

Where do all the writers go?

 By [Marion Scher](#)

16 Apr 2015

For the last year or so there's been a steady trend throughout the media worldwide of journalists, sub-editors and editors being 'let go'... Newspapers and magazines have been cut down and cut out of media organisations. Electronic media has also suffered with cutbacks and in some cases whole divisions closed down. The big question is, where do all the people who have lost their jobs go?

For many, the first thought is to go freelance but as someone who's been a freelancer for 27 years I know that a) this isn't an easy road and b) it's become even harder to get work for the same economic reasons they lost their jobs in the first place.

Those that are lucky enough and perhaps really excellent (and I use that word in its truest sense) will get snapped up by rival organisations but, for many who have to put bread on the table for more than themselves, it's a very worrying situation.

In the last few weeks I've had emails and phone calls from several people, all highly qualified, in this situation. One such person asked if I could help her get into the corporate field as she's 'sick of getting retrenched from one media company to the next.' That would seem a good idea - the steady corporate job with an assured future.

The problem is there are only so many permanent communication posts available and many companies these days (thank goodness) are outsourcing.

So, having given you all the negatives what are the positives - if, in fact any exist. Well here are a few tips on changing direction:

- Look at where your biggest strengths lie: editing, writing online news, ghost writing, features, IT writing etc...
- Draw up a list of every single organisation, media and otherwise, who could use your skills. For instance, a few years ago whilst looking for work I looked at my academic background in economics and put that together with writing and editing and approached every major accountancy firm in SA asking for work. The result was report writing/editing from two major companies.
- Make sure you have a cracking CV with great references and examples of your work
- Google yourself and make sure there's nothing out there you wouldn't want anyone to read. Remember how easy it is to access Facebook and read posts that are perhaps written in anger or in haste and come across as showing you not in your best light. No one wants to employ a negative, angry person.
- Try and find out a name of someone who actually has influence in hiring full-time/freelance people in these organisations and if you're in the same town ask if you could see them for 10 minutes while you drop off your CV. Even if they're not

hiring right now, ask them to 'file it' for future reference.

- If you get a foot in the door you literally have 5 - or if you're lucky, 10 - minutes to sell yourself. They may file a CV away but a memorable meeting will stick in their minds.
- If you don't already blog, think about starting one that will showcase your work and then make a real effort to attract readers.
- The same goes for Twitter - start tweeting for all you're worth - again spreading the word on what you do and how invaluable you could be to an organisation.
- If you don't already have a website, think about starting one selling yourself and your skills. Get someone who really understands SEO to help you here.

Perhaps the best advice I can give is to tackle looking for work as if you're at work. Literally sit down at your computer from 8am and start writing. Whether it's pitches for stories, sending out CVs or posting on social media. If you sit waiting for work to come to you, it could be a long wait.

The saddest part of this whole story is the incredible amount of talent that's out there going to waste. Really good writers who don't have anywhere to write...

ABOUT MARION SCHER

Marion Scher (www.mediamentors.co.za) is an award-winning journalist, lecturer, media trainer and consultant with 25 years' experience in the industry. For more of her writing, go to her Bizcommunity profile or to Twitter @marionscher.

- How to get your media release ignored - 12 Nov 2015
- Mmusi - Where are you? The country wants to hear from you! - 3 Nov 2015
- Be careful what you wish for - 7 Oct 2015
- Your speech - brilliant or boring - 2 Oct 2015
- Why you didn't even get an interview - 3 Sep 2015

[View my profile and articles...](#)

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>