

ProCopyTips

Copywriting Tips for *Smart* Copywriters

12 Astonishingly Simple Ways to

Dazzle Your Clients & Double Your Income

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Why “Churn and Burn” Can Torpedo Your Freelance Copywriting Business

If you're like most freelance copywriters, you're making a grave mistake that costs you thousands of dollars a year.

What is this mistake?

It's what sales people call “churn and burn.”

That means finding a prospect, turning them into a client, getting paid for a project, then having to find a new prospect to turn into a client for a new paying project, and so on.

Obviously you don't do this all the time. You probably have at least one or two clients who hire you for more than one project. But it's likely that you're churning clients more than you should.

It's not hard to understand.

After you've completed one project, you'd love for the client to hand over another project, but when they don't, the natural reaction is to find another client.

I'm not saying you shouldn't be attracting new clients. You should. But if you're targeting and landing good clients, the sort who have a lot of work and could easily hire you repeatedly, and you're *not* getting repeat business, there's a problem.

And the problem is two-fold.

First, if good clients are not hiring you repeatedly, it means you're not doing enough to make them want to work with you again and again. You may be doing your job well, but sometimes good work just isn't enough.

According to a *U.S. News and World Report* article published a

few years ago, when clients move from one service provider to another, it's almost never because something terrible happens. It's generally for *no particular reason*.

There are a few specific reasons a client may fail to hire you again. For example, your contact may get another job, a competitor may win their business, or you may do something your client doesn't like.

But most of the time, you won't get repeat projects for no special reason at all.

They can't say exactly why. They just have a vague feeling that they aren't satisfied. They don't feel an overwhelming urge to hire you again.

Second, by not getting repeat business, you are forced to churn and burn. The endless cycle of chasing clients to get projects can quickly burn you out and suck the life out of your freelance business.

If you've been freelancing for even a few months, you know how much time and effort goes into landing clients.

You have to market yourself to your chosen niche, establish a reputation, reach out to potential clients, provide information and estimates, possibly meet with them in person, and share samples of your past work. Then you often have to follow up with them for weeks or months.

You can easily spend more time gaining a client than you do completing the project you're eventually hired to do.

So if you're in a cycle of landing an endless stream of new clients in order to get paying projects, you can spend half or more of your time *not* writing and *not* getting paid.

The bottom line: Even if you do competent work, you're going

to lose repeat projects. When you lose repeat projects, you'll have to churn and burn. And when you churn and burn, you'll dramatically reduce your earning potential.

The 80/20 Rule and What It Means for You

To make money as a freelance copywriter, you need a stream of paying projects. The more projects you have, the more money you make.

Note that I didn't say you need a stream of new clients. You need a stream of "paying projects."

Where do you get a stream of projects if you're not taking on a stream of new clients? From the clients you already have.

Let me be absolutely clear about this: *Your best source for paying projects is your existing client pool.*

It's always easier and more profitable to work with current clients than with new clients. You know their expectations. You don't spend time marketing, sending information, and following up. And you're familiar with their products and services.

When you get projects from existing clients, you spend almost no time landing the project. You spend most of your time writing copy and cashing checks.

In the business world, successful entrepreneurs often cite the 80/20 rule. It means that 80% of your business will come from 20% of your clients.

So if you have 10 clients, it's likely that 2 of those clients will account for the majority of your income.

When talking to fellow freelancers about managing clients, I tell them they must have a "portfolio" of clients. Some will give

you one or two projects, others will give you occasional projects, while a handful will hire you repeatedly. Respectively, I call these clients, the Filler Clients, the Bread and Butter Clients, and the Cash Cow Clients.

The Filler Clients are those who give you small projects that can fill open slots in your schedule. The Bread and Butter Clients are those who hire you now and then and provide fairly regular and reliable income.

But the Cash Cow Clients are those who keep you busy with a seemingly endless stream of work. And at the end of the year, you can add up your earnings and see they have provided the bulk of your income, often around 80%.

