

Freebird

November 16th
2004

Daring you to spread your wings and soar to new heights

Special Holiday Issue

from the editor

Ushering in the holidays

In little more than a week those of us in the U.S. will be celebrating Thanksgiving. Soon afterwards, people the world over will usher in the holiday season. With shopping, decorating and gala events on the horizon, our normal routines will go by the wayside until the New Year.

In light of holiday activities and events, we've decided to publish a combination November-December issue, a 'bumper issue' as it might be called in the U.K. The pages are packed with articles to give you food for thought and entertain you until we return with the January issue. Perry Droast gives you a simple method to polish off your business plan. If you are a Cold Call Chicken, not to worry, Chris Wondra has a solution and the *Tool Box* will help you carry out a campaign to land new clients. Follow Brian Farrell's advice and drive traffic to your new web site. Nancy Pickering explains how to protect your email from "spiders". In the *World of Graphic Design*, Mike Klassen has tips for designers who are in a slump. You'll find designs to inspire, delight and make you laugh. Be sure to read Krishna Avva's recommendation for a book you'll want to add to your Christmas list. If a European vacation is on your to-do list, Mike Slagle will have you dreaming about a Roman holiday. As you read the ezine from beginning to end, you'll find help to make your business a success in 2005.

Best Wishes for a Happy Holiday and a Prosperous New Year

Maria Thompson
Lyn Blair
Frauke Nonnenmacher

The (Sometimes) Rocky Road to Success

Chapter 9 - Plan for Success: Part 3

Formalize your "Plan for Success"

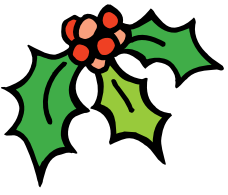
By Perry Droast

Every business owner envisions success when starting out. To achieve success develop your vision into an action plan and use it to guide your business. Jim Rohn, America's foremost business philosopher, delineates five steps to success.

1. Imagine the possibilities
2. Believe what you imagine is possible for you
3. Go to work. Make it real.
4. Begin disciplined activity. Do the work.
5. Welcome the disciplined activity.

Visualize yourself as a successful freelance writer; really believe in yourself. Start marketing your services. Formulate a plan of disciplined activity. Embrace the activity and do it daily, even when it's difficult. Now let's finish your business plan so you can get on with the business of writing.

In the first article in this series we explored why you need to develop a vision for your business and how to guide your business using a mission statement. In the second article we asked four essential questions, seeking information to help develop the building blocks of your plan. Use your answers to help write your business plan. Now you're ready to finalize the form and structure of your personal plan for success.



Use this simple outline as a guide to write your business plan.

1. Title Page
2. Executive Summary
3. Business Overview
 - a. Vision Statement
 - b. Mission Statement
4. Marketing Plan
5. Financial Plan

You won't be weighed down by a cumbersome task. In fact, you may even enjoy seeing your business come alive as you lay out the steps in your outline.

Title Page

With the first page you're giving birth to your new business identity and are preparing to display your shiny new name to the world. Keep the title page simple. Include the name and location of your business and your logo, if you have one. Include the name of the person who prepared the plan and to whom the plan is being submitted, if you are seeking financing from a lender.

Executive Summary

What do I have to offer?

A blend of credibility and expertise is in order for this section. As you weave your qualifications and experience together, the fabric of your success begins to take shape. Use your answer to this question to summarize your qualifications. Describe your business and writing experience in general terms. Explain briefly why you will succeed in this business.

Business Overview

Describe your business in detail without writing a book about it. It's time to dust off your vision and mission statements you labored on from the first article in this series. Now insert them into the *Business Overview* portion of the plan. Even better, expand upon your objectives and goals described in your vision and mission statements. Ramp up the expectations and explain actual *need* for your services.

Marketing Plan

Who would buy what I have to offer?

How do I reach the people who want to buy what I have to offer?

Answering these two questions provides the data needed to write your marketing plan. It is important to determine if a market exists for any business, a writing business is no different. Your client list tells you *who* to market to. Your promotional strategies tell you *how* to market to them.

Find out if there is anyone else in your area offering the same services you offer. Find out how much they charge and how busy they are. If they are really busy you may be able to partner with them on some projects or get some overflow business. What you learn may affect to whom you market and how you approach them.



Financial Plan

What do I want?

As you fill in this section, also take a moment to imagine yourself enjoying the fruits of your business labor.

You have already defined your revenue goals in broad terms in your vision statement. Break this goal into yearly, monthly, weekly, and daily goals. Financial goals help you to focus your energies on generating more revenue and avoiding time wasting tasks.

Lay out your fee schedule and your philosophy behind your fees. Since so much writing work is done by the job not by the hour, define the guiding principles you will use to set your fees. These guidelines are just as important as the fee schedule itself. Since each writing project is different, having a guide to fall back on, when you can't seem to decide what to charge, can simplify things. You will probably charge more for a direct mail sales letter or web sales copy than for writing a company newsletter for instance.

