

MARKETING MENTOR

The Creative Professional's Guide

REVISED
& UPDATED!

GET THE WORK YOU WANT

MARKETING PLAN



All it takes is one marketing
effort every day to get the work you want.

BY ILISE BENUN

The Big Idea

Are you doing the work you want?

If not, why not?

If so, which projects and clients would you like more of?

If you don't know the answer to these questions, if you are just taking what comes along or think you're "lucky" because you get word-of-mouth (not a real marketing tool and not something you can control), it may be time to think again.

And it may be time to follow a plan. According to Dr. Robert Cialdini, author of *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion*, "Recent research has shown that making even a simple plan increases the likelihood that a person will follow through."

Because the work you want isn't likely to magically find you. You have to know what you want and then go get it.

That's why we've created [The Creative Professional's Marketing Plan + eCalendar to Get the Work You Want](#).

You see, there are so many ways to market your services that it's easy to get overwhelmed. How will you find your best prospects? Which tools are most effective for reaching them? Should you reach out to them directly? How many networking events should you attend each month? Should you be blogging? What about social media: is it worth the time? And if so, which outlets/sites should you focus on?

The Creative Professional's Marketing Plan + eCalendar to Get the Work You Want answers these questions and more. It guides the growth of your business, day by day, month after month, year after year. It breaks down all the steps and keeps you on track.

But success doesn't happen overnight. Marketing is a gradual process that gains momentum over time when done consistently. And it requires focus and positioning, that is finding your "position" in the marketplace.

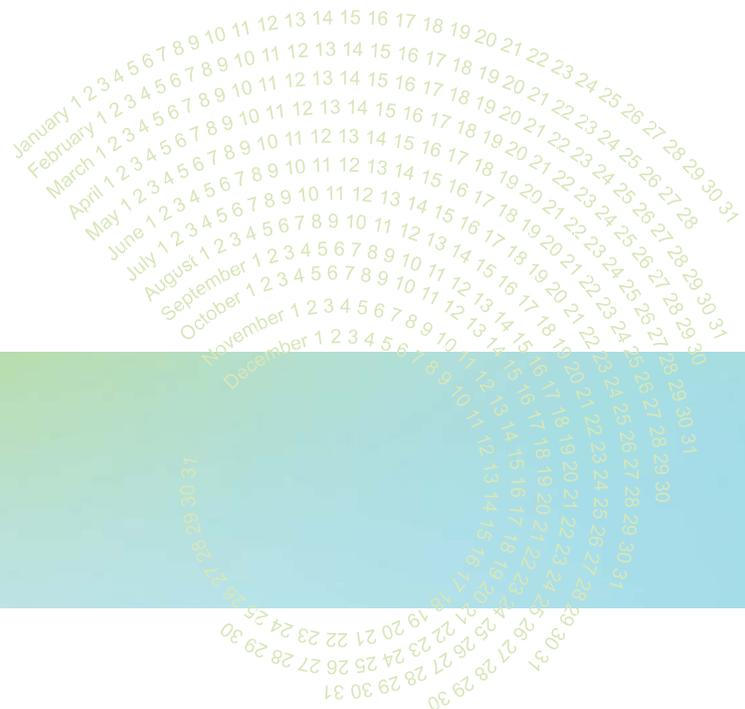
Knowing your position will also show you who your best prospects are, which makes your marketing process supremely simple and efficient. It allows you to eliminate people, companies and marketing efforts that do not support that positioning.

Once you've decided where to focus, you know which events to attend, which people to approach, which groups to join. As marketing opportunities come your way, asking "Does this support my positioning?" will make it easier to decide which ones to pursue and which to decline. And this will save you a lot of time and money.

Doesn't that sound better?

Ready to get the work you want?

Read on to find out how.



4 Basic Marketing Tools

1. Your Blurb. One formula that works when it comes to answering the question, “What do you do?” is this: Who you help + what they get. Here’s an example:

“I work with energy companies to make sure their messaging is crystal clear.”

