



## Former Cubicle Worker Swaps Corporate Job for Double the Pay, Working at Home Where She Controls Her Time – and the Thermostat!

Li had always been content being an employee. In various government, nonprofit and private-sector jobs, she went to work every day, doing the best job she could. She didn't have the inkling or the itch to go out on her own – until she found herself miserable.

At the time, Li worked at a “soul-less” multinational corporation that seemingly only cared about the bottom line. She reported to not one, but two bosses, and saw no path to advancing.

“The real kicker was when I started getting my coworkers’ duties, but without any change in position or pay,” Li says. “They were getting paid three times as much as I was, and now I was doing part of their work, but I didn't get a raise. On top of that, I had a window-less cubicle in a freezing corner of the office. I hate being cold!”

Like many frustrated employees, Li began plotting an escape plan: She set a date one year in the future when she would simply quit. She got her husband on board and diligently saved up a year's worth of take-home pay.

And then she did it. On that date, she gave notice – without anything else lined up.

“It was the middle of the recession and things were bleak,” she says. “Smart people have something lined up before they quit their jobs, but I did it backward. I couldn't stand it any longer.”

### CASE STUDY:

### Li Vasquez-Noone

*“I hadn't even thought about it until someone asked me, but now I make about twice as much as I made in my corporate job. And I'm MUCH happier.”*

### MEMBER:

Li Vasquez-Noone

### LOCATION:

Delray Beach, Florida

### OTHER CAREERS:

Administrative work for government, nonprofit and private sector employers

### HOW SHE GOT HER FIRST CLIENT:

Via a LinkedIn connection, Li landed a couple of articles for an online teen magazine.

### TOP AWAI PROGRAMS:

- *Circle of Success*
- *FastTrack to Copywriting Success* Bootcamp and Job Fair
- *How to Make Money as a Social Media Marketing Expert*

## Real Copywriters – Really Making a Living

Fortunately, Li's leap of faith found solid ground – though not immediately. Not long after quitting, she received a letter in the mail from American Writers & Artists Inc. (AWAI) asking, "Can You Write a Letter Like This One?"

The same letter had landed in her mailbox before, but that time, she had tossed it in the recycling bin. Now, the timing couldn't have been better. Twice Li had participated in National Novel Writer's Month (NaNoWriMo), which had reignited an interest in writing.

"It was always in the back of my head, 'Wouldn't it be great if I could make a living writing?' But I didn't know you could make a living any other way besides writing a hit novel."

AWAI offered a view into another path: copywriting, where she could design her own career, work from home and would not be limited by corporate salary caps.

As a first step, she invested in AWAI's flagship program, *The Accelerated Program for Six-Figure Copywriting*, yet soon questioned her decision. "I was turned off by writing sales letters," she says. "I was intimidated and it wasn't intuitive to me. I thought about getting my money back and doing something else."

Instead, through AWAI she found many other types of copywriting. She found a fit in *Email Copy Made Easy*. She also discovered article writing, which became the source of her first freelance jobs – two articles for an online teen magazine.

Then Li signed up for her first *FastTrack to Copywriting Success* Bootcamp & Job Fair, held right in her hometown of Delray Beach, Florida. The annual event brings together hundreds

of writers and instructors for several days of learning and networking.

For Li, having the event a mile away from home made it logistically easier, if not mentally easier. "I remember that first day, actually thinking I could turn the car around right now, and not go," she says. "But I forced myself to go and it was the best thing I ever could have done. I don't know if I would be in this position now if I'd turned around."

When she arrived, she began fact finding. "I was going up to people, asking, 'Do you actually make a living doing this?' And a lot of them said yes," she says. "For the first time, I was face to face with other writers – many of them – making a real living copywriting."

She also connected with beginning writers like herself, many of whom she's still close with today. Suddenly she had a support group to consult when times were tough and to celebrate wins with. They would meet regularly on the phone, and each year at *Bootcamp*.

### Big Break: Barefoot Writer

Li's strength in writing articles and blog posts – and *Bootcamp* connections – soon landed her work with AWAI's monthly *Barefoot Writer* magazine. And when it came time for editor Mindy McHorse to seek interim help during her maternity leave, Li was at the top of the list.

"She liked my writing and found me easy to work with," Li says. "And I really related to the idea of the *Barefoot Writer*, of crafting your own lifestyle."

Li helped primarily with the magazine's social media for a few months. Again she tapped



into AWAI's trove of programs, this time Nick Osborne's *How to Make Money as a Social Media Marketing Expert*.

After Li proved herself, AWAI turned the short-term engagement into a retainer with *Barefoot Writer*, giving Li a reliable source of income. Now, she serves as an editorial and content coordinator – and often a mentor to new writers. Additionally, she secured a second retainer helping AWAI with its social media activity.

Beyond her work with AWAI, Li picked up additional clients for social media work. She also now provides strategy and copywriting for her husband's side business, which makes labels for small and home-based wine and beer makers. That includes web copy, market research, a Facebook ad campaign, and direct mail. Yes, she's using the persuasive copywriting skills she picked up in *The Accelerated Program*.

"I'm having so much fun applying all the things I've learned over the years from AWAI," she says. "Every day I use stuff from the *Accelerated Program* – even for just writing an email or a Twitter post.

And I can now look at a sales letter and tell you backward and forward what's missing."

And where once Li found *Bootcamp* daunting, the event is now an annual must for her. "I couldn't stay away!" she says.

### **Double the Income, with a Flex Schedule**

Li does it all from her home office in Delray Beach, with the thermostat set to a comfortable 79°F. With a flexible schedule, she occasionally takes a day off midweek to run errands, or even see a movie with her husband, and makes up for it by working some early mornings, evenings or on the weekends.

In fact, Li enjoys her copywriting career so much that the income was a second thought. "Earning six figures wasn't necessarily my big goal," she says. "I hadn't even thought about it until someone asked me, but now I make about twice as much as I made in my corporate job. And I'm MUCH happier."

### **Li's Tips For Copywriters**

- **Stop comparing yourself to others** – "Early on I thought, 'I will never be a success unless it is the way someone else did it.' I learned to stop comparing my path to others."
- **Move on from mistakes** – When a client didn't love a couple of articles Li turned in, she worried her copywriting career was over. "At the time it was very devastating to me but I rewrote them and the client liked the second round. I realized then that second, even sometimes third drafts, are not a bad thing."

## **Ready to pursue the Writer's Life?**

Learn more about the program that launched Jerry's career, [\*\*The FastTrack to Copywriting Success Bootcamp & Job Fair.\*\*](#)