It isn't likely that most freelance writers are going to seek financing to start their business, but it might be beneficial to think of your financial plan from a lender's point of view. A lender wants to see revenue projections for the next several years. Could you convince a banker that you are able to achieve the revenue stream you project?

Your Plan for Success

Your marketing plan can open doors for you. If you really want to succeed in any business, then pay close attention to your marketing plan. Spend as much time as it takes to get it right.

- Define your promotional strategies and follow them religiously.
- Track results no matter which type of marketing you use.
- Test to verify which marketing strategy gets the best response. A systematic approach will get you more business than a haphazard approach.

As Henry Thoreau said, "Our life is frittered away by detail... Simplify, simplify". As promised your business plan is simple to complete.

A business plan for a freelance writing business does not need to be more than a few pages long. Keeping your plan simple makes it easy to follow. If you are just starting out a short-term plan covering six months or a year may be sufficient. Once you have been in business for a while, it should be easier to see into the future. Just remember to put your plan in a prominent place in your office. Refer to it often to maintain focus and drive, achieving success one writing project at a time.

For a quick way to complete your business plan use the free template at www.beehive.org (you will need to register to use this site) to build your plan. Follow the links step by step. Fill out each section and when you're done, print your plan.

Contact Perry Droast at: pd@droastcopywriting.com



How to Get Clients If You're a Cold Call Chicken

By Chris Wondra

Mark sat in the kitchen, staring fiercely at the office door, drinking coffee strong enough to peel paint. Exasperated, he slammed his hand on the kitchen table, but he still couldn't muster the courage to rise and turn the knob on that door. Behind it, a hairy monster slouched stubbornly at Mark's desk, munching Altoids and fingering his phone pad. He waited all morning, but the beast wouldn't budge. Mark looked out his window. "Perfect lawn-mowing weather", he thought. The clock on the wall struck noon.

The problem is so common it's almost cliché - the new freelancer, so full of talent, so full of promise... so afraid to market himself. Peter Bowerman, in his award-winning book, *The Well Fed Writer* and its companion *The Well Fed Writer: Back For Seconds*, puts it this way,

"SALES and MARKETING are indeed The Bogeymen for creative types. It's the thing that wakes people up at night, gasping and sweating. More importantly, it keeps them from actively chasing their dream, from pursuing the freelance writing life that really calls to them."

And for most of us, nothing gnashes and snarls and slashes more fearfully than the Cold Call Monster.

How to Kill Monsters—Without Silver Bullets or Wooden Stakes

If you're new to self-marketing (or just sick of cold calling) take heart. There is a way to handle this - without Buffy the Vampire Slayer. The best way to eliminate cold calls and ignite your client base is to fire up your computer and craft an email lead generation campaign. A skillfully executed lead generation campaign can tap into your market, position you as an expert and fill your pipeline with high paying jobs. You'll still have to follow-up, but you won't have to persuade a stranger to fork over \$50 an hour. Use email as a tool to market yourself and enjoy these benefits:

- Avoid the phone - it has sharp claws and bad breath, remember?
- Save time - avoid answering machines, receptionists, prospects who are out of the office or in meetings (or hiding behind furniture).
- Control your client's frame of mind - expectations, predisposition, mood, and environment - at the moment of your presentation.
- Position yourself as an expert.
- Avoid being perceived as another hungry freelancer trying to drum up business.
- Qualify and prioritize follow-up calls to prospects who have already shown some level of interest in your services.

The Magic of Lead Generation

As students of the copywriting craft, we all know (or will very shortly) what it takes to create a motivating sales letter. It has to have a great headline and subheads. It has to be interesting, believable, and easy to read. It has to be persuasive, hold attention, contain proof beyond a doubt and call for action. It has to be specific, list facts, features and benefits, go the full distance and make a sale. Whew!

If a sales letter has a type A personality then a lead generation letter has a type B. Think of it as the sales letter's cool older brother - the mysterious one. A lead generation letter can afford to leave some questions unanswered because it's not selling anything - at least not directly.

Great sales letters create skydivers. Great lead generation letters introduce skydiving instructors - charismatic experts in adventure who attract interest in a safe, relaxed environment. Lead generation is simply tempting prospects to show interest, ask a question, read a pamphlet, or sign up for a free skydiving course. In doing so they take small, safe, steps. They learn. They gain confidence. And before you know it, they're eagerly strapping on a parachute and soaring with you at three thousand feet.



This transformation is actually the most natural psychological progression in the human decision making process. Many seasoned marketers refer to it as “dating your customer.” Seth Goodin, author of *Unleashing the Idea Virus* and *Permission Marketing* compares this “courtship” to real life romance. Would you walk into a bar and propose marriage to the first man or woman you saw? Of course not. You’re a stranger to that person and (depending on the depth of your market research) he/she may be a stranger to you. Goodin discourages trying to turn strangers into customers. Instead, he suggests you first turn them into leads (the warmer the better).

