

FREELANCE
FORUMPO Box 250024
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www.freelanceforum.org

Annual Membership Dues:

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

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Bobby Hickman
770-529-9189
bhickman@bellsouth.net

VICE PRESIDENT

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

SECRETARY

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

TREASURER

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

MEMBERS-AT-LARGE

Kellie Frissell
770-474-1953
Kellie@kfdp.com
Nancy Spraker
770-514-8788
nspraker@bellsouth.netTHURSDAY, FEBRUARY 1ST MEETING

So... What Do You Charge?

BY POLLY WADE

Most of us, whether we're new to freelancing or established veterans, question the way we price our services. Am I overcharging? Undercharging? Should I give price breaks for high-volume work? What do others do? Now's your chance to find out.

Join us in February as we break into small groups to share pricing experiences with our peers. We'll divide into groups based on specific disciplines—writing, design, etc.—and a facilitator will lead a discussion on such issues as:

- How do you price your services?
- What are your concerns in assessing your current rates?
- Do you employ any "creative" options when pricing services?

You'll leave with a pricing "reality check" and the confidence to price your work appropriately.

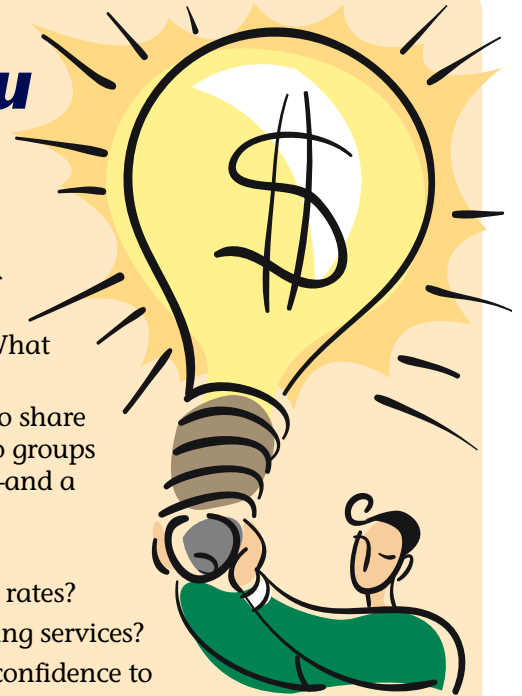
WHEN: February 1, 6:15-8:30 pm

WHERE: The Creative Circus

ADDRESS: 812 Lambert Drive (near the I-85 Monroe Drive exit)

ADMISSION: FREE for Members/Guests \$15

SEE LAST PAGE FOR DETAILED MAP AND DIRECTIONS TO CREATIVE CIRCUS



Jan Stittleburg

Mark McGraw engaged the Freelance Forum audience in finding the right questions to ask prospective clients.

January Meeting Recap

BY CHRISTIN WHITTINGTON

How can you know the answers if you don't ask the questions?

January's Freelance Forum speaker, **Mark McGraw** of the Sandler Sales Institute, talked

about how we can differentiate ourselves and stand out against all the competition. It all boils down to:

- the types of questions we ask
- the types of questions we fail to ask

It's vital to take the time to ask probing questions of our prospective clients. McGraw recommends spending at least an hour or two in meetings (face-to-face is best) just asking questions, before even beginning to

develop a presentation. He says much of business today suffers from "Premature Presentation Syndrome," characterized by PowerPoint slides that don't address what the client is really looking for—because the presenters didn't bother to ask first.

Of course, there are many reasons why people don't ask questions, especially face-to-face. Sometimes we really don't want to know the answer! However, in-depth questioning is a valuable qualifying tool as well: better to find out early that this client or project is not a good fit, rather than when you've invested more time and resources than you will be able to recoup. In other words, "qualify hard, close easy."

