

sophia amoruso

CRAFTING THE PERFECT BIO:



Everything you need to write a bio that reflects your unique talents, accomplishments and personality—and sets you apart.

BY SOPHIA AMORUSO

LET'S TALK ABOUT ME.

That's what first comes to mind for most of us when we sit down to write our bios. However, it's precisely how you DON'T want to start things out. Bear with me here...

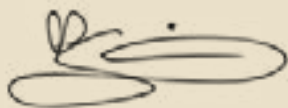
Talking about yourself is easy when someone else is asking the questions. But writing about yourself without anyone to prompt you? It can be awkward, difficult, and feel kind of gross. We're all complex creatures with important stories to tell, and sometimes the pressure of boiling down who you are to one page or less can be entirely overwhelming.

I've been there too—unsure of whether or not I'm being too boastful or too restrained, or if anyone gives a crap about my personal life. I've also been on the receiving end of so many bios from folks trying to pitch themselves to me for my podcast, in press coverage, to work for me, and to land me as a client. I've been impressed by many—and disappointed by just as many.

In the age of the personal brand, having a great bio is more important than ever. Everyone has a voice on the internet and it's your job to make sure yours stands out from the crowd. Bios are the first thing we see when we click on someone's Instagram profile, and About Pages are the second-most visited page on any website. Whether you're looking for clients, showcasing yourself to potential employers, or pitching yourself to the press, your bio is your opportunity to sell yourself.

Feeling the pressure? Don't worry! The next few pages will guide you through the process of telling your story, owning what makes you unique and crafting a concise, cohesive bio you can be proud to share with the world. Plus, I'll fill you in on a little secret if you're nervous to brag about your accomplishments: your bio isn't really about you.

Ready to get writing? Flip to the next page.



Sophia



EVEN THOUGH IT'S ABOUT YOU, IT'S NOT ABOUT YOU

Yes, you read that right. Your bio isn't really about you; it's about connecting with your audience through your story. Introduce who you are and what you do, but make sure you're incorporating them into your story to share how your unique experience, accomplishments and personality can meet their needs.

GOALS OF A BIO

INTRODUCE YOURSELF

This is who I am and what I do.

SHARE YOUR WHY

Why do you do what you do?

SHARE YOUR UNIQUENESS

How do you do what you do differently than anyone else?

CONNECT THE DOTS BETWEEN WHERE YOU ARE AND WHERE YOUR AUDIENCE WANTS TO BE

How can you help them reach their goals?

ESTABLISH TRUSTWORTHINESS

Position yourself as an expert or a guide.

ESTABLISH A CLEAR CALL TO ACTION

What's the actionable next step they can take?



GETTING IN THE FLOW

Before we dive in, let's cover two of the most commonly asked questions when it comes to writing a bio:

- How long should it be?
- Do I write about myself in first person (I'm) or third person (she/he/they)?

LENGTH

Keep it clear and concise. Similar to a news article or press release, a bio should have short paragraphs (2-3 sentences each). Aim for about 10 sentences total.

These are just guidelines for your standard bio: one you might see on a conference website in the speaker descriptions, on a company website, or in a LinkedIn bio. You can have a longer version of your bio with more details and personal information that you use for an About Page on your website.

POINT OF VIEW

Should you write about yourself as yourself, or as someone else? The answer: it depends on (a) where your bio is being published, and (b) your personal preference.

If you're writing a bio for a company website or a speaker description for a conference website, third person might make more sense since it's not your own platform and therefore you're not introducing yourself. For a social media bio or an about page on your website, first person might be a better fit.



YOUR UNIQUE INVENTORY

Let's do a career inventory. Fill out the answers below to get the basics together for your bio:

THE DETAILS

NAME

CURRENT LOCATION

CURRENT INDUSTRY

YEARS EXPERIENCE
IN INDUSTRY

CURRENT POSITION

PAST POSITIONS

GLOAT A LITTLE!

I'M KNOWN FOR:

MY EXPERTISE IS IN (EVEN IF IT'S DIFFERENT FROM YOUR MAIN JOB):

TRADE, MENTORSHIP, OR FORMAL EDUCATION:

AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS:

PRESS AND PODCAST APPEARANCES:

PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS:

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

(EX: SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS, AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION):

YOU CAN ALSO FIND ME ON/AT (SOCIAL MEDIA, YOUTUBE, PODCASTS, ETC):

TESTIMONIALS

Reach out to 3 (or more!) trusted colleagues or clients to ask for a testimonial.