Six Ways to Scare Off Monsters (And Scare Up Warm Leads)

If you’re ready to live the life of freelance freedom, it’s time to let go of your fears and march boldly into the world of self-marketing. Here are six tips that will burn an image of competence and confidence into your prospects’ minds. This is how to create that mysterious older brother that everybody wants to know more about.

Know your niche. You have to know your audience. The biggest indicator of success in lead generation is the work you do up front. If you want to be taken seriously, you have to walk a mile in your prospect’s shoes. What motivates them? What frustrates, and angers them? Where does their pain come from? Where do they find comfort? What flavor gum do they chew? Steven Covey’s fifth habit in his bestseller *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, is “Seek First to Understand, Then to Be Understood.” Lead generation doesn’t mean shot gunning off 600 impersonal form letters about how great you are.

Make your first impression a professional one. Common sense tells us, but many people forget professional etiquette *does* apply to email. In the 1700s Lord Chesterfield said, “A letter shows the man it is written to, as well as the man it is written by.” In the e-book, [*Make Your Words Sell*](#), copywriter Joe Robson suggests, “The humble email is probably the most abused means of communication ever devised!” Stand above the idiotic and inconsiderate noise that litters your prospects inbox. Be a pro.

Sweat over your subject line. According to research done at Brightmail, 40% of the email we get today is spam. Compared to the 20% of commercial broadcasting that is advertising, your Inbox is twice as interrupted as your favorite TV show despite the CAN-SPAM act. Your subject line is your headline, and it might be only one in dozens your prospect has to wade through. Be original. Avoid spam-speak like, “Special Offer!” or “Big Discounts!” or “Lose Weight!” And for goodness sake don’t use an exclamation point.

Personalize. Harvest names from company web sites. Call companies for names and contacts. Tailor each message to include specific references to their business. Mention information you read in an article or on their web site. More research means more work, but it’s well worth it.

Content is King. Unless you are using a quality template like those offered by email campaign managers (see the **Tool Box** in this issue), avoid fancy graphics. HTML text is often a big tip off for spam filters. Get too cute and you risk having your prospects’ spam guards block you like bouncers at a Las Vegas nightclub.

Offer value. There is no better way to generate interest than by offering something of value - for free. This is where you can really shine. Invite your prospect to click through to a relevant article on your web page, offer them a free report, results of an industry survey, a newsletter subscription or a free e-book. Position yourself as a generous guru - an expert in your niche. Make your offers valuable to your client and they won’t be able to resist.

Pulling It All Together

You’ve collected a solid database. You’ve done your research. You’ve written a tight professional, value packed email sure to tap into your prospect’s mind with brain tickling creativity. What next? Even after all the preliminary work, if you launch your campaign from your home computer’s mail system, you’ll only be reaching half your potential. An effective, an email campaign does more than just push your message out - it also pulls valuable information back in. A powerful email campaign



provides feedback, not just about who replies, but who clicked through to your web content, who participated in polls, who downloaded your free content—and who didn't.

The good news is you've arrived at the easy part. Read this month's **Tool Box** item. Then click through to [Benchmark's](#) web page. The tools at Benchmark can increase a lead generating email campaign's effectiveness ten-fold.

Once you've captured vital information with Benchmark's tools, all that's left is to follow up on warm leads (those who have taken action on your offers) and you're well on your way to dealing with an entirely different beast - the monster client.

Go to [Benchmark](#). Set up the nuts and bolts of your email campaign. Next time we'll show you psychological techniques to put your prospect in the right frame of mind at each decision point of the lead generation process - how to, "Think Outside the Inbox."

About the Author When Chris Wondra is not teaching Middle school Language Arts in St. Croix Fall, WI, he's using his Six Figure Copywriting skills to create and build businesses. His most recent start-up is a self-publishing endeavor combining storytelling and magic to create a unique brand of children's literature. To learn more about his Letters From Santa or other products for kids go to: www.freebird-zine.com/sunshinewords

Tool Box

Time-Saving Email Marketing Tools You Can't Do Without

Whether you are just starting out or already in business, recruiting new clients and maintaining relationships with existing clients are crucial to your success. Email campaigns and newsletters are proven ways to communicate with clients. For a one person or other small business, however, email and newsletter strategies can consume more time than you can spare in your busy schedule. Benchmark www.benchmarkemail.com provides one of the easiest and most affordable methods for handling online or offline promotional mailings. With Benchmark's services you can build professional-looking e-mails and newsletters, and track your progress with real-time campaign tracking and reporting.