It's important to avoid becoming too dependent on too few clients. But the reality is that, to maximize your income, you must have those Cash Cow Clients.

Those kind of clients don't just happen. It's up to you to turn one-time clients into repeat clients.

Success is All About Repeat Business

So what are we saying here? We're saying that instead of focusing most of your efforts on getting new clients, you should instead focus your efforts on securing *repeat business*.

In a sense, I'm saying you should market your services to your best clients.

That doesn't mean sending letters and ads to your clients. It means dealing with your clients in such a way that they want to hire you repeatedly.

So, what's the secret to getting repeat projects?

I think I can explain this best by sharing a story about a service provider who turned *me* into a repeat client.

My wife and I live in a nice, two-story, 4,000+ square foot home. However, the former owners were, shall we say, less than delicate.

I don't know if they gave birth to kids gone wild, threw frequent drunken parties, or housed a herd of restless bulls, but the walls were scraped, scuffed, and dinged when we first moved in.

Fortunately, it wasn't anything spackle and new paint wouldn't fix. So we made some inquiries and hired a local painter named John.

Even though John came highly recommended, I've had bad luck hiring handymen, so I had serious doubts. No amount of sales patter would convince me that he would do good work or act like a professional.

John surprised me. He dressed neatly and spoke to us in a friendly, relaxed way. He asked about our preferences and what we wanted done. He also made several smart suggestions for how to paint each room.

As John began two weeks of painting, we watched him work quickly and professionally, making all his paint lines straight and cleaning up after himself at the end of each day.

He even did extra things, such as fix two faulty light switches, repair a shower valve that was on backwards, and reduce the bill because the materials cost less than he estimated.

And every day when he entered our home, he removed his outside shoes and put on a clean pair of inside shoes to make sure he didn't track anything.

He was even fun to have around. He would talk to us about his family, ask us about our work, and chat about his favorite restaurants. Unlike most people who might work on our home, John was a guy we came to think of as our friend and someone we liked having around.

In short, he *dazzled* us. He did top-notch work for a fair price and left us thinking that we could not possibly hire any other painter. Not only have we hired John again, we've enthusiastically recommended him to several of our neighbors as the best painter we've ever known.

Is that how your clients react to you when you write copy for them? Do you just do good work and get the job done? Or do you dazzle them? Do you leave them convinced you are THE copywriter to call? The ONLY copywriter to hire?

This is what this report is about. To show you a few simple ways to dazzle your clients and gain repeat business from them. It's the easiest and most direct way to increase your freelance copywriting income.

12 Ways to Dazzle Your Freelance Clients

1. Ask a LOT of questions.

This is the key to smooth, successful projects. The more questions you ask, the more you will understand about your client's expectations and what your objective is.

I didn't learn this in a book. By nature, I've always been highly inquisitive and systematic. So even in my earliest days as a freelancer, I found myself asking many questions.

Clients always seem impressed by this. Apparently, most copywriters ask few, if any, questions and just start writing. This can lead to misunderstandings, poorly chosen themes, off-target copy, and bad results.

One day I ran across a copywriting checklist by the legendary Don Hauptman. He said he used this checklist to make sure he collected all the information he needed for every writing project. And if you know anything about Don, he's a stickler for details.

I liked the idea so much, I adapted the [checklist](#) to my own needs and have used it ever since.

Here are the questions I ask:

- DESCRIPTION. What is the product or service you want to sell?
- PURPOSE. What does the product do? What's the "big idea" behind it?
- FEATURES. What do you know about it? Facts, statistics, specifications?
- BENEFITS. What will it do for people? Does it solve a problem, save money, save time, make a task easier?
- UNIQUE SELLING PROPOSITION. What is it about this product that is really different, new, better, unique?
- COMPETITION. Can you describe similar products?
- POSITIONING. How does this product fit into the market relative to competitors?
- YOUR COMPANY. Does the company have a special history, unique owner, awards?
- PRICE. How much does it cost?
- SAMPLE. Can I look at it or try it for myself?