Not sure how to ask for a testimonial?
Try one of our scripts:

PRO-TIP:

Holidays, milestones (i.e.: their anniversary as a customer on your email list) and the end of the year are great opportunities to send a note and include a testimonial request.

1. FOR THE PERSONAL CUSTOMER:

(good for testimonial requests from clients or customers you have a personal relationship with)

X

Hi [Name],

I hope you're well and [insert personal note like "enjoying the new house."] I'm so thankful for your [partnership/business] with [me/my business] over the past [length of time]. Your support has meant so much to me and played a huge role in the success of my business. Would you be able to write a testimonial about your experience [working/shopping/partnering] with [me/my company]?

Thank you for considering my request and thanks again for your support over the [length of time]. I hope to [see/hear from] you [soon/at company name].

Best,
[Your Name]

2. FOR THE BUSINESS CUSTOMER:

(good for loyal customers you have a less-personal relationship with)

X

Hi [Their Name],

Thank you for being one of our loyal customers over the past [length of time]—your support means so much to us! I wanted to ask if you would be able to share a testimonial about your experience with our company that I can use in future promotional materials.

Thank you for considering this request and thanks again for being a part of our [family/community/business] at [business name]. We hope to see you again soon!

Best,
[Your Name], [Your Position],
[Your Business Name]

3. FOR THE MENTOR:

(good for mentors, teachers and colleagues)

X

Hi [Their Name],

I was just thinking about [insert memory of working with that person]. Your [mentorship/support] has been instrumental in my career and I wanted to reach out to see if you'd be available to write a testimonial about your experience working with me. I'm currently putting together my bio for [job applications/my website/LinkedIn/conference] and a word from you would mean so much.

Thank you for considering my request and for your continued support of [career/projects/business]. I look forward to hearing from you!

Best,
[Your Name]

WRITE YOUR TESTIMONIALS HERE

NAME

TITLE

COMPANY

RELATIONSHIP TO YOU

TESTIMONIAL [5-8 LINES]

WRITE YOUR TESTIMONIALS HERE

NAME

TITLE

COMPANY

RELATIONSHIP TO YOU

TESTIMONIAL [5-8 LINES]

WRITE YOUR TESTIMONIALS HERE

NAME

TITLE

COMPANY

RELATIONSHIP TO YOU

TESTIMONIAL [5-8 LINES]

DIGGING DEEP

Let's get into the deep stuff: Why do you do what you do? These are heavier questions, so feel free to sit with them for a while or walk away and let them marinate before you get everything out on paper.