Try Benchmark services for 30 days — Free. During your trial period you can build an e-mail list and send 250 emails at no cost. With Benchmark's List Builder features you can automatically gather prospects and subscriptions. Store unlimited amounts of lists safely and securely online. Auto-responder methods of automatic communication allow you to subscribe, unsubscribe, double opt-in, confirm and perform other newsletter and email subscriber management functions. Explore the large variety of professional templates or create your own for an email and newsletter campaign. To create an email you'll find customized HTML features and a powerful HTML editor. Benchmark gives you the ability to schedule your campaign 24-7. You can track campaigns in four modes: *Draft, Scheduled, Sending or Finished Sending*. You can *Add, Edit, Delete or Copy* information from all campaigns. You can send your campaign *Immediately* or *Schedule* for a specific future date. Benchmark's services offer many, many more features like their unique "Sublists" that allow you to follow-up based on which emails were opened and which were not. Knowing which emails were opened allows you to actively market to the best prospects and delete those who are not likely prospects or who are inactive subscribers. You can even test and track emails by sending a test email to yourself and others before launching your actual email campaign. Imagine sending up to 1000 emails per month for little more than a penny apiece. If you're considering an email or newsletter campaign to promote your business or land new clients, you'll want to explore all the powerful features of Benchmark's email and newsletter campaign services.



Online Marketing – Part 2

Build Links To Drive Traffic

By Brian J. Farrell

You've built your website and have tested some of the basic concepts found in Online Marketing - Part 1. Let's focus on a specific strategy to get more traffic to your website: link building.

Why are inbound links so important?

Most search engines, such as Google, MSN and Lycos, present search results based on the number of quality, inbound links to your site. Links can also increase quantity and quality of traffic to your website. Look at the "links" page on www.wellfedwriter.com. All of the links listed are relevant to the freelance writing market. Imagine this scenario:

You (the search engine) are vacationing in a distant city (the Internet), and want to find the best place to eat in town (search engine query). Stopping at a convenience store for a map, you ask a convenience store clerk where she likes to eat.

"Sunrise Diner is my favorite place," she says (a link).

Not satisfied, you walk a few doors down to the local chamber of commerce.

You ask for a recommendation for lunch. The receptionist hands you a stack of fliers for all the businesses in town (bunch of unrelated links). She winks at you and says "I eat lunch at Sunrise Diner three times a week" (a link).

Thinking you have found the perfect place, you hop in a taxi.

"Sunrise Diner, please".

The driver turns towards you and smiles.

"My wife is the best cook in town and works at Sunrise Diner" (a link).

It's easy to see how website links are like face-to-face networking to the search engines.

How to look for link partners

Look for link partners by searching your keywords and market niche. Since webmasters are inundated with junk link requests, write a compelling offer with a value proposition that makes sense. Look at the websites of your local chamber of commerce, business association, etc. for a "links" page. If none is found, consider buying a link on their website – again, make a compelling offer.

If you are a member, some trade organizations will give you a free link in exchange for you placing their logo on your website. Links within your relevant industry are very powerful to a search engine. Remember: when searching for link partners, think complementary, not competitive.

Get your first links today

Get your first link by submitting your data to Freebird-Zine's "Networking" section. See www.freebird-zine.com/fav.html for a perfect example of a complementary link.

Then go to www.dmoz.org - The Open Directory Project. Follow their onscreen instructions for submitting a link. You'll need to navigate to the most appropriate category for your website. A link from DMOZ is extremely important. DMOZ feeds AOL Search, Google, Hot Bot, Lycos, Netscape and more. There is no charge for this link. The downside: your link could take months to show.



If you have a small marketing budget, a link on Business.com (\$99/year) and Yahoo.com (\$299/year) are worth paying for.

Other ways to get links

There are many other ways to get links.

- Create a short “signature file” that includes your name, URL, and sales message (*). Then make comments on web logs (a/k/a “Blogs”) and forums within your industry, adding your “signature file” to each posting. Using signature files is valuable not only for the potential inbound link, but for the visibility you’ll get within the blog or forum.
- Write and distribute an article, including your website URL and short bio in the footer. Your value proposition to the webmaster is the free content from your piece. They simply have to keep the entire article (and your link!) intact.
- Similarly, you can distribute an online tool, offer a free service, or create an award logo (such as “YourWebsite.com’s Site of the Week”). Don’t forget to ask visitors to link to you.

Build a links page

Build a “links” page for reciprocal links, but create an out of the way link. You don’t want to lose your potential customers to another website. An easy way to do this is to create a link to your “links” page from your sales or lead confirmation pages. That way, you’ll have captured user data.

The most important aspect of creating a links page is to make sure all of the listed links are high quality - linking to a real website with content. Categorize the links to make sense not only to your user, but to search engines. Once you create your “links” page, you can then put up links to potential partners, and begin your message with “I’ve added your link to my resources page, which can be found here: www.anysite.com/links.html. Will you consider linking back to me?”... and so on.

