Working with Freelance Medical Writers

A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE

kainic

KAINIC'S MED COMMS FREELANCER A – Z GUIDE

When Kainic started out we were a one-man, one-client, one-country organization. Now we have a highly skilled team working to deliver medical communications materials to clients in 11 countries across four continents. Through the years we have learned what works, what doesn't, and how to optimize the working relationship with our clients.

Meeting the literal scope of a brief is easy, but meeting client expectations can be a bit more difficult.

There are a variety of reasons for this, but as a former colleague once said *"Briefing freelancers is an art in itself"*. Most freelance medical writers have worked in an agency environment, whereas most people writing briefs have not, or at least not in an off-site capacity. So, while we have an idea of what happens within our clients' environments, our clients may have very little knowledge about how we operate within our environment.

Therefore, the team at Kainic have asked ourselves how we can proactively communicate with our clients to help improve outcomes for everyone. The result is this A to Z of working with, briefing and getting the most out of a freelance medical writer.

We hope you will use this guide to inform your briefs and facilitate great working relationships with your freelancers.

Blair Hesp PhD NZDipBus CMPP
Managing Director

Attachments
Briefing document
Call
Deadlines
Email
Feedback
Goldfish brain
Hours
Interests (conflicts of)
Juggling
Knowledge
Long-term relationships
Meetings
No, we don't do that
Overnight delivery
Performance
Questions
Reviews
Security
Team
Updates
Vision
Writing off time
X factor
Yes person
Zinc etc.

A Attachments

Attachments are one of the most important features of any brief because they provide a key link between the brief and client expectations. Of course, the document or materials that are being worked on are the most critical attachments, but in many ways the accompanying documents are just as important.

From a freelancer's perspective, attachments provide an extraordinary amount of context to a brief. Firstly, their presence suggests that content from the attachment is intended to either be included in the materials being developed, or at a minimum, act as a useful guide. Secondly, attachments providing examples of similar projects can offer a template on which to base the brief.

In the worst case scenario, forgetting to attach documents to an email means that a project may not be able to be started or completed. However, it is usually the email with several attachments provided, but one missing, that causes the most problems, because it may not be immediately clear that something is missing.

Therefore, we suggest always incorporating a list or description of the attachments that should accompany a brief. This allows any missing attachments to be identified quickly and flagged to the client.

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B Briefing document

Using a templated briefing document ensures that all relevant details are communicated to the freelancer at the outset. At Kainic, we want to make briefing as easy and quick as possible for you. Accordingly, we've developed an online portal using our own template, so you can securely submit your brief, knowing we have all the information we need.

When it comes to describing your project in a briefing document, a general rule is **the more detail, the better**. Incorporating more detail may seem onerous, but it is likely to save time in the long run by improving output quality.

Key elements of a brief include:

- Expected deliverable length
- Expected time required
- Any templates or examples
- A list of attachments to accompany the brief
- Deadlines
- Any expected interim review processes
- Style, e.g. UK or US English
- Intended audience
- A job number
- Key contacts.

A detailed brief helps clarify expectations, highlight possible red flags (such as a mismatch between the size of the output and the time allocated), and can avoid lengthy back-and-forth emailing.

A templated briefing document helps ensure that all relevant details are communicated to the freelancer

C Calls

Usually, a written brief is sufficient to communicate the task at hand, but a quick call to follow-up a brief can be a valuable opportunity to add context, such as:

- Which aspects of the brief require special attention or emphasis?
- Reasoning as to why an aspect of the brief has been specified.
- Has the brief has been correctly interpreted?

A quick chat can help identify any red flags and project risks early, before significant time has been invested.

Calls are also about maintaining relationships. Tone and context can easily be lost in email, particularly if a project has not gone entirely to plan, so getting on the phone is always preferable to discussing difficult matters over email. Calls can also help to brainstorm and problem solve complex challenges, providing the best possible outcome for everyone.

A quick chat about the brief can help identify any red flags and project risks early

D Deadlines

Deadlines need to be met.

