



So, You Never Want to Have a Boss Again?

Steps to Marketing Yourself as a Freelancer

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Once upon a time, I myself had a *eureka!* moment when I realized that I could be in charge of my life by starting my own writing consulting business. As a creative (but also ridiculously organized) person with a mission never to have a boss again, the following steps helped me get Outside Eye Consulting off the ground in a year flat. Now, I am delighted to share my strategy with you. (And along the way I've craftily embedded plenty of self-promotional plugs along with suggestions that you hire my posse of very talented associates.)

Step

Resource

YOUR BUSINESS NAME

- Come up with a memorable name** and do the research to make sure someone else in a competing industry isn't already using it. Make sure that an appropriate **domain name** is available, and buy it right away, before someone snaps it up. You may have to be creative with your domain name, but choose something that will be easy for people to remember and not so long that they get bored typing it.
*There are several companies that license domain names, but I use **GoDaddy.com** to host all my domain names. An average domain name costs \$10 a year and is yours for life, as long as you pay the fee each year. Go Daddy will also host your site, which adds to the convenience of having one vendor for both needs.*
- Protect your new identity** by registering it as a local **Fictitious Business Name** and potentially by **trademarking** it globally. Trademarking is more expensive, but also more farsighted.
Steps to applying for a fictitious business name in San Francisco: http://www.sfgov.org/site/countyclerk_index.asp?id=4469

YOUR BRAND AND LINGO

3. Spend some time crafting an **elevator pitch** about your business and get in the habit of talking about it constantly, with everyone you know. When someone asks, “What do you do?” pull out the elevator pitch. Consider hiring a writer or consulting with a life coach to help you hone it. Once you have a solid elevator pitch, you can work on developing an entire lingo around what you do. This is all part of your **branding**, which is the most crucial element of your **marketing**.
4. Look for opportunities in conversation to offer your services. Don't be shy about promoting yourself. The more you believe in your product or service, the easier that will be for you. Remember, you're not just trying to convince people to pay you for something; you're offering them something they need!

***Outside Eye** can sit down with you and put shape to your ideas in order to help you come up with an elevator pitch, lingo, tagline and branding phrases.*

An inspiring and experienced life coach can also put you on the path to clarifying your vision and taking the initial steps.

Two coaches that I have used, trust and highly recommend:

Pete Chandonnet: www.peterchandonnet.com

Cynthia Simon of The Radiant Heart: theradiantheart.com

YOUR MARKETING COLLATERAL

5. **Get a business card**, PDQ. You can use any one of many cheap, automated web services, but I would recommend having a creative designer help you come up with a **unique and eye-catching logo** for a few hundred dollars. The bonus to using a professional graphic designer is that it's also the first step on the road to having a web site. Choosing a graphic designer is a matter of personal taste. Check out their portfolios and choose one that matches your own style.

Inexpensive web printing services:

greenerprinter.com

vistaprint.com

OvernightPrints.com

Great graphic designers:

[Darlingville Design: darlingville.com](http://darlingville.com)

[Dianna Jacobsen: diannajacobsen.com](http://diannajacobsen.com)

[Graphic Moxie: graphicmoxie.com](http://graphicmoxie.com)

6. You will definitely, absolutely, for sure need a **web site**. If you're on a tight budget, you can use a free or cheap online template such as the ones that iWeb and Google offer. To customize your site and have more specific control over its look and feel, a graphic designer can help you create your own site for a higher cost (at the lowest end, expect to pay a few thousand dollars).

The designers listed above all work with engineers who can take care of the "tech stuff" to build and launch your site.

*If you already have a design, **Tierra Interactive** (in San Francisco) can help you "code" it: tierrainteractive.com*

*And, of course, **Outside Eye** can help you plan the content, organize your thoughts for your site, and write your copy.*

7. Consider starting a **blog**. Blogs help search engines find your web site, they enhance your brand, they give your company personality, and they are very easy to set up. There are a number of free platforms you can use.

*Creating, maintaining and ghostwriting blogs is one of **Outside Eye Consulting's** most popular services. We can help you with the initial setup and/or manage an ongoing posting scheduled for you. We can also ghostwrite your blog for you. And you can take all the credit.*

AGGRESSIVE OUTREACH

8. Send out a **mass email** to everyone you know announcing your new endeavor, in friendly lingo that doesn't sound sales-y, but is simultaneously modest, confident and enthusiastic.

***Outside Eye** can help you write, edit, hone, assemble, and send your email through **Constant Contact's** sophisticated (and comfortably inexpensive) mass email service. In fact, we're a Business Partner with Constant Contact, so it's very easy to sign up for an account through our Partner Page:*

<http://www.constantcontact.com/index.jsp?pn=outsideeyeconsulting>

9. Take advantage of social marketing networks. Don't be afraid to blur the line between your personal and business lives.

***Outside Eye Consulting** can provide initial training as well as ongoing support of social networking management.*

a. Create a **Facebook** fan page and send an invitation to all of your friends to join it. This can be a great forum to promote events, special deals, your blog, or any news about your business.

We can link your blog, Facebook fan page and Twitter feed so that each new post shows up in all three places.

b. Use **Twitter** to send one-liners about events, deals and news.

10. Be social. Go out to where people are, and **always bring your business cards**. Don't be caught off guard! Take every opportunity to meet new people and let them know what you do. Consider joining a networking group.

***BNI (Business Networking International)** is a great networking group with chapters around the world.*

Check out their web site for details: www.bni.com

11. If your business is something that other small businesses can use, consider **cold-calling** or emailing them to offer up your services.

12. **Hire a PR person** to help you get your name in the local and national press.

***Brooke Sobel Schell (brookesobel@yahoo.com)** is a fantastic freelance PR expert in San Francisco who doesn't sic her clients with a monthly retainer. She works on a per-hour or per-project basis.*

13. **Offer your services in trade** until you have enough experience under your belt to build a healthy resume.

14. Once you have some happy clients, **ask them for testimonials** to put on your web site. Always make sure to ask your clients for permission to use their words and their name. If they are shy, you can use just their first name, but it's important to use a name in order for your testimonials to have credibility.

15. **Consider volunteering** in a field that mirrors your work.

*For example, if you are a writer, spend an afternoon a week tutoring underprivileged kids through **826 Valencia**.*

RUN A TIGHT SHIP

16. **Keep track of your marketing efforts** and aim to do at least one marketing task every day. This will set you into energetic motion to propel your business forward.

Visit www.outsideeyeconsulting.com/freeideas.html to download a template help you track your efