

FREELANCER'S BUSINESS BULLETIN

March 2006

This month's Featured Article:

"How to Get the Undivided Positive Attention of a Potential Client — Guaranteed!"

ALSO in this issue...

Announcing a BRAND NEW copywriter's survey designed to bring you more hidden pricing information :)

FIRE SALE! (Well, really it's just to drum up money for my tax bill :) I'm rolling back prices on The Freelancers Fee & Compensation Survey!

Plus Chris' "Quick Q & A" column: "How important is design to my professional marketing materials?"

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Please add "Chris Marlow" to your address book so you don't miss a single issue of one of the web's most valuable ezines for copywriters, coaches, and other business consultants!

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

Dear Subscriber,

Things are rapidly changing in the world of freelance copywriting...and probably graphic design too.

Like a cat that smells a rat, I've been on alert for signs of increased competition in the marketplace. And while little things have been filtering in, not looking terribly significant by themselves, when I add them up with feedback from my subscribers, coaching clients, and colleagues, the

picture becomes clear:

Competition in the freelance copywriter marketplace is on the rise!

The day I became really alarmed was the day Sebastian, one of my past coaching students, emailed me with a hot prospect. The prospect said he had several copywriters he was looking at but he was especially interested in Sebastian because he was the only one who specialized in his (very narrow) niche.

While Sebastian was focused on landing the client, I was freaking out that the potential client said he had "several other" copywriters he was looking at.

You see...we had carved out a VERY specialized sub-niche for Sebastian in the health care market...and I mean drilled way down and going sideways (I don't want to give his super cool, super sub-niche away).

What alarmed me is that this prospect was cherry picked by Sebastian, as part of the list-building phase of my coaching program, the part where my coaching students pick the clients THEY want to work with (rather than taking whatever garbage comes to them).

Anyway, that was the day I decided it was time to really turn the dial up on the marketing tactics I teach my coaching clients.

Thinking back to some of my biggest winners as a copywriter, I decided to institute the "bulky mailing" technique into the coaching syllabus.

What's the "bulky mailing technique" you say?

Well, you probably have it figured out already, but it's simply a good idea already, but So what this means is that rather than doing your standard 2-page sales letter delivered in your standard #10 business envelope...

When it comes time to do that first introductory mailing to the hand-picked list of super-high-quality clients (the

ones that pay well, respect you, and can provide first class portfolio samples)...then we forego the standard run-of-the-mill sales letter in a number 10 envelope, and do a high-impact, in-your-face, impressive "bulky" mailer instead!

Mailers that have something in them...a tea bag, a toy airplane, a wad of fake money...these get a super high open rate, and a very high level of involvement.

What are the statistics?

Well, they're all over the board, but you can expect a bulky package to get past the gatekeepers, and you can expect four times the impact/response of your basic mailer.

And really, if your idea is relevant to what you're selling, rather than just a gimmick, your results should be off the scale!

So what are some ideas you can use? In an ad agency, this is called "concepting." You think of some unusual and relevant as a way to get the attention of your target. The elements of your campaign — the envelope, a letter, a "bulky item," etc. — are developed after the main message has been determined. And as we all know by now (don't we?)...the best message usually has to do with solving someone's pain.

So ok. What would this look like...a "bulky item" concept that supports a message that promises to alleviate a pain of your target audience?

Years ago a client came to me who said, "I need to fill seminar seats so I can sell dentists my \$15,000 marketing solution. But the problem is, it's hard to get through the gatekeeper. The front office keeps dumping my letters."

My client knew that dentists are very busy, under a lot of pressure (this is the pain). So I came up with the idea of sending a couple of tea bags along with the letter.

The messaging (from memory) was "I know you're very busy and rarely get time to rest. But here's an invitation to

take a break with a cup of chamomile tea. And while you're enjoying a well-deserved moment of calm, give yourself the opportunity to consider this offer..."

The bulky envelope idea was a smashing success and my client used it for years. The "bulk" in the envelope gave the mailing importance (or intrigue), and got it past the gatekeeper and into the dentist's hands. And apparently, the dentists liked it that someone understood their "pain."

You can use the same tactic to set yourself apart from all the other (less imaginative) copywriters out there.

The key is to come up with an inexpensive idea for a bulky item that's relevant to your message. And the most effective message is the one that promises to alleviate a pain your prospect must grapple with.

Where to get ideas for 3-D or bulky mailers

In the agency world (where I come from), there are companies that supply specialty items for bulky mailers. Here's the URL for one of them:

<https://www.impactproducts.net>

Click on the navigation link, Promotional Products Catalog

Then click on "Product Category" and see the drop down menu of perhaps 100-plus ideas you can use. These items are part of the catalog because they're the kind of items that often have "relevance" to a smart marketing message.

This site will get your thinking going, but remember, the best ideas are original ideas, spawned by your own creative solutions to client problems.

Chris Marlow helps new and aspiring copywriters and other solo-preneurs find their niche and then land the best clients within that niche. You can check out her coaching program at: <http://www.TheCopywritersCoach.com>

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

Exciting news on our new teleseminars!

Soon I'll be offering teleseminars for sharing the hard-core nuts and bolts for putting together a killer marketing system for copywriters, coaches, and consultants. Kim Stacey, one of my FIRST coaching students, will moderate.

Stay tuned...I promise it will be fun, exciting, and PROFITABLE!

Chris' Quick Q & A

This month I was asked "Should I work with international clients?"

And my answer is "Yes!"

I've been copywriting for a software company in Israel for the past two months. And I've had coaching students in Japan, the U.K., Belgium, Spain, Canada, and more.

The only hiccup in providing services for international clients is getting paid. But these days it's easy to get an online merchant account. And even if you don't have an online merchant account, you can still have one that's offline.

The ability to process credit cards will open up new business for you, and not just international business. Be sure to use your fee agreement contracts, and you should be fine!

Want to use this article on your website, blog, or ezine? Be my guest, as long as you include this complete blurb:

Self-marketing coach Chris Marlow publishes the Freelancer's Business Bulletin for copywriters, coaches, and other business consultants who want to accelerate their marketing success. Sign up for a free subscription at:

<http://www.FreelancersBusinessBulletin.com>

Earn thousands more by pricing right...

My seminal survey, the 2005 Freelance Copywriters Fee & Compensation Survey, reveals benchmark pricing on marketing's most "in demand" 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 find out why every copywriter MUST have this Survey Report, go to:

<http://www.FreelancersBusinessStore.com>

Do you need coaching for the business side of copywriting?

Do you wonder how create a powerful introductory mailing to your niche market...or even how to find out what your niche market should be?

Email my office manager, Jackie Robinson, at:
d-jrobinson@earthlink.net

She'll schedule you for a personal one-on-one coaching

session with me and you'll come away with the solution to your problem.

For information on long-term coaching, visit:

<http://www.TheCopywritersCoach.com>

Send this newsletter to your freelance friends. They'll thank you, and so will I!

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To your freelance success,

Chris Marlow

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Award-winning copywriter Chris Marlow, <http://www.chrismarlow.com>, has written for the nation's leading businesses for over 20 years.

She now coaches copywriters, coaches and consultants in marketing to high profile clients. Visit her coaching site at:

<http://www.TheCopywritersCoach.com>