Find out who’s linking to you now

Want to know who is linking to you now? Just open up Google and type in this query (replacing yoursite.com with your website): link: www.yoursite.com

You’ll be given a list of all the links that Google has found linking to you. Finding who is linking to you is even easier to do if you have installed any of the following toolbars:

Google Toolbar (toolbar.google.com)

Alexa Toolbar (download.alexa.com)

Or by using the tools located on the following websites:

LinkPopularity (www.linkpopularity.com)

LinkPopularityCheck (www.linkpopularitycheck.com)

CheckYourLinkPopularity (www.checkyourlinkpopularity.com)

For those who want a more powerful link-building tool, consider using Axandra’s Arelis utility, about \$99 (www.axandra-link-popularity-tool.com). This automatically searches for link partners, builds a link directory and composes emails for you.

Final thoughts

Create lots of high quality content for your website. The more content you create, the larger a funnel you make for search engines to find you. Webmasters will link to your content and resources. Search engines prefer to find your page from links on other websites, making link building a



necessity. But it's the relevance of the link, not the number of links that determine your rankings. Link building is like making friendships: best done one at a time.

(*) Joe Robson in his e-book, [*Make Your Words Sell*](#) reminds us, "Just as a **P.S.** at the end of a sales letter magically attracts the reader's eye, your 'sig file' freely advertises your goods and services to your audience! And no one thinks of it as spam. But many marketers put too little thought into their 'sig file'. What a sad, sad waste."

About the Author: Brian J. Farrell is a director of online marketing for a nationally licensed mortgage firm by day and maintains several websites, including his online marketing consultancy at www.bfarrell.com, and his fishing search engine at www.outfishing.com. Brian is available for consultation on all aspects of online marketing and can be reached at brian@bfarrell.com or 732-735-9104.

Book Review - Make Your Words Sell! (MYWS!)

The Simple Art of e-Persuasion

By Joe Robson and Ken Envoy, M.D.

"Sales copy that doesn't sell should carry a government health warning."

Joe Robson, Copywriter

MYWS! dives deep into the mindset of a potential buyer and shows you how to craft strong, effective copy for web sites, e-mail campaigns and online store content. In his introduction, Robson tells us, "**MYWS!** isn't just about writing copy...It's about writing copy to **SELL**"

Joe Robson captivates you with a very easy, yet entertaining writing style, revealing gem after gem. Ken Evoy adds his insights and personal experience in small bites to drive home important points with a twist. There is a separate volume on *Web Content*, *E-mail Messages* and *Online Store Content*. Each volume provides the steps for writing great copy from the mindset of the buyer with lots of examples and personal accounts from the authors' hugely successful portfolios.

In each volume, Robson and Envoy walk you through a detailed project with a fictitious client. Both authors provide slight deviations in method, providing different approaches to the same primary process. Drawing on their vast experiences of which words work and which words don't, they create a separate comprehensive guide named *Automatic Response Words*.

The discovery process of "what makes your words sell" starts with identifying the *Most Wanted Response (MWR)*. What action does your client want the potential customer *to do most*? With this **MWR** focal point and a total immersion in the customer's mindset, the **SWAT** process sweeps you along the way to discover numerous and distinct benefits of the product or service. This ultimate list of powerful and undeniable benefits writes the USPs, Headlines/Sub Headlines and copy by itself. You just decide the flow and priority. At the end of this step, 95% of the copy is written and all you have left is to clean it up (again with techniques they offer) for final approval and testing. Robson promises, "...you will very quickly produce web copy a hundred times more successful than your present efforts."

MYWS is a must-have addition to your e-library. [Click here](#) to order.

494 pages, **Rating: 5 Stars.**

Review provided by R. Krishna Avva, President, Avva Communications, LLC,

*Grow **YOUR** business with a clear message www.avvacomm.com*



Protect Your Email From Unwelcome Spiders

By Nancy A. Pickering

Last month you learned how to *Protect your HTML Web Page Code from Pirates*. Did you know your contact e-mail address is vulnerable, too? Here's another trick you can add to your "security" bag. Hide your contact e-mail address "in plain sight" from unwanted web "spiders."

A "spider" is a program that automatically fetches information contained in Web pages. It's called a spider because it crawls over the Web. Some spiders are good. Many are sent through the Web searching for sites to index for search engines like Google. And you do want your site's pages to show up in search results, when visitors search for sites such as yours. But some spiders have a darker purpose. Some are "spam robots" or "e-mail harvesters" which search through the Web finding e-mail addresses to set up as spam targets.

You'll want to display your e-mail address so real people can see it or link to it, but at the same time, hide it from automatic e-mail harvesters. One reliable technique is to incorporate your e-mail address into a graphic, such as a picture of your business card. However, you're at a disadvantage with a graphic because visitors can't click a link to open a pop-up e-mail window. Instead, they must compose a message in their e-mail system and type your e-mail address by hand.