- PROSPECT. Male or female? Income level? Family situation? Lifestyle and general description? In business, what is his/her title/responsibility? Biggest concerns, fears, attitudes? How will he/she use your product to get ahead or to keep from falling behind? For consumers, what main interest/desire/action does it appeal to?
- SECONDARY PROSPECTS. Who else might want this product?
- OBJECTIONS. Why would someone NOT want this product?
- TESTIMONIALS & ENDORSEMENTS. Letters from happy users? Media coverage? Celebrity endorsements?
- COMPLAINTS. Letters from unhappy customers? Phone calls?
- ASSIGNMENT. Print ad? Direct mail? E-mail? Brochure? Insert? Broadcast spot? Complete campaign? Other?
- OBJECTIVE. Inquiries or leads? Direct sales? Traffic building? List building?
- OFFER. Free trial? Introductory price? Premium? Time limit? Free information?
- CALL TO ACTION. How will you ask for the order?
- BUDGET. How much can be spent on this promotion?
- SCHEDULE. When does this need to be done?
- LISTS/MEDIA. What have you used in the past? What worked and what didn't? What statistics do you have?
- SAMPLES OF PAST PROMOTIONS. Winners and losers?
- TESTS. Will you test lists, offers, price, creative, etc.?

- REQUIRED COPY POINTS. What information or legal copy must be included?
- TABOOS. What can never be said or promised?
- RESTRICTIONS. Are there parameters you must work within?
- METHOD OF PAYMENT. Check? Credit card? Purchase order? Bill me later? Installments?
- METHOD OF ORDERING. Mail? Phone? Fax? Online?
- GUARANTEE. What are the exact terms of the guarantee?
- OTHER. What else is important? Research and background material? Demographic studies? Focus group reports? Creative briefs?
- BACKGROUND READING / PEOPLE TO TALK TO

These questions are not comprehensive. I always have additional questions related to each project. But these are enough to get the conversation going and get my client thinking.

You can use this questionnaire if you like or adapt it to your own needs. For example, I used to write a lot of software direct mail and created a highly targeted version of this questionnaire focused on those products.

2. Do your research.

Even if you've asked lots of questions, there is no substitute for digging deeper and learning about your client's company, products, customers, and competitors.

Clients can't be fully objective, so you can often discover facts and ideas that your client can't see or doesn't think are important. Spend time poring over company literature, past ads and

promotions, testimonials, and testing data.

Pull ideas from your past projects that may apply. Talk to your fellow copywriters or other clients. Put feelers out on your [LinkedIn](#) network or [Twitter](#) followers.

Perhaps the best research tool you have today is [Google](#). You can find nearly anything with a few keystrokes if you know how to search effectively.

Google Search Hacks

Type:

investment newsletter
 investment OR newsletter
 "investment newsletter"
 investment -newsletter
 ~investment
 define:investment
 allintitle: investment newsletter
 inurl: investment newsletter

Google searches for:

"investment" *and* "newsletter"
 "investment" *or* "newsletter"
 exact phrase "investment newsletter"
 "investment" but *not* "newsletter"
 "investment" plus synonyms
 definitions of the word "investment"
 keywords in page titles
 keywords in page URLs

Bonus Google Search Tools

Go to [Google](#) and click on "more," then click on "even more" to reveal a full page of search tools, including:

- Blog Search – search for blogs on specific topics
- Books – search the full text of books
- Directory – search by topic or category
- Earth – explore the world
- Finance – search business info, news, and charts
- Images – search for images
- Maps – view maps, directions, terrain and satellite images
- News – search thousands of news stories
- Patent Search – search the full text of US Patents
- Scholar – search for scholarly papers
- Videos – search for videos

3. Suggest alternate ideas.

I once had a client who referred to freelancers as “hands.” That’s how he saw them. Just a pair of hands to do some grunt work he didn’t want to deal with.

