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Why Every Freelancer Should Have A Web Site

By Yuwanda Black

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by: **Yuwanda Black**

"Do I send samples, a media kit, or just the query, postcard and/or sales letter?" As a freelancer, when you are trying to reach new clients or stay in touch with old ones, how to approach the contact can be a sticky, confusing, discombobulating journey. Having a web site can solve all of these situations. How?

Outlined below are four ways a web site can contribute to the bottom line success of your business.

1. Save Postage: When prospecting for new clients, instead of sending an entire media kit, numerous clippings, and/or writing samples, simply direct your target to your web site.

A simple postcard can list the services you offer and/or products you sell. For samples of your work direct prospects to your web site, which can do a better job of selling. A web site can list client testimonials, special deals and discounts, awards -- the possibilities are endless.

In essence, you are selling a potential client on your business for just the cost of a postcard. Of course, you can always send a sales letter instead of a postcard. The point is, you don't have to spend a lot of money on postage up front.

If a client is interested enough from your initial postcard/letter to look at your web site, then you have a better chance of them contacting you. One could argue, the less you spend up front, the better. This weeds out the tire kickers from the serious buyers.

Can you do business without a web site? Yes. But, consider the following first.

2. Increase Revenue: Would you like to make money while you sleep? Essentially, a web site allows you to do just that. Proof?

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After launching a Web site, 41% of small businesses report an increase in their sales volume, and more than half (55%) with a Web site say their sites have generated a profit or paid for themselves. SmallBusinessComputing.com, "Internet Future Bright for Small Businesses." January 14, 2003.

This does not mean you don't have to do all those things necessary to drive potential customers to your site, i.e., market your site. A web site is simply another avenue, albeit a powerful one, for you to increase your bottom line.

Providing such info as location, photos, testimonials, price, hours of operation, et cetera, somewhat pre-qualifies clients without you ever having to meet them. This greatly increases your chances of making a sale.

A 2001 study from Cyber Dialogue reveals that 86% of U.S. adults who were online have either clicked on e-ads or gathered product information online and then made an offline purchase based on the web ads or data.

3. Stay in Touch with Existing Clients: Via your web site you can alert clients to special deals and discounts, announce new hires and promotions, advertise feedback and company awards, showcase media outlets where your business has been featured — the possibilities are endless.

As postage increases, adding some type of listserv* software to your site to collect names and address of visitors is not only smart business, it's essential. Sending announcements via email is infinitely less expensive (some studies quote as high as 90%) than doing even a postcard mailing.

Staying in touch with your clients puts your business foremost in their minds when it comes time for them to purchase the type of product/service you offer.

*LISTSERV is a computer program that allows you to create, manage and control electronic mailing lists. Each list has a general (or sometimes very specific) topic of interest. It makes sending email to groups of people fast, easy, and cost-efficient.

4. Saves Time (Hence Money): Thomas Jefferson said, "If you love life, do not waste time, for that is what life is made of."

Remember, posting all pertinent information on your company web site — hours of operation, location, company history, products/services offered, type of clients served, et cetera — saves untold hours in phone time answering the same rote questions. This is time that can be better spent servicing existing customers (hence, making more money).

And, to reiterate, adding listserv software automates the process of collecting names and addresses of customers. This saves time and money because you don't have to (or pay someone to) type all of this information into a database. The customers themselves do this. Further, since the customer voluntarily gives you their information, this builds your in-house mailing list. By building your own mailing list (which will almost always out pull most purchased mailing lists), you won't have to seek out lists for which you have to pay.

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Lastly, an in-house mailing list can be rented or sold to companies with complementary services. For example, a wedding consultant might rent/sell their list to a photographer. However, be very, very careful about this. It should be clearly stated in your privacy policy if you outright sell your list.

Instead of selling an in-house list, most companies prefer to offer the products/services of an outside company in conjunction with their own services. In the example mentioned above, the wedding consultant's mailing of, for example, 10,000 brochures, would contain a mention of the photographer's service. The photographer's mention can be large or small, depending on mutual agreement.

Note: Most customers WILL NOT voluntarily give you their contact information if you sell it. Guard your in-house list as if it's gold — because it is. These are customers you have worked hard and spent untold dollars to obtain. Although selling your list might be tempting, it breaches customer trust. In the long run, it is almost never worth the short-term gain.

In conclusion, having an Internet presence speaks volumes about your firm's professionalism. This is especially important for small businesses. It adds another measure of credibility to your growing enterprise, while adding positively to your bottom line.

Parts of this article were excerpted from *How to Get Your Small Biz on the Web Quickly & Affordably*, available for immediate download.

May be reprinted with inclusion of the following: Yuwanda Black is an entrepreneur, author, speaker and syndicated small business columnist whose focus is controlling your destiny through small business ownership. Her most recent e-books, *How to Really Make a Living as an Editorial Freelancer* and *Advice from Successful Freelancers: How They Built Their Careers & How You Can Too!* are available for immediate download at

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Increase Freelance Sales With an Online Resume!

By Kelly Kyrik

Freelancing is a competitive business, especially in today's fast-paced, e-focused world.

Often there are hundreds of writers competing for the same, limited number of assignments, and the writer who can best showcase his or her abilities is the one who lands the job.

Editors, however, are very busy people, and don't have the time nor the inclination to sift through the

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hundreds of resumes and clips they receive in search of your information. If your credits and clips are not right there on an editor's desk, or available with a single click of the mouse, that plumb assignment is going to go to the writer who managed to catch the editor's eye; even if you're the better writer for the job.

So, how do you get your writing clips into the hands of the editors looking for writers? Easy, with your own online resume!

A personal site has become a must for today's freelancer, but successful writers know that they need to do more than simply paste their picture out on the Internet, or send off their email address along with their snail mail query.

What's needed is a site that showcases your entire writing resume, including: Bio Publishing history Writing-related job history All published credits Specialty or genre Easily accessible and visually attractive clips, whether scanned or in document form

An editor is then able to access all of your information at once, instead of being forced to slog through link after link looking for work that is spread out over twelve different sites, six of which no longer exist. With everything in one place, an editor is also more able to get a feel for your abilities and range.

In addition, a professional-looking site - one that features your published writing, not pictures of your dog and boyfriend along with your latest Ebay stats - will prove to an editor that you're on the ball, that you take your writing seriously. In turn the editor will take you more seriously.

Even freelancers with very little computer knowledge can set up a website; check with your Internet service provider to find out how to start your own (often free) site. Or, if you have some knowledge of HTML or are willing to learn, you may be able to set up your own site. There are also many web-design companies that will set you up for a fee.

If you decide to go with a web-design company, here are a few important things to consider:

What are the total costs? Be sure to read the fine print, otherwise your bill may be higher than you'd intended.

Is maintenance included? If so, how much does it cost and what is the turnaround time?

How many pages are you allowed? Some budget companies only offer six or so pages, which is hardly enough to showcase your clips.

Do they work with writers? Web-design services that cater to exotic dancers or widget-sellers may not know much about a freelancer's needs.

Whichever method you choose, get your resume and clips online today and start wowing editors and making sales tomorrow!

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Kelly Kyrik is a successful freelancer and part owner of [The-Write-Resume.com](#),
, a web-design service that caters exclusively to freelance writers.

You can contact her at

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