



F R E E L A N C E

folio

E-NEWS FOR
MEMBERS & FRIENDS of
THE FREELANCE FORUM
MARCH 2009

FREELANCE FORUM

PO Box 250024
Atlanta, GA 30325
www.freelanceforum.org

Annual Membership Dues:

Individual - \$85
Couples/Partners - \$150
Student - \$60

2009 EXECUTIVE BOARD

PRESIDENT

David Knope
404-435-8475
knope@mindspring.com

VICE PRESIDENT

David Batley
404-314-6359
dbphotodesign@comcast.net

SECRETARY

Kellie Frissell
770-474-1953
Kellie@kfdp.com

TREASURER

Stan Schnitzer
404-851-1804
stan@theschnitz.com

MEMBER-AT-LARGE

Jan Stittleburg
770-931-8170
jan@jsphotofx.com

PAST PRESIDENT

Jerry Silvestrini
678-380-1012
kingcool@bellsouth.net

THURSDAY, MARCH 5 MEETING

How to Make Your Work More Useful to Your Clients



Over the last 25 years, Robin Sherman, veteran journalist and publication specialist, has provided hands-on editorial services, design direction and layout guidance to more than 50 publications. Robin is the associate director, newsletter editor and a founding director of the American Society of Business Publication Editors (ASBPE), the only professional association exclusively geared towards B2B editors and writers.

Robin will show you how to think about your client's mission, communicate that mission clearly and quickly to your client's customers, and organize information to increase the client's readership. Whether you work in print or digital format, editorial or design, sales or marketing, this session is for you.

WHEN: March 5, 6:15-8:30 p.m.

WHERE: The Portfolio Center

ADDRESS: 125 Bennett Street NW, Atlanta, GA 30309

ADMISSION: FREE for Members/Guests \$15 (check or cash only, please)

REMEMBER, WE NOW MEET AT PORTFOLIO CENTER

The Portfolio Center is in Buckhead, 2 to 3 miles south of where Roswell Road meets Peachtree Street. If going north on Peachtree, go past Piedmont Hospital, Fresh Market and Vita Restaurant on the left. Turn left onto Bennett Street and go straight, just past Tula.

If going south on Peachtree, go past Office Depot, Willie's Burrito and Vita Restaurant on the right and turn right onto Bennett Street. Go straight, just past Tula.

Other directions are available at the Portfolio Center site:

<http://www.portfoliocenter.com/about/contact/directions/>

First Thursdays on Bennett Street

As the weather warms up, plan on arriving a little early for the Freelance Forum



meeting and enjoy this event first. Most of the galleries on Bennett Street are staying open 5:30-7:30 pm on the first Thursday of the month and will have light hors d'oeuvres, wine and other delights. You can have a pre-meeting "artist's date" and feed your own creative side while getting a nearby parking spot. Many of these galleries change their shows every month or two, so there's something different to see before each meeting. And it's a nice way to introduce a guest to a Freelance Forum meeting.

USE THAT MIKE!

In our new meeting space, using the microphone is necessary if you want to be heard. When you have an announcement, please come boldly forward to the mic. It doesn't bite and neither do most of our members!



WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS!

Susan Berland, graphic designer

Kimberly Sundling, graphic designer

Marie Wendel, web developer

SUBMIT IT!

All members are welcome to submit announcements, news items, articles, artwork and ideas to the *Folio*. ALL material is subject to edit and approval by the *Folio* staff.

All submissions need to be in by March 10, unless pre-arranged.

Please send to BOTH
honeyrubin@tobeablessing.com
AND
soozy@soozy.com.

COMMITTEE CONTACTS

COMMUNICATIONS

Soozy G. Miller

770-693-7059

soozy@soozy.com

Honey Judith Rubin

770-951-0304

honeyrubin@tobeablessing.com

MEMBERSHIP

Claudia Arkush

678-366-1857

CAgraphicdesign@comcast.net

NEWSLETTER

Soozy G. Miller

770-693-7059

soozy@soozy.com

Honey Judith Rubin

770-951-0304

honeyrubin@tobeablessing.com

PROGRAMS

Ray Pelosi

404-373-1956

raypelosi@yahoo.com

REFRESHMENTS

Lois Graham

770-939-8948

lois@grahamgraphics.com

SOURCEBOOK

Laura Heck

770-814-8984

Laura@heckdesigngroup.com

SPONSORSHIP

Bill Burns

404-210-6070

burnsll@aol.com

WEB

Steve Knapp

770-434-2352

steve@knappcommunications.com

February Meeting Recap

Hank Leeds on Finding the Perfect Client

FROM NOTES BY RONN HANLEY

For this meeting, chairs were arranged in a circle. Everyone could hear **Hank Leeds** clearly and it invited a sense of fellowship.