But top copywriters are more than hands typing copy. They’re consultants, selling their skill and expertise.

In my line of work, for example, clients hire me to help them make sales, generate sales leads, or raise funds. The words I deliver are simply the tools I use. My clients don’t really care about words. They care about results.

So in addition to delivering my copy, I always share business ideas with my clients. If a client is doing a mailing to generate sales leads, I might talk about how the client should set up a system for quickly responding to those leads.

Or if a client wants to sell a product online, I might suggest ways to improve the offer, redesign the website, or create effective follow-up offers to those who buy.

No matter what your project might be, you should get into the habit of suggesting alternate ideas for the client’s benefit.

Suggest a different format, medium, or message. Consider whether something can be added, subtracted, or modified. Maybe it could be simpler, easier, more personal, or more dramatic.

In no particular order, here are a few project add-ons and alternatives that could benefit both you and your client:

- Direct Mail Package
- Magalog
- Self-mailer
- Flyer
- Postcard

- Sales Letter
- Envelope Teaser
- Insert
- Brochure
- Print Ad
- Classified Ad
- Tip-on
- Magazine or Catalog Wrap
- Billboard
- E-mail
- Website
- E-newsletter
- Online Sales Page
- Autoresponder
- Blog Posts
- Pay Per Click Ads
- Banner or Pop Up
- Television Commercial or Infomercial
- Radio Ad
- Video
- Article
- Product Sheet
- Case Study
- Data Card
- Newsletter
- White Paper
- Product Packaging
- Instruction Sheets
- News Release
- Backgrounder
- Video News Release
- Media Kit
- Speech
- PowerPoint
- Webinar
- Telemarketing Script
- Consultation
- Brainstorming Session

- Marketing Material Review
- Marketing Plan

You want every project to be successful, because the more successful your client, the more likely they are to hire you again.

4. Craft crackerjack copy.

Do you need to be reminded that the best way to promote your copywriting services is to write well? Give every project your best effort, even small ones that don't pay a lot.

Your copy is your calling card. It should be solid right from the first draft, punchy, powerful, and persuasive.

There's no shortcut to good writing. You must practice your craft for years to become a master wordsmith. The more you write, the better you get.

The best advice I can give you is to write a lot. A LOT. If you don't have enough work to fill your day, write articles for publications your prospects are likely to read. This is good practice and can build your reputation.

In addition, read a lot. It's important that you read good examples of the kind of writing you do. So if you specialize in technical manuals, read every technical manual you can get your hands on. Study them. Decipher the difference between the good ones and the bad ones so you can write good ones.

Forget what your college English professor taught you about formal writing and teach yourself to write in a simple, clear style that ordinary people will enjoy.

Most of all, get a copy of Strunk and White's **[The Elements of Style](#)** and read it 10 times and then once a year for the rest of your life. When you understand what the authors were trying to say, you'll understand the difference between good writing and the sort of self-indulgent fluff that plagues most writers.

5. Edit and polish ruthlessly.

I once read that Isaac Asimov never edited his copy. Maybe he was a freak of nature, but the rest of us benefit from ruthless editing and heartless polishing.

You can't make it perfect, but with the time you have available, you should slash every word that isn't clear and necessary. If you're writing advertising, delete every word that doesn't motivate, persuade, and sell. Choose words wisely. Vary the tempo. Compose a pleasing rhythm.

You can write long, but don't blather. Keep it crisp, specific, and full of meaning. In particular, look out for empty adjectives that clutter your sentences and don't add to the message.

Pay attention to what you say more than how you say it. Don't try to create a style. That will happen by itself. Put yourself in the background and think only of your reader and what he or she gets from your words.

Writing and editing are related. To become a better editor, you must become a more efficient writer. And by that, I mean you need to start writing faster. Faster writing can be better writing because you agonize less and are able to edit more objectively.

