

# **FREELANCER'S BUSINESS BULLETIN**

May 2004

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**Dear Subscriber,**

Welcome to the May 2004 issue of Chris Marlow's FREELANCER'S BUSINESS BULLETIN. In this issue you'll discover how to get those super valuable testimonials that are so vital to your freelance success!

Copywriter Kim Stacey recently asked the question, "How can my client quickly generate testimonials?"

The answer is the same for her client as it is for us: You must develop them!

I must confess that in my own copywriting business I was lazy in this department and had to scramble once I decided to correct my negligence.

It's a fact that every couple of months about 10 percent of your business contacts change jobs, get promoted, quit work, or otherwise leave their positions. When that happens, your chance for getting a glowing testimonial from a happy client is gone forever!

So listen up...here are the secrets to painlessly growing your testimonial list:

## **KEEP A TUNED EAR**

Whenever a client compliments your work, ask immediately if you can use the statement as a testimonial. If it's verbal, write it down and send it to the client right away for changes or approval.

Oftentimes a client will compliment you in an email. That's

even better. All you do is reply, and ask if you can use the written statement as a testimonial.

## **CULTIVATE TESTIMONIALS**

If you did a great job for a client, they know it and you know it, ask for a testimonial. If you're on the phone, listen for a slight hesitation. If you discern some reluctance, it's probably not that your client doesn't want to write you a testimonial, but that there's something in the way.

I suspect the number one reason for reluctance is that you've just given your client a "job" to do. Now he has to think and spend time on your behalf, and it doesn't benefit him in any way.

Another "objection" is that he may be intimidated. Many people are poor spellers or insecure about their writing ability in general. And now they're being asked to write something for a professional writer! You can blast past both barriers by offering to write the testimonial yourself.

My approach is always something like this: "If you'd rather I write it and you edit, I can do that. I'll write it as close as possible to what you just said. All you have to do is approve it or make any changes."

I've never had a client say no to this suggestion. And often I've been able to tell that they were relieved that I assumed the burden.

## **REACH INTO THE PAST**

If you're just starting out in your freelance life and you don't have any testimonials, don't despair. Unless you were born yesterday, you DO have testimonials... they just haven't been written yet.

Clients value more than a successful job. They value professionalism. They care very much about deadlines. They want to know they're working with a human being who's easy to work with, not some stuffed shirt with a big ego.

Undoubtedly you've found favor in the eyes of those you've worked with in the past. Ask these people for testimonials! They can be past employers, friends you've done work for, even relatives (although it doesn't look so good if they have the same last name).

So THINK. Who have you helped in the past? Ask them for a testimonial...and if they hesitate, offer to write it for them.

### **THE LEGAL SIDE**

Whenever you get a testimonial, you should also get a signed and dated Testimonial Release. (You'll easily find forms on the Internet. However, for your convenience, the text from my own is contained at the bottom of this newsletter.)

What you want is permission to use the testimonial in any or all of your marketing, and protection against lawsuit for using the testimonial.

You might wonder if a client's permission, recorded in an email thread, will suffice. My guess is that the law would be on your side, but why take the chance? Although I've never heard of a copywriter being sued for testimonial use, copywriters are at risk for lawsuits.

### **A FINAL NOTE:**

Testimonials are worthless unless they carry a full name (no initials!), a company name, and a location. You also want to publish your client's title as well. Testimonials are about credibility. If you don't supply the details, what's the point?

### **OTHER IMPORTANT STUFF:**

- Send this valuable newsletter to your freelance friends! The FREELANCER'S BUSINESS BULLETIN was conceived for copywriters, but contains the same information any business freelancer can use to build their business.

- Become part of the Survey Team for the FREELANCER'S BUSINESS BULLETIN. You'll be among the first to get information on the business side of freelancing that

exists nowhere else!

Send an email to [chris@chrismarlow.com](mailto:chris@chrismarlow.com) and put "survey" in the subject line. In the body, state what kind of business freelancing you do (e.g., "copywriter," "designer," "white paper writer.") The FREELANCERS BUSINESS BULLETIN'S first Survey, addressing the state of the economy for freelancers, will distribute to members of the FBB's Survey Team in June.

By participating you'll find out whether the economy is better, the same, or worse than it was in 2003, for your freelance colleagues! (Remember, the larger the team, the more reliable the numbers. If you want accurate data, then you owe it to yourself to become a FBB Survey Team member!)

- Got a burning question about some aspect of building your freelance business? Send it to [chris@chrismarlow.com](mailto:chris@chrismarlow.com) and it may become a newsletter topic!

- Did a friend send you this newsletter? Get your own subscription at <http://www.TheCopywritersCoach.com> where you'll also find information on how to build your business FAST.

To your freelance prosperity,  
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COACHING, COPYWRITER FEES, AND MORE: Award-winning copywriter Chris Marlow has written for the nation's leading businesses for more than two decades. For information on powerful copywriting, visit: <http://www.chrismarlow.com>

Chris also offers business and copywriting coaching to new, aspiring, and seasoned copywriters who want to accelerate

their success. Check out the benefits of coaching at:  
<http://www.TheCopywritersCoach.com>

Chris has also created the world's only large-scale survey of copywriter pricing and economics. Find out what others charge and earn at:  
<http://www.FreelancersBusinessStore.com>

And for free information on how to quickly build a profitable freelance business, sign up for Chris' Freelancer's Business Bulletin at:  
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### **HERE IS THE TESTIMONIAL RELEASE COPY I PROMISED:**

I, <<full name>>, hereby declare:

1. As of <<date>>, I grant <<your name here>> the absolute right and permission to use in perpetuity my name and/or the initials representing my name and my likeness and photograph(s), video(s) of me, recording(s) of my voice, the city and state of my business or company I am affiliated with, and/or my profession, and the attached statements (the "Statements"), either alone or accompanied by other material, in any manner and in any media, throughout the world, for the purpose of advertising, promoting and publicizing <<your name here>> business(es).

2. The Statements may be used in whole or in part and may be paraphrased, amplified, shortened and/or put into conversational form to meet the requirements of copy, layout and/or script, provided the general sense is not

changed. I agree that <<your name here>> may use an actor or a model to portray me in any advertising, promotion or publicity materials which utilize the Statements.

3. I warrant and represent that all of the Statements are true and accurately reflect my honest opinion of and experience with <<your name here>> and/or her work. I have made these statements without any prior payment or promise of payment, or any other benefit having been made to me and without any expectation by me of any payment or benefit in return.

4. I waive all rights to inspect and approve the finished advertising, promotion, and publicity materials, their use and/or such written or spoken copy as may be used in connection with them.

5. I agree that I will not hold <<copywriter's name>> or anyone who receives permission from her responsible for any liability resulting from the use of my name, initials, likeness and photograph(s) in accordance with the terms hereof, including what might be deemed to be misrepresentation of me, my character or my person due to distortion, optical illusion or faulty reproduction which may occur in the finished materials.

6. I understand and agree that <<your name here >> is and shall be the exclusive owner of all right, title and interest, including copyright, in the testimonial, and any advertising or promotional materials containing my name, voice, visual likeness or image and/or statements.

7. I warrant that the rights and privileges granted herein do not infringe upon the legal or equitable rights of any other person, firm, or corporation.

8. I am of full legal age and have the right to give this release. I have also read this release and am fully familiar with its content.

Signed: Name: Date: Title: Company: Address: Phone:

