

FREELANCE
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770-529-9189
bhickman@bellsouth.net

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678-380-1012
kingcool@bellsouth.net

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404-435-8475
knope@mindspring.com

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770-931-8170
jan@jsphotofx.com

MEMBERS-AT-LARGE

Kellie Frissell
770-474-1953
kellie@kfdp.com
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770-514-8788
nspraker@bellsouth.netTHURSDAY, MARCH 1ST MEETING

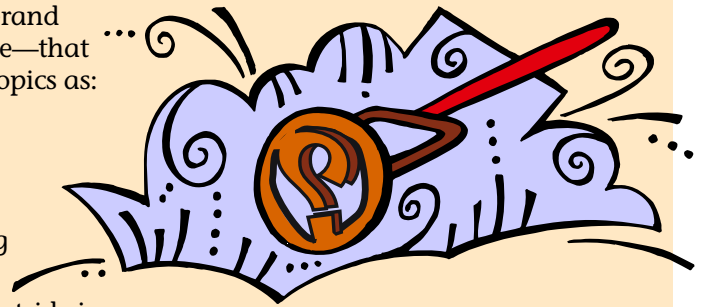
Branding from the Outside In

BY POLLY WADE

Brand building is about creating relationships. Most clients tend to talk about brand building from their own point of view. They see the relationship between brand and customer as a one-way street, asking things such as, "How can we add more value to our brand?"—not realizing that it's their customers who will actually add the value.

Join us in March as Freelance Forum member and veteran copywriter **Robert Roth** looks at brand building from a different perspective—that of the customer's. He'll cover such topics as:

- Defining the brand experience
- What the customer expects
- How markets shape brands
- How winning brands stay winning brands
- How to get your clients thinking outside in



WHEN: March 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

February Meeting Recap

How much do *you* charge? Breaking into small discussion groups based on specific disciplines, members and guests shared pricing experiences and practices at our February meeting. Here are some insights and tips culled from the various groups:

Internet and Multimedia Group,

Steve Knapp reporting

Many of us feel uncomfortable with how to price and how to estimate how long something will take. It would be nice to



Tim Shannon, PR-PICS.com

have "the answer," but it doesn't really exist per se. Now we know, "It's not just me struggling with it all!" Good to hear ballpark hourly rates on a "standard five-page brochure" site to get a little more concrete validation. And to hear similar issues others encounter, such as about clients that may necessitate 100% payment up front. Other points include:

- Better to have a higher rate and not bill all hours (especially when learning a new product or technology) than to have a lower rate due to the client's perception of value.
- Hesitant to raise your rate? Try it out on new clients.
- When quoting a project, define your scope up front with a written proposal or contract. With a project-based fee, include two or three revisions, and your hourly rate for work beyond the scope. Steve's web design proposals, e.g., include email setup,

continued on page 2

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COMMITTEE CONTACTS

MARKETING

Irene Hatchett
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

February Recap

continued from page 1

testing in the top four to six browsers, search engine submissions, a support period for 30–60 days after the site goes live, and an hourly rate beyond the scope effective through a defined date.

- Don't talk rate right off the bat. Engage the prospective client first, find out about the job and them, and let them get to know about you and your work, so they can understand that your fee is worth what you're asking.

Writers Group #1, (led by Irene Hatchett)

Magazine writers:

Most magazines have non-negotiable rates and contracts. At times, a few writers are able to negotiate a better rate. One said she will not work with a magazine that will not include her bid letter and/or proposed contract term changes in the final contract. Local magazines pay less—"You can't make a living on local publications."

Contract terms are getting more difficult to negotiate and are more favorable to the media companies than to the writer. Several writers find their published work appearing on pay-per-article sites and they get no residuals. A common theme: get a contract and make sure you know what rights you are selling. Legal assistance is often available through the National Writers Union and the America Society of Journalists and Authors; check their websites.

