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## What to NOT Name Your Freelance Business

By veteran copywriter and  
copywriter's coach, Chris Marlow

Many years ago when I first began freelancing, I struggled over what to name my copywriting business. The first name for my one-man shop was Chris Marlow and Associates. Although there were no associates, I imagined it made me look bigger.

Years later when I thought I was much smarter, I changed the name to Ad Copy, Inc. It didn't get me any more business than Chris Marlow and Associates. And it cost me lots of money for new stationary and legal incorporation. Eventually I gave that name up too, since I was not fulfilling the requirement of taking minutes at board meetings, seeing as how I was the only board member, and a fully absent one at that.

Finally I settled on plain old Chris Marlow Copywriting, which as it turned out, was the best name for a freelance business such as mine. And why is that, you ask? Because of the power of branding.

Over the years people have seen and heard my name, sometimes many times, which leads to an inevitable (and hopefully positive) impression. Even if they don't remember how they heard of me (e.g., they saw an article, happened across my Web site, received a sales letter from me), they do remember my name.

And when the day comes that I have an opportunity to do work for them, I am partially "pre-sold" because they're familiar with my name.

The reason I'm writing on this topic today is that many of my coaching students who are just starting their freelance business ask me what they should name their company. Of course, I always advise that they use their own name.

If they want proof that there's value in building a brand with their name, I simply ask them how many copywriting and marketing gurus are "name famous"? We know the greats by their names...Bob Bly, Ted Nicholas, Gary Halbert...even the old masters are known by their names...John Caples, Claude Hopkins, Victor Schwab.

Invariably my students point out that "they" are not copywriting gurus, to which I answer, "Well how are you going to become a guru if nobody knows your name?"

Now, many copywriters do have a company name "at the back end." For instance, Jay Abraham's famous name is out front, using its power of branding to sell high priced seminars. At the back end, however, is The Abraham Group, which exists to support Jay's marketing ventures.

So if you're selling something other than your copywriting services, creating a company name might make sense. Whatever you do, avoid cute, "punny" or irrelevant names. Names like "WriteRight" and "Write-On" say nothing about your services or your benefits to the client. If you feel the need to "beef up" your own name, then why not create a tagline instead? I recently admired this one from the signature file of copywriter Monica Day:  
"Finding the words that work for you."

As a potential client, this tagline implies that Monica will exert effort on my behalf ("Finding the words"), and that I will be pleased ("that work for you"). Remember, simple and straightforward works best in freelancing. Rather than coming up with a clever company name, put your efforts toward doing good work for your clients. After all, YOU are the product. Let your name be your brand.

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Chris also offers business and copywriting coaching to new, aspiring, and seasoned copywriters who want to accelerate their success. Check out the benefits of coaching at:  
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Chris has also created the world's only large-scale survey of copywriter pricing and economics. Find out what others charge and earn at:  
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And for free information on how to quickly build a profitable freelance business, sign up for Chris' **Freelancer's Business Bulletin** at:  
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