If you want branding work, adjust your blurb to mention specifically the creative services you offer. In fact, mention them first and see if that grabs your prospect’s attention.

- If you’re a designer, talk about designing web sites or Wordpress or direct mail pieces with PURLs or whatever is trendiest at the moment (because that’s what they’ll think they need).
- If you’re a writer, talk about writing for the web or creating content that creates loyalty or generates sales.
- If you’re an illustrator, talk about the various uses of digital illustration or show the benefits of custom illustration.
- If you’re a photographer, talk about retouching and the use of photos on web sites or in printed materials.
- If you’re a marketing strategist, talk about the latest online marketing tools.

The point is: include your speciality in your blurb so you don’t inadvertently alienate those who are looking for it.

So the blurb above could be modified as:

“I work with energy companies to make sure their messaging is crystal clear, especially on mobile devices and apps.”

Even if you’re not an “expert” yet, talk about “moving in that direction” or “doing more and more web work” or “exploring web and app design” (or writing).

Otherwise, they may assume you don’t do it.

2. Your Social Media. Make sure you have a presence on the social media most frequented and used by your prospects. For most professionals, it’s LinkedIn, but Twitter is very popular for business, and Instagram has become the “go-to” platform for visually-oriented industries.

Whichever networks you focus on, make sure they’re up to date and consistent with each other and with your web site. Use them to demonstrate your position in the markets (vertical industries) you serve and be sure to mention specific services you offer, as in your blurb.

Join groups on LinkedIn that are related to your target industries as well. On your profile, the icon and group name will show up and become part of the impression made by your profile, thereby enhancing your positioning.

3. Your Web Site. It must be up to date. If it’s not, you might as well just forget about getting clients who need anything related to their web sites. You’ll either be too embarrassed to send them to yours or they’ll go there and be unimpressed by what they see.

Here are the top 5 things your web site must have:

- **Strong positioning**—it must communicate clearly on the homepage who you best serve and how. At Marketing Mentor, our positioning says: “If you are a creative professional, consultant or freelancer who wants better clients, bigger budgets and better projects, Marketing Mentor can show you how to find them.” See positioning examples from creative professionals, compiled and designed by Jill Anderson of Jill Lynn Design, on pages 17-22.
- **Good SEO/keyword usage**—it must offer useful content that addresses your client’s business needs, integrating the language your best prospects are

Tuesday: Prospecting

The backbone of your campaign should be **warm email prospecting**—using email to introduce yourself to people you’ve learned something about so you can approach them with a completely personalized message and a reference they will recognize—that’s why it’s “warm” and not “cold.” It will seem just like it’s written for them, because it actually is!

This is a proven strategy and ideal (and least uncomfortable) for people who don’t like self promotion in the first place.

Here’s a sample outreach campaign to experiment with once you’ve done your research:

Step 1—Tuesday: Connect on LinkedIn and follow on Twitter.

Step 2—Thursday: Send an introductory email message.

Step 3—2nd Tuesday: Follow up with a phone call.

Step 4—2nd Thursday: Send another email message.

Step 5—3rd Tuesday: Send something via snail mail.

If you’re ambitious and/or it’s a client you really want, take these 2 extra steps:

Step 6—3rd Thursday: Send another email.

Step 7—4th Tuesday: Follow up with another phone call.

Over the course of a month if they don’t respond to any of those efforts, drop them and move on. Unless....

If it is your dream client and you really want to work with them, leave them alone for a month or two, then try again. Don’t be afraid of being too persistent or of stalking them. This is how you let them know you’re interested and enthusiastic.

How much is too much? Marketing is hard to overdo. Read my article for Entrepreneur, *New Rule of Social Media: 3 Tweets Gets the Message Out*, on the next page.

What to Say?

