples
- Develop 1 to 3 strategies for marketing to prospective clients
- Describe 5 tips for nurturing clients into long-term relationships

3. Best Practices for Editing Medical Content: More Than Catching Typos (Laura Sitler)

Whether performing a final proofread of your own work or heavily revising a client's initial draft, strong editing skills can make the writing clear and precise. To do this, editors must not only consider spelling, grammar, punctuation, and consistency, but also the clinical context,

project's goals, editorial style, and industry standards. In this roundtable, we will discuss the medical editor's role and methods for performing a thorough edit so that you are able to:

- Define the different types of editing
- Discuss various resources and approaches to the editing process
- Evaluate the skills needed to be a freelance medical editor

4. Let's talk MWC: Medical Writing Certification and the MWC Exam (Brian Bass)

The Medical Writer Certified (MWC) Examination is now being administered in June and December each year via computer-based testing at IQT testing centers near major cities across the globe. To aid in the process of applying for and studying for the exam, last year the Medical Writing Certification Commission (MWCC) released an updated MWC Examination Candidate Study Guide. This roundtable discussion will focus on:

- The potential value of the MWC for freelancers
- Registering to sit for the exam
- Preparing to take the exam

5. Educating the Freelance Writer (Dan Benau)

When we search the internet for leads or information, we are frequently bombarded with offers for training and education. How do we evaluate these offers and the organizations or people who offer them? What is the potential return on investment with a degree, a badge, a post-graduate diploma, a certificate, or other such program? Is a certificate the same as certification?

Participants at this roundtable will examine these issues to assess the value of different programs.

The participants will learn to:

- Differentiate between training and education
- Evaluate the depth of information provided by different programs
- Distinguish the difference between a certificate and certification

6. Stepping Up to Stand Out: Enhancing your CV through Volunteerism (Kristen Wasson-Blader)

We will discuss how volunteerism within professional organization can add skills to your CV.

- Identify professional volunteer opportunities
- Learn how to get started volunteering
- Expand your professional network

7. Project Rates vs Hourly Rates: Who, Why, When, and How (Laura Ninger)

Many freelancers have very strong opinions about how to set rates and will only use either project or hourly pricing regardless of the scenario. Others use one pricing method or the other depending on the type of project or the specific client, while other freelancers may be completely unsure what to do. This presentation will discuss the pros and cons of both approaches, including some that you may never have considered.

8. How to Attract More Clients on LinkedIn (Lori De Milto)

More clients are searching for freelancers on LinkedIn these days. But if you want to rank high in search results, you need 3 things: a) client-focused profile, b) large and relevant network, and c) engagement.

Learn how to:

- Develop a client-focused profile with the right keywords and a strong headline and summary
- Grow your network with the right connections
- Be active enough (engagement) to rank higher in search results.

Come prepared to share your LinkedIn challenges and successes.

9. Examining Transferable Skillsets for Medical Writing (Darryl L’Heureux

Certain keywords appear in almost every job posting and relate to abstract skills such as communication, multitasking, teamwork, creativity, critical thinking, and leadership. These keywords are not a secret language, but rather transferable skills that enable you to do your job well. In this roundtable, we will break down transferable skills found in scientific writing and medical communication so you can:

- Identify different primary communication skills
- Explore problem solving and creativity found in our daily activities
- Discuss better time management and organization
- Explore leadership and teamwork opportunities in your projects

Concurrent Interactive Freelance Sessions

Whether you are early in your career or a more experienced freelance, we have a session for you. Learn how to grow your business by attending the Opportunities in Freelance Medical Communications or the Freelance Jam Session led by experienced freelances.

Opportunities in Freelance Scientific Writing and Medical Communications

For those starting a freelance business, most experienced freelances recommend identifying a professional niche, but they also recommend expanding that niche once your business is established. Attend this panel discussion to learn from established freelances in various medical communications roles to help identify your current niche or how you can apply your skill set to new areas of medical communications. Moderator: Darryl Z. L’Heureux, PhD,

Panelists:

- Jen Minarcik, MS, Sales Training and Promotional Writing
- Mark Bowlby, PhD, Regulatory Writing
- Monica Nicosia, PhD Publications
- Kathy Molnar-Kimber, PhD, CME and Grant writing

Freelance Jam Session When accomplished musicians jam, their combined talent, energy, and experience make a special kind of synergy. A similar kind of magic happens when seasoned freelances get together to discuss their thoughts, ideas, concerns, and challenges with peers of equal or greater experience. These rare gems of collegial conversation and commiseration happen spontaneously and usually unpredictably. (Often they involve a glass of wine.) This session has been held at 2 AMWA Medical Writing and Communication Conferences, and now accomplished freelances have an opportunity to make some local jam session freelance magic at the AMWA-DVC Freelance Workshop. This no-holds-barred session will provide a supportive space for freelances who have a minimum of 5 years of continuous and current freelance experience, to wrestle their demons and share their experiences. Whether you emerged from your experiences bloodied and bruised, valiant, or victorious, we all have stories to tell, and we can all

learn from and teach each other. This session will be lightly structured to permit a free flow of discussion without getting stuck for too long on a single topic. Sorry, there won't be any wine during the session.