We don't ask because we don't want to offend. And yet, the prospect is usually

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COMMITTEE CONTACTS

MARKETING

Irene Pierce
404-260-4514

Irene@impactcopywriting.com

MEMBERSHIP

Lois Graham
770-939-8948

lois@grahamgraphics.com

Ray Pelosi

404-373-1956

raypelosi@yahoo.com

NEWSLETTER

Christin Whittington

404-406-5204

christin@solutionsinwriting.com

Honey Rubin

770-951-0304

honeyrubin@tobeablessing.com

PROGRAMS

Polly Wade

770-645-6396

polly@pollywade.com

REFRESHMENTS

Claudia Arkush

678-366-1857

CAgraphicdesign@comcast.net

SPONSORSHIP

Patrick Carlson

404-352-3006

patrick@bullseyecreativecommunications.com

WEB

Steve Knapp

770-434-2352

steve@knappcommunications.com

January Recap

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impressed by our interest, and will look on us more favorably as a result of our questioning. We don't want to take the time to ask questions, or we don't want to sound foolish. In McGraw's words, we're working on the "I," not the "U," being more anxious to show off than to meet that prospect's needs.

Yet, if we take the time to listen and understand the emotional reasons why that prospect is looking to do business, there's a payoff: we may never have to drag out that PowerPoint presentation!

So what are the right questions to ask? First, McGraw says, be clear on what makes a

good client for you. Make a list if you need to, then ask questions to qualify them as well as to find out what they need. For example: "Can we talk about what's important to you?" "What are you unhappy with in your current situation?" And "who else is involved in this decision?"

Asking probing questions may bring you to "wimp junction"—the fork in the road when you decide whether to cut your losses or ask more questions to determine how to save the account. Again, better to find out early. You can find more sales tips and tools on Mark McGraw's website, www.salesengine.sandler.com.

Meet the New Folio Co-Editor

Honey Judith Rubin, long time member, is delighted to help with the creation of the newsletter this year. While Honey finds words themselves quite delicious, she especially enjoys telling the story—of the dreams and visions that drive peoples' lives, of the gifts they bring into the world, and of their triumphs.

Honey has taught every age group and most learning profiles and abilities. She is also degreed as a school psychologist with a specialty in learning theory. Honey applies her unique array of skills and talents to

create human-interest pieces and inspirational and motivational materials for training programs. She currently does freelance proofreading and copyediting.

Honey writes and collects "chicken soup for the soul"-type stories on her website, www.tobeablessing.com. She teaches metaphysical classes synthesizing several mystical and spiritual traditions. Honey is crafting her first book, *When P.I.G.S. Fly—learning to engage your personal inner guidance system*.

Introducing the 2007 Freelance Forum Board



The 2007 Freelance Forum Board: Bobby Hickman, Kellie Frissell, Nancy Spraker, Jerry Silvestrini, David Knope, Jan Stittleburg.

Jan Stittleburg

New faces, and old faces in new places, make up the incoming Freelance Forum Board of Directors.

Bobby L. Hickman, returning president, is a former newspaper reporter and editor whose freelance journalism has appeared in many Southern newspapers, the Associated

Press—even the *National Enquirer*. He writes for *MergerMarket*, a global business publication; the *Atlanta Business Chronicle*; and such magazines as *Points North*, *North Fulton Living* and *Cobb Living*. As a copywriter, Bobby works with organizations

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NEW MEMBERS' LUNCH

The next new members' lunch will be on Thursday, February 22, 11:30 am to 1:00 pm at The American Cafe at Phipps Plaza.

Contact Membership Committee chair Ray Pelosi at 404-373-1956 or raypelosi@yahoo.com for more information.

REMINDER: No More Slippin' In the Back

For security reasons, Creative Circus has asked that we enter and leave the school through the Main Entrance only.

Thanks for respecting the wishes of our generous host!

Introducing the 2007 Freelance Forum Board

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of all sizes to create newsletters, press releases, web copy and marketing collateral. His company, B.L. Hickman and Associates Inc., was founded in 1995.

Vice-president **Jerry Silvestrini's** dream of becoming a hack illustrator was realized in 1983 when he graduated from The Columbus College of Art and Design in Columbus, Ohio. Jerry spent five years slaving in studio sweatshops learning the ins and outs of professional illustration from liars, cheats and plagiarists. He has been living the sweet life of an independent contractor since 1988. After a phenomenal run as an advertising product airbrush guy, Jerry has reverted back to his infantile, junior high school cartooning style and achieved alarming success. His clients include Strotzman International, Coca-Cola, Ilearn, and many other, even larger more important companies that he can't legally name.

