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Maximizing The Effect Of Your Freelancer's Bio

By Angela Booth

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Summary: If you want to be a successful freelancer, you need to learn the art of the bio.

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Maximizing The Effect Of Your Freelancer's Bio

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Your freelancer's bio is a vital job-hunting tool.

While traditional job hunters have CVs and resumes, independent writers and other independent professionals have biographies, because as an independent, you're working *with* your clients as a consultant, rather than working *for* them as an employee.

Yes, bios, plural. You need at least four bios of various lengths: 200 words, 100, 50 and 25. Over time, you'll create dozens of bios, as you emphasize your various strengths to suit a

situation.

Many writers find it excruciating to write about themselves. If you feel this way, don't despair. You will get over this shyness in time. Until you do, force yourself to write at least three bios. I promise, after you've created your fourth and fifth, writing a bio will be a breeze.

=>It's not about you, it's about them

Self-interest rules. So before you write a word, ask yourself about the client and the client's needs. You must approach your

bio from your client's perspective.

If you're answering a job ad, this is easy. You know what the client wants, because she's told you. Make sure that you slant your bio towards the requirements expressed in the ad.

Usually you'll introduce yourself to businesses without a job ad to guide you. The most effective way to do this is with a mini-proposal. You send a mini-proposal, because you should never, ever send out a naked bio; you must have a reason, other than self-interest, for contacting a business. (More on naked bios below.)

A mini-proposal is a single page, with:

- * a description of a problem (or need) you perceive the business has;
- * an outline of the solution;
- * why you're the person to solve this problem ---- what skills you have (your bio).

Mini-proposals are easy to write, and once you've written a few, you should be able to write two an hour.

And because your mini-proposal is focused on your prospect, it will be kept by the business you send it to. I often receive calls from companies I sent a mini-proposal to three or more years ago.

Did you notice how the mini-proposal focused on the client and

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the client's needs? After saying who you are, you talk about the client, not about you.

That said, you should start your letter or email message with a very quick statement of who you are. Like this:

Dear Mr Jones

I'm Cindy Cooper, of Cooper Copywriting. I write for business. I found your Web site, and ... (here's where you describe the problem or need you think Mr Jones has that you could solve).

After this super-fast introduction, the bulk of the letter/ email message will be taken up with your outlines of the need the business has, and your proposed solution. **KEEP THE FOCUS ON THE CLIENT.**

Finally, after presenting this information, comes your bio, and your bio should be no longer than a quarter of the length of the entire letter. So let's say that your need/ solution outline takes 200 words; in this case your bio will be no longer than 50 words.

*Your letter **MUST** focus on the client and the client's needs. Your bio needs to be short in comparison.*

==> Don't send a naked bio!

I can't emphasize this enough: keep the focus on the client's needs! Don't send a naked bio – that is, a bio on its own, which you've simply decided to send a business, hoping that the business will have work for you.

This message in a bottle stuff doesn't work. Freelancers get into the habit of whizzing their resumes, CVs and bios to anyone they think might be remotely interested in hiring them. Then of course they wonder why there's no response. **THERE'S NO RESPONSE BECAUSE PEOPLE WANT TO KNOW WHAT YOU CAN DO FOR THEM, A BIO OR CV ON ITS OWN IS NOT ENOUGH.**

Yes, I know I'm shouting, but this is important. Never, ever, send a bio on its own.

=> Your bios' style

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Every book you own has a bio of the author, so take a few books off your shelves and study the author bios. Most are short. Novelists' bios mention the writer's interests, partner, children and pets. The bios of non-fiction writers emphasize the writer's academic credentials if it's important to the writer's credibility, or the writer's experience in the field the book covers.

So what do you emphasize? This is where your bio's slant comes in. If you're sending a mini-proposal, emphasize your experience/qualifications/ interest in the business's industry. See why you need many different bios, and the confidence to crank them out quickly?

==> HELP! I haven't got any experience!

Freelance consultants in areas like graphic design, financial services, and management have employment experience to draw on, so this plaintive yodel usually comes from freelance writers.

A lack of experience in a specific area worries new freelance

writers, and it shouldn't. You're a writer. You can create SAMPLES of your writing capabilities anytime, to order. Write a sample, and hey presto, just like magic, you've got experience.

I write for several editorial agencies, and often they'll send out messages to their stable of writers asking for a 200 word bio, and a work sample for a particular job. It takes me about an hour, research included, to crank out a fresh sample.

This is where a Web site or blog (Web log) is important. It gives you instant credibility, because you can refer people to it to check out your work samples. And as explained, those work samples don't need to be work that you were paid to do.

=> Where to use your bios

Your longest bio, of no more than 200 words, can be posted on your Web site. You can also use it in a presentation folder, with a photo, that you give or send to clients. It's also appropriate to use this long bio in a media kit.

You can send your 100 word bio to editorial and other agencies, so that they have some information about you on file.

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The 50 word bio is the one you'll use most. Tack it onto direct mail letters, and mini-proposals that you send to companies.

Your short 20 word bio is ideal as a signature file ---- a few lines that you tack on to the end of your email messages. Your email program will take on your sig automatically; read the Help file to see how to set one up.

If you haven't created a bio yet, do it today. Your bios are a vital freelancing tool.

Resource box: if using, please include

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Writer, journalist and author Angela Booth has been writing for print and online venues for over 25 years. She also writes copy for businesses.

Virally Imperfect.

By Seamus Dolly

Virally Imperfect. by Seamus Dolly

A virus is sometimes described as the smallest infectious agent known to man.

A virus is sometimes described as a self-replicating program, known to man and machine

The commonality here, relates to its effect in terms of their transmission properties, nuisance value, and their often-sickening effect.

Its' nature is as it was intended.

This holds true where man and machine are the designated recipients or targets to infiltrate.

Both viruses have evolved to seek-out, infect, and propagate.

We are (as yet), unsure who masterminded the biological version and we know some of the masterminds behind the software version.

Mutation and transmutation of both versions, is the key to their success, and therefore their existence. Had we the foresight to determine such mutations, then, both would be "old hat" and the "fodder of history".

And to have that foresight, we'd have to know in one case, more of our own ability to upset and the

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"cure" for it.

The bio-virus, by design or nature (which may or may not be the same thing), needs a host to reproduce.

The cyber-virus, by design and nature needs a host to reproduce.

One is alive and the other is given life.

The code of behaviour is similar and the parallels are perhaps, too many.

Change and challenge. Create and consume.

Both versions being ethically allied, it seems that the weak will perish and the strong might sustain.

The nature of the man designed the nature of the software though, and in terms of time and evolution, it is pre-dated by the bio-virus so the cycle is therefore, old!

So what's new?

Minor actions within that cycle?

The creators (to date) become victims to their respective design and eventually as before, antibiotics and incarceration become the "cure"!

Seamus Dolly is a webmaster and author. His background is in engineering and analogue electronics. His studies include A+, Server+ and iNet+. <http://www.CountControl.com>



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