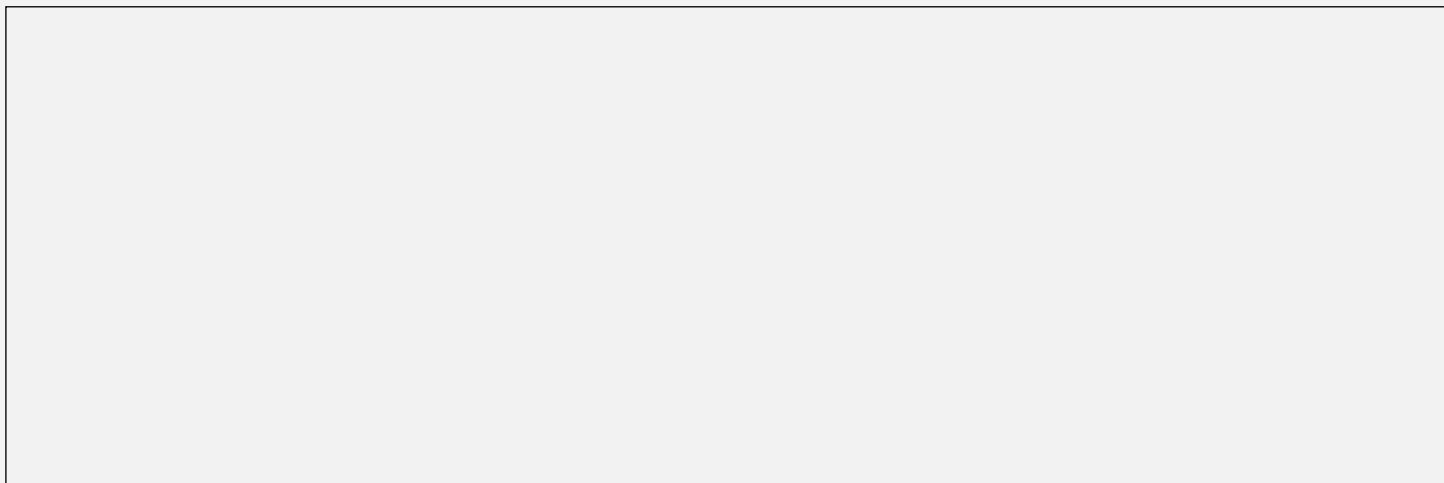
ABOUT YOU

WHAT ARE YOU PASSIONATE ABOUT?

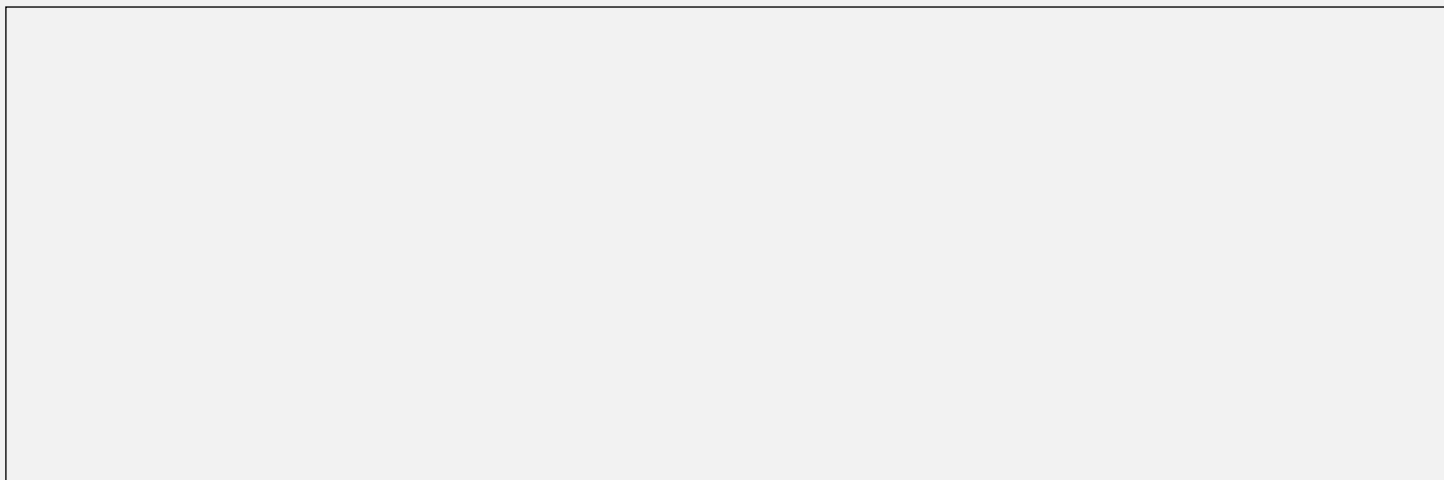
HOW DO YOUR PASSIONS CONNECT TO YOUR WORK?

HOW DID YOUR PASSIONS GET YOU TO YOUR CURRENT POSITION?
(WALK THROUGH YOUR EDUCATION/CAREER PATH)