Deadlines also set expectations between the freelancer and the client as to when delivery should be expected and provide an estimate as to the amount of time expected to be invested in a project.

On the flip side, Northern Hemisphere clients can require delivery overnight to meet internal deadlines. Luckily, our business model is set up to handle this. However, providing advance notice of an impending deadline allows a freelancer to make sure that plenty of resource is available, regardless of whether or not it is actually used.

Providing advance notice of an impending deadline allows a freelancer to make sure that plenty of resource is available

NAMED

MOST INNOVATIVE MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS COMPANY

IN NEW ZEALAND

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E Email

Like most med comms agencies, Kainic spends a lot of time communicating via email: lots and lots of emails, largely because the majority of our clients are in the Northern Hemisphere, so phone calls are not always convenient.

Time differences between New Zealand and every other country in the world mean confirmation of receipt is a must. A simple acknowledgement provides peace of mind in knowing that an email has been received.

However, a key barrier to successfully receiving emails is attachment size. When attaching files to an email it is worth considering whether the file size can be handled by both the sender's and the recipient's systems. Tools such as ftp sites, Google Drive, Dropbox, Hightail and WeTransfer are all great methods for ensuring large files can be successfully delivered. While these tools are fairly pervasive within modern agencies, you can always ask for a link to a dropbox where you can leave files for a freelancer to pick up too.

A simple acknowledgement provides peace of mind in knowing that an email has been received

F Feedback

If clients had plenty of time, there would be no need for freelance support. Therefore, in most cases, having the time to provide feedback to a freelancer can be more of a luxury than a necessity.

However, feedback is key to developing a strong long-term working relationship with a freelancer. Immediate feedback facilitates constant, rapid improvement of outputs by the freelancer and a strengthening of the client-freelancer relationship. A freelancer's response to feedback also provides a gauge of their commitment, attitude and dedication to fulfilling your needs. The process of providing feedback may also highlight gaps in your briefing methodology, as in many cases, it is easy to forget that a freelancer is unlikely to have the same familiarity with an end client.

From a freelancer's point of view, every time we begin working with a new client, we know that there will be nuances and a particular style of working that we will need to learn and adapt to as quickly as possible. In turn, feedback will improve outcomes for both the client and the freelancer through an improved and increasingly efficient working relationship.

*Feedback is key to developing a strong long-term working relationship with a freelancer*
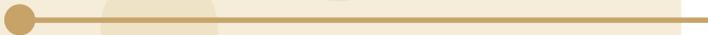
G Goldfish brain

An often overlooked luxury of working within a full-service medical communications agency is the context within which each project is performed. Most agency medical writers will work almost exclusively on one or two accounts. You know the client, their style and their preferences. You are familiar with the project and its context within ongoing, past and future projects, and you also have an intimate understanding of everything that has happened on a project and why. In addition, if certain useful resources exist, you are aware of them and know how to access them.

In contrast, freelance medical writers can have little continuity on projects, and rather than seeing a project evolve like a film, we usually receive the trailer and a few still snapshots of what happened in the past in a **brief**. Furthermore, whatever we are working on today is most likely not what we will be working on tomorrow. Most projects are short-term, discrete and will only be partially handled by us. Freelancers may not have any knowledge or understanding of what has occurred in the intervening time and why in the days, weeks or months between looks at a project.

Therefore, every day as a freelancer occurs almost as if we forgot everything from the day before, like the proverbial goldfish. It is easy to presume that a freelancer will remember everything from an earlier **brief**, have cumulative knowledge of an account or be aware of how and/or why amendments have been made. However, this is often not the case, so each day requires a new brief and an understanding that the freelancer will only ever have a partial understanding of the context of the project.

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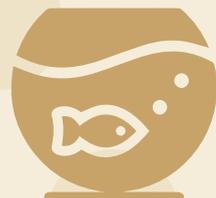
H Hours

Client hours

Med comms revolves around hours – how much they cost and how many you have available – but hours are a lot more than a number. When a client provides a set number of hours in a brief, it becomes an indicator of the expected scope of work. For a freelancer, completing a job in much less time than expected suggests something may have been missed. However, projected hours are really estimates. Therefore, completing a job is prioritized over keeping within the estimated time, unless explicitly instructed to stop. Likewise, a freelancer will only ever be able to estimate the number of hours required (i.e. cost) to complete a project when asked.

