

What Clients Want: How to Build Loyal Client Relationships from Day One

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Introduction: Harvesting the fruits of your learning

Hello and welcome!

My name is Ann Jordan-Mills; I am a Freelance Copywriter, and a lifelong learner.

Since I first discovered AWAI (American Writers and Artists Inc.) less than three years ago, I have been immersed in a passion that has been waiting for many years to be set free. I spend all my days (and many nights) sitting at my computer writing and, after a long and varied career, I know that, for me, retirement is not for “sitting around in a rocking chair,” as I recently heard someone (a well-known motivational speaker!) describe this chapter of life.

As I have been exploring the many articles and resources that AWAI and Wealthy Web Writer (www.wealthywebwriter.com) provide for us, I’ve discovered that Rebecca Matter (Co-Managing Partner and the Vice President of Marketing for AWAI, and Founder of its Wealthy Web Writer division), has written extensively about how we can find and keep clients, and better-paying assignments.

These articles are exactly what we need; I know that many of you, just like I am, are prospecting for clients. So, I have gathered the information together in this report, and I share it with you so that you will benefit from Rebecca’s wisdom, as I have.

Much of the early content in the report addresses copywriting, but you will find that everything inside can be applied to all freelancers.

And in this report, through Rebecca, I’m going to show you how to ...

- Discover what high-paying clients are looking for;
- Increase your client’s delight and satisfaction so they hire you over and over again;
- Maintain appropriate communication throughout the project;
- Expand your contract — extend the work you have been given and find new marketing strategies; and
- Solve your clients’ marketing problems.

By the end, you’ll have a complete strategy guaranteed to help you nurture your client relationships. You’ll learn what they want, and how to make them happy, so you can build and encourage their long-term loyalty.

What high-paying clients are looking for

Find clients who understand your value and need lots of copy

One key to your copywriting success is to land clients who conventionally have the biggest continuous demand for your copywriting. They understand the value of top-quality copy, and they are willing to pay for it. Once you become skillful in these areas of copywriting, you will be sought after, and your clients, appreciating your value, will hang onto you tightly.

What are these areas, and what is their purpose?

Search Engine Optimization copywriting

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) involves very specific keywords and key phrases which cause a company's website to appear in the search engines whenever a visitor searches for a specific word or phrase. This is called organic searching, and the company does not pay the search engines to use these keywords in the copy.

Pay-Per-Click Ad copywriting

Pay-Per-Click (PPC) is somewhat similar to SEO in that companies use PPC ads to drive visitors to their websites. However, with PPC, advertisers pay the search engines to have an ad appear whenever a user searches for a specific keyword or key phrase. Instead of paying for every ad that pops up, they pay only if and when someone actually clicks on the ad and visits the web page.

e-Letters and Autoresponders

Both e-Letters and Autoresponders are similar devices to each other, and they are key to companies establishing successful long-term relationships with their customers.

"Autoresponder" is, in reality, the software that delivers the emails, but copywriters understand that the term Autoresponder is also applied to the actual message that goes out, so the two terms can be used interchangeably. Autoresponders are one of the fastest pieces of email you can write and, depending upon how quick you get, they can be just about the most lucrative.

Web copywriting

Any web copywriting includes all aspects of copywriting for websites, including the home page, landing pages, subscription pages, and others. There's a huge demand, and big dollars are waiting for copywriters who understand the complexities of writing web pages that will convert website visitors into buyers.

When you write effective copy for SEO, PPC, e-Letters, Autoresponders, and websites, you will be writing for the highest-paying projects around.

Keep your clients

So you have a brand new client — and you want to keep him — what do you do next?

The best way to make your client immediately feel comfortable is to show him that you're a professional.

First verbally, and then in writing, explain the process that you're going to follow as you carry out his project. Make sure to include timelines and deliverables as well as other pertinent details, such as payment and payment schedule, right from the beginning.

This ensures that you both have the same expectations — of your work and of the project flow.

Early in your career, if you don't have results to demonstrate your own successes, you can use statistics to demonstrate the success level of the strategies you use. When your prospective client sees how a specific strategy will boost his response rates or his income, he will immediately be wide open to hearing about your services.

Make sure you focus your client messages on the benefits you can bring to the company.

For example, when you see possible changes you could make to a website — rather than criticizing your client's poor landing page or home page, offer a few positive suggestions to increase his readers' responses. Show him results from other websites that you have re-written, or provide him with some examples of research case studies.

Give your prospect a taste of why he should hire you.

