

Career: Writing for Publication, Performance and Media

Writers can work almost anywhere. Good writing skills are at the core of dozens of careers in publishing, media, public relations, non-profits, advertising and corporate communications. What is difficult is to secure the “glamour” jobs like magazine or on-line journalism, broadcast and screenwriting. But even these are attainable with the right attention to basic skills, career development strategies and persistence.

The first steps for any writer is to perfect and then continually improve their craft. The next step is to write for as many venues as possible, even as a volunteer, and get involved with the industry of your dreams, even if not immediately as a writer. Pratt will graduate its first class of writing majors in June 2003. These students have undertaken a variety of internships as part of their curriculum and continue to explore field related experiences both with the various media available at Pratt and within the New York area.

Listed below are the basic industries in which students may find their career path.

PUBLISHING (including magazines and interactive) Graduates may work in editorial or production areas as assistants with the ultimate career path leading to editorial specialties. There are a myriad of publishing opportunities for those with strong journalism skills. Editorial career paths may be an end in themselves or they may lead to a career as a freelance writer for magazines, e-zines or interactive content. Of course, all writers have a novel or two in the drawer and these, too, may find a publisher some day.

PUBLIC RELATIONS The promotion and image development of companies, individuals and products, this is an extremely vigorous career area that looks for strong journalism skills at the outset.

CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS Almost as diverse as the corporations that make up the business world, how a company defines itself internally and externally is ultimately described by writers. They might write for catalogs, public relations, annual reports and shareholder materials, advertising and even, in the case of a company like the World Wrestling Federation, create characters and “screenplays”.

BROADCAST (news) Broadcast in this context focuses on news and journalism media (radio, TV network and cable) that are both on-air and on-line and require masses of writing to keep 24-hour news stations and web sites in material. There are positions not only for writers but also for producers, directors, technical staff, researchers and artists. There are also news-gathering organizations which ally themselves with the broadcast world.

ENTERTAINMENT: FILM AND TELEVISION Included here would be writing and production for all other television programming on the network and cable channels as well as producing, writing and distributing for independent and studio film. Careers in writing in these venues are almost always freelance and “connection” based, that requiring a great deal of networking. Characteristics of the successful individual in this arena are persistence, optimism, willingness to work harder than anyone else and to take on unpopular assignments and make something of them.

ADVERTISING Beginning as a writer of copy for ads requiring a clever wit and a conceptual mind, this career area leads to management positions in Creative Direction and Account Management.

IDEALIST AND NON-PROFIT WORK Writers are needed everywhere from grant writers for non-profit organizations (where writers often do PR, promotion and corporate communications) to researchers and staff assistants on Capital Hill. Here you follow your commitments to a cause and create a career.

These areas may suggest many, many more career paths to those who pursue writing. It is basic to much of the work world but does require a great commitment to craft. It is important that those pursuing a career in writing constantly check their expectations against reality, evaluate their own skills realistically and maintain a perpetual belief in their goals.

Bottom Line

The Career Services office lists over 4000 jobs annually. We offer career counseling and job referrals for those entering their professional

field as well as general art-related jobs for those still developing portfolios. E-mail: career@pratt.edu Phone: 718-636-3506

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