It is important to remember that the client-freelancer relationship is like any other business relationship, where mutual courtesy and respect helps build and maintain an effective working relationship. Managing resource requirements is a key part of this and it should be expected that there will be a bit of give-and-take in the relationship.

Freelancer hours

Freelancers are remunerated at an hourly rate that is at a premium to agency staff for a number of reasons, such as covering the costs of equipment, office space and insurance, but also because of the inherent uncertainty and flexibility required. However, it should be remembered that a freelancer's time cannot be inventoried and re-sold to another client, so there is a reasonable expectation that when a client asks a freelancer to set aside a number of hours for their exclusive use, the client should commit to using a fair portion of those hours. Any early notice that the freelancer is no longer required is greatly appreciated, as this frees them up to assist with other projects.

When a client provides a set number of hours in a brief, it becomes an indicator of the expected scope of work

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I Interests (conflicts of)

Full-service agencies usually have robust processes for managing conflicts of interest and support provided on any particular account may be a matter of public record. However, in the freelance medical writing world, policies for avoiding conflicts of interest are often relatively opaque. For example, many of Kainic's activities in support of agency clients are not disclosed, but Kainic has a conflict of interest policy that is strictly enforced, in line with our moral and contractual obligations. Therefore, the relevant therapy area should be disclosed upfront when commissioning a project so that the freelancer can appropriately manage any conflicts of interest prior to accepting a project.

Early discussion of the therapy area also saves time for both the client and the freelancer because neglecting to identify potential conflicts can lead to work being provisionally accepted, only to be declined at the last minute. This can delay delivery as alternate resource may need to be found and briefed. Likewise, for the freelancer, there is an opportunity cost in accepting and planning for a project, only to discover that you cannot proceed.

In addition, it pays to remember that a freelancer who has worked with your agency on one account may not be capable of working on all accounts. Therefore, projects in new therapy areas should be proactively cleared in advance.

Kainic has a conflict of interest policy that is strictly enforced, in line with our moral and contractual obligations

CLIENTS ACROSS
11 COUNTRIES

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J Juggling

Freelance medical writers are seasoned jugglers, accustomed to unpredictability and a day-by-day work schedule. A typical freelancer is often handling multiple projects for several clients at any one time.

Importantly, unlike in a full-service agency where an individual medical writer may be handling several projects on the same account, where delivery can be negotiated and prioritized, each freelance project is independent and delivery must be negotiated with each client.

Now of course, it may be said that a freelancer should not overcommit themselves, but it is not unusual for timelines to shift, creating unintended overlap.

Declining projects knowing that a client has presumed you will be available is difficult. However, while every good juggler knows their limits, the good ones will often catch and juggle everything that is thrown at them.

A typical freelancer is often handling multiple projects for several clients at any one time

K Knowledge

Freelance medical writers work on a wide variety of projects across a number of therapy areas. Does that mean you have therapy area expertise? If you are honest, absolutely not.

A new drug being approved or data from a major clinical trial being released can change the shape of a therapy area overnight. Likewise, there are often layers of subtherapy areas, which limit any claim of expertise. Furthermore, therapy area knowledge does not equate to client or product knowledge.

Our simple conclusion is that actively claiming expertise in any realm places us at great risk of over-promising and under-delivering. Therefore, the ability to consistently and accurately apply skills, procedures and techniques across the broad range of materials produced by a medical communications agency may be more important than therapy area expertise. These processes are likely to deliver greater value for clients, arguably contributing more to the quality of any output than any underlying expertise.

So, the starting point must be making sure that the freelancer understands everything they write, then incrementally improving their outputs by listening to client **feedback** and guidance.