Provide suggestions

Even if your prospect has no current work available, you can still keep in touch from time to time. For instance, you might come across an article that he would be interested in, or you found some new information that would make your client's life easier, benefit his consumers, or boost his bottom line.

If you know it will be useful to him, send it along (with your contact information, of course) — you never know where your thoughtfulness could lead.

He may not need you now, but he will remember, and your name will pop into his mind when he's looking for a freelancer or a copywriter.

You know your business

You should never feel inadequate (even if you do, don't show it) — you will always know more than your clients. You've studied your craft for months — probably longer — and your client has masses of things to remember about the running of his whole company. No client will know your job as well as you!

Increase your clients' delight and satisfaction so they hire you over and over again

The dreaded deadline

Just about the most important expectation of every client and marketer is that you meet your promised deadlines. It's surprising to know that more than 75% of freelancers are late with their work. Almost no excuse is valid, especially if it has been heard before — and it usually has!

You have undertaken a job and it is your responsibility to plan your time so that you complete it when you say you will.

Always build in extra time for unexpected delays such as computer malfunctions or other issues.

Yes, you are working from your desk at home, but remember there is a chain of events that follows the submission of your work. Marketing campaigns, printing and production schedules, and your clients' commitments to their superiors, reach far beyond your computer.

Your late piece may not seem significant to you, but it certainly has much bigger ramifications along the line!

If you know in advance of any reason for delaying your completion date, or if you do not think you can get the work done in time — either negotiate broader timelines, or do not accept the assignment in the first place.

Remember: If you want to be sought after, never ever agree to a deadline, and then miss it!

Always do your best

Whatever you submit, always make sure it is your very best work. If the standard of your copywriting slips a little, and your project is less than your best, your client will know. She's familiar with your usual work and she can tell when you have allowed carelessness to creep in.

Your clients come to trust you, and the quickest way to break that trust is to submit shoddy work. Always submit your projects as if they were the first projects you'd ever sent to your client.

Remember at the very beginning when you were working your hardest to win a new assignment? You used to go over and over your writing, you proofed it time and time again, you checked and re-checked your research, you hesitated with that finger over the Send button, until you eventually pressed it — with a big 'gulp' ... "Did I miss anything?"

Send your best work every time, and you will always have loyal clients!

Accept criticism graciously

Delivering or receiving criticism usually causes people to become defensive, because it is frequently a negative experience and most of us don't do well with what we perceive as disapproval. But criticism, when delivered as a critique or a review of a piece of writing, can also be tremendously useful. As a new copywriter — even as a seasoned copywriter — we can all benefit from the eyes and minds of other people reading our work.

Sometimes it's hard to hear, because we might have become attached to our words and believe that what we have written is good. But, in copywriting, it is the end result and the benefit to the client and his business that is most important, and if dropping that paragraph we love improves the copy — we must learn to accept it graciously.

Accepting criticism without defense can be difficult, but we grow and learn, and become better copywriters through the experience. The pleasant freelancer will always get more work.

Over-deliver

If you want to make a good impression on your client, over-deliver. If you send more than you have promised, you provide a happy surprise to the recipient and he will remember!

Include that extra piece of copy, and tell your client it is free for him to use or not.

Proof ... proof ... and proofread again.

No matter how many times you proofread your writing, there always seems to be some small error that creeps in between pressing the Send button and when your copy arrives to your client.

It is helpful to ask a trusted colleague or friend to proof your copy after you have read it a few times yourself. It is a well-known fact that after we've spent a lot of time writing, then reading our copy over numerous times, our eyes can pass over an incorrect or misspelled word and not even see it.

An insider's trick for proofreading is to read your document one last time — from the back to the front. Your mind is less likely to “slip in” a missing word, and it will help you catch errors you miss when reading forward like normal.

Another way to proof is to have your colleague read your copy aloud while you follow along. You often find that the word order subtly changes as he speaks your copy, or he pops in an alternative word that is not on your page or screen. When he speaks it naturally, that's the word you need, and you should include it!

An excellent, and similar, method of proofing, is to read your document aloud yourself. You will find that the same small changes happen. Not only that, but you will get a true sense of how the rhythm and cadence will feel to your readers when they are reading your copy.

Remember: don't rely on your computer's spell-check program. There are many times where your computer suggests incorrect corrections. (For example, my computer just suggested “There is” for the first two words in the sentence!) Or, an incorrect word is spelled correctly, and spell-check won't catch the problem. For example, “own” and “won” are both spelled correctly, but with completely different meanings. And, spell-check will not catch the nuances of “their” and “there,” “to” and “too,” and so on.

