

FREELANCER'S BUSINESS BULLETIN

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This month's Featured Article:

'The World's Most Powerful Marketing Model for Freelance Copywriters...and Their Clients!'

Also, a chance to win the 2005 Copywriter Fee & Compensation Survey(tm)...a \$125 value!

Please add 'Chris Marlow' to your address book right now so you don't miss a single issue of one of the Web's most valuable ezines for freelancers!

To change your subscription, see the link at the bottom of this newsletter.

Dear Subscriber,

As a copywriter and copywriter's coach, it's my responsibility to offer powerful, on-target advice to my 'mentees.' For them as well as myself...and for you...I keep a keen watch on the world of freelance copywriting to pick up on changes and trends.

I spent part of December musing over numerous clues, statements, conversations, experiences, and purchased research pertaining to the business side of copywriting.

My conclusion? The world of copywriter marketing is changing rapidly...thanks to the Web.

I built my site in 1998. Back then there were few copywriters on the Internet. For a long time, when you keyed 'copywriter' into Yahoo, my site would come in at the top along with Bob Bly's and Ivan Levison's. I'm sure there were others, but these are the sites I remember.

With so few copywriters on the Web, I enjoyed a virtual

cornucopia of new clients for about four years, until copywriter newcomers started pushing my site down and down and down...until even I didn't look for my site any more.

Like everyone else, I had to start driving business to my site, and as time wore on, it proved a marketing model that worked very well.

But I believe a radical shift is now taking place...

...one that implores you to forget thinking about your WEB SITE as the centerpoint of your marketing and make your FREE EZINE the centerpoint instead!

Why is this?

Because the ezine is emerging as one of marketing's most powerful...and inexpensive...and superfast...marketing tools ever.

Note that free ezines have been around for a long time. Note also that there are hundreds of thousands of them! And note that YOU are subscribed to at least one :)

In the early days of the Internet virtually everyone looked upon this new medium...the Web...as one would look upon an extra-terrestrial. It LOOKS powerful, but where does that power come from?

Companies started pasting their employees' bios on the Web until pirating ran rampant. Then they moved toward wimpy 'online brochures.' Now enough testing has taken place and enough time has passed to offer clear direction on what works, what doesn't, and what wins.

And guess what wins?

You guessed it...the ezine!

Knowing this, I've gone from suggesting that my coaching students create a highly-targeted, content-rich ezine (or blog), to requiring it.

My own experience with an ezine (a tip of my hat and thanks

to you), proves the power of keeping in touch with a group of like-minded people. Because I work hard to bring useful content to my readers, my list grows steadily and my unsubscribe rate is low.

That said, here's what you must know about marketing your freelance business in 2006 and beyond:

Today's business-building writer should select one primary marketing method and strengthen it with other marketing methods that suit their temperament, location, goals, and target market.

I used to believe that one should pick two or three favorite marketing methods and do them exceedingly well. Now I believe that new copywriters who are entering the business at ground zero, with no name recognition in their marketplace, should use as many marketing tools as they can.

I still recommend direct mail as an essential marketing method because it's the only way to handpick your target audience...to know that the people you're reaching are of sufficient quality to deserve your time.

Your direct mailings and everything else you do... participation in discussion boards, article publication, face-to-face networking, cold calls, public speaking, and so on...should drive sign-ups to your ezine.

And it's from your EZINE that you do your most effective... and least expensive...selling. Over time, as your ezine readership grows, you can abandon your time-consuming direct mailings altogether.

More evidence that the ezine is becoming the world's most powerful marketing tool...

While on vacation in Oregon I brought along some overdue reading. One piece was Part 2 of Clayton Makepeace's interview with the legendary Gary Bencivenga. They're discussing mailing formats, particularly that of the magalog.

Clayton says, 'Everyone's looking for the next big format breakthrough...'

And Gary replies, 'I really think it's here already. I think it's an e-zine. I'm finding that with the clients I'm a partner with, I almost don't want to do direct mail anymore.'

'It's too tough to send a 24-page magalog to a prospect who doesn't know you. I don't think that direct mail will ever be dead, but rising paper costs, rising printing, and rising skepticism argue against people responding to cold mailings that are trying to sell them something right on the spot.'

'I think these factors argue instead for an elongated courtship of an e-zine that is of great value, where the selling process starts more subtly, a lot more softly. Perhaps in the future, the most profitable use of much direct mail will be to drive people into an e-zine relationship.'

Gary Bencivenga's take on the ezine only strengthens my long-held position that a free ezine should be an essential part of any copywriter's marketing toolkit.

Gary supports the age-old premise and marketing tactic that in lead-gen, you must lead your prospect down the path with high quality information that is valuable.

Here's another prediction:

The Internet will create more competition for the freelance copywriter.

This sounds scary but it's not. Direct marketers such as AWAI are reaching a vast market of people who want to transition from what they're doing now to a career with greater flexibility, freedom, and financial promise.