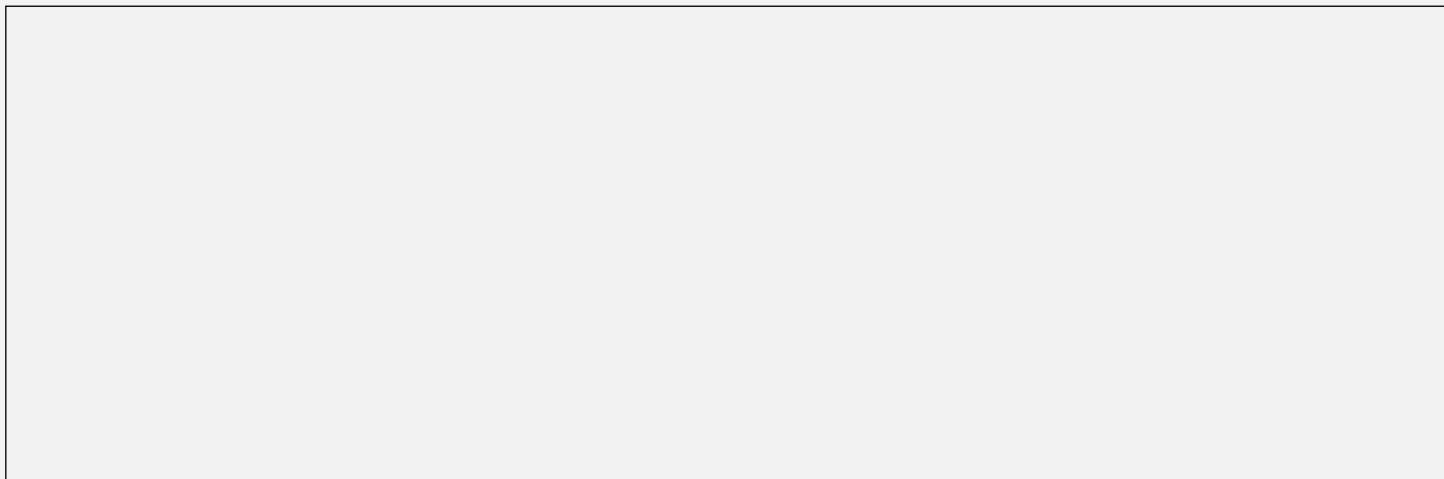
WHAT ARE YOUR PROUDEST ACCOMPLISHMENTS?



WHAT'S YOUR BIGGEST DREAM?



WHAT DO YOU WANT TO BE KNOWN FOR?



THE FUN STUFF

Accomplishments and recognitions are great, but at the end of the day, people will want to work with you because of *who you are*. We bring our whole selves to work and it's important to own what makes you unique. While you won't include all of the details below, these questions will get your mind jogging with a few personal items you might want to include.

WHAT TITLES DO YOU HOLD OUTSIDE OF WORK?
(HUSBAND/WIFE, CALIFORNIAN, VOLUNTEER, ETC)

WHAT ARE YOUR HOBBIES?

WHAT TOPICS EXCITE YOU?

WHAT ARE YOUR FAVORITE THINGS? TV SHOW? COFFEE ORDER? ANIMAL?

WHAT'S A FUN FACT (OR TWO!) ABOUT YOU?

SAMPLE BIO: EMMA BROWN

You've dug deep and done the real work—now it's time to put it all together into one cohesive bio! Here's an example with sample answers to the questions, and how you might string these answers together to tell your story.

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

NAME	Emma Brown
CURRENT LOCATION	Los Angeles, California
CURRENT INDUSTRY	Food & Service
YEARS EXPERIENCE IN INDUSTRY:	7
CURRENT POSITION	Founder, Coffee with Friends
PAST POSITIONS	Barista
I'M KNOWN FOR	Creating amazing vegan lattes
EDUCATION	Bachelor of Arts in Entrepreneurship, The University of Southern California

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

AWARDS/ RECOGNITIONS:	<i>LA Foodie Magazine's</i> Top Five Best Coffee Shops in LA
PRESS	<i>LA Foodie Magazine's</i> feature, "Meet Coffee with Friends Founder Emma Brown"
PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS:	Small Business Association of Los Angeles
TESTIMONIALS:	"Emma doesn't just have the best coffee, but the best attitude. Everytime I come into her coffee shop, I'm greeted with a smile, and she always remembers my order." —Mike Adams, Coffee with Friends customer since 2010
YOU CAN ALSO FIND ME	On all social media channels @emmascoffee, or my podcast <i>Coffee with Friends</i> .

