



Moment of Kismet Leads Corporate Communicator to New Life of Flexibility and Fulfillment

Although she didn't realize it at the time, Leslie Blaize had been preparing for this moment her entire life.

She had been working in corporate communications at an engineering, architecture, and planning firm for years when one day, the human resources director unexpectedly announced that Leslie's position was being eliminated.

"Oh, all right. Then I'll go into freelance writing," Leslie immediately replied.

Before that moment, she hadn't known that she already knew what she wanted to do next. "I was as surprised as the others," Leslie says. "It was like it was meant to be."

Her friends and colleagues immediately rallied around her new career. "One friend called and said, 'Now you can help my mom write her World War II memoir.' And then an engineer said, 'My friend is looking for a copywriter.' So I had freelance work before I headed out the door."

Laying the Foundation

In that instant it may have seemed like kismet, but Leslie's entire career had led to this moment. She held bachelor's and master's degrees in journalism, and had written for and owned newspapers for years before joining the multidisciplinary firm.

The freelance aspect was entirely new, however, and she needed to figure out what kind of writing she wanted to do — and acquire the skills to do it. When she came across a promotion for American Writers & Artists Institute (AWAI)

CASE STUDY:

Leslie Blaize

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MEMBER:

Leslie Blaize

LOCATION:

Billings, Montana

FORMER CAREERS:

Co-owner of weekly newspapers, corporate communicator at an engineering, architecture, and planning firm

HOW SHE GOT HER FIRST CLIENT:

She landed her first two freelance clients simultaneously, one through a friend and another through the referral of an industry colleague.

TOP AWAI PROGRAMS:

- *The Accelerated Program for Seven-Figure Copywriting*
- *B2B Copywriting Mastery*
- *Case Study Mastery & Certification*

offering to help new writers, she knew she had found her answer.

Leslie invested in *The Accelerated Program for Six-Figure Copywriting* (now *The Accelerated Program for Seven-Figure Copywriting*) for the broad base of knowledge she was looking for.

“If I was going to be a freelance writer, I needed to know exactly how to do it,” Leslie says. “Reading the information on the website and the case studies, I felt comfortable taking that first course and going from there. And then once I was in it, I realized this was giving me exactly the background that I needed.”

Nailing Down a Niche

Excited by what she was learning, Leslie continued to develop her skills with a slew of AWAI programs and events. Following her interest in business-to-business (B2B) writing, Steve Slaunwhite’s *B2B Copywriting Mastery* provided a solid overview of B2B content and how to approach it. It also taught her how to talk to clients confidently.

She followed that with programs on writing web copy and Search Engine Optimization (SEO), among others. She joined *Circle of Success (COS)*, AWAI’s premiere level of training and mentorship, which included AWAI’s entire library of programs and the chance to access training immediately on any skill that she might need. She also attended AWAI’s *FastTrack to Copywriting Success Bootcamp* and *Job Fair* twice.

“I focus on lifelong learning,” Leslie says. “AWAI gives people confidence and shows you new opportunities. It’s all there in the programs they offer. It’s a buffet — what are you going to choose?”

Leslie began accruing new clients and opportunities. She did website copy for a

flower shop and other miscellaneous jobs that came her way. But when she was hired by a manufacturing company to do some blog posts, followed by a friend hiring her to do project updates for an engineering firm, the dots connected for Leslie. She realized she had found her niche: she would use her background in the Architecture/Engineering/Construction (A/E/C) field to build her copywriting career.

“I enjoy working in the A/E/C world,” Leslie says. “I have wide experience in it, and I get the industry. It just made sense for me to focus on it.”

Building a Platform

Things really clicked for Leslie once she took Casey Hibbard’s *Case Study Mastery & Certification*. She already knew that she enjoyed interviewing people and writing columns. Now, she found that she loved telling clients’ “happy stories.”

But it was when a colleague asked her what kind of market there was for case studies in her area that inspiration struck again.

“I looked on A/E/C websites and realized, ‘Oh, I don’t see any,’” Leslie explains. “Most companies have project updates, or they might have a testimonial. But I didn’t see any with client-focused case studies. I realized that I could educate people and show them that this is a possibility for them. That was life-changing for me.”

Leslie started a LinkedIn newsletter called *A/E/C Connect* that focuses on the value of storytelling and case studies in her field. Even in a technical industry, creative storytelling engages people, both in internal communications



and external outreach. Now her newsletter has over 600 subscribers, many of whom are potential clients.

“My mission is promoting case studies in the A/E/C world,” Leslie says. “It’s about being generous and sharing knowledge. I know my clients subscribe, and I think they see me as a thought leader.”

Her outreach has led to numerous speaking, podcast and writing opportunities — further showcasing her knowledge in front of prospects.

Enjoying the Writer’s Life

Semi-retired and working part-time — by choice — Leslie has built the work-life balance she chooses. With three grandchildren living nearby and another in California, that’s a priority for her.

“The freedom and flexibility are what I like about copywriting,” Leslie says. “My family time is very important to me. My son just asked if I could come help with my grandson in

California because his spouse was going to Japan. I like just being able to say yes, because I know I can work anywhere.”

Leslie also has the freedom to do the things she loves, like participating in her women’s dance group, the Golden Dancers. With practices twice a week and performances at local senior centers, she’s devoted to both the dancing and the friendships she’s found within the group.

“I’m pretty happy with the way things are going,” Leslie says. “I don’t want to be working a whole lot, because I like doing these other things.”

Literally the day before her life changed, Leslie had no idea she was going to spend the next chapter of her career as a copywriter. But now she lives the life she wants because of it.

“At the heart of freelance copywriting is doing what you enjoy. I want to do the work I find inspiring with clients I like in the amount of time I want to spend,” she says. “I’m so glad I pursued this path.”

Leslie’s Tips for Copywriters

- **Have a support group or accountability partner** – “I’m in a mastermind group that meets every week, and we offer each other support, guidance and advice. Having a support group has been really valuable.”
- **Be flexible** – Be open to possibilities and things that come your way.
- **Be easy to work with and value what your clients do** – “I’ve worked with engineers for years, and sometimes they’re very introverted, but I can talk to them,” Leslie says. “I come from a deep appreciation of the A/E/C world. They know that, and it makes them feel comfortable.”

Ready to pursue *the writer’s life*?

Learn more about the program that launched Leslie’s career,
The Accelerated Program for Seven-Figure Copywriting.