Copywriting:

If you lock in at a lower rate, it's harder to ask for more money later. For long-term clients, there are ways around it—such as telling a client that all your rates are going up on a certain date. Some offer volume discounts on large projects or repeat clients, but most have been burned when the expected extra work does not materialize. *Everyone* has been burned by not charging enough when they started out, finding that lower rates attract less desirable clients.



Tim Shannon, PR-PICS.com



Tim Shannon, PR-PICS.com

The rates published in *Writer's Market* are far below what most Atlanta writers are charging, although their description for the number of hours expected usually seems reasonable. Your best bet in pricing an unfamiliar project is to contact other writers and ask questions.

There are good websites with background on almost any product, and some indicate common rates. For example, for white papers see www.whitepapersource.com and www.whitepaperguy.com.

Writers Group #2, Paul Glickstein reporting

Project fee vs. hourly rate: with fees, you go over and you go under, but it's fair over time.

Retainer: establish an hourly rate for when you exceed specified hours on a retainer agreement. Position it as a "fee per month" as opposed to a "retainer."

Alternative pricing model: ask the client what the ROI is for your work: orders, sales, revenues, etc., to determine the real value of your services.

One writer established his first job with a new client at \$25/hour, with a \$10/hour increase on each succeeding job, up to a cap of \$75/hour.

Quote a fee range, including revisions (can specify number of hours for revisions).

To help determine your fee, ask the client: What's your budget? What do you charge your clients? Ask yourself the potential value of the new client.

One writer/branding consultant has separate fee schedules for (1) corporate, (2) small businesses, (3) individuals and (4) nonprofits.

Consensus: best to have subcontracting vendors bill the client separately.

Structured fee scale (writing vs. editing vs. proofreading vs. consulting, etc.): most set fees at a single, uniform rate.

continued on page 3

NEW MEMBERS' LUNCH

The new members' lunch for this month will be on Thursday, March 29, 11:30 am to 1:00 pm at The American Cafe in Phipps Plaza.

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

WANT TO GET ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN THE FREELANCE FORUM?

We are looking for you! The Freelance Forum sponsorship committee is looking for dynamic individuals to assist with introducing the organization to potential sponsors. Gain valuable experience while getting to know other active members.

Contact **Patrick Carlson** at patrick@bullseyecreativecommunications.com for further details.

February Recap

continued from page 2



Tim Shannon, PR-PICS.com

Don't work on spec unless you volunteer to increase your experience, add a sample to your portfolio, etc. But never if a client asks you to work on spec.

Graphic Designers and Art Directors,

Lois Graham reporting

The Graphic Artist's Guild Handbook—Pricing and Ethical Guidelines, the best guide to pricing, offers a range of prices based on size and type of the client's business or company. It is the industry standard for working with clients, writing contracts and handling disputes. The website creativelatitude.com is another resource for determining prices and helpful articles.

For concept/creative work the client often wants a fixed project price. Avoid conflict in the event that the project is expanded in midstream by adding a line in your contract terms of agreement which covers "change of project scope." Keep communication open as the project proceeds so there are no surprises when payment is due.

Hourly fees can apply where production art is the primary focus and the client prefers that method of pricing. Ongoing support of a client's graphics needs calls for an hourly fee, as well.

Use a time sheet to record all the time spent on a project for accurate invoicing and future estimating.

Remember that you are a *business* and must cover overhead for expenses, benefits and taxes. Your fee is not all take-home pay.

Photographers, Videographers, and Illustrators,

John Slemper reporting

Only two group members used "usage" pricing, in which the value of the produced work is scaled to the visibility the work will have. The greater the visibility, the more it is worth to the client, and fees are accordingly higher. The concept also entails limiting the usage, based upon a detailed licensing agreement, and trusts that the client will respect the creator's copyright (use the work within the constraints of the licensing agreement).

Most did not know what others might charge for a particular job—currently there is no peer group for pricing information. Some knew how to determine one's Cost Of Doing Business (CODB), others had only a vague idea. **Ken Hawkins** later sent us an online link to a CODB calculator: www.nppa.org/professional_development/business_practices/cdb/cdbcalc.cfm.