Hank briefly talked about the difference between creative people versus corporate America and then offered advice:

► Stay focused on your business to keep your momentum and spirits high. Our greatest challenges for getting business during this period of time are:

- Clients cutting back on budgets and not wanting freelancers
- Lack of ability to do all tasks, including ones that aren't in our freelance description
- Companies trying to do less with more — laying people off and then piling additional work on current employees

► Educate your potential customers when they explain that they can't afford you. Can they afford not to? What will happen to their bottom line if they choose a cheaper competitor, or worse, chose not to do anything at all?

► Make fees that are different than others. Don't sell yourself short. When you cut your fees or don't charge what the market will bear, customers lose faith in your ability. After you lower fees, you will have a much harder time raising them when the economy gets better or your skills improve.

► Refocus your efforts and review your values. Be very careful about whom you choose to associate with; your friends, co-workers, clients and family can make or break your attempts to build a solid, thriving business.

► Build a power marketing team (a group of people whose areas are different than yours) and surround yourself with strong people. You can bounce ideas off of them and



Jan Stittsburg

Hank Leeds offered a lot of excellent advice for finding great clients in a slow economy.

exchange information. Also build a mastermind group of four to six like-minded business owners who act as that friendly nudge when you need it.

► Use a weekly business plan. Write it up on Sunday night for the week. 1) Write down your top 10 calls (high profile qualified contact targets) to make during the week. 2) Take notes about what the target might need. 3) Give yourself a reward at the end of the week if you meet the goal for that week.

► Consider reading *Think and Grow Rich* by Napoleon Hill. Take excellent care of your health, mental status and business goals.

► Methods to bring in new clients:

- Use tools like LinkedIn to build relationships with more than just the people you know. Introductions and referrals usually come from being in the right place at the right time, or helping someone. They will remember and reciprocate.
- Pick an area of specialization (i.e. health care or green society). Niche marketing is

very powerful and eventually you will become the voice of authority in that field. That leads to people seeking you out.

- Improve your skills outside your specialty. This makes you flexible and more of an asset.
- Get involved in associations and volunteer work.
- Create a new website and/or improve your current one.



Jan Stittsburg

GO TO THE SOURCE

Just click on
Find a Freelancer
at freelanceforum.org
to instantly connect
with Atlanta's best
creative talent.

www.freelanceforum.org

See **Recap** on page 3

FOLIO VOLUNTEERS

CO-EDITORS

Honey Judith Rubin
Soozy G. Miller

DESIGN

Janie Morgan

PHOTOGRAPHY

Jan Stittleburg

CONTRIBUTORS

Claudia Arkush
Susan Drake
Kellie Frissell
Ronn Hanley
David Knope
Soozy G. Miller
Honey Judith Rubin

DIGITAL DISTRIBUTION

Steven Knapp
Jack Massa

FREELANCE FORUM LOGO DESIGN

Charissa Schultz

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ZENITH
DESIGN GROUP

Recap *continued from page 2*



Jan Stittleburg

- Pound the pavement and hand out business cards.
- Do cold calls.
- Join marketing groups.
- Attend or give classes and/or speaking engagements.
- Target people new to the area. Helping them could create a lead that turns into a paying assignment.
- ▶ Qualify your ideal client and focus marketing efforts on them:
 - What kind of vibe do you get from the phone conference and from face to face meetings?
 - Has the client done business with you — or your type of company before? If you have to spend too much time educating the potential client, it might not be worth the time.
 - Ask for referrals. Referrals are the lifeblood of any business. Most businesses manage to grow without advertising.
- ▶ Make sure potential clients understand that you are the best consultant for them:
 - Give off a positive vibe.
 - Exude strength and competence.
 - Be comfortable in your own skin.



M E M B E R N E W S

Women in Aviation International National Conference

John Slemp's aviation photographs (Aerographs) will be exhibited at the upcoming WIA National Conference being held at the Atlanta Hyatt Regency hotel February 26–28, 2009. John will be in booth 805 with aviation prints, greeting cards, coasters, and perhaps a few new items, too. Come on by and say “Hello” if you’re in the neighborhood.

- Be aware and project the image that you are a professional there to do a job.
- Continue to work on people skills — they make pitch meetings go well and present the freelancer as a problem solver, not just someone looking for an assignment. Use your expressive and forward personality.