Here's a 12-step procedure I recommend:

- **NARROW YOUR TOPIC.** You can't write about five things at once. And you can't include every idea that pops into your head. If you have a lot of facts on the tip of your brain, staying focused can be hard. But it's essential to stick to one point if you want to write well and minimize editing.
- **GATHER YOUR FACTS.** Knowing what you want to say will eliminate hours of painful editing and rewriting. So if you know your subject, jot down a few notes before you start writing. If you don't know your subject or need additional information, do your research.

- **START AN IDEA FILE.** This is a huge time-saver. I keep a simple text file on my computer desktop and jot down ideas as I get them. I also use Google Notebook to record notes from online reading. I don't tear out magazine bits anymore because that creates clutter that I have to reread later.
- **PUT YOUR THOUGHTS IN ORDER.** Don't think "outline." Just take all your facts or ideas and arrange them in the order you want them to appear in your finished piece. I did this earlier today for a journal op-ed, and it helped me stay on track and cut my writing and editing time significantly.
- **ELIMINATE DISTRACTIONS.** I tend to save certain writing chores for the evening so I can sit on my comfy sofa in the media room with my laptop. But flipping through news channels eats up the time and fills my mind with information that doesn't advance my topic. So, turn off the TV, mute the phone, and close your e-mail program. I doubt you'll miss much.
- **START WRITING AND DON'T STOP.** You can't agonize over every word or sit and stare at the computer screen. Put your fingers on the keyboard and GO. It doesn't have to be perfect writing. Just get the words down. You might be surprised at how much you can get done and how good it is if you take your foot off the brakes and let 'er rip.
- **DON'T READ WHAT YOU'RE WRITING.** This is a toughie for me. When I get stumped, I often go back and read what I've written to create momentum that can carry me through the part where I'm stuck. But really, that's a bad idea for a first draft. You can read what you've written after you've written it all the way through.
- **DON'T EDIT OR REWRITE.** I'm laughing as I write this because I wrote two or three other versions of "Don't edit or rewrite" just now. I need to work on this one. To increase your writing speed, take off the editor hat and just plow

through until you're finished. You can edit and revise later. *Write then edit* is faster than *write and edit*.

- **FINISH WHAT YOU'RE WRITING.** If you start it, finish it. That's good advice for any project, but especially good advice for writing faster. Don't think about it, just do it. Once it's all down, it will feel finished even if it's not. Then you just have to edit.
- **BREAK BIG PROJECTS INTO LITTLE PIECES.** Writing a page or a section is easier if you can focus on just that page or section and aren't worried about all the other bits you have to write. Take it one step at a time.
- **WHEN YOU'RE DONE, WALK AWAY.** Once all the words are down and in order, save your document and do something else. When I'm finished with this, I'm going to relax and watch a rerun of the Sopranos and forget all about this topic.
- **EDIT WITH A FRESH EYE.** Objectivity and a clear mind always make you a better editor. You'll catch the mistakes. You'll spot the extraneous details. You'll cut the fat.

6. Deliver more than expected.

They'll never see it coming. Write more than you promised. Provide two versions. Offer bonus suggestions for improving a past promotion.

When you do something valuable and unexpected, you'll give your client one of those "wow" moments and move up about a hundred notches in their eyes.

Example 1: I recently landed a client who wanted a sales page. Once I started writing, I realized he needed more than I had estimated. So I wrote twice as much as I promised without charging a penny more.

The client was so blown away, he chucked his other writers

and is now using me to write everything for his rapidly growing health supplement company, which will mean tens of thousands of dollars this year and likely hundreds of thousands over the next few years.

Example 2: I just finished writing a direct mail package for a client advertising a retirement community. When I delivered the copy, the client said he had located a new list of people with religious affiliations and wanted to run a test.

Without being asked, I wrote a lift letter about how the community was faith-based, run by a religious nonprofit, and home to over 40 members of the clergy. It took me no more than 15 minutes.