Most "get as much as they can" and are as busy as they want to be. Very few are pursuing alternative markets for their work, such as fine art, stock, etc.



Tim Shannon, PR-PICS.com

GLORY ROAD UPDATE

BY LAURA HECK

A tremendous and heartfelt thanks to everyone who has been so supportive of my husband, Jamie, and his musical *Glory Road*, including **Jon Andersen** for his thoughtful legal services. Jamie and his collaborators are in the process of finding a fabulous new venue and a new producer. We will keep you posted, and will host a Freelance Forum Night when the show finds a new home. The various ups and downs of this production have highlighted what a great group the Freelance Forum is. We both are grateful to have such wonderful and creative people as friends and allies.

WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS

Ayana Glaze, writer

Clyde Fossum, photographer

Glen Trower, graphic designer

Julie Longino, web designer

Kate Hauk, writer

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

Tim Shannon

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Susan Drake

Paul Glickstein

Lois Graham

Laura Heck

Bobby Hickman

Steven Knapp

Honey Rubin

John Slem

Polly Wade

Christin Whittington

DIGITAL DISTRIBUTION

Steven Knapp

Jack Massa

FREELANCE FORUM LOGO**DESIGN**

Charissa Schultz

SPONSORS**THE LIST**

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www.zenithdesigngroup.com

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



Despite the inclement weather, we had a large turnout at the February meeting on pricing, proving once again that money is a compelling topic!

My group had a spirited and helpful discussion on how we set prices, how much we charge and pitfalls to avoid. Despite varying degrees of experience and different areas of focus (magazine articles, marketing

collateral, books, web copy, etc.), we all had something to learn and to teach. One of the Freelance Forum's greatest strengths is that everyone is willing to share and help others.

When I roamed among the groups to advise the facilitators how much time was remaining, I noticed the same dynamics in all—spirited discussions, colleagues working together in a non-competitive environment to help each of us run our own businesses more successfully. And when it was time to finish up, some wanted to continue—always a good sign of an engaged, worthwhile event!

Many thanks to the facilitators—**Patrick Carlson, Paul Glickstein, Irene Hatchett, Steve Knapp** and **John Slem**, and particularly to Irene and Steve, who were drafted at the last minute. Kudos to program chair **Polly Wade**, for the original inspiration to wed previous attempts at salary surveys with a small group discussion format. Based on the feedback, many folks came away with plenty of useful information. I, for one, realized that my rates are entirely too low! In March, we'll draw on a member's expertise in a more traditional program. **Robert Roth** will share suggestions for steps to take as freelancers and small agencies to help clients (and ourselves) with branding. See you then! —Bobby Hickman



MEMBER NEWS

S. Michael Gaston's Artwork on Display

Michael's fine art work is in a group show of Georgia artists!

Linda Hanks, who is in Linda McCulloch's and Michael's Monday figure drawing group and will also display some works in this show, referred Michael to the Atlanta Art Gallery. Michael's work so impressed the gallery owner that one of his large oil paintings went in the window immediately.

Directions and information about the gallery and the exhibit, which runs until March 14, 2007, is on www.atlantaartgallery.com.

Photographer Volunteers Talent at 2007 Martin Luther King Service Summit

John Slem donated his time to create portraits of some of the key volunteers for this year's Martin Luther King Service Summit, sponsored by Hands On Atlanta (www.handsonatlanta.org).

"My motivation was twofold." said John, "First is to honor the generous poets, novelists, filmmakers, playwrights, artists and notable musicians who have lent their time and talent to the King Service Summit, making this event one of the premier celebrations of Dr. King's legacy; second is so that Hands On Atlanta may use the resulting images in promoting future events, and attracting participants of the same caliber."

Rich Godfrey, Communications Director for Hands On Atlanta said, "We have received an overwhelmingly positive response to these images, and everybody that sees them just loves 'em." To view a selection of the images, go to: www.jslem.com/mlk. For more information, call John at 770-493-9727 or Rich Godfrey at 404-979-2827.