The ability to consistently and accurately apply skills, procedures and techniques across the broad range of materials produced by a medical communications agency may be more important than therapy area expertise

L Long-term relationships

Like all strong relationships, the freelancer-client relationship takes ongoing commitment and some hard work to maintain. As freelancers, we know that additional effort is initially required when working with a new client because we need to invest time in understanding new drugs, therapy areas and ways of working, just as our clients may need to invest time in educating us. Therefore, given the mutual investment, facilitating a long-term working relationship that promotes success is in the best interests of both parties.

When a freelancer first works with a new client, they are naïve to the client's preferences and processes. This is of course difficult as the client generally has a clear idea of what their expectations are, and account nuances may not be immediately recognized by a freelancer. However, a good freelancer will learn and adapt quickly.

For the client, freelancers do not expect you to rely on us all the time, but there is value in developing a relationship that offers short-term access to resource that meets your needs with minimal notice. You inevitably also have to invest in the relationship to get the best possible outcomes, particularly by providing feedback and appropriate materials, such as style guides, so that the freelancer can adapt to your needs and refine their service.

It is worth remembering that the client-freelancer relationship is a two-way street. Good freelancers are lucky enough to be in high demand and selective in who they accept as clients, so it is good etiquette to ensure that requested time is used, and ensuring timely payment of invoices, just as you request that freelancers deliver materials on time (or early) and submit their timesheets regularly.

Like all strong relationships, the freelancer-client relationship takes ongoing commitment and some hard work to maintain

M Meetings

Being distant from most of our clients, it's not often that we have meetings. However, telephone conferences (TCs) with our clients are often much more effective and productive than emailing back-and-forth. A lot of information can be communicated rapidly and it offers an opportunity to ask questions as they become apparent.

In addition, it can be difficult as a freelancer to have meetings or TCs with the end client. We usually do not know the background on an account or the context within which a project is being performed, so may not be in a position to act on behalf of our clients. Likewise, there is a risk that any comment we make may or may not be in agreement with our client, so it can be very difficult to know the true scope of your role and responsibilities as a freelancer when interacting with the end client. Therefore, we prefer to avoid direct interaction with the end client.

However, there is great value in any opportunity to have face-to-face meetings with our clients. We aim to facilitate this by regularly travelling to meet our clients in their offices and attending conferences in an educational capacity to keep up-to-date with the latest trends in medical communications, technology and clinical data.

There is great value in any opportunity to have face-to-face meetings with our clients

N No, we don't do that

Freelance medical writers are approached by a wide variety of people and organizations with many unique motivations for doing so. From the outside freelancers may look like 'med comms mercenaries' who are willing to do anything for anyone as long as they are paid, but this could not be farther from the truth.

Freelancers have the option to decline any project and walk away with minimal notice because we are generally contracted for hours delivered, not project delivery. Our vetting and risk assessment continues throughout the course of each project.

Sometimes it is obvious what we will say no to – the university student assignment/thesis, clearly questionable data or the document that the client tells us that they will expect us to *"put your name on it to give it credibility"* (yes, that happened). In other instances, concerns are not immediately apparent, e.g. the genuine-looking reference provided by the client that is from a predatory journal or the data set that is frequently updated and is highly variable across iterations.

Therefore, with every project we ask ourselves *"Would I be happy to put my name on this?"* If the answer is not 'Yes', then we will say 'No, thanks'. Furthermore, it should be remembered that even when we say no, we are often adding value by providing insight into a project and its pitfalls that may have not previously been considered.

With every project we ask ourselves "Would I be happy to put my name on this?"

O Overnight delivery

Freelancers based in New Zealand have the advantage of being able to provide an overnight service for clients based in the Northern Hemisphere. At the same time, the cliché of 'You can have any two: high-quality, fast or cheap, but not all three' very much applies. So, when discussing overnight delivery with clients, we often refer to the difference between the cost versus value of a freelancer.

The priority for a freelancer is to provide value for clients in terms of the quality and insight that we put into our outputs and the timing of delivery. Overnight delivery gives agencies the opportunity to turbocharge turnaround times, either by operating in tandem with New Zealand-based freelancers who tag in to a project at night, and tag out in the morning, or simply making something 'magically' happen overnight. Late delivery or poor-quality deliverables requiring further input also adds costs.