You need to know your spelling and grammar; even a basic understanding will catch most mistakes. It can't be emphasized enough: Check over your work before you submit it.

Show that you care

Last in this section, but definitely not the least, you need to show your clients at all times that you care. Implementing the noted suggestions shows marketers you are thinking about how to please them and make their lives easier.

When you increase their delight with the services you offer, there is a very good chance you will remain on their "go to" list.

Read through all of these pages, and you will find lots of strategies that will keep every marketer you know happy.

Adopt and regularly practice these habits and you will soon rise above the competition, and find that you are never short of work.

Your ideas

Later, we will talk about ideas that you could suggest to your client. Never hesitate. They are always pleased to discover a new idea. Whether it is successful, or whether it fails, your client sees you as someone who will make his life easier — and he will very likely send more projects your way.

When you come up with new ideas, you show your client you can:

- Think outside the box
- Offer more value to his business
- And demonstrate your creativity

You might suggest ideas in many areas of your client's company, such as:

- Broadening the scope of an existing project
- Thinking up a different marketing strategy
- Creating a fresh new design for a website
- Designing a brand new product
- Or, taking a different direction in research

The possibilities are endless.

Marketers love freelancers who are easy to work with, and who are interested and vested in the success of the projects.

Following these best practices will keep them happy — and your first project won't be your last!

Maintain appropriate communication throughout the project

How you keep in touch can make a difference to your ongoing relationship with your new and prospective clients.

Marketers are busy people. They have tight deadlines and pursue their goals aggressively. They don't have extra time for unnecessary or prolonged emails, and they definitely don't have time for long voice mail messages or phone calls.

How you handle your communication with your clients demonstrates the difference between whether they consider you an easy-to-work-with freelancer or not.

And, whether they will call you for their next project ... or not.

Here are some ideas to ensure that your clients will enjoy working with you and will call upon you first the next time a project comes up.

Keep in touch

You need to be in touch with your client when you are working with him, but keep your communications as brief and as infrequent as possible, given his busy schedule. You are showing your client that you respect his time and he will appreciate this and remember.

Ask only necessary questions

You need information to do a good job and you probably have some questions about your assignment. Try, however, to get answers to most of your questions during your creative calls, keep your emails to a minimum, and be very sure the answer is not provided or in the research you are supposed to be carrying out!

Get to the point quickly

When the point of your email, and the crux of your questions, are surrounded by unnecessary detail, your client is likely to give up trying to find out what you mean, and move on. Stick to the point and you'll be more likely to get what you want, or the answer you need.

Include a complete signature file

Your correspondence should include all your applicable contact information — every time. Your client probably works with many freelancers at once, so don't assume that she knows who you are by signing only your first name.

Always include the complete thread

In an email conversation, commonly known as the "thread," always include responses from both sides. That way, your client doesn't need to waste time searching for past related emails. When you use the "Reply" button for emailing back and forth, all the relevant email information will be included in your "conversation" messages.

Maintain a positive approach towards your client

Marketers are very busy people and quite possibly they will be stressed. Therefore, a positive communication from a cheerful freelancer is much more welcome than a negative and griping one. (Probably best not to be too perky though.)

And never complain — your clients don't want to hear about your personal misfortunes — they have similar problems, too. You have friends and family whose shoulders are reserved for your troubles.

Keep your follow-ups limited

Remember to limit your follow-ups to a minimum where possible. It's easy to get impatient when you are waiting for your client's reaction to your copy or a proposal, but be sure to be professional and tolerant while you wait for their answer. When you do inquire, keep your request respectful and reasonable.

Marketers' to-do lists are long — and you'll rise to the top of the list eventually. You don't want to annoy your client with constant emails or phone messages asking if they have gotten to your file yet. That pestering approach is likely to be irritating, and it might actually lose you the assignment as a result.

Marketers, who work with many freelancers and many projects all at once, state that they really appreciate those who make an effort to make their life easier by keeping contact to a minimum.

Expand your contract — extend the work you have been given and find new marketing strategies

Most freelance copywriters believe that one of the hardest things to do is to compete with all the other freelancers out there. But, actually, it's easy if you know what to do.

And it's especially easy if your client is a smaller business owner and he doesn't have much experience with marketing online.

Generate ideas

Ideas increase your value to your client; you might suggest an improvement on a strategy that is already in place, or you may think of an entirely new idea altogether. She may not have even thought of the idea until you suggested it — and that is good.