SUPPORT OUR SPONSORS



**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!

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.

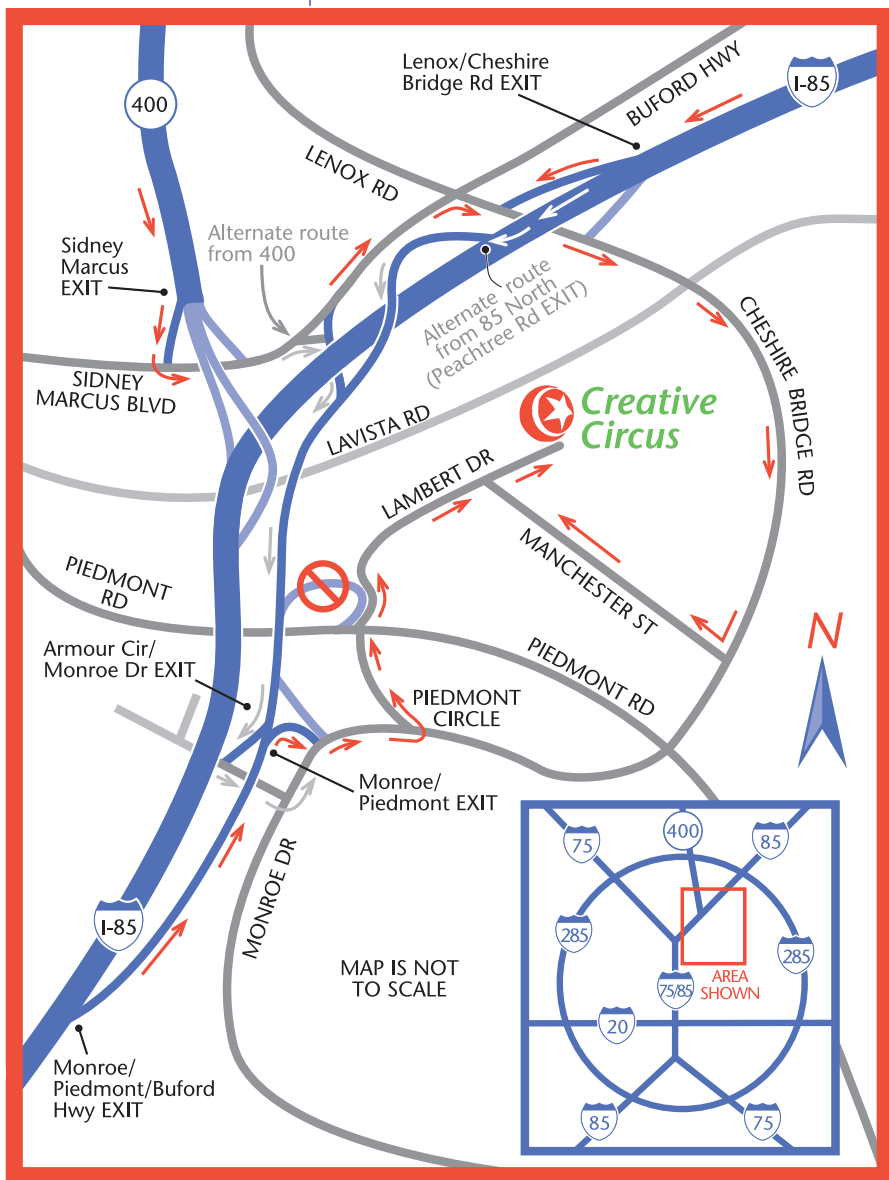
FROM I-85 NORTHBOUND: Take exit 86 (Monroe/Piedmont/Buford Hwy). Coming off the I-85 exit ramp take the first exit (Monroe/Piedmont). Go left at the light, then take an almost immediate left at the BP Station onto Piedmont Circle. At the next light, cross Piedmont Rd onto Lambert (staying to the right 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