David Knope, secretary (and last year's treasurer), is a writer of scripts, speeches, websites, print materials and minutes of Freelance Forum board meetings. His background includes 19 years in corporate communication at Georgia Power after starting out as a public television producer/director in Michigan. David formed his own company, Knope Communications, Inc., in 2000 to do freelance writing for corporate and government clients in Atlanta and the Southeast. He holds degrees in journalism from the University of Wisconsin and film from The London Film School.



Freelance Forum Board President **Bobby Hickman** presents **Laura Heck** with a gift certificate, in recognition of her outstanding service as a board member and past president. Though now officially a "civilian," Laura will continue to serve by spearheading the annual Sourcebook project.

Jan Stittleburg, treasurer, returns to the board in a new position—she was secretary last year. She comes to Atlanta from Wisconsin by way of Massachusetts. She studied mechanical design in school, worked on the drafting board for a few years, then decided she needed to be able to color outside the lines. She has been doing product and architectural photography for the last 20 years. Jan also worked in prepress, learning how to use a computer and create printable files, and now does a wee bit of graphic design, mostly for her catalog clients.

Kellie Frissell, member-at-large and a rare native Georgian, has worked in metro Atlanta for the last 20-something years. Kellie has generally worked in corporate art departments from real estate to computer software to aviation. She transitioned into a more publication-heavy direction in the early '90s. Her specialties are corporate identity design and publication/magazine design and production. However, she does plenty of marketing, promotion (including the Atlanta Jazz Festival the past two years) and web work. She has been doing freelance work throughout her entire career, and officially created a permanent home office in late 2004.

Nancy Spraker, member-at-large, is another graduate from the University of Wisconsin—where she received a B.A. in Radio, TV & Film. She assisted in development of CD and DVD technology upon graduation, worked on documentaries, then established a career in printing and magazine publishing after moving to Atlanta in 1982. In 2004 she received a Masters of Arts in Professional Writing from Kennesaw State University and since then has written destination and other articles for local and international magazines. While in town she works on copywriting assignments. She has been a Freelance Forum fan and member for three years.

WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS

Rachel Bailey, writer

John E. Bills III, illustrator/web designer

Marcia Riley, writer

Linda Travis, strategic marketer

FOLIO VOLUNTEERS

CO-EDITORS

Honey Rubin
770-951-0304
honeyrubin@tobeablessing.com
Christin Whittington
404-406-5204
christin@solutionsinwriting.com

DESIGN

Janie Morgan
Claudia Arkush

PHOTOGRAPHY

Jan Stittleburg

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Susan Drake
Kellie Frissell
Bobby Hickman
Honey Rubin
Polly Wade
Christin Whittington

DIGITAL DISTRIBUTION

Steven Knapp
Jack Massa

FREELANCE FORUM LOGO DESIGN

Charissa Schultz

SPONSORS

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Got an item or suggestion for the Folio? Have you won an award, landed a new account, had a baby? Contact one of our Folio editors:

Honey Rubin
honeyrubin@tobeablessing.com
770-951-0304

Christin Whittington
christin@solutionsinwriting.com
404-406-5204

We want to hear from you.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER



There's a fellow writer I run into occasionally while I'm out networking. At a recent meeting, I was handing out Freelance Forum Sourcebooks and talking to some editors when he came up. "Freelance Forum—I've had some people tell me I should attend a meeting," he said. "But I'd rather spend my time hanging out with people who might hire me."

So I explained that while we're not a leads group, we do take steps to generate business, such as through the job leads service and through member referrals. However, what makes us unique is our programs geared towards running a freelance creative business, and our members' openness in sharing experience and knowledge with each other.

"It's definitely not for me, then," he replied. "I'm not sharing my secrets with my competitors."

As the conversation turned to other topics, I realized he's right—he's probably not a good fit for our group. We don't generally see each other as competitors, but as colleagues who can help each other.

Plus, he definitely wouldn't be comfortable at our upcoming meeting, where we'll be "sharing secrets" about how we price our services with others in our disciplines.