I sent the copy to my client and he loved it. I explained that he could simply print and insert the lift letter into the direct mail package for an easy test of the new list.

This is the perfect example of how to dazzle your clients. Most writers will deliver exactly what they promise. But when you deliver more, you will stand out from the crowd.

Best of all, you don't have to make a great sacrifice. Just think of a small extra you received in the past, such as a computer store giving you a free mouse pad or a bakery giving you an extra donut. Even small gestures leave a big impression.

Can you write an extra element? Provide a sketch for the designer? Give your client a checklist for printing or production? Provide a few suggestions for related marketing efforts? Send links to relevant article or reports? Show samples of competitor's promotions? Write up a bonus news release? Dash off a quick slogan?

Use your imagination and judgement. Just don't get into the habit of doing free work. You want to deliver occasional and unexpected bonuses — random acts of kindness.

7. Beat your deadline.

You must meet deadlines. However, delivering copy ahead of time can make a great impression. There are a dozen things a client has to manage on any project, and submitting your work before the deadline makes life just that much easier.

Be careful. If you have two weeks, don't deliver your copy after three days. That makes it look like you didn't invest enough time or you're not busy. Delivering your copy one or two days early is good enough.

This technique is most effective when you know your client is dealing with a tight schedule.

I work with a small ad agency in California that specializes in health care marketing. Recently, they hired me to write a series of direct mail pieces that had to mail on a strict schedule to comply with government guidelines.

The legal review process was long and grueling, and I knew my client was concerned about the printing deadline. So I rearranged my schedule to deliver the copy a few days early. This gave my client some breathing room and let her get the job done on time and enjoy a holiday weekend she would have otherwise sacrificed.

It didn't cost me anything. But it demonstrated that I care about my client's business as much as my own.

As with delivering more than expected, you don't want to make a habit of beating your deadline. This could train your client to expect work early on every project.

And always ask for more time than you actually need. On Star Trek, the engineer, Scotty, multiplied his time estimates by a factor of four in order to have enough time for complicated repairs and maintain his reputation as a miracle worker.

I recommend you simply give yourself an extra week or so. This allows for easier scheduling, project multitasking, more time for editing, and handling unexpected problems.

8. Accept changes gracefully.

Writers can be defensive. "I slaved over the copy. I massaged every word. And now you dare to change something?"

I don't like people changing my copy any more than you do. However, I've found that clients can often improve the copy. After all, they know far more about their products and services than I ever will.

There are several reasons a client may suggest changes:

- *They want to clean up the facts.* Names, dates, prices, phone numbers, and other facts make for quick, easy edits.
- *They have a better understanding about what they want.* Some people don't know what they want until they see your copy. As long as it's not a total overhaul, you need to just deal with it.
- *They have recent input on the project.* Maybe they have new research results. Maybe management has thrown a wrench in the works. Maybe the legal department has nixed an idea. What can you do? Roll with the punches.
- *They want to alter the style.* This is where things get tricky. Style can be subjective, such as whether your client thinks your writing is too soft sell or needs more "oomph." This isn't something you can define clearly in a conversation. You need to see samples of what they mean so you can interpret their comments.

Whatever the change or reason, you should always listen to what your client suggests, but be willing to explain and defend your choices, especially on matters of style.

My policy is to explain and make a case if I think I'm right and the client is wrong. However, if the client persists, I make the change. I say something like this: "My job is to do the best work possible for you. So I want to explain why I wrote the copy the way I did. If you agree, we'll keep the copy as is. If you disagree, then we'll make the change."

This gives you the opportunity to be diligent and professional without getting into a debate with the person who signs your checks. Most clients appreciate your concern and flexibility.

Changes are part of the job and you should expect them on nearly every project. But there are a few things you can do to make handling those changes easier:

- *Get all changes in one batch.* Don't let the client piecemeal edits, which wastes massive amounts of time. You want to handle the document as few times as possible.
- *Make sure all changes filter through one person.* Nothing will blow up a copywriting project faster than accepting changes from different people. They will never agree, and you're put in an awkward position.
- *Ask the client to submit changes in an efficient format.* Request trackable changes in Word, notes in a PDF, or a fax with traditional editorial markups. Always get the changes in writing. And always ask for specific notes.