Moderator: Brian G. Bass, MWCTM

Registration and Logistics

Register Online Now

Visit the [registration page](#)

Registration Cost

AMWA Members \$130

Non-members \$150

Full-time Students \$110 (must provide official ID to register)

The registration fee includes breakfast, lunch, and morning and afternoon beverages and snacks.

No refunds will be given for cancellations after Friday, March 1, 2019.

Program Logistics

Location

Double Tree Suites by Hilton Philadelphia West
640 Fountain Road,
Plymouth Meeting, PA, 19462

Directions

Visit the hotel's [website](#) for directions. The hotel is north of Plymouth Meeting Mall and interchange between the Blue Route (I-476) and the PA Turnpike (I-276).

Discount Hotel Rooms

We have arranged a discounted rate, \$99 plus tax, on hotel rooms for Friday, March 15, 2019. To make your reservation, use this [link](#). Use the code "AMW" for deal. The hotel has several discounted rates available.

Friday Night Networking Dinner

Join us for an informal networking dinner, to be held at a local restaurant on Friday, March 15, 2019. (details to come). Each person will pay his/her own dinner and beverages.

To sign up, email [Debbie Anderson at :deb@dgamedcom.com](mailto:deb@dgamedcom.com) and insert "AMWA-DVC Freelance Workshop Dinner" in the subject line. We will be in touch with details in early March.

Questions? Contact Darryl L'Heureux: dzlheureux@gmail.com

Biosketches

Brian G. Bass, MWC™, President, Bass Global, Inc., is an award-winning freelance medical writer. He is President of Bass Global, Inc., which was founded in 1989 and provides medical writing solutions in the areas of pharmaceuticals, biotechnology, devices, and diagnostics for healthcare professional, consumer, and business audiences in a wide range of therapeutic areas and media. Brian is also co-author of The Accidental Medical Writer® Series of books, resources, information, and inspiration for freelance medical writers. Brian is a Past President of AMWA, where he has also served on the Executive Committee as President, President Elect, Administrator of the Annual Conference, in development and publicity capacities, and currently as Chair of the Communications and Marketing Committee and a member of the Certification Committee. He is AMWA's 2017 Harold Swanberg Distinguished Service Award Winner. In addition, Brian has served as President of AMWA-DVC, and as the chapter's Programming and Publicity chairs. He founded and chaired the AMWA-DVC Princeton Conference for 16 years, and is an avid speaker and presenter.

Danny A. Benau, PhD had a 12-year career as a full-time regulatory medical writer before being appointed Associate Professor of Biomedical Writing at the University of the Sciences in 2005. He has been the Director of the Biomedical Writing Programs at the University since 2008. He is a frequent presenter on job and career prospects in medical writing and has also written articles and book chapters on the history and best practices in regulatory writing.

Mark Bowlby, PhD, has 20 years of experience in the clinical research and drug development industry in large pharmaceutical companies, and for the last 4 years has been a full-time regulatory writer. Mark is currently employed as a Principal Regulatory Writer at Synchrogenix. His background covers both sides of the contract negotiations process, that of the employer and of the freelance. This perspective will inform the discussion and allow the participants to understand the needs of both sides of their next contract negotiation. Mark is currently serving as President Elect of AMWA-DVC.

Lori De Milto, MJ is a freelance medical writer, and online teacher and coach. She helps clients engage patients, health consumers, healthcare professionals, and other audiences and teaches other freelancers how to get the clients they deserve. An AMWA fellow, Lori founded the annual AMWA-DVC Freelance Workshop in 2002 and has served in many positions for AMWA national and the Delaware Valley Chapter. She is the author of *7 Steps to High-Income Freelancing* and host of *The Mighty Marketer* website and courses. Lori has 2 degrees in journalism from Temple University (BA and MJ).

Kelleen Flaherty, MS, MWC™, Adjunct Assistant Professor, Graduate Program in Biomedical Writing, University of the Sciences, has been a professional medical writer for 25 years and has worked across several subspecialties (CME, promotion, regulatory, publications, training, academia, etc.). She has also been teaching for over 30 years. Kelleen has belonged to AMWA for 20 years and is both MWC- and CMPP-certified.

Darryl Z. L'Heureux, PhD, MSc, MS Pharm QARA, Senior Medical Writer, Bristol Myers-Squibb, is an active member of the medical writing community. He is the current President of AMWA-DVC and co-chairs the DIA Annual Meeting Planning Committee. Currently, he leads

lung protocol development for Bristol-Myers Squibb and teaches courses in Scientific Writing in the Professional Science Master's program at Temple University.

