



NEVER
Look for
WORK
AGAIN

The 10 Commonsense Marketing
Tactics That Will Help Your Freelance
Business Reach Critical Mass

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Introduction

In August of 1989 I decided to jump out of a perfectly good airplane without a parachute. I quit a job I enjoyed with a company I liked but could no longer work for, and started my freelance business. In the beginning I used traditional marketing tactics like direct mail and advertising. As the years went by I embraced websites and social media. But to reach **critical mass** (the number of great clients my business needed to ensure I would never have to look for work again), I realized I needed to do something different. My marketing tactics had to evolve.

Looking back on what has become more than 3 decades of freelance success, this book reveals the 10 common sense tactics I use to market my business every minute of every day. These tactics have ensured I have enough clients bringing me work that I no longer need to, or have the time to, look for work myself.

I'm saying these are common sense tactics because I didn't purposefully set out to do these 10 things. Retrospectively I see that these are the 10 things I did that made all the difference in the success of my freelance business. They must have made sense to me at the time or I wouldn't have done them. They must have worked out for me or I probably would have been out of business long ago. There's nothing radical in these ideas. But apparently, consistently applying all 10 of them *is* radical because I apply them constantly to this day and continue to enjoy freelance success while other freelancers struggle for business.

When Cyndy Kryder and I wrote *The Accidental Medical Writer*, our goal was to use our experience to encourage, inspire, and empower, other freelancers to become successful. This book is another step toward that goal.

Why “Critical Mass?”

The secret to becoming a top freelancer is achieving critical mass. But what is critical mass, and why do you want to reach it?

Critical mass is when your freelance business has so many potential clients that someone is always contacting you with work. And I mean work, not opportunities for work. Not possible work. I mean how-soon-can-you-get-started work. You want your freelance business to reach critical mass because then you can spend your time doing work and making money instead of looking for the work that will make you money. In her book, *Freelancers Behaving Badly*, my colleague, Cyndy Kryder, aptly refers to having to constantly look for work as



The hamster wheel of client acquisition.

How do you get your freelance business to reach critical mass? It’s not by traditional marketing methods like direct mail, advertising, websites, and social media. Make no mistake, you need traditional marketing tactics like those to get your freelance business up and running, and to maintain and build it. But these tactics won’t likely get you to critical mass. Where the power of traditional marketing tactics ends, that’s where the 10 tactics I’m about to share with you begin.

Why do you need to know these tactics? Because they’re the tactics that enable successful freelancers to achieve critical mass. They’re the tactics I use every day to make my clients love me, hire me, recommend me, and pay me more than they pay most, if not all, of their other freelancers.

Now, you might be wondering how long it took for my freelance business to reach critical mass. The answer is, about 7 years. But I started in 1989—long before the internet was invented. Even before we had email. So I think you have the potential to get your freelance business to reach critical mass much faster.

Whether you’re just getting your freelance business off the ground or you’ve been freelancing for years, it’s never too soon or too late to start doing things better and smarter. You’re never too old or too experienced to learn. Trust me, I learn something new that benefits my freelance business every day. The day I stop learning will be the day I stop paying attention, and I don’t intend for that day to ever come.

How does achieving critical mass affect the way you market your freelance business? It enables you to alter your marketing strategy so work comes to you. Let me give you an example. One day I walked into my office at a little before 9. I was expecting it to be like any other day. Deadlines, teleconferences, the usual. Before I dug in for the day, I opened my email to see whether there was anything urgent I needed to address. Here's what I found:

- An email from a current client with 2 new assignments they wanted me to start on as soon as possible.
- An email from a colleague explaining that she had been approached for an assignment that wasn't up her alley, and she'd be happy to recommend me if I was interested.
- An email from someone I'd never heard of before or met, explaining that he had found me in the American Medical Writers Association (AMWA) Freelance Directory and thought I might be a good resource for his new medical communications company.
- An email from another current client with an add-on assignment to a project I've been working on for them.

My typical day instantly turned into an atypical day, but it's not an unusual day either. This happens to me all the time, and it's not luck. I market myself nearly every minute of every day so precisely this happens.

How did all these opportunities that came to me (instead of me looking for them) work out? Within a month, the 2 new projects from the current client were completed and invoiced. The recommendation from my colleague turned into a first project from a potentially huge new client, and that project was underway. The lead from the AMWA Freelance Directory was in pursuit and discussion. And the add-on project was about to get started.

What one thing does nearly all the business that came to me on that day have in common? My network. Am I talking about LinkedIn or Facebook? No. Those are networks of hundreds, thousands, or perhaps millions, of people you may or may not really be directly or indirectly connected to. I currently have more than 1,700 direct connections in my LinkedIn network, and I actually do have a professional relationship with many of those people. But through them I'm superficially connected to more than a million people. That's not what I'm talking about.

The network that's important to me includes my current clients and the people I speak to regularly. This is important to keep in mind because it's the major differentiating factor between traditional marketing and the tactics I'm about to share with you. Traditional marketing is vital for building a network of people and companies you can work for, and the Commonsense Marketing Tactics I use are vital for leveraging the network of people and companies I work for into a group of people and companies that work for me.

So what are those tactics? Here we go...

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