Sometimes your ideas are not used immediately, and sometimes they reappear as someone else's — especially in a large corporation. But you know, and your client knows where the idea came from, and, though this one may not be credited to you, or even used, you become known as an ideas person and, therefore, you are valuable to your client.

Expand your project

The more you understand about how your copy is going to be used, the better opportunities you can find to upsell and expand a project into something very much bigger.

Once you have learned your client's marketing system, it is easy to increase your income from every project you accept.

And, you can use this strategy again and again to continue working with your client for as long as you want to.

Here's an example of how you do it:

- ✓ Your client has hired you to write a landing page for \$500 — and the job of the landing page is to get visitors to sign up for a free e-Letter. You know that the job will only take you a few hours — so it's pretty good rate.

BUT, if you know about marketing to free e-Letter names, you can turn that \$500 into a lot more money ... By digging deeper, you find out that the e-Letter your client is planning will ultimately sell a membership to a new website.

- ✓ So, you pitch an autoresponder email series to get the readers to continue reading the free e-Letter, and ultimately convert them to a paid membership. For that, you'll charge her an additional \$750.

Then, you tell her she'll also need a sales landing page to sell the membership.

- ✓ You'll be happy to write that landing page for \$1,000. It is a little more complex than the free sign-up landing page she originally hired you to write.

Of course, then you'll recommend another autoresponder series to retain the members once they buy (it's also called a stick series).

- ✓ That will only cost her another \$750.

And then, she's probably going to need content for the website itself ...

- ✓ So, you are happy to provide her with articles for an \$800-a-month retainer.

That small landing page project just got a WHOLE lot bigger.

You can use the "project extension" strategy with both experienced and inexperienced web marketers. As long as you have statistics and case studies to show your new web marketer the results that are possible, he will be interested. Depending upon his product, you can easily demonstrate the benefit of his investment in you.

Solve your clients' marketing problems

What kinds of problems do your marketers have?

And, what kind of solutions do they need?

Your client needs a website

He has a copywriter — you. But, he still needs a website developer and probably a web designer, too. He is booked to the hilt and way too busy to start looking for these people — even if he knew where to look. And, if he did know where to look, how would he know if they were any good or not?

You have a network of associates in the business; you even have a colleague with whom you work on projects — mostly websites. Your colleague is a web designer; he has a graphic designer associate, and he knows her work. And, you are a web copywriter.

There's your team.

By offering to your client that you will put together this team to develop and build his website, you have effectively found a solution to his website-building problem. You've saved him a lot of time and resources, and a few headaches as well. What is more, you will act as the communications liaison between team members, and manage the work processes, saving him even more time.

You are now the project manager — your job has expanded and you have become way more valuable to your client. In this management capacity, you can now charge him a higher fee because of the additional role you have assumed.

Improve a strategy already in place

You are known by your client because you've already written some copy for her. She does not have a great deal of work for you at the moment, but because of your experience in the industry, you can see some areas of her website that could be enhanced to make it more efficient and to attract more traffic.

So why not send her a list of easy adjustments she could make on her site? You do not charge her, and you don't expect anything in return.

You have provided a solution to potential efficiency issues, and you have increased her traffic. Also, you have demonstrated your ability and knowledge, and not only is your client grateful for your "gift" of information, but you have opened a door for future work for yourself.

Conclusion

So, there you have it.

You understand what areas have key importance to high-paying clients who will value your copywriting, and how to treat them so they will keep you.

You have learned what keeps marketers happy – from always meeting your deadlines, to submitting your best, meticulously-proofed work — every single time.

Communication in all areas of life is important, but when you are dealing with a marketer, it is paramount. I have suggested lots of ways to communicate with your clients to keep them happy, so they will call you again and again.

People with ideas are valuable to marketers, whether or not their suggestions are implemented immediately, later, or not at all. And savvy freelancers who know how to develop and expand a project to increase their client's results (and, therefore, their own fees), are prized.

If you can provide solutions to your client's problems, he will hold onto you tightly because he needs you and appreciates your expertise.

As you practice and perfect all the skills and strategies within these pages, you will realize that there are thousands of potential clients who are looking for someone like you to come along and give them either a new way to market, or a way to improve their current marketing. They need help to achieve their goals or simply to make their lives easier ...

That person might as well be you.

Follow the best practices outlined in this report, and it will be!

I wish you luck!

Ann Jordan-Mills

Proud owner of [Written Words Copywriting and Consulting](#)