Jennifer Minarcik, MS, Principal Biomedical Writer, Biomedical Communications, LLC is a biomedical communicator, artist, and social media enthusiast. After years of scientific research at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, Jennifer began her freelance career in 2011. She specializes in writing about cutting-edge technologies used in early drug discovery models and works with medical communication companies to develop sales training and promotional materials. Jennifer has been a member of AMWA since 2011 and is currently the AMWA-DVC Immediate-Past President and Treasurer.

Katherine Molnar-Kimber, PhD, President, KMK Consulting Services of Kimnar Group LLC, enjoys being an independent scientific consultant and medical writer. She is an active member of AMWA and AMWA-DVC (editor of the *Delawriter*). She began her career as a scientist and pursued basic science, translational and medical research (20+ years in university and pharmaceutical industries, 54 scientific articles, 9 patents). She uses her experience as a reviewer of grants and manuscripts, speaker, award-winning scientist, and corresponding author to substantively edit or write research papers, reviews, posters, brochures, continuing medical education (CME) needs assessments, CME programs, and web pages. Her clients have published more than 120 articles. You can learn more about Kathy at KMK-How-to-Write.com.

Susan Morris, Morris Consulting Group, LLC is an instructional designer, workshop facilitator and Executive Coach, has more than 20 years of experience in partnering with individuals, functional groups, new and mature teams and organizations in the pharmaceutical and healthcare industries. Before starting the Morris Consulting Group, LLC in 2002, Susan worked for a training and consulting firm targeting technology-based organizations. Today, Susan's client relationships focus on global pharmaceutical and medical device companies with an expertise in pharmaceutical sponsors and contract research organizations (CRO) partnerships. Susan is a national speaker on issues related to women scientists and advancing their careers. She has spoken to DIA, Materials Research Association, Project Management Institute, New York Academy of Science, Healthcare Businesswomen's Association, American Association of Pharmaceutical Scientists and Association of Women in Science. Susan holds a Master's in Education from Temple University and a Bachelor's degree from Douglass College. She is a certified Executive Coach through Comprehensive Coaching U, has completed a second coach training from the Coaches Training Institute and achieved international professional status as an Associate Professional Coach from the International Coach Federation. Recently, Susan completed training as a group coach through the Institute of Life Coach Training.

Monica Nicosia, PhD, has 22+ years of experience in medical communications, including 12+ years as a freelance (Nicosia Medical Writer LLC, Bryn Mawr, PA). Monica has a BA in Biology from Carleton College (Northfield, MN), a PhD in Cellular and Developmental Biology from Stony Brook University (Stony Brook, NY), and 4.5 years of post-doctoral research experience at the Wistar Institute and the University of Pennsylvania (both in Philadelphia, PA). Monica worked for 6 years as a medical writer, managing editor, and project director at Meniscus Health Care Communications (West Conshohocken, PA), and 3 years as a project

director and continuing medical education director at the Meniscus Educational Institute (West Conshohocken, PA). After a 9 year stint as a freelance medical writer, one of Monica's clients (Hayes, Inc. Lansdale, PA) lured her to fulltime work in health technology assessment. Early in 2016, Monica's freelance business relaunch sparked her research interest in the tech medical communicators use to work more efficiently.

Laura J. Ninger, ELS, is a medical writer and editor with 30 years of experience in medical communications, including 25 years as an independent consultant. Laura provides writing and/or editing services on varied projects including abstracts, needs assessments, journal articles, patient education materials, slide decks, e-learning sales training modules, and other content in various therapeutic areas. She began her career at Elsevier in New York, started freelancing in 1994, and established Ninger Medical Communications, LLC, in 2007. In addition to her certification as an Editor in the Life Sciences (ELS), Laura holds 3 AMWA certificates and has presented at AMWA meetings on topics pertaining to freelance business practices.

Laura Sitler, ELS, Freelance Medical Editor, LS Editorial Solutions, LLC is an accomplished freelance medical editor who has been developing continuing medical education (CME) activities, journal articles, Web sites, and promotional materials for 15 years. Before becoming a freelancer, she was the Editorial Director for a medical communications company in New Jersey where she managed both an internal team and freelance medical writers in the creation of CME materials, exposing her to a broad range of clinical topics, as well as giving her insight into what clients value in a freelance professional. Today, Laura partners with agencies and medical communications companies to provide clinicians and consumers with the most up-to-date medical information possible. A member of the AMWA-DVC chapter, Laura also recently received her Board of Editors in Life Sciences certification.

Kristina Wasson-Blader, PhD, ELS, has more than 18 years of freelance experience in medical communications. She writes and edits scientific publications and provides developmental editing services for grant proposals to a variety of funding agencies. She is a past president of the Southwest Chapter and a former AMWA Executive Committee member. She currently serves on AMWA's committees for Budget and Finance and Communications. Kristina also serves as president-elect of BELS.