9. Follow up.

You've asked questions, done your research, suggested alternate ideas, crafted crackerjack copy, edited and polished, delivered more than expected, beat your deadline, and accepted changes gracefully.

So you're done, right? Just send your invoice and start another project.

Hold on. You're not finished.

Get out your calendar and schedule a follow-call to your client for a month or two after you've delivered the copy and cashed your check.

Ask for results. See if there's any other way you can help. Make yourself available for an after-action conference. If results are good, get a testimonial. If results are bad, discuss improvements.

Good clients don't expect perfection from you, they just want you to be professional and give a darn about their needs. Few writers will do this, so you will instantly differentiate yourself from competitors.

Plus, by learning what your client likes and what produces results, you can become a more skilled copywriter and a more valuable business asset.

10. Be a trusted consultant.

I mentioned before that you should work with your clients as more than a wordsmith. Even though your main "deliverable" is copywriting, you should be a consultant who helps your clients succeed.

The most valued and highest paid copywriters are those who have experience and know-how in a specialized area. For me, this includes direct mail, sales lead generation, business-to-business marketing, and radio advertising.

Many years ago, a marketing manager from a child sponsorship charity contacted me after seeing an article I wrote in an industry magazine. She said she wanted to test a new direct mail package and asked if I could help.

So I carefully analyzed the package and said, "Yes." I suggested a rewrite and a few format changes. The result was a boost

in response and a pleased client. She said she had never seen such a big improvement for direct mail that had been successful for so long.

I began taking on additional projects and making regular trips to their headquarters to consult on a wide variety of marketing projects. This included not only writing TV ad scripts, but also traveling with a production crew to several Third World countries to shoot the video, as well as flying to the studio to edit the final commercials.

I went from providing copywriting services to being a trusted and well-paid consultant. I contributed my experience as a former TV producer to add value to my client's marketing efforts.

Today, clients frequently call me to ask about mail production, radio advertising, sales lead generation, and other vital topics because they know I have more to offer than copywriting, even though writing is what they eventually ask and pay for.

Since they don't get that from others, I get the call and the business.

11. Be fun to work with.

When I first started freelancing, I tried to be all business. And for the most part, I still am. I like to cut to the chase. It's something clients like about me. I can quickly diagnose and solve problems, saving them time and money.

However, I've discovered that my best client relationships are those where I form friendships and loosen up a little. Since I've always had a good sense of humor, I am able to make my clients laugh and brighten their day.

Recently one of my clients wrote a testimonial for me which made me realize how important this is:

"Our client is so excited with the closed package results that

you created for us. Results to date — only 4 weeks into the campaign — have already QUADRUPLED the results from last year's campaign! You made us look so good to the client. An added bonus was the humor you brought to the project — kept me laughing! Thanks, and can't wait to do it again!"

Sounds like a dazzled client, doesn't it? The important part was that I helped them succeed and look good. But the fact that I'm fun to work with put the icing on the cake.

Now don't misunderstand. I'm not suggesting that you put on a clown suit and start telling jokes. With rare exceptions, you don't want to start sending funny YouTube videos, political cartoons, or other goofy stuff.

I'm just saying that it helps to be pleasant and upbeat, and to have a sense of humor. Lighten up. Talk to your clients as if they're your friends. Be glad to hear from them. Show an interest in their lives, their family, their hobbies.

This won't work with everyone. Some clients will be serious all the time. Some will even be gruff and difficult. You'll have to adapt to them to a certain point, but don't be afraid to be yourself.

One final observation. When I worked at a TV station, I could tell you which client worked with which sales person just by talking to them. The ditsy client worked with the ditsy sales person. The Type A client worked with the Type A sales person. And so on.

