

To Market Your Freelance Business Effectively, Try Being a Little Provocative

By Nick Usborne

I know a lot of freelancers who get the training they need, choose the niche they want to work in, build a terrific website ... and then come to a grinding halt.

It's like they've done everything that needs to be done. Trained, launched, and ready ...

So what's holding them back?

Well ... they just haven't found anything interesting to say.

Let me explain.

At the heart of every effective marketing campaign lies a powerful message.

In the classic case of Nike, their core message is "Just Do It!"

That message permeates everything they do with their marketing.

But often, the core message isn't stated quite so bluntly.

Check out the work of email specialist, Ben Settle.

Although he doesn't come right out and say it on his homepage, his core message — or my take on it — goes something like this ...

"Boring emails don't work!"

Everything he writes and teaches underscores his belief that if you want to drive more sales through email marketing, you'd better add a little more life and character to your emails.

Nike and Ben Settle are both being a little provocative.

When Nike says, Just Do It! ... Maybe you'll come back with "Yes, but I'm too busy." Or, "Yes, but I have a sore back."



Nick Usborne

If Ben tells you to up your game with your emails, you might say, "Yes, but our audience wouldn't respond to that." Or, "Yes, but my boss is a stickler for formality."

My point is this. The core marketing messaging for both companies is a little provocative. It stimulates a little push-back.

And push-back is great, because that means you just started a conversation.

Let me explain that another way.

Let's say I tell you, "Eating an apple a day is good for you."

Your response is "Okay, that's probably true."

And we're done. No conversation.

But what if I say, "If you think eating apples will make you healthier, you're seriously deluded."

Now I'm being a little provocative. I'm creating a little push-back. Maybe you'll feel a little defensive.

Well, that's perfect. Because now we have the beginnings of a conversation.

To bring this back to a freelance writing business, imagine you're about to launch yourself as a social media writer, or social web writer.

Your core marketing message, right there on your homepage, could be something like ...

"I write for companies that want a strong social presence online."

Well, that's descriptive. But kind of boring. Definitely not the start of an interesting conversation.

How about something more like ...

"If your business isn't social, it's dying."

Ouch! Gotta love that! It's going to create some serious push-back.

Believe me, I could get up on a stage right now and defend that position nonstop for the next 60 minutes.

I could write a dozen articles based on that headline. I could write a book about it. I could argue with anyone you like about this.

I could make some serious NOISE about this!!

Now I'm in the place YOU want to be when you launch your freelance writing or copywriting business.

You want to be able to say something that provokes some push-back, makes some noise, and gets you noticed.

This is how you start conversations with prospective clients.

Go on. Be a little brave. Get yourself noticed. Be a little provocative.

That's what marketing is all about.

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2 Responses to "To Market Your Freelance Business Effectively, Try Being a Little Provocative"

Loved this poignant pen, engagingly delivered - you made your point well, and I got the message alright. Thank you!

Guest (Earthpassion) – over a year ago

Wow! Nick, I will try to be more provocative. I thought your example was good. ""If your business isn't social, it's dying." It should be put on a T-Shirt. Here's my question: How could it be used in web marketing campaign such as email or mobile marketing. Please share your thoughts.

jimiYTEE2 – over a year ago

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