Take the plunge and choose a great alternative - a bit of javascript. Javascript offers an advantage because harvesters can't process scripts, so they can't collect your address when it resides within a script. If you aren't comfortable using javascript, then try the graphic method instead.

The basic script is shown below in three variations, all designed to break your address into sections and then "stitch it back together" on the page. Place one or another script in the page where you want your e-mail link to appear.

The Script

```
<script language=javascript>
<!--
var username = "username";
var hostname = "yourdomain.com";
var linktext = username + "@" + hostname;
document.write("<a href=" + "mail" + "to" + ":" + username + "@" + hostname + ">" + linktext +
"</a>")
//->
</script>
```

Or try this variation, with a change in the "var linktext" line:

```
<script language=javascript>
<!--
var username = "username";
var hostname = "yourdomain.com";
var linktext = "Click Here To Send Me E-mail";
document.write("<a href=" + "mail" + "to" + ":" + username + "@" + hostname + ">" + linktext +
"</a>")
//->
</script>
```



Or try this variation in the "document.write" line, with the "var linktext" line omitted:

```
<script language=javascript>
<!--
var username = "jane.doe";
var hostname = "XYZwriting.com";
document.write("Click <a href=" + "mailto:" + username + "@" + hostname + ">" +
"Here</a> To Send Me E-mail")
//-->
</script>
```

As always, be sure your spacing and punctuation are accurate. A single space or quotation mark or closing bracket out of place can foil your script and cause errors.

Note: This script assumes your system is configured to work with mailto: links.

Customizing the Script for Results

Suppose your e-mail address is *jane.doe@XYZwriting.com*. Do the following:

1. In place of "username" in the scripts above, type "*jane.doe*" instead.
 2. In place of "yourdomain.com" above, type "*XYZwriting.com*" instead.
 3. The "var linktext" line can be written two ways or omitted, depending on which example you use. If you want your link to show your full e-mail address as the link, use the first example, and no other substitutions are necessary. If you want your link to be instructional text, include that text between the quotation marks, replacing "Click Here To Send Me E-mail" in the second example with text of your own choosing. The third example is a variation of the second, with only one word in the phrase used as a hyperlink.
- The first example displays on your page as jane.doe@xzywriting.com.
 - The second example displays on your page as [Click Here To Send Me E-mail](#) or [Send Me Your Comments](#) or whatever you specified between the quotation marks on the "var linktext" line.
 - The third example, without the "var linktext" line, displays on your page as [Click Here](#) To Send Me E-mail. Only the underlined "Here" is the actual link.

All the links open a window from your e-mail program for composing and sending a message.

Many web sites offer free scripts like the ones above. Weigh the advantages against the disadvantages of using javascript — and then test, test, test, to be sure the script works the way you intended to protect your email from unwelcome spiders.

About the author: Nancy A. Pickering is a senior technical writer based in Minneapolis, Minnesota, specializing in printed and online user education materials for custom software. She is the web master for a professional musician's web site, www.stevemillaranddiamondhead.com. Nancy is enrolled in the AWA1 Copywriting course and plans to complete the Graphic Design course as well.



World of Graphic Design



Holiday Tree Trimming Party
You're invited!

Date: December 18th, 2004
Time: 8:00 p.m.
Place: The Franklin's
 4550 Devonshire
 Granada Hills, CA 91325

Please bring a small gift to exchange.

RSVP

With Christmas around the corner, plans for holiday parties abound. Lyn Blair captures the spirit of the season with her design. Using Adobe PhotoShop and Illustrator she created an eye-catching party invitation. Even if you haven't taken a design course, today's *user friendly* software programs allow anyone with a sense of style and color to develop attractive designs.



Western Rider UK

Wishing all our friends a very Merry Christmas!



MORE AND MORE ENGLISH RIDERS SEE THE ADVANTAGES OF RIDING WESTERN

'Tis the season to be jolly' and Frauke Nonnenmacher, tickles your holiday funny bone with her humor. The snooty smirk on the pinto's face makes you laugh before you read the text of the cartoon. Frauke employed her talents as a cartoonist, copywriter and graphic designer to prepare this delightfully humorous Christmas card for a client.



A Winter Wonderland

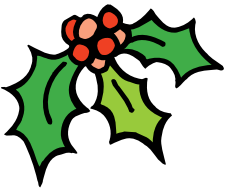


Wishing you a joyous Holiday Season
and a New Year of peace and happiness

Valerie Gupton

Above & Beyond Graphic Design

The beauty of Oregon's Coast Range seen from Valerie Gupton's kitchen window inspired her greeting card design. Valerie started with one of her favorite digital photos and created text for the card using Jasc Paint Shop Pro 7. Her card not only sends a holiday message, it displays her design capabilities and it functions as an advertisement for her business. Visit *Above & Beyond Graphic Design* at: www.abovenbeyondgraphicdesign.com



Six Ways to Kick Designer's Doldrums

By Mike Klassen

No matter how much fun graphic design is, we all go through times when we're stuck in a design rut. While there may be no sure-fire formula that works for everyone, when you need design inspiration you can kick the doldrums.

