

FREELANCER'S BUSINESS BULLETIN

August 2005

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Dear Subscriber,

Welcome to the August 2005 issue of Chris Marlow's Freelancer's Business Bulletin (FBB).

This month I'll share a problem every copywriter experiences at one time or another...

And that's what to do when you're left "standing at the altar" on a copywriting job.

One of my favorite past students emailed me a couple of weeks ago with this distressing situation. In her own words:

"What do you do when you talk to a potential client several times and you both agree on the details of a project. (The project is worth \$4,800.) They seem pleased and excited about continuing.

"I send them my 'Fee Agreement' with details on where to fax it and where to send the deposit. I emphasize the point that I can not begin work on the project until I have both the signed Agreement and deposit. I wait...and wait...

"Four days later I send them a short and friendly email asking if they have received the information and again remind them that I can not begin work until I have the Agreement and deposit. No response. The due date that we set for the initial stage of the project is approaching...

"What do I do? Have they dropped the project? Do I give them another nudge or is this too pushing?"

How to interpret a client's silence...

In my experience there are several possibilities for why a client suddenly shuts down at the beginning of a job:

1. More often than you'd think, it's not YOU, it's something awry internally. And if it's a budget issue (like not being able to cut a 50% check on demand), it's less embarrassing for the contact to remain silent while he or she tries to remedy the situation.

In other words, the silence may simply be a stalling tactic. It's far less painful to come back to a copywriter and say "Sorry, the boss was out of town and we needed her signature," than to say "We're so stretched we can't pay you \$2,400 right now."

Another hold-up is the possibility that the contact has "hired you," but now needs to "sell the boss." In this case, patience is a virtue.

2. There may be a turn of events on their side. World affairs, a business emergency, a sick employee, or a change in business strategy are just a few common derailers. I've even seen delays because a merger was imminent (and with mergers there are usually power struggles...in which case your contact may be unsure of what business decisions to make).

3. If this is a new client, you may have a lemon on your hands...and by requiring a signed Fee Agreement and partial payment up front, you've exposed them for being willing to put you to work without paying for it.

Unfortunately, many copywriters get burned when they start copy, only to have the client pull out. That's why I teach my coaching students to submit a Fee Agreement and the moment it's signed, invoice for partial payment up front. If the client is distant, then ask for the check to be over-nighted. Never start clock time without a check in your hand first!

If the client's not willing to do business with you on the same terms they do business with everyone else, then you

don't want them.

Still, when you find yourself in the situation my coaching student did (and which I've been in many times), you do want to give the benefit of the doubt.

How many times should you "nudge" a silent client before calling it a day?

I would send a maximum of three emails (one every two or three days), and on the third email (about the 7th day) I'd say that it appears the project is stalled. I would leave the door open by letting the client know that "I'm setting the file aside, but I'm here when and if you move forward."

When you show your client that you respect your time, they will respect it too.

Coaching time slots are now available!

I've been fully booked with coaching students since January. With several students now "graduating," I'm now able to take new students.

if you want to put together a proven program for getting the RIGHT kind of clients and earning your highest potential, check out my coaching program at <http://www.TheCopywritersCoach.com>

Don't put it off...once the slots are filled it can take months for another opening!

Find out what other hundreds of other copywriters charge for their work...

The 2005 Freelance Copywriter Fee & Compensation Survey offers statistical guidance on 20 common copywriting jobs, including:

- * print sale letters
- * web site copy
- * email letters
- * self-mailers
- * full mailer packages

Plus info on what copywriters charge per hour, how they find clients, and what they earn per year!

Check it out at:
<http://FreelancersBusinessStore.com>

Don't miss a single issue of the Freelancer's Business Bulletin...

Our new content management system reveals that the Freelancer's Business Bulletin has been "spam rejected" by 2 percent of subscribers. To make sure you always receive your free issue, add "Chris Marlow" to your address book.

Need help pricing a project?

If I can't help you, my super agent, Kevin Finn can! Don't risk losing a pile of money on a pricing mistake. For a small investment, you have not one but two pricing experts at your disposal. Email me at chris@chrismarlow.com if you need pricing help and negotiation strategy for any copy job.

Other stuff:

*** Send this 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.

*** Got a burning question about some aspect of building your freelance business? It may become a newsletter

topic if you send it to:
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. She also offers business coaching and master-level copywriting to new and aspiring copywriters and other business freelancers who want to accelerate their success. Check out the benefits of coaching at:
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