

FREELANCER'S BUSINESS BULLETIN

February 2005

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Dear Subscriber,

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

This month I'll answer a question posed by Cynthia B. who is returning to copywriting after a long absence. She wants to know:

How important it is to have an "agency quality" website?

The answer is that it is very important to have a high quality website IF you are prospecting other than locally.

When you prospect locally, the client can meet you personally. But when you prospect nationally, your website, "telephone" personality, and marketing materials form the basis of your prospective client's impression of you.

Fortunately, it's not difficult to find a designer/webmaster who can help you build a high quality site at a reasonable cost. And some of my students do a very nice job of creating a quality site themselves.

Because I've found national prospecting to be far more profitable than working with local business, I encourage my coaching students to prospect nationally (and sometimes internationally), and create a website that supports a sophisticated positioning.

What, exactly, constitutes an "agency quality" website?

Here are five pointers for creating a website that convinces quality clients that you are the right copywriter for them (plus

two common mistakes to avoid):

1. Make sure your website has a "you" orientation. The Home page should not talk about "you" except in the context of what you can offer a client.
2. Have a "unique selling proposition" (USP), or positioning statement. Why are you "the best" choice? Do you serve a particular niche? Are you an expert at some important element of copywriting (e.g., offer development, headlines, concepting, etc.)? Make sure your USP "shines through" on your Home page.
3. View your entire site as a lead-generating tool. If you write a direct response package, you first try to get your prospect into the envelope. Once inside, you attempt to lead your prospect through the package, with the end destination the reply card or order device.

Use the same principle in designing your website and its navigation. Always send your prospect to the "contact me" page, or the page where you offer more information. As with any lead-generation effort, your only goal is to get your website visitor to respond.

4. Create an offer, and offer it on your website. Unlike general advertising, direct marketing is defined by the offer. If you don't have an offer, you're not employing the most fundamental rule of marketing, and it will cost you responses.
5. Pay attention to look and feel. Copywriters have the right and responsibility to make sure the end product produces leads or sales.

This means that the copywriter should offer the art director some level of direction on look and feel (without overstepping bounds, of course).

A clean, well-organized website that exhibits a "professional finish" will offer a sophisticated client some level of assurance that contacting you will not be a waste of their time.

What NOT to do on your website:

First and foremost, don't "preach to the choir." Because the world of copywriting is new to new copywriters, they have a tendency to "tell what they know" on their website.

But a quality client (usually mid-size to large companies and organizations), doesn't want to know WHY copywriting will help him. He already knows that, even if he doesn't know how to write copy himself.

What he's looking for is validation that you could be the RIGHT copywriter for him.

Websites that attempt to "teach" generally attract clients who need teaching (oftentimes small business with a low appreciation of what good copywriting can do for them, and an even lower threshold for paying reasonable fees).

The second mistake I see is mentioning price on the Home page (or anywhere in the site, for that matter).

Quality clients do not put price first, and any discussion of price usually comes after the copywriter has a complete picture of the marketing problem that needs to be solved.

Not long ago, one of my coaching students complained that his prospects seemed fixated on price. After going to his website I noticed that his Home page positioned him as more attractively priced than other copywriters.

This positioning inadvertently created a USP based on "low price" — something we copywriters should always avoid.

Bringing up the subject of price on your website will actually cause your prospect to put it front and center. Best to let pricing discussions occur "naturally" in the process of landing a job.

The 2005 FREELANCE COPYWRITER FEE & COMPENSATION SURVEY is the world's first and only comprehensive survey on copywriter fees and economics.

Nearly 300 copywriters reveal their pricing for 21 common copywriting jobs, and share intimate details on hourly rate, yearly income, marketing methods, and much more.

For more information, visit:

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JOHN AND KEVIN FINN of Finn Communications in Redondo Beach, California, are agents to copywriters who work on commission only and/or earn incomes in the \$200,000 to \$1,000,000+ range.

If you fit this category, please contact John at john@johnfinn.com or Kevin at kevin@finncom.com, or call 310-373-0743. If there's a "fit," John and Kevin will thank you with a recently published marketing encyclopedia by Jay Abraham valued at \$10,000.

Other Important 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? Send it to chris@chrismarlow.com and it may become a newsletter topic!

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To your freelance prosperity,

Chris Marlow

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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 instruction to new and aspiring copywriters and other business freelancers who want to accelerate their success. Check out the benefits of coaching at <http://www.TheCopywritersCoach.com>

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