You'll find that you will attract clients who are like you. Be yourself and you'll probably end up with clients who are a good fit for your personality.

I like to have fun, so I tend to attract pleasant clients who, for the most part, are easy to work with and like to have fun as well.

12. Put the client first.

Of all the tips in this report, this one is the most difficult to describe. But in many ways, it could be the most important, because if you put it into practice, all the other ideas I've talked about will take care of themselves.

While you have a specific task to perform, you should try to think of the various needs of your client and how you can help your client succeed and complete the project with the least amount of stress.

Sometimes this will mean a small extra burden on you, but often it's just a mindset for working with the client.

Here are some examples:

If you think your client is wasting money with a project, say so. A client once asked me to write a full direct mail package, but I thought a simple postcard would work more efficiently. I lost money, but gained trust.

If your client gets into a bind and needs your help over a weekend, try to make time for it. I stopped working weekends many years ago. But now and then, I make an exception if I think my help will make a difference in the success of the project.

If you have nothing to contribute, admit it. I'm occasionally asked to help clients select mailing lists. But I know very little about this. Since mailing lists are vital, I always refer clients to a specialist rather than gamble with their money.

If you've vastly overcharged for a project, refund part of your fee. I'm good at accurately estimating projects, but on one project, I greatly overestimated the scope. I work on a flat fee basis, which means I don't change the fee if it's a little high or a little low. But on this project, my fee was far beyond what was reasonable, so I sent a refund check.

If you have agreed to a project, follow through no matter what. My loyalty is always with ongoing projects. So if I accept a small project and a bigger, more profitable one comes along, I do my best to handle both, but I never neglect the small project. I put my full effort into every project no matter the size.

There are many other examples, but you get the idea. Keep your word. Be honest. Maintain your sense of ethics. Work as if your client's success is your own, because in many ways, it is.

Conclusion

Remember, you have to invest time and effort to land new clients, so you don't want to be a one-project wonder. You want long-term, repeat clients who know you're the "go-to" writer when they need you.

Dazzle your clients. Keep your clients loyal. Get more paying projects. It's just that simple.

Additional Resources:

[7 freelance tricks to get new clients fast](#)

[11 quick ways to kickstart your slow freelance business](#)

[8 rules for setting your freelance copywriting fees](#)

[187 marketing terms every copywriter should know](#)

[30 copywriting blogs that are actually worth reading](#)

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Dean Rieck has been called “the best Direct Response copywriter” in America!

Dean has been writing copy professionally for 25 years as a TV producer, fundraising development director, agency creative, textbook writer, and freelancer.

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His name has appeared in *Who’s Who in Direct Marketing Creative Services*, *Outstanding Writers of the 20th Century*, *Outstanding Intellectuals of the 20th Century*, *Who’s Who in the Media and Communications*, *Strathmore’s Who’s Who*, *Who’s Who in the Midwest*, *Who’s Who in America*, and *Who’s Who in the World*. American Writers & Artists even named Dean their “Copywriting Genius.” Are you impressed yet?

Dean has written for a variety of blogs, websites, newsletters, and print publications, including Copyblogger, Write to Done, Men with Pens, The Wealthy Freelancer, Melissa Data, Marketing Profs, *Direct Marketing Magazine*, *DM News*, *Target Marketing*, *Inside Direct Mail*, *The Not-For-Profit CEO Monthly Letter*, *Smart Money*, *Potentials in Marketing*, *Business First*, *Columbus CEO*, *Strictly Business*, *Small Business News*, *Response*, *Mercedeo Directo*, and *Self-Employed Professional*.

When he’s not writing copy for clients or slaving over his blogs, he’s throwing a wrench into Ohio politics as a political action committee leader, terrorizing city traffic on his Bianchi bicycle, coming painfully close to winning pistol tournaments, cursing at his obstinate garden, watching classic sci-fi movies, or composing self-congratulatory biographical pages in the third person.

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