We can almost always make overnight delivery happen for our clients. However, any advance notice we receive is useful for ensuring we have sufficient resource available. Likewise, when having such tight timelines, the quality and detail of the **Brief** and ensuring all **Attachments** are sent are essential for an optimal outcome.

Overnight delivery gives agencies the opportunity to turbocharge turnaround times

P Performance

Clients want to work with freelancers who perform well, save time and offer value.

At Kainic, we often say that 'our job is to make our clients look good'. We know that our clients will always exhaust their internal writing options before they come to us. Therefore, we are here to act as an extension of your team, as and when you need it. We're committed to delivering a service that focuses on supporting both our clients and the end client by delivering high-quality materials, and leveraging our time difference with the Northern Hemisphere to deliver those materials faster.

Performance depends on brief quality

The 'garbage in, garbage out' model should be front of mind whenever briefing or reviewing outputs for a freelancer. A freelancer's performance is inherently dependent on the quality of the brief and source materials that accompany it. As mentioned previously, both the **Attachments** and **Brief**, amongst other things, will influence the quality of outputs that a freelancer can produce. If the freelancer's outputs are not quite what you expect, it is worth reviewing the brief for ambiguity or omissions. Likewise, providing **Feedback** can help improve outcomes for both client and freelancer going forward.

A freelancer's performance is inherently dependent on the quality of the brief and source materials that accompany it

THIS IS A KIWI...

WHILE EVERYONE ELSE IS ASLEEP, IT'S HARD AT WORK.

Kainic Medical Communications is proud to be staffed by Kiwis.

Our team operates from its standalone office in New Zealand, and while agencies across North America, Europe, and Asia are closed for the night, our team of medical writers are hard at work providing freelance support for our clients:

- Writing manuscripts
- Developing slide decks
- Incorporating amendments
- Preparing meeting reports
- Performing desk research
- Data checking
- Collating reference packs

Kainic has a proud record of delivering our clients a superior return on their freelance writer investment overnight.

Meet the team who put the science behind the art of medical communications at **kainicmedical.com**.

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kainicmedical.com

Q Questions

One of the benefits of being an experienced freelancer is knowing what questions to ask clients. This is particularly important when there is a limited window before our clients become unavailable for the day. However, sometimes a project has already progressed before questions about a project and client fit become apparent.

Some of the questions we ask ourselves before taking on a new client or project include:

- Who is the potential client? Are they an individual, a company, a medical communications agency or an advertising agency?

- What does the client want us to do?

- Why has the client come to us?

- How did the client find us? Have they come to us through a search or via a referral?

- Where is the client looking for value in our contribution?

- Is there value for us in working with this client?

- Are there potential financial, reputational or ethical risks in working on this project?

- Are the interactions professional and respectful?

Ultimately, freelancers want to ask questions of our clients early to avoid poor working relationships for both parties because we will generate our best outputs when there is a mutually beneficial working relationship.

Freelancers want to ask questions of our clients early to avoid poor working relationships for both parties

R Reviews

Reviews are often classed as projects that are 'easy to freelance'. However, this can be an overly simplistic view that does not fully appreciate the inherent complexity of appraising, interpreting and reviewing a high volume of literature.

In most cases, the scope, timelines and resource requirements for a review cannot be readily predicted. Therefore, before forwarding a brief, full consideration should be given as to whether or not a freelancer can reasonably be expected to generate the required output, and accommodate key nuances associated with the therapy area and the end client's requirements. The outcome should also not be pre-empted.

Review articles carry a high risk of a disconnect between the client and freelancer because of diverging perspectives. The freelancer's priority will be to provide a comprehensive, accurate and objective assessment of the available literature in the context of the brief provided, but this may not always produce a result that is consistent with the deliverable that was scoped prior to searching the literature.

Furthermore, gaps in the literature often exist because relevant data has not been published. When developing a review, freelancers develop an in-depth knowledge of the therapy area, the available literature and the answer to the question being posed, which should be appreciated when reviewing the deliverable.

