

# MODULE #4: MARKETING YOURSELF AS A FREELANCER

## IN THIS MODULE:

We'll look at what marketing yourself means and run through some practical (and low-pressure!) ways to let people know how you can help them. We'll also clear up some misconceptions about marketing yourself.

As a freelancer, you're a one-person business. That means you need to market yourself and bring in new clients for your services.

This can be daunting, especially if you're not a "toot your own trumpet" sort of person. You might worry that marketing yourself means making cold calls to companies, or constantly tweeting about your business, or coming across like those MLM enthusiasts on Facebook.

But marketing yourself doesn't need to involve doing anything that makes you feel uncomfortable or miserable. There are plenty of ways to market yourself without ever being obnoxious or pushy. In this module, we're going to look at some practical, low-pressure techniques to use.

First, though, there's an important question to ask yourself...

## What Type of Clients Do You Want to Work With?

Marketing yourself means targeting the right clients for your freelancing services.

At its most basic, that means bringing in clients who want the kind of writing you do. If you're a content writer, you might not want to write sales emails. If you're a ghostwriter of novels, you might not be interested in writing non-fiction.

But marketing to the right clients also means considering what would be ideal for you. For instance, if you're a content writer for blogs, do you want to work directly with the owners of smallish blogs – giving you a high degree of autonomy? Or would you prefer to work with content marketing agencies, carrying out work with them that they deliver to their clients?

Either option could work well – but you might want to angle your website materials towards one audience or the other.

## Marketing Yourself Using Your Website

As a freelancer, you can market yourself 24/7, without any ongoing effort, using your website and/or social media accounts.

If someone's searching for a freelancer, or if they come across a guest post you've written and click a link to your site, or if they spot a tweet of yours that someone else has retweeted, then your website and social media accounts are your chance to make a positive impression.

### What to Include on Your Website

It's up to you what you want to put on your website. These days, I don't mention my freelancing much on Aliventures because the focus there is on the blog, newsletter, and the products and courses I sell. I have enough current and past clients that I don't need to bring in new ones – that happens naturally through word of mouth.

But if you're actively looking to get more clients, it's a good idea to include some of these things on your website.