On the surface, it may look like lots of new copywriters are flooding the market...and they are!

But most target the obvious markets...the ones we can

readily see...such as alternative health and publishing.

And yes, you will see increased competition in the obvious markets as AWAI and other programs create more and more entry-level copywriters.

But this is a perfect example of tunnel vision. You see what's before you...not what actually exists.

And that's one of the things I do for my coaching students... I show them how to find lucrative hidden 'pockets' in traditional copywriting niches.

But it doesn't stop there.

I also show my copywriters how to discover exciting markets that other copywriters are unaware of...and under certain conditions, I can even show them how to CREATE their own niche markets!

So while it may seem that the market is flooding with new copywriters, the truth is that the new copywriters will flood only the obvious markets. The world of business is full of markets...hidden and not.

The Internet has made marketing faster, easier, and cheaper for service providers such as copywriters.

I have long marveled over the low cost of maintaining a Web site. Creating a presence in other Web venues (such as discussion groups and blog postings) is virtually free. You can write articles for free and distribute them online for free or at low cost. My own positive experience is proof that the effort to 'show up' all over the Web is worth it.

And in a recent conversation with a successful nonprofit copywriter, I learned that email marketing can work well IF you have a reliable source for names and their email addresses.

To avoid spamming, you'll need to find lists where prospects in a target market have 'put their names and emails out there,' and would not be surprised by a cold contact coming in this way. If you're in a niche market

that has associations, this is the most likely place to find such a list.

Local clients can be a good source of income for the beginning copywriter.

I used to advise against targeting local clients because they usually want you to come to the office for meetings and to 'pick up the check.' It's a bad use of your time, that's true, but if you have a connection with someone local who you think would hire you, it's money in the door, experience, and a sample for your portfolio.

And no, they don't have to be in your niche market. You do want a 'connection,' however weak. I once did fun work for Oregon specialty cataloger Norm Thompson. While they usually don't hire freelance, they used me because I lived in Lake Oswego, which was a stone's throw to their Wilsonville location.

If you have the stomach, talent, and opportunity for public speaking, do it!

It's one of the most effective marketing tools you can use. And because relatively few copywriters like public speaking (including me), there's plenty of opportunity to get before groups that are eager to hear what you have to say.

Board members are always looking for their next speaker. Believe me, you will be welcomed! Just be sure to avoid groups that have little to offer, such as groups of other solopreneurs.

In my opinion, networking is equal in power to doing steady direct mail mailings to your target market.

And that means both online and off. This is where you definitely do want to stick to your target market, especially in any offline efforts. It's simply too time-consuming to hob-nob with groups that you don't have a strong connection with.

It bears repeating...

Make sure ALL your marketing activities send people to your free ezine.

This is the model everyone is using...first it was the small guys, then the mid-size companies caught on, then I saw Agora's Internet marketing model...now even the big guys are putting the ezine at the center of their marketing!

Just be aware that it takes 'multiple touches' before you can expect to see your relationships turn into business. Some say to plan a minimum of nine touches, and for some copywriting markets, you may find that it takes up to two years of continued contact to gain the trust of your prospect.

THIS is why I now advocate using as many marketing tools as you reasonably can when first starting out...touch as many people as possible, always driving to your list...then touch your own list with frequent mailings (at least once a month), while staying in front of your audience in as many ways as possible.

When I say 'use as many marketing tools as you reasonably can,' I don't mean use everything at your disposal. We're all human and we have limits.

If you try to use every marketing tool at your disposal you'll dilute your efforts. Best to pick those that are right for you from your burgeoning 'package' of possibilities.

This is one place a good coach can help you accelerate your success...by showing you how to create a customized marketing plan. Copywriters are akin to marketers...and smart marketers craft marketing plans that maximum their exposure both online and off.

End note: This article is available at no cost for reprint as long as it's reprinted in its entirety.

You know who I am, now I want to know who YOU are!

I was all set to change the name of the Freelancer's Business Bulletin to the Copywriter's Business Bulletin, but a detailed analysis of our database reveals that we have people who identify themselves as copywriters (41 percent), freelance writers (22 percent) sales/marketing/creative/design pros (13 percent). And the rest of my subscribers (24 percent) are nurses, truck drivers, masseuses, ministers, scientists, paralegals, other professions, and retired.

So I've decided not to make a name change after all. What I DO want to do, however, is find out why you subscribe to the Freelancer's Business Bulletin, and what you would like me to bring you in 2006.

Right now I'm working on a new series of publications that reveal the TRUTH about working in specific markets. The first one is due at the end of February and is entitled 'The TRUTH About Copywriting for Non-profits.'

Why did I pick that niche to start with? Because I get MANY questions from my subscribers and coaching students about this niche. So I'm doing the hard research to bring you the truth...including statistical research and no-holds-barred verbatim interviews with leading copywriters in the industry!

