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Write What You Know

by Dan Poynter

Experience counts. You must have expertise or experience to be a credible nonfiction author. *Expertise* could mean you have an advanced degree in the field. *Experience* means you have lived it. You do not need a Ph.D. if you have personal experience, dedication to do research, and a deep desire to spread the word. The most important question is “Have you been there?”

“You must have experience to write a good nonfiction book, so please do not write a book on *how to get rich* unless you are already rich.”

—Patricia Clay, actor.

His engineering firm told Bob Bly he would have to relocate from New York City to the headquarters in Wichita, Kansas. His fiancée did not want to leave Manhattan so he resigned and started a new career as a self-employed industrial writer, producing brochures and data sheets for chemical companies and industrial equipment manufacturers.

The transition from employee to freelancer was an educational experience, one he knew many others would go through (or hope to some day). The experience became the topic of his book, *Out on Your Own; From Corporate to Self-Employment*, published by John Wiley and Sons. <http://www.bly.com>

A fresh outlook can be an asset. When you are beginning in a new field, you have the same questions your readers will have. Write as you learn, record as you study and blossom as you grow. Then run your manuscript by other experts on your subject matter to make sure you have not left anything out or written something you misunderstood. That is your third draft and it is called *peer review*.

Write from experience plus research.

 **Writing periodicals:**

Dan Poynter does not want you to die with a book still inside you. You have the ingredients and he has your recipe. Dan has written more than 100 books since 1969 including *Writing Nonfiction* and *The Self-Publishing Manual*. For more help on book writing, see <http://ParaPub.com>.

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Dan Poynter, the Voice of Self-Publishing, has written more than 100 books since 1969 including *Writing Nonfiction* and *The Self-Publishing Manual*. Dan is a past vice-president of the Publishers Marketing Association. For more help on book publishing and promoting, see <http://ParaPub.com>.

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Dan Poynter has written more than 100 books since 1969 including *Writing Nonfiction* and *The Self-Publishing Manual*. He is past-chair of NSA's Writer-Publisher PEG and the founder of the PEG newsletter. For more help on book writing, publishing and promoting, see <http://ParaPublishing.com>.

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