Let's suppose you've been hired to design a newsletter for a company. You know the general guidelines, but it's up to you to create a winning design. Firing up your favorite design program, you look at the empty workspace and nothing comes to mind.

What To Do, When You Draw a Blank

1. Look at the company's current newsletter, assuming there is a current newsletter. Sometimes breaking down the current newsletter into pieces and tackling these pieces one at a time can help you rebuild a stale design into a fresh one. Remember, it's not always necessary to reinvent the wheel. Look in Section 7 of the *Graphic Design Success* course for a wonderful example. You'll see a newsletter "fixed" piece by piece until we're left with an updated design far better than the original. And it didn't require starting from scratch.
2. Move away from the computer, At AWAI's Design Bootcamp in October. Roger C. Parker suggested taking out pencil and paper and sketching some ideas. It doesn't have to be anything fancy, but it should help you to piece together where nameplates, headlines, pictures, and articles should go. At the computer you'll be tempted to check e-mail, surf the Internet or <gasp!> play FreeCell while waiting for inspiration to strike. Find a quiet spot away from the computer and try a few ideas on paper instead.
3. Examine your swipe files - not to steal, but to inspire. If you've gone through the graphic design course, you should be able to look at different designs and understand the techniques used to create them. Which techniques grab your attention? How can you incorporate these ideas into your design? If you don't have a swipe file, it's not hard to build one. Call or email any company that mails brochures, newsletters or direct mail packages and ask to be put on their mailing list.
4. Look through design books in your local bookstore or library. You don't even need to read every page. Often just thumbing through the books will generate some ideas. You'll find a lot of good ideas in books in the Arts/Design section of your bookstore or library. And don't forget to look through a variety of magazines. Either the actual magazines or the ads in the magazines should inspire an idea that you can use on your project.
5. Search for newsletter templates. Depending on the software you use, there may be free templates available. Using a free template as-is, isn't highly recommended because there's a chance your project will look similar to one created by someone else with the same template. You're simply trying to get some ideas you can incorporate in your own design.
6. Bounce ideas off a design colleague. Don't have a design colleague? Find one! This is an area where copywriters and travel writers on the AWAI Forum have an edge on the graphic design crowd. Because writers deal with text, it's easy to post their work on the Forum to be critiqued. As designers, it's not as easy to share a design on the forum. You could create a private section on your website to hold "ideas in progress" and point other Forum members to it. There's a lot of value in finding someone with whom you can share ideas and e-mail whenever you have a question. A design colleague can become a true friend. You'll be more likely to share ideas or opinions without fear of giving away secrets and as a friend and colleague you'll be sincerely interested in seeing each other succeed.



There's no escaping occasional doldrums. The secret is having a plan to overcome them. As you see yourself sinking into the "design doldrums", run through these steps. If these six ideas don't help, develop ideas of your own. The most important thing is to keep working through these ruts. Don't trade the computer screen for the TV screen. Don't give in to the temptation to passively wait for inspiration. Better yet, share them on the *Graphic Design Success* Forum so others benefit. There's nothing like networking and immersing yourself in others creativity to breathe life back into your work. With a little bit of extra effort you'll be back on track to meet your deadline.

About the Designer Mike Klassen is a graphic designer and writer. His company, Klassen Communications, located in Everett, WA offers one-stop design and writing solutions. Mike attended AWAI's Graphic Design Boot Camp in October and is currently finishing the *Graphic Design Success* course. His design and writing work for local Bellevue Community College led to teaching a quarterly Marketing Communications course. Mike's designs and articles have been published in *Freebird*. He is a member of the Everett Chamber of Commerce, Business Network International and Everett Rotary Club. To see Mike's designs visit: design.mikeklassen.com.