While we're on the subject, please participate in my short, anonymous Survey for non-profit copywriters! Go to:
<http://tinyurl.com/adv8l>

But please participate ONLY if you consider yourself niched into non-profit either part or full-time. When the Survey closes, I'll share some delicious information about what our copywriter colleagues have told us about the TRUTH of working in this mysterious and intriguing niche!

Okay...what else would you like to know the TRUTH about?
Please email me now and let me know: chris@chrismarlow.com

We're starting free monthly teleseminars in February and these will also be forums for revealing the TRUTH about what it's like to work in specific niche markets.

My pledge is to always bring you advice you can trust, so you can make the RIGHT decisions...decisions that can affect your entire future...and determine the level of your work satisfaction and financial security.

Give me your opinion and you could win my 2005 Freelance Copywriter Fee & Compensation Survey(tm)!

The 2005 Freelance Copywriter Fee & Compensation Survey is still for sale at the INTRODUCTORY price of \$125.

It's been on the market and selling briskly since its debut last April.

I've been wondering how long an 'introductory' price should last. Six months? A year? We're past six months and closing in on a year.

So I've been getting ready to deal with a price increase that I really don't want to put into place. Many people who purchase the Survey Report send me wonderful testimonials and say that it's worth much more than the \$125 cover price...especially those who earned back their investment on their next (more accurately priced) job.

Marlene Jensen, the pricing expert I hired to help me set the price came in at \$250. But I'm a copywriter and I know what MY limit is.

That's why I cut the price in half for the rollout, and decided to call \$125 an 'Introductory Price,' intending to bring the price up to where Marlene said it should be sometime later.

Well, that 'sometime later' is here, nipping at my heels. I

know I can't go lower than \$125 for the 2005 Freelance Copywriter Fee & Compensation Survey, but what shall I set the price at so more copywriters can afford this truly important information?

To take the burden off me, and let you do the work, I've decided to let YOU set the new price!

Right now the Survey Report contains statistical pricing for these common copywriting jobs:

- * lead-gen sales letters
- * order-gen sales letters
- * lead-gen classic packages
- * order-gen classic packages
- * catalog copy
- * full page print ads
- * quarter page print ads
- * home page copy
- * web site copy
- * email letters
- * self-mailers
- * magalogs
- * newsletters
- * lift notes
- * publisher's renewal series
- * order forms
- * lead-gen microsites
- * order-gen microsites
- * email letters
- * concepting

To read more about the Survey Report, go to:
<http://www.FreelancersBusinessStore.com>

Then send me an email with a dollar figure in the subject line (I'll know what it's for). I'll ask Jackie Robinson, my office manager, to randomly pick an email response and I'll announce the winner in the February issue of the Freelancer's Business Bulletin!

Tell me what YOU think I should charge for the 2005 Freelance Copywriter Fee & Compensation Survey.

Email your suggested price (in the subject line) to:
chris@chrismarlow.com

A GREAT new book by Bob Bly that I highly recommend!

Bob sent me his new 'Write and Grow Rich' ebook and I read the WHOLE THING over my vacation. It's SO content rich! And it contains up-to-the-minute information you can use to price right and grow your business.

In paging through it, here are a few snippets from the underlines and the little stars I use to mark the stuff that 'wows' me:

- * 'In every market and endeavor, there is a segment of the market willing, even eager, to hire beginners instead of experienced professionals.'
- * 'Statistically, one third of those you come in contact with will be potential clients open to working with novice writers, and you will get assignments from them.'
- * 'Some of the best-paying clients: Fortune 500 corporations, Madison Avenue ad agencies, large New York book publishers, major-market consumer magazines with large circulations.'
- * '...double your fees. Starting tomorrow. You will be shocked to find that the majority of prospects pay them without blinking. Reason: 90 percent of writers just charge too little...and you are probably one of them.'

And particularly relevant to this month's Freelancer's Business Bulletin topic:

- * '...have you considered publishing your own ezine? I do. And it has been my most successful self-promotion... generating thousands of dollars in extra income every month. You can too.'

Read more about this wonderful new ebook at:
<http://tinyurl.com/8oq9g>

Coaching time slots are available

Discover the perfect niche market for you. Put together a CUSTOM marketing program for accelerating the success of your freelance business. Develop branding that attracts the right kind of clients. This and much more when I show you how to market your freelance business. Check out my coaching program at: <http://www.TheCopywritersCoach.com>

Other stuff:

*** Send this newsletter to your copywriter and freelance writer friends. They'll thank you!

*** What baffles you most about building a freelance business? It may become a newsletter topic if you send it to me at: chris@chrismarlow.com

*** Did a friend send you this newsletter? Get your own subscription at <http://www.FreelancersBusinessBulletin.com> where you'll also get the valuable complimentary Report, 'The Secret to Successful Projects Every Time - Guaranteed!'

To your freelance success,

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Veteran freelancer and award-winning copywriter Chris Marlow has written for the nation's leading businesses for over 20 years. Visit her copywriting site at:
<http://www.chrismarlow.com>