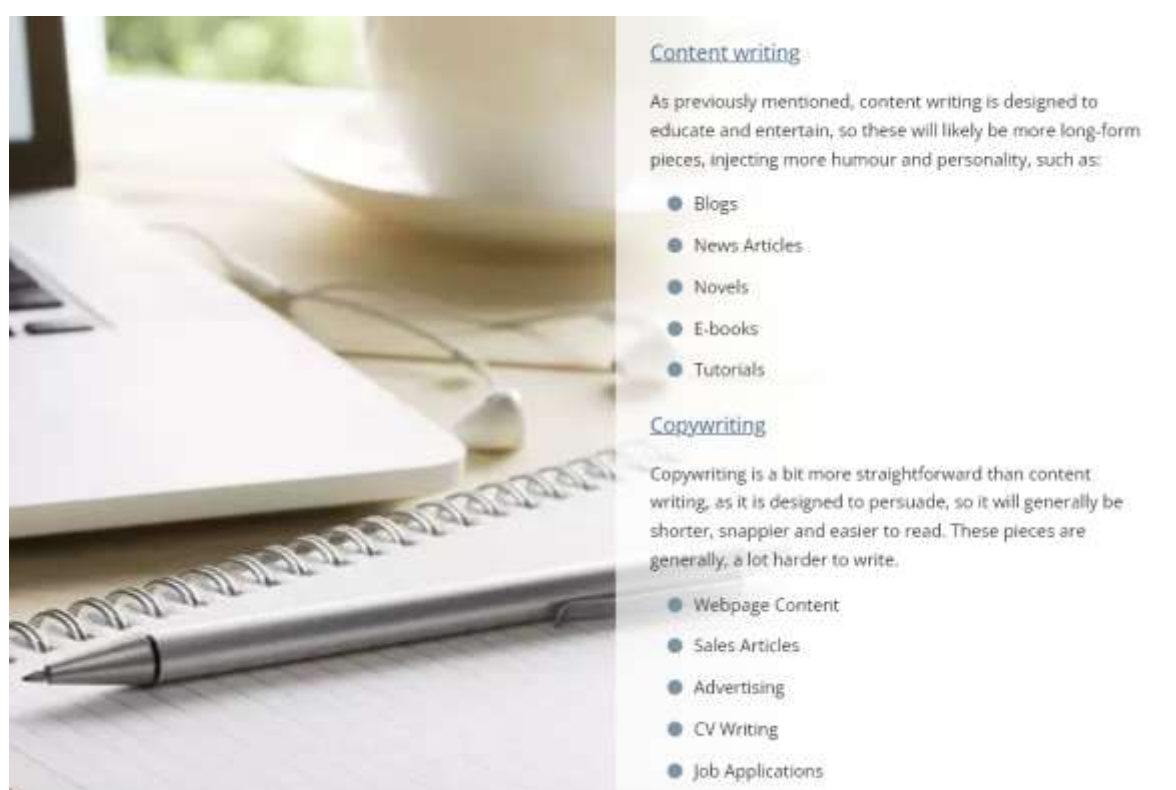
### Clear Information About What You Do

When clients are looking to hire a freelancer, they might start off by searching for a freelance writer – but they usually want something a bit more specific.

When it comes to explaining what you do, “writing” isn’t enough – do you write blog posts? (On what topics?) Sales pages? Social media posts? Marketing emails? Be clear about what you specialise in.

If you cover a couple of related areas of writing, you can clarify what these involve – bear in mind that your clients may not be particularly familiar with freelance writing terminology.

Here’s a good example from [freelancer Joanne Burgess’s website](#):



## Samples of Your Previous Work

**Tip:** Back in Module 1, we looked at building your portfolio: if you feel you need a bit more experience, take a look at that module again for some help.





You don’t have to include an extensive portfolio of previous work on your website, but it’s definitely a good idea to have some samples of your writing. Clients will be more confident about getting in touch if they can see that your writing is high-quality.

If you offer several different types of writing (e.g. blog content *and* sales emails) then include examples of each.





If you write in several different topic areas (also called “niches” and “verticals”) you should aim to have at least one piece for each. Clients interested in hiring you to write about cryptocurrency probably won’t be particularly interested in seeing your articles on parenting, and vice versa.

Here’s one great way to display your samples, from [freelance writer and researcher Scarlett Mansfield’s website](#). Each image is a link to the writing sample:

## Journalism

			
<b>The Inaccessibility of Postgraduate Education</b> The Guardian	<b>Not Your Christmas Tree: Avenue of the Giants</b> Roadtrippers	<b>Crawl of the Wild: Rock-Crawling in California</b> Land Rover Owner Magazine	<b>Two Fools, One Freelander: To Mongolia</b> Land Rover Monthly Magazine

## Web Content

			
<b>7 Things Every LR Owner Can Relate To</b> BritcarUK.com	<b>The Changing Face of Talent</b> Technology Recruitment	<b>5 Natural Wonders of Peru</b> Kated.com	<b>Why Men Should Get Brotox</b> SmileWorks.com

## Testimonials from People Who've Worked With You

Put yourself in the shoes of a potential client visiting your website for the first time. They don't know you, but you're offering the exact service they need, and they really like the samples they've seen from you.

The problem is, they've had some bad experiences with freelancers in the past. Freelancers who were great writers – but who weren't exactly easy to work with. Maybe they constantly turned in work late, got huffy about minor changes, or had tons of questions about every single assignment.

