



TRUST

BEYOND QUALIFICATIONS:
GAINING AUTHOR TRUST

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You're a professional editor or proofreader and you want to work with indie authors.

Should be a doddle, right? After all, your tutor gave you amazing feedback. Your scores were high, your pass solid.

The course was intense – it tested your skills and knowledge to the limit. That's good because now you're feeling confident. Fit for purpose and fit for market.

And to prove it, you've got that shiny certificate.

The problem is, you're not alone.



Editorial training – critical but standard

The next time you're in a room or online forum with a bunch of fellow editors, ask them to shout out if they've taken editorial courses or carried out continued professional development.

Scratch that. Ask those who *haven't* to shout out. It'll be much quieter!

The fact is, most pro editors have studied. Which means it's not a compelling proposition for an indie author trying to work out who to hire.

Training is critical – of course it is. It teaches us what we don't know, allows us to discover our weaknesses and fix them. That way we're in great shape by the time we start searching for clients.

Training is a solid baseline. When it comes to being practice-fit, that's its strength. But when it comes to attracting the attention of indie authors, that's also its weakness.

The snag with competing at the baseline

Imagine walking into a hospital. How impressed would you be to discover that all the doctors have been to medical school?

Not very. It's critical, yes, but *not* impressive. Rather, it's expected.

The same applies to editors and proofreaders. No indie author seeks to hire an editor who hasn't learned how to their job.

And why would they? That's no more likely than any of us walking into a hospital hoping there's an untrained medic on the premises.

Our being fit for purpose is expected too. And so, if we want to stand out, we need to add value *beyond* the baseline.

Adding value by solving problems

You might be wondering what that value looks like and why it will appeal.

The answer comes in the form of **solutions to problems**.

Let's revisit the hospital. If we or someone we care about is a patient, there's a problem. And the moment we enter the building, we're not focusing on the qualifications of the doctors; that's baseline stuff. Instead, we're focusing on ourselves or our loved ones, the problem in hand, and whether one of those professional, qualified people in scrubs can fix it.

If the medical pros succeed, we feel immensely grateful. And we *trust* them.

When editors solve their target clients' problems, the same thing happens. Those clients feel grateful and warm towards us. And they trust *us*.

That's how we add value.

The problems indie authors have

The problems indie authors have lie in what they don't know. Their expertise can be found elsewhere – maybe they're one of those doctors in our hospital. Perhaps they're a taxi driver or a plumber or a teacher.

They have a ton of skills and knowledge related to their professions but they don't have the skills and knowledge related to ours.

That's great news because it gives us a whole raft of stuff with which to start building our trustworthiness – an online basket of **free goodies** ... gifts that solve indie authors' problems and make them feel warm and fuzzy about us.



‘But somebody’s already done that!’

Maybe you’re thinking it’s a waste of time. After all, loads of people have already created online content – blogs, vlogs, podcasts, booklets – about spelling, punctuation, grammar, story structure, line craft, the types of editing, and a thousand other things that indie authors query in Google Search.

Trust me – that’s not the point. The point is that when they go searching for that stuff, we’re in the mix.

Indie authors do not search for ‘Louise Harnby fiction editor’. They search for things like ‘What’s third-person limited viewpoint?’

If my website’s all about Louise Harnby, I won’t appear in the search engines when an author hunts for information about narrative point of view. If my website’s about viewpoint – and other questions that authors ask – it’s a different story.

Content that solves problems enables us to become visible, add value and build trust.

The solutions your clients are searching for need to be:

- ✓ on your website
- ✓ created by you
- ✓ presented with your voice and with your angle

even if other people have already covered these topics in their own unique way elsewhere.



Trustworthy added value: 7 ideas

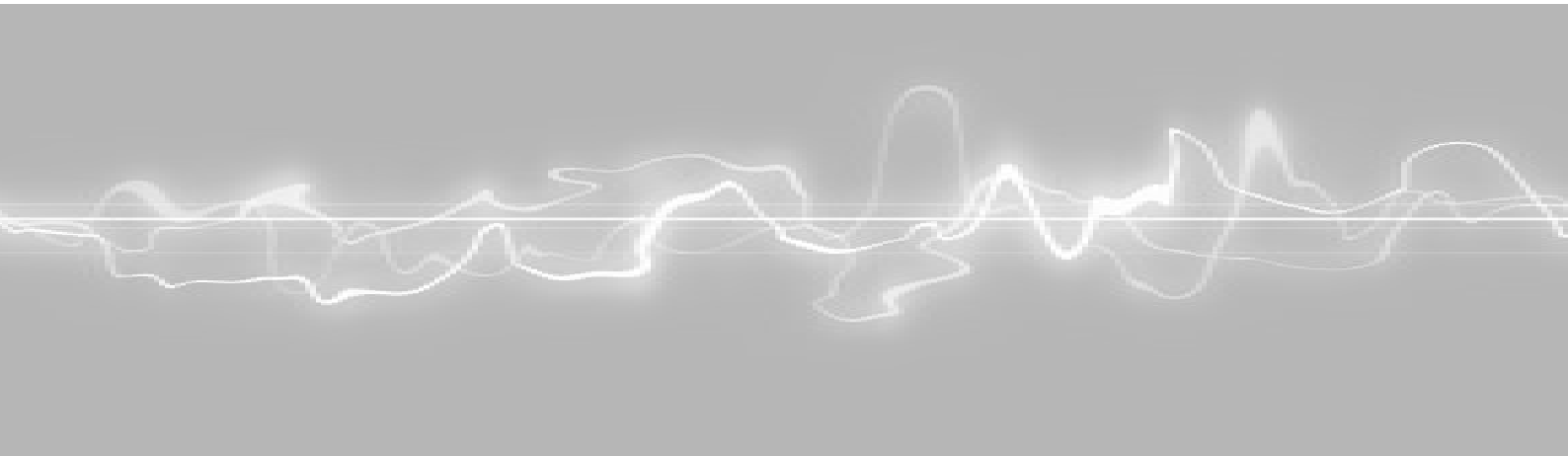
Here are 7 ways in which you can add value. Each can be published on multiple platforms, including your website and social media:

- ✓ Write a **blog post** that shows a client how to fix one writing problem.
- ✓ Turn it into a **PDF booklet** – make it look pretty in Canva!
- ✓ Create a **slide deck** in PowerPoint. Use images to illustrate each learning point. Do a voice-over with a script based on your blog post.
- ✓ Save the deck as an **MPEG4 video**. Upload to YouTube. Use the cover image of the booklet as a thumbnail image.
- ✓ Take the key themes and create an **infographic**.
- ✓ Create a **promo video**. Go to Canva. Choose eye-catching images and overlay the text from the headings in your blog post. Upload the images to MoShow. Choose a motion theme and music.
- ✓ Record an audio-only version of your slide-deck script. Upload to Soundcloud. Embed your one-off **podcast episode** on your website.

Rising above the baseline and the noise

The web is big and noisy. Editors and proofreaders who want to attract best-fit authors from within that online space need to be discoverable there.

A list of qualifications isn't enough to cut through. We must add value. When we do so, we show our worth rather than telling it. That's about **trust**. We get found, too. And that's about **business success!**



Hone your editorial marketing skills with online training

Louise Harnby is a fiction editor who specializes in working with independent authors. She's also a passionate marketer.

If you want to learn how to add value, craft a powerful and visible editorial brand identity, and attract ideal clients, take a look at her **books** and **courses**.

Louise Harnby
FICTION EDITOR & PROOFREADER