Before forwarding a brief, full consideration should be given as to whether or not a freelancer can reasonably be expected to generate the required output

S Security

Security is a concern for all clients who are handling confidential information, particularly in the age of all sorts of cyber-nasties. However, some of the biggest confidentiality and security risks of the digital age for medical communications agencies may not be the direct result of confidentiality being compromised via the internet. In fact, compromise may be just as likely to occur as a result of informal workplaces, such as co-working spaces or cafes with free wifi.

We've all heard the stories of employees of other agencies discussing work on the train home and being overheard by competitors, but what about freelancers? Some work environments used by freelancers can come with a heightened security risk. Is your information being kept confidential in an environment with low privacy and open internet connections?

That is why we have opted for a secure office with an independent internet connection and our own server system. We even have the option of submitting a **brief** via a secure online portal. Client confidentiality and data security are too important to compromise.

We have opted for a secure office with an independent internet connection and our own server system

T Team

A truly effective team is often characterized by the ability to rely on your team members and for them to be there to support you in achieving a common goal. This is often without question – you just know that you can rely on your team to provide the support you require.

There are also many forgotten elements of effective teams, such as everyone, including the leader(s) recognizing when someone has a particular skill set or talent. This means being willing to delegate responsibility to the team expert under appropriate circumstances, take joint responsibility for poor outcomes and use debriefs to look for ways forward.

A good freelancer will always act as part of their client's team. Good clients will also make freelancers feel like they are part of their team.

Freelancing can be a lonely profession and may be compared with the team players who come off the bench for elite sports teams. They are often good enough to easily make the first team for another side, and want to play every day, but have a very important role to fill. Every day they go to work aiming to deliver their best when called upon, whether it is for 10 minutes or 10 years, and it is also often in unexpected and trying circumstances that these people step up and deliver for the team.

A good freelancer will always act as part of their client's team. Good clients will also make freelancers feel like they are part of their team

U Updates

There is nothing worse than a communication vacuum. It is not uncommon to hand a large project to a freelancer, trusting that the freelancer will deliver on time so that you can meet both internal deadlines for review and external deadlines for delivery. If there are any problems, it is always nicer to know in advance so that they can be proactively addressed, rather than managed at the last minute.

Budgets are also a key source of apprehension in service industries, and you are unable to dip into a freelancer's time-keeping system to see how many hours have been accrued on a project. We realize that updating clients on time spent is a valuable component of any progress report.

On the other hand, while clients are often busy, any status updates on projects expected to be sent to a freelancer are always much appreciated. Freelancers are often asked to set aside large chunks of time, but project timelines can be fluid. Therefore, a quick heads up, or an update as to if and when resource may be required, is always helpful.

We realize that updating clients on time spent is a valuable component of any progress report

V Volume

Volume is always a difficult issue for freelancers. In addition, at peak times, agency access to high-quality freelance resource can be limited and a competitive process.

Clients who provide high volumes of work can drive costs down as efficiencies lead to less time being billed overall and a level of goodwill. However, providing a high volume of resource to a single client can also result in a freelancer putting all their eggs in one basket. This has an opportunity cost in turning down work from other clients that can have lasting implications, e.g. if your client turns to another freelancer and the account is lost. On the other hand, imposing a sizable fixed administrative burden (e.g. compulsory weekly timesheet submission) while offering a low (or zero) volume account is a less attractive option for a freelancer.

Volume commitments can also place other financial pressures on freelancers contracted to supply a set amount of time per week to a client or be paid upon milestone completion. Therefore, when clients struggle to supply an agreed volume of work or milestones become out of reach due to unforeseen delays, some flexibility is required from both parties.

Expected volume is difficult to predict for both freelancers and clients
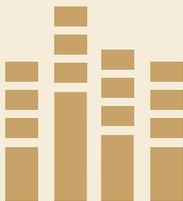
W Writing off time

The exchange of value between freelancers and clients revolves around payment in return for time. However, both parties should remain conscious of what constitutes a fair exchange of value.