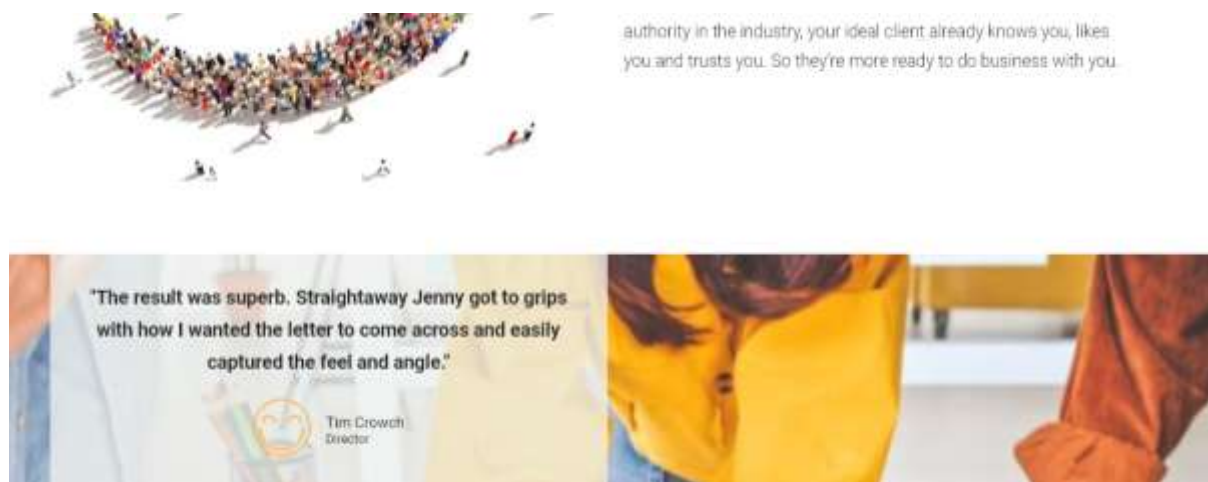
If only they knew what you'd be like to work with.

**This is where testimonials come in!** Testimonials are recommendations from people who you've worked with and who enjoyed the experience.

If you've taken [my Start Freelancing course](#), I covered a lot of tips on getting testimonials there. But essentially, the simplest way to get a testimonial is to email a past client and simply ask for one! Most people will be glad to help out.

Your testimonials don't even need to come from people who paid to work with you. Perhaps you did some free work for a friend's website or a local charity's social media account. They'd likely be thrilled to write a testimonial for you.

You could put all your testimonials on one page of your website, or integrate them on several different pages (probably those relating to your freelancing services). Here's a great example [from Jenny Wing Copywriting](#), with a testimonial from a client prominently displayed at the bottom of the page:



## What Overall Impression Does Your Website Give Visitors?

The overall impression created by your website is also part of your marketing. Prospective clients will infer things about you and your writing from things like:

- How fast (or slow) your website is to load.
- Whether your website looks clean and professional – or cluttered.
- Whether they can easily find your contact details – or your contact form is broken.

In general, I think that simple is usually best when it comes to websites.

Don't try to add so many fancy features that your website is hard to navigate, or looks messy. Stick with a small palette of colours, and one or two different fonts. Every so often, check that key features (like your contact form) are working.

## Marketing Yourself on Social Media

Social media can be a great way to reach people, and I've certainly connected with clients for the first time on Twitter in the past. Of course, it's important to find a good balance. You don't want to be constantly posting about your freelancing services – it's likely to come across as a little desperate, at best.

Here are a few ways to market yourself in a more low-key way:

### Use Your Social Media Bio

When did you last update your Twitter or Instagram bio, or the About section of your Facebook page?

This is one of those tasks that it's easy to forget about – but your bio is one of the first things that people will check out when they come across you.

Make sure yours at least mentions your freelancing and provides a link to where potential clients can find out more.



## Share Nice Things That Other People Say

If a client tweets about how much they loved working with you, don't be shy of retweeting that. If you get a lovely Facebook review, post a link to it on your page so that everyone can see it – and perhaps mention how much you enjoyed working with that client, too.

## Talk About Freelancing / Writing More Generally

You could use your social media account to share general tips or thoughts about freelancing and writing. This can help you connect with other freelance writers (who may well be a useful source of leads) as well as potentially getting you onto the radar of people who're looking for freelancers to hire.

## Look Out for People Who Are Asking for Freelancers

Companies who are looking to hire a freelance writer may well ask for recommendations on social media – and there's nothing stopping you from replying to offer your services. Occasionally searching for phrases like "writer needed" or "hiring writers" can help you find some potential opportunities.



## Encouraging Existing Clients to Refer You to People They Know

After 15+ years of freelancing, I haven't needed to market myself in quite some time. I have a stable set of regular clients – some who I write for most days, others that I write a piece or two each month for – and from time to time, these lead to referrals.

Those referrals typically come in a couple of different ways:

- An editor mentions a contact of theirs who's looking for writers, and offers to put me in touch.
- An editor leaves the company they were previously working with (or starts another project on the side) and contacts me about their new company/project.