Personally, I think the greatest strength of our group lies in our members—the depth and breadth of our experience, our knowledge, even our personalities. I always look forward to opportunities for us to share best practices and war stories. That happens already, in one-on-one conversations before the meetings or outside our regular functions. But when we can do that more formally—through panels that include members, articles in the newsletter or break-out sessions like the one this month—it's an opportunity for us to more efficiently disperse our collective wisdom to a larger audience.

So—assuming you're not opposed to sharing a little of your insights in return for those of others—I hope we'll see you at the February meeting!

—Bobby Hickman

If at First You Can't Make a Referral, Try, Try Again!

BY KELLIE FRISSELL

Recently, an ad production project was thrust at me due to a last-minute scheduling conflict. Well, putting the two words "ad" and "production" together, for me, was as bad as "ice storm." I did not even consider myself a potential candidate. However, **Patrick Carlson** contacted me about the project thinking it might be a good fit. I was hesitant. But after talking with the publisher and Patrick, I decided to take it on—and it did turn out to be a good fit. I have already been asked to return for the next issue.

So, some advice: don't count out a project you hear about without really looking into it. What might not be suitable for one artist, or what might not fit into their schedule, might end up being perfect for you. And don't discount the opinions of your fellow members. They might see something in your abilities that you haven't noticed. I want to officially thank Patrick at Bull's-Eye Creative

Communications (www.bullseyecreativecommunications.com) for passing this project along. I also want to remind everyone to keep thinking of your fellow Freelance Forum members for projects that might not fit into your schedule or specialties.

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DIRECTIONS TO CREATIVE CIRCUS

FROM DOWNTOWN HEADING NORTH ON

PIEDMONT: North of Ansley Mall, turn right onto Cheshire Bridge Rd. Go approximately 2/10 of a mile to Manchester St (at Roxx Tavern) on your left. Turn left and follow Manchester until it ends at Lambert and turn right. Creative Circus is the purple building at the end of Lambert on the left.

FROM BUCKHEAD HEADING SOUTH ON

PIEDMONT: Continue south past Lindbergh and go under I-85 overpass. Turn left at the first light past I-85 onto Lambert. Creative Circus is the purple building at the end of Lambert on the left.

FROM CHESHIRE BRIDGE/LAVISTA ROADS: On Cheshire Bridge from Lavista, go approximately 1 mile south toward Piedmont Rd. Turn right onto Manchester St (at Roxx Tavern, just past NAPA Auto Parts). Follow Manchester till it ends at Lambert and turn right. Creative Circus is the purple building at the end of Lambert on the left.

FROM I-85 NORTHBOUND:

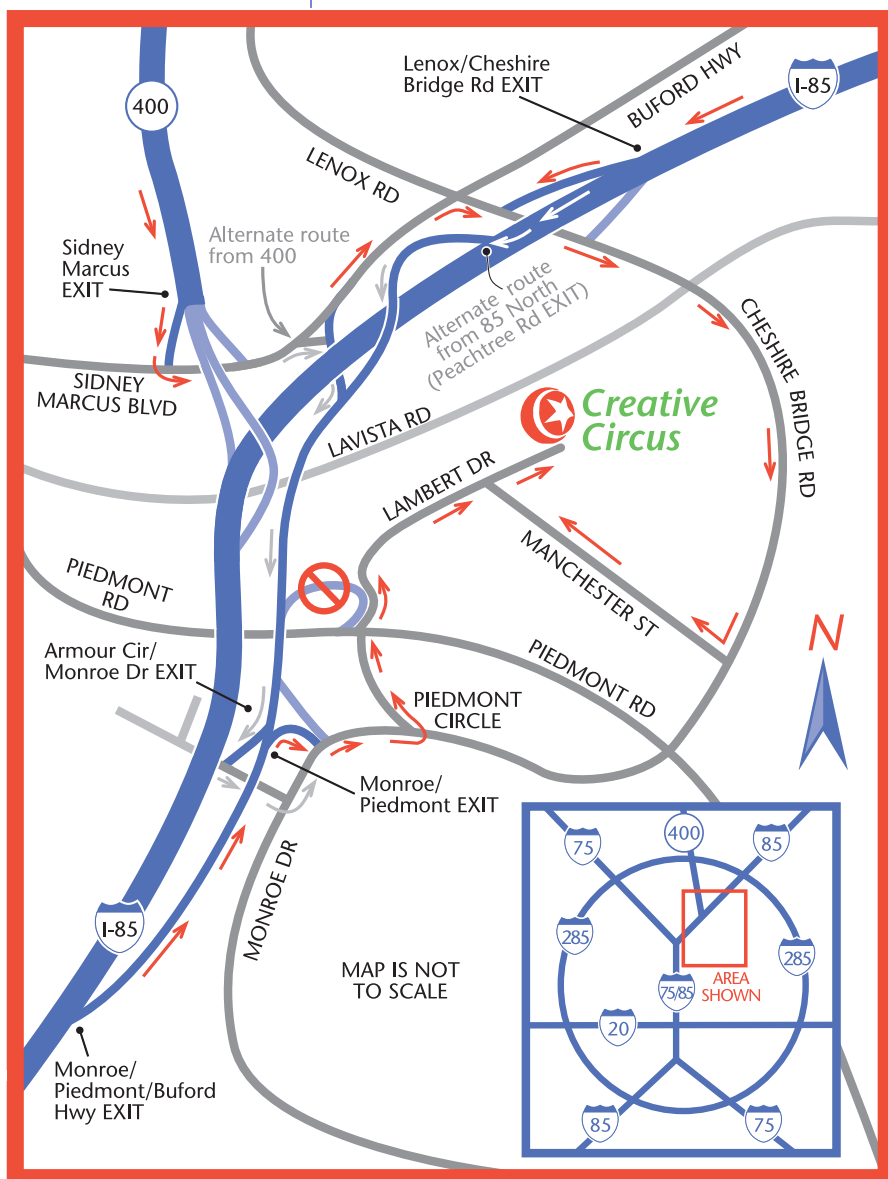
Take exit 86 (Monroe/Piedmont/Buford Hwy). Coming off the I-85 exit ramp take the first exit (Monroe/Piedmont). Go left at the light, then take an almost immediate left at the BP Station onto Piedmont Circle. At the next light, cross Piedmont Rd onto Lambert (staying to the right of the yellow highway barrels). Creative Circus is the purple building at the end of Lambert on the left.

FROM I-85 SOUTHBOUND: Take the Lenox/Cheshire Bridge exit (Exit 86); turn left at the end of the ramp onto Cheshire Bridge. Continue 1.3 miles to Manchester St and turn right (at Roxx Tavern and just past NAPA Auto Parts). Follow Manchester till it ends at Lambert and turn right. Creative Circus is the purple building at the end of Lambert on the left.

OR: Take the Peachtree Rd exit (Exit 88) onto the access road. Take the first exit (Armour/ Monroe). At the end of the ramp go left to the next light and turn left onto Monroe. Turn left at the BP Station onto Piedmont Circle. At the next light, cross Piedmont Rd onto Lambert (staying to the right of the yellow highway barrels). Creative Circus is the purple building at the end of Lambert on the left.

FROM GA 400 SOUTHBOUND: Take the Sidney Marcus exit. At the end of the ramp go left onto Sidney Marcus. Turn left onto Buford Highway. Turn right at the next light onto Cheshire Bridge. Continue 1.4 miles to Manchester St and turn right (at Roxx Tavern and just past NAPA Auto Parts). Follow Manchester till it ends at Lambert and turn right. Creative Circus is the purple building at the end of Lambert on the left.

FROM I-75 SOUTHBOUND: Take the I-85 North ramp. Stay in the right-hand lane once on I-85. Go approximately 1 mile to the Monroe/Piedmont/ Buford Hwy exit (Exit 86). Coming off the I-85 exit ramp take the first exit (Monroe/Piedmont). Go left at the light, then take an almost immediate left at the BP Station onto Piedmont Circle. At the next light, cross Piedmont Rd onto Lambert (staying to the right of the yellow highway barrels). Creative Circus is the purple building at the end of Lambert on the left.



Janie Morgan