There are two main instances where a freelancer can find themselves writing off time and not billing the client:

- *Fixed-price projects* – If the scope and a set fee for a project is agreed prior to commencing a project then freelancers expect that some of their time may need to be written off compared with charging a full hourly rate.

- *Discretionary write offs* – A freelancer may use their discretion, for example, if an error has been made.

However, these instances are also a double-edged sword and while freelancers are likely willing to write off time when agreed, or as the result of an error, clients must also be prepared to renegotiate fixed fees when the scope of a project changes or queries about errors are traced to the brief.

Both parties should remain conscious of what constitutes a fair exchange of value

X factor

Medical writers can be very good technically with their grammar, attention to detail and therapy area understanding, but some writers have elements of style and expression that cannot be taught. However, style without substance is a recipe for disaster, so we like to think of a number of 'X factors' when it comes to good medical writing:

Explain   Good content needs to provide sufficient background and detail to be able to stand alone in its ability to communicate a concept.

Exact   The presentation of data and messages should be targeted, accurate and clear.

Examples   Providing examples and definitions are effective methods of confirming the meaning of ambiguous terms, such as 'side effect' (an adverse event or additional therapeutic benefit beyond a drug's indication?).

Extensive   It should not be necessary to give an extensive explanation. Writing with the X factor can clearly and concisely communicate detail on any topic.

Excite   Effective communications should have the reader thinking 'Wow, that's interesting!'

Exemplify   Good medical writing should exemplify what you stand for. At Kainic, this means quality, accuracy and a commitment to ethical behaviour.

Incorporating some of these elements into a brief can also make sure that you achieve an excellent outcome and limit costs.

Some writers have elements of style and expression that cannot be taught. However, style without substance is a recipe for disaster

Y Yes person

Every freelancer likes to say 'yes' because we want to help. Saying 'no' can also lead to the client looking elsewhere for support. However, there can sometimes be a disconnect between clients and freelancers as to what an initial 'yes' means.

Accepting a brief is always conditional on the following:

- The scope of work being consistent with the initial brief

- Reasonable progress being made and not stalling before milestones are met

- The agreed fee fairly reflecting the skill required to deliver the project

- Agreed deadlines being fixed

- No questions surrounding ethical conduct becoming apparent during the course of the project (e.g. source materials being published in predatory journals, unexplained major variations in data, failure to prospectively register clinical trials, etc.)

- The project being deemed as appropriate to freelance following a full review.

A 'yes' is always conditional because it can take several hours to fully review a brief, accompanying materials, data and output feasibility. Furthermore, the initial decision to accept a project is generally made in the context of limited information.

Therefore, it is important for clients to be honest and detailed in the briefs that are offered, especially as experienced freelancers are not Yes People. They also have the luxury of being able to decline projects, and are prepared to walk away once the full nature and scope of a project becomes clear.

A 'yes' is always conditional because it can take several hours to fully review a brief, accompanying materials, data and output feasibility

Z Zinc® etc.

Freelancers are often engaged because clients do not have resource available to get a job completed on time. However, a freelancer can be used on a regular basis to help get more done faster.

However, one barrier to enlisting a freelancer to help with relatively straightforward tasks, such as Zinc® uploads, data checking or formatting, is the question mark around value. Is it worth paying a senior medical writer-equivalent fee for that service? However, enlisting a freelancer can add value because:

- Relatively straightforward services can be sourced at a discount to a senior medical writer fee without compromising on quality by utilizing junior writers under supervision.

- Using someone in New Zealand who can deliver overnight, so zero Northern Hemisphere business hours are lost/delivery of a project effectively advances progress by at least one full business day.

- Multiple writers may be available for projects, such as Zinc® uploads, who can unlock extra value by working in parallel.

Think about the impact and impression that you could leave by delivering projects early. Working with freelancers in New Zealand can increase the capacity and work rate of your team, helping you impress your clients.

Think about the impact and impression that you could leave by delivering projects early

Kainic can provide freelance support for:

Writing manuscripts
Developing slide decks
Incorporating amendments
Preparing meeting reports
Performing desk research
Data checking
Collating reference packs

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