So how can you get referred to other clients – or at least kept in mind if an editor has a new project for you?

### Do a Great Job With Your Freelancing

It's obvious, I know, but you do need to do a great job if you want to get referrals. Turning in work late – even only a day or two late – might be okay for your current client, but they're unlikely to risk referring you to someone else.

Make sure you're meeting deadlines, communicating proactively and positively, handling revision requests with grace, and so on. That way, you'll be the type of person who clients want to work with again and again – and who they want to recommend to their friends.

### Ask for a Referral

There's nothing wrong with asking for a referral – this is very normal and it won't come across as pushy or needy.



Here's a simple template email you can use – obviously do personalise it based on your client and your relationship with them.

*Hey [name],*

*I'm really enjoying working with you on [project]. I'm now at a stage when I'm ramping up my freelancing business and I wondered if you know anyone else who's looking for a writer? I'd really appreciate an introduction if so! Of course, if there are any extra projects I can help you out with, I'd love to get involved with those too.*

*Thanks,*

*[name]*

The biggest thing to remember about marketing yourself as a freelancer is that anything you can do to get yourself out there – whether it's a guest post, an email to a past client, or even a simple social media post – can potentially bring in new or repeat work for you.

Don't feel you have to do it all, or that you need to push yourself to market in ways that don't feel authentic for you. Instead, look for a few small actions you can take on a regular basis to keep getting your name out there into the world.

## How the Assignments Work

For each module, you have an assignment to carry out. Obviously you don't *have* to do it – this isn't school! – but you'll get the most out of the course if you work through the assignments along the way.

Each assignment has a suggested length (e.g. 30 minutes) to give you a rough idea of how long it's likely to take, if you do it in full. Don't worry if you only have a little bit of time to spare: even 10 minutes is well worth doing.

### ASSIGNMENT (45 minutes)

Your assignment this week is in three parts:

**#1:** Review your website, as if you were coming to it from the first time. Does it create the impression you want? (E.g. professionalism, friendliness.) Are there changes you could make in, say, 20 minutes?

**#2:** Check your social media bios. Do they mention that you're a freelancer? Do they let people know how to find out more about your services? If not, fix that!

**#3:** Reach out to one existing client and let them know that you'd love to be in touch with anyone who they know who might need a freelancer.

## Module #4: Further Reading

*All of the further reading is optional, but if you want to find out more about something we've covered, it's highly recommended.*

### **Why It Pays to Be a Specialist When It Comes to Freelance Writing,**

Alexander Cordova, Leaving Work Behind

In this post, Alexander explains why you'll be able to charge more if you specialise rather than writing about anything that comes your way – and why it'll make it easier for you to find clients and ongoing work.

### **5 Major Types of Freelance Writing Jobs (And How To Get Them),**

Claire Bradshaw, Writer's Edit

Claire goes into detail about five big areas of writing jobs, and – crucially! – offers tips on how to get that type of writing gig. There are some areas covered here that you might not have considered, like writing social media posts for clients.

### **What do freelance writers write about?,**

Quora

This question on Quora has some really interesting answers: take a look at Annie Mueller's in particular, as she lists a huge range of topics (note that many of these are connected, e.g. I'd class most of them under "small business", "productivity", "early career tips" or "parenting"). Donald Tepper's answer is also fascinating as it gives an editor's perspective.

## What's Coming Up Next:

Well done on reaching the end of the fourth module. Remember, if you have questions at any point, please do pop into the Aliventures Club Facebook group. It's a really friendly place.

[facebook.com/groups/aliventuresclub](https://facebook.com/groups/aliventuresclub)

If it's something you'd prefer to discuss privately, or if you're having a technical issue with the course, the best way to get in touch is to email me at [ali@aliventures.com](mailto:ali@aliventures.com).

Here's what you'll find in Module 5:

### MODULE 5:

In the next module, we'll be looking at how to achieve financial success as a freelancer. We'll consider what "success" might mean to you, then cover a range of practical tips. In particular, we'll dig into the importance of tracking your income, ways to deal with the "feast or famine" cycle that many freelancers fall into, and the importance of raising freelancing rates regularly.