From the Travel Journal

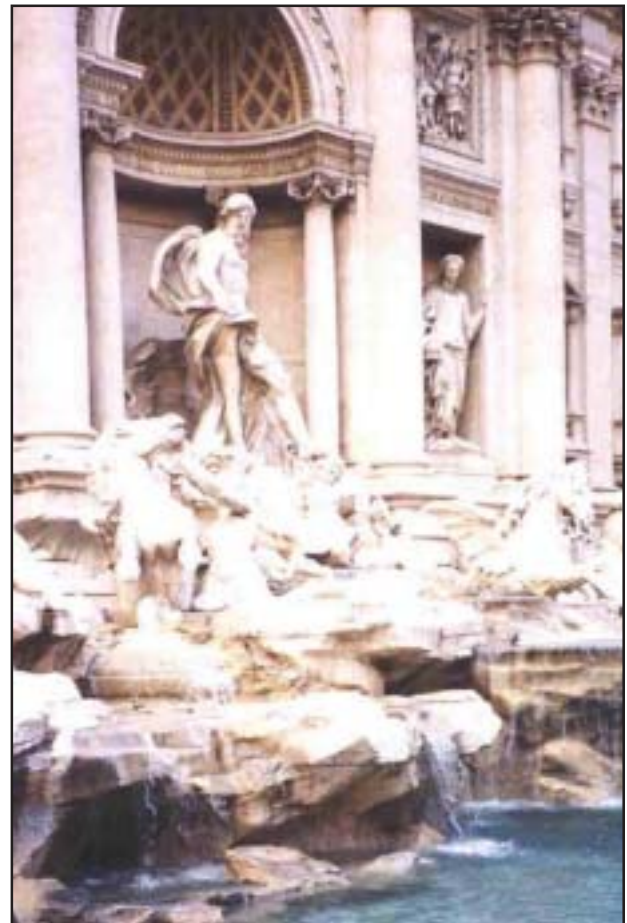
Captured in the Timeless Web of Rome

By Michael Slagle

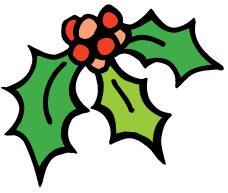
As any great city will, Rome reminds us why we travel. The real discoveries – the experiences that hang on longest after the trip is over – are not the "must-sees" we highlighted in our guidebook before leaving home. These are merely the embellishments that draw us to her. Rome's true allure reveals itself in more subtle ways.

We visit, of course, those obligatory sites. It is expected. For one does not go to Rome without seeing the Coliseum, or without marveling at the harmonious architecture of the Pantheon. We eat *gelato* while sitting on the Spanish Steps next to the Keats House. Exercise neck muscles to capture the full panorama of Michelangelo's masterpiece on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. And, following tradition, throw coins over our shoulder into the Trevi Fountain to assure our return to Rome.

But the memories that haunt us the most afterwards are those that come about unexpectedly – the dozens of feral cats that escort us on the Palatine Hill; the artisans restoring century-old furniture in tiny workshops tucked into the medieval buildings a few blocks off the *Campo di Fiori*; the *osteria* on a side-street in Trastevere, where we eat lavishly and inexpensively and then successfully negotiate with our waiter in our rudimentary Italian for the ceramic pitcher he'd served our *vino rosso* in.



Trevi Fountain



And we remember the Sunday morning church bells, their chiming replacing the usual early-morning cacophony of *Vespas* and spirited conversations over *cappuccini* beneath our hotel room window.

The first bells arouse us from the deep sleep of exhausted travelers. Then, one by one, other bells from Rome's hundreds of churches join in, permeating the morning with their collective celebration.

This ethereal wake-up call draws us from our bed to the window, as if the sound of the bells might actually be seen, as well as heard. The sun, though not yet dipping into the shadows of the *piazella* below, pours invitingly into our third-floor room. The late-February air teases of spring. But the bells dominate the morning.

The day before, we'd walked among the ruins of the Roman Forum, imagined we might actually be placing our feet upon the very stones that Julius Caesar once walked, yet still conscious of that vast chasm between past and present.

But these bells chiming across the city defy such temporal barriers. This, we realize, is the same Sunday morning concerto that centuries of travelers to Rome have awakened to. As they might have, we linger at the window and listen, captured in the web of that continuum. We know now why Rome is the Eternal City. This is why we have traveled here.

About the Author Mike Slagle is a freelance travel and copy writer residing in Ft. Wayne, IN. His recently published clips include non-fiction articles in *Freebird*, *The Traveler*, *Latitudes and Attitudes*, and *Dream of Italy*, as well as fiction in the literary journal *Rosebud*. When Mike isn't writing, he is teaching English Composition and Business Writing at Indiana University-Purdue University at Fort Wayne.

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Freebird is always looking for well-written, short travel pieces of 500 – 800 words. Think about those sketches you did early on in the *Passport to Romance* course. Or the entries you've made in your writer's notebook as you've learned to observe your surroundings with a travel writer's eye. These journal entries and sketches are the types of "seeds" that professional travel writers turn into short articles, even while they're working on larger projects. So, pull one out. Play around with it a bit. Expand it, if necessary. Rewrite it a couple of times. And, when you feel you've got an intriguing, polished short article, email it to mail@freebird-zine.com. If you have photos available, mention that in your email, as well.

If we like your article, we'll slot it for publication in an upcoming issue of **Freebird**. If needed, you'll then work with a published travel writer (an AWA! travel writing course graduate) to "fine-tune" and edit your article for publication. And you'll end up with a *published clip* to send out with your next travel article query or submission!