ABOUT YOU

WHAT ARE YOU PASSIONATE ABOUT?	I'm a people person and I love having meaningful discussions with others. I'm a big believer everyone has a story to tell!
HOW DO YOUR PASSIONS CONNECT TO YOUR WORK?	I love being a coffee shop owner because I get to create something I love—coffee—while forming relationships with regular customers in the community and meeting new people everyday.
HOW DID YOUR PASSIONS GET YOU TO YOUR CURRENT POSITION?	I always knew I wanted to start my own business someday, which is why I majored in entrepreneurship. I found an incredible coffee shop when I was in college where I did all of my studying. The sense of community, connection and creativity I felt there gave me the idea to start a coffee shop. I got a part time job there as a barista while I was in college, studied under the owner, and two years after graduating, I opened Coffee with Friends.
WHAT ARE YOUR PROUDEST ACCOMPLISHMENTS?	My proudest accomplishments are opening Coffee with Friends and going completely waste-free.
WHAT CURRENT GOAL ARE YOU WORKING TOWARDS?	I'm working towards opening a second coffee shop location in the next five years!
WHAT DO YOU WANT TO BE KNOWN FOR?	I hope to be known for creating a place where people can slow down, enjoy a cup of coffee and connect with others.

THE FUN STUFF

WHAT TITLES DO YOU HOLD OUTSIDE OF WORK?	Friend, daughter, sister, animal shelter volunteer
WHAT ARE YOUR HOBBIES?	I volunteer at the local animal shelter, bake and enjoy going to concerts.
WHAT TOPICS EXCITE YOU?	I love learning about the environment and how to live a more sustainable life.
WHAT ARE YOUR FAVORITE THINGS?	My favorite coffee is a caramel coconut milk latte, my favorite animals are cats and my favorite show is House Hunters.
WHAT'S A FUN FACT (OR TWO!) ABOUT YOU?	I play the guitar!

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

FIRST-PERSON BIO:

Hi friend, I'm Emma Brown, the founder of Coffee with Friends in Los Angeles, California. I may have made you a vegan latte recently, or maybe I helped you find your new pet at the animal shelter where I volunteer. You might have heard my podcast, *Coffee with Friends*, that I film in my shop, or maybe you found me because you just Googled "coffee shops in LA." Either way, I'm glad you're here.

I founded Coffee with Friends in 2017 after four years studying business and the art of the latte. I always knew I wanted to start my own business someday and studied entrepreneurship at The University of Southern California. It was in college that I found my passion as I spent my time studying at the local coffee shop where I became a regular customer. I loved the sense of creativity and community I felt every time I walked in, and it sparked my idea for Coffee with Friends.

I started working part time as a barista while I earned my degree in entrepreneurship. After graduating in 2015, I studied as an apprentice under the owner of the coffee shop for two years while crafting my own business plan. I opened Coffee with Friends in 2017, and in the past three years we've earned multiple accolades, including recognition as one of the Top Five Best Coffee Shops in LA from *LA Foodie Magazine* in 2019. As a passionate environmentalist, my hands-down proudest accomplishment is going waste-free with reusable straws and compostable cups.

My favorite part of being a small business owner is the people; I'm a big believer everyone has a story to tell and I love hearing all of them from across the barista counter. Whether you're an LA local or just passing through, I hope to see you at Coffee with Friends soon.

THIRD-PERSON BIO:

Emma Brown is the founder of Coffee with Friends in Los Angeles, California. Emma is known for her vegan latte creations, environmentally-friendly cups and straws, and the community she's built at her shop.

Emma founded Coffee with Friends in 2017 as the culmination of her passions for business, service and meeting new people. In addition to her degree in entrepreneurship from The University of Southern California, Emma also studied as an apprentice under two decade-long coffee shop owner Mike Adams at Adams' Coffee Co.

In the past three years, Coffee with Friends has earned multiple accolades, including recognition as one of the Top Five Best Coffee Shops in LA from *LA Foodie Magazine* in 2019. As a passionate environmentalist,

Emma's proudest accomplishment is going waste-free with reusable straws and compostable cups.

Emma's favorite part of being a small business owner is the people; she's a big believer that everyone has a story to tell and loves hearing all of them from across the barista counter. When she's not at the coffee shop, you can find Emma volunteering at the local animal shelter. To connect with Emma, you can follow her on all social media channels at @emmascoffee, or listen to her podcast where she interviews her guests, *Coffee with Friends*.

NOW, IT'S TIME TO WRITE YOUR BIO!

If you get stuck, try some of these prompts to get you started again:

- My favorite part of [occupation] is...
- I love to...
- On the weekends, you can find me at...
- My proudest accomplishment is...
- Over the past [#] years, [your name] has...
- I'm an expert in...
- I'm excited by...
- I'm currently working on...
- I look forward to...



WRITE YOUR BIO

WRITE YOUR BIO