The message in all of the above efforts is essentially the same:

- Here’s who I am and what I do
- Here’s our connection
- Here’s my question and/or offer

The question can be as simple as, “Do you ever need these services?”

What’s Your Offer?

Don’t ever send a message introducing yourself that ends with “Hope to hear from you.” Why would anyone respond to that? It doesn’t ask for a response.

If you want a response you must ask for one by using a “call to action.” And the best type of call to action involves giving them something they’ll find useful, something they can’t say no to.

If the point is to generate a specific type of work, try an offer that speaks to that. For example, you can offer:

- An audit of their brand and/or their web site
- A critique of their existing web site or marketing materials
- A comparative analysis of their biggest competitor’s branding and theirs
- A slide makeover. Laura Foley makes one slide for clients, then uses the before and after as a case study for her own marketing. (It’s not spec work when it’s used with your own volition for your own marketing.)

Watch video here: <https://vimeo.com/78426940>

Many companies are in the market for creative services. You’re looking for the ones who are ready and already in the market and therefore open to your advances. The ones who aren’t won’t respond, not necessarily because they hate you but because they’re not in the market.

This is one way to do prospecting. It’s very effective if you choose the right prospects and do your homework. But keep in mind that there is no “right” way to do prospecting or outreach. In fact, you must try different techniques to see what works best for you and what your best prospects respond most positively to.

A business expert for creative professionals



Ilise Benun is the author of seven books for creative professionals, a national speaker and teacher to the creative class. Through her

mentorship programs, courses and materials, she helps you build the creative business that provides the life and freedom you want.

Industry-shaping programming and leadership

In her more than 30 years in coaching, she's developed and delivered programming for creative professionals as instructor at the Maryland Institute College of Art and as "Business Coach" for the Savannah College of Art & Design. She's also co-founder and host of the creative business and design entrepreneurship program for HOW Design Live, and has conducted marketing workshops for art schools and trade organizations catering to the creative community, including International Freelancers Day, the NYU Entrepreneurship Summit, HOW Interactive Conference and many more.

Advice for (and from) the independent worker

After quitting her first two jobs out of college (and, OK, one of those may have been involuntarily resigned), Ilise declared herself unemployable and launched her own business as a professional organizer. She started out helping her friends in the creative community in New York stay on top of unpaid bills, unfiled paperwork, and all the other things the artists weren't getting around to doing. As she spent more time with these stacks of paper, she invariably came across some sheet at the bottom of the pile that piqued her curiosity. When client after client brushed

these scraps off as unrealized self-promotion ideas, Ilise recognized the crux of the starving artist problem and set out to help them carve out lives of stability and prosperity through small, consistent acts of marketing. She's passionate about helping creative professionals break out the feast-or-famine cycle to build the businesses and lives they love.

Nationally published author

A nationally published author and speaker, Ilise hosts two podcasts, writes one of the 100 Best Business Blogs, and publishes a bi-weekly email newsletter read by more than 15,000 creative professionals. She's been featured in and contributed to Entrepreneur.com, HOW Magazine, Toronto Globe and Mail, Inc. Magazine, Nation's Business, Self, Essence, Crains New York Business, Dynamic Graphics, Working Woman, The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Denver Post, Fast Company, and more.

Live training, courses & events

Ilise is programming partner for HOW Design Live and co-founder of the Creative Freelancer Conference, launched in 2008. She's also developed and delivered online courses and content for the Maryland Institute College of Art's Graduate Program, and HOW Design University, covering topics from graphic design proposals, earning more, strategies for freelancers, successful online marketing plans, and how to start as a freelance business.

She was also the lead developer of and trainer for Freelancers Union's online program "Freelancer 360: How to Be a Better Boss of You," a series of workshops and panels led by expert freelancers covering work-life balance, thriving networks, lasting client collaborations, optimizing day-to-day operations and planning for growth.



To buy the full version of Ilise's "Get the Work You Want Marketing Plan for New Creative Professionals," [click here!](#)