

Overcoming writer's block



Content tips

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Katrina Kempney | Principal Content Strategist

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Usually when we hear about someone having writer's block—an inability to think of new ideas or write—it's in relation to creative projects. But when you're stuck on business writing, you may not have time to set the project aside for days, weeks, or even months until inspiration strikes again. So how can you get unstuck?

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Usually when we hear about someone having writer's block—an inability to think of new ideas or write—it's in relation to creative projects. Many [famous authors](#), from Ray Bradbury to Stephen King, have admitted to struggling with writer's block during their careers. But when you're stuck on business writing, you may not have time to set the project aside for days, weeks, or even months until inspiration strikes again.

So how can you get unstuck?

Do some research

If you're struggling to come up with an idea for a blog post, collateral asset, social media post, or other content, answering a few questions can sometimes help you uncover potential topics:

- What is my audience looking for?
- In what topics is Red Hat a key voice or leader—or in what topics do we want to be?
- What topics am I well-positioned as an expert in? What topics would I be interested in learning more about so I can share that knowledge with Red Hat's audiences?

The best way to answer these questions is to **take a look at your data**. What content has performed well in the past? Is there an opportunity to revisit those topics with an updated perspective—or for a new audience? Or to expand on a particular aspect of those topics? (Tip: Red Hat's [Marketing Analytics Tableau dashboards](#) are a great place to start.)

You can also **review competitors' content** for inspiration, as well as industry publications like blogs, newsletters, webinars, or analyst materials. (In fact, this content tip was inspired by a [recent post from MarketingProfs](#).) Just remember that we don't want to directly copy anyone. When you write your content, determine how to apply Red Hat's unique perspective—for example, adding data from our research or [examples of customer success](#) when relevant.

Researching using [Google's "People Also Ask" search engine feature](#) can also help you find ideas and related topics that will **answer common questions** and, as a result, likely rank well in search engine results.

If you have a topic but are stuck on how to turn it into a full piece of content, **generative AI (gen AI) tools** may also provide some suggestions. For example, you can use gen AI tools to generate a draft outline or provide feedback your outline. However, you must comply with Red Hat's [Policy on the Use of AI Technology](#) and [Red Hat Global Privacy Program](#) when using these tools, and be sure to double-check the recommendations for accuracy. (For more information, check out the Marketing Content team's [point of view \(POV\) on responsible use of generative AI in content creation](#).)

Break up projects into smaller tasks

Writer's block is often the result of feeling overwhelmed, which can lead to procrastination. But making progress—even small progress—can help get you unstuck. If you find yourself feeling daunted by a project, try breaking it down into **smaller, timed tasks**. For example, if you need to do research of the kind just mentioned, make that a separate task in 15- or 30-minute blocks.

Or set aside time for **brainstorming and free writing**, dedicated to writing down ideas or possible topics. Even if nothing comes up, giving your mind time to only think about the project and what you could write about isn't wasted. It may help you rule out ideas you know won't work, freeing you to discover what will.

Similarly, **setting a project aside** to work on another can also help. Often, while you're consciously focusing on the new project, your mind will continue to think about the one you're stuck on. But the distraction can give your mind time to reset and rethink things when you return.

Even if your project is now going well, don't forget to **build in breaks**. Taking a walk, grabbing a snack, or simply stepping away from outlining or writing for a bit can help clear your mind and restore your energy and motivation.

Remember: editing is usually easier than writing

You may have an idea and an outline but be struggling to actually put pen to paper (or fingers to keyboard) and do the actual writing part. Many writers attempt to make their first draft the only draft, but **editing** is a key part of the writing process. Completing a draft, even if it's very rough, will not only help you figure out what's working and where you might have gaps in your idea, but also make it easier to get feedback from others. After all, you can't refine what you haven't written!

Professional writers take advantage of **peer reviews**—and in many content creation jobs, they're required. Behind any successful published author is a skilled editor. At Red Hat, we share our writing and help each other identify anything from minor issues like typos to areas where more evidence is needed to back up our assertions.

Sometimes you may need to scrap large sections of your draft—and that's okay. Like many skills, writing and editing improve over time with practice. Even "bad" writing helps you learn. (Pro tip: **Save those extra words** in a document somewhere. You never know when they'll be useful for another project—or give you a new idea for your next piece of content.)

And most important, remember: **writer's block is temporary!**

What are your tips for overcoming writer's block when you're stuck? Share your suggestions in the comments.

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