

Spreading The Word

by Paul Williams

I have been freelancing for a couple of years now and I still get a tingle down my spine each time I see an article of mine in print. Although I am still at the stage where making contacts is more important than making money, my writing has been featured in several local newspapers, one national daily and two magazines, making me some cash along the way. When I first started out I naturally assumed that the actual writing of the various pieces would make up the most difficult part of my work. But I was wrong! It's not the formulating that's the problem; it's the marketing.



Marketing, the art of identifying your customer and giving them what they want, was a complete mystery to me, but, put simply, marketing is about letting your customers know who you are and what you can do. Part of this process is writing for free. I have always written some articles for free but I know other freelancers who are quite disdainful about this and refuse to write anything for free but personally I find this attitude rather short-sighted and counterproductive. The contacts that I made in my very early days, by writing for free, are now proving to be valuable and trusted

sources of income. I also mention my occupation whenever I meet new people at parties or functions as you never know where the next piece of work will come from! There are several tips you can use to pep up your marketing:

Think beyond the role

Marketing is often seen as something which should only be utilised right at the end of a project. This isn't the case. Marketing should be a 'rolling process' covering everything you do from the way you speak to people through to building and maintaining a website or blog.

A little more conversation

Make sure you are as clued up as you possibly can be on current trends and debates. Read widely across the media. Use magazines and websites such as [Writers Reign](http://WritersReign) and establish your own voice and identity within the industry.

It's not what you know

Don't be afraid to get in touch with people you admire to ask for advice. Maybe you could work with some emerging local talent whom you admire. Most writers are grateful for some support in their early days. This is an excellent way of not only building relationships but of gaining media exposure too.



The social club

Use social media and encourage others to pass on the message. Look out for clubs, writing groups and societies in your area. Word of mouth recommendations really are the best form of advertising and public relations.

The power of the press



Local newspapers love local stories. It's why they exist. They especially love positive or unusual local stories. If you have won a competition, had a book published or got yourself an agent, tell your local newspaper. A quick flick through will glean some contact details or you could use a press release to deliver all your relevant information in one handy package. Take the time to develop relationships with journalists, broadcasters (particularly local radio) and bloggers. Ensure that communication is built into each new project right from the start.

Paul Williams has been freelancing for two years after spending ten years as an events organiser and literacy teacher, he also works for a charity which supports homeless people. He writes mainly on environmental and self-employment issues but likes to tackle an assortment of subjects. Paul is the founder of the 'Writers Cafe' a popular literature event in the North East of England.

Paul can be contacted on pwfrelancer@yahoo.co.uk

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