Marketing is simply a way to keep at the top of someone’s mind. Effective marketing happens when people know your name and what you do and then call you or respond positively when you call them. The client chooses you because you

made yourself memorable and available. (If you are not the person for the job say so, and find an alternative. That makes you look good and the client still gets served.)

▶ Plant seeds for the future. If the client doesn’t have anything for you right now, they might some day. “No” doesn’t always mean forever. And “No” usually isn’t personal.

▶ Make good use of time at networking meetings by getting involved and talking. Trade business cards and use your “elevator speech” when people ask you what you do. Don’t always be looking for the next assignment — also look for opportunities to help.

▶ The decision makers for most companies are available on Fridays 3–6 p.m., when the “gatekeeper staff” is gone, and the decision makers are hanging around the office.

▶ Be honest about your skill set. If you think you can pick something up quickly that’s fine, but if it’s really outside your ability, don’t say that you can do it. Lying ruins the connection with the potential client.

▶ The small business economy is vibrant. There are thousands of small-to-medium sized businesses in America. Don’t limit yourself to one geographic location. Go outside Georgia and the United States.

▶ Avoid the news; eventually the doom and gloom message sinks in and sabotages your efforts. Things have been bad before. When everyone realizes that individual effort is what puts things back on top, things will turn around.

Q&A

Q: Can freelancers file for unemployment benefits?

A: Only if pay is reported to the IRS on a W-2. If it’s on a Form 1099, no.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Forum: A Place for Discussing Questions

BY DAVID KNOPE

About 20 minutes into our February program it dawned on me. We were sitting in a big circle facing each other, there was no back row, and we were exchanging ideas.

We were in a forum.

I've long advocated programs in which we talk to each other about how to succeed — and now, about dealing with the current economic reality. Hank Leeds asked questions and got us thinking and talking and we again saw the value of the two-way conversation. That conversation can be leveraged in our work. We need to find creative ways to involve our clients in the creative process so projects are based on partnership. Our clients have knowledge and ideas that are valuable. Being passive about information has its place, but we all like to be heard and our ideas considered.

BOARD MEETING MINUTES, 01-13-09

Approved by **Jerry Silvestrini**, seconded by **David Batley**.

Treasurer's report: We received the Solarium refund check. David B. will do profit/loss (PL) for January and then turn the duties over to **Stan Schnitzer**. **Bobby Hickman** will continue to maintain the PayPal™ account until the new site is up and running.

Meeting location: The board decided to move to the Portfolio Center starting February 5. Our contact at Portfolio Center is Claire Danielson.

Program ideas: Program chair **Ray Pelosi** came to discuss program ideas. The board discussed giving our speakers a link from our site for a year as a thank you for speaking and/or presenting.

Sponsorship packets: **Jerry Silvestrini** is working with **Lois Graham** to retrieve and update editable files.

Web site update: **Jack Massa** and **Steve Knapp** are finding a new host for the site.

Next board meeting: Wednesday, March 11, 6:30 pm at Olde Mill Steakhouse on Savoy Road, the access road by the Chamblee Dunwoody — 285 exit. All members are welcome to attend.

Whatever our individual specialties, we all work in the communication business. So we have to think about what makes communication effective. Engaging and exchanging and having real conversations in our meetings are a good start.

In both January and February we had real conversations. In March we'll have one of our own members present. This lets us get to know each member better and learn and appreciate the resources our group has to offer.

If you have ideas for the content or presenter for a meeting, we'd love to know.



Involvement Opportunity

The Freelance Forum board would like to plan an awards competition. We want to form a committee that would make recommendations on categories (graphics, writing, photography etc.), rules, eligibility (FF members only or open to other freelancers, students etc.), judging standards (using outside judges), prizes/awards, etc. If successful, this could become an annual event showcasing the great work done by freelancers in Atlanta. If interested, contact **David Knope**, knope@mindspring.com or 404-435-8475.

The Folio wants YOU!

Folio editors Soozy & Honey can REALLY use some help with producing the *Folio* when workload or family emergencies have captured our time. Please let us know if you can help, even periodically.

And Janie apologizes to all the good folks who have offered their design help. She'll contact you as soon as she gets her act together. Promise!

FYI:

A new-found resource for intellectual properties. Everything you want to know (and not know) about protecting your work: <http://tinyurl.com/intelprop>.

PUT THE SOURCEBOOK TO WORK FOR YOU!

The 2008–2009 edition of the Freelance Forum Sourcebook makes an excellent leave-behind for clients and prospects—just highlight your listing (or ad). If you need a few extra copies, contact **Jan Stittleburg** at 770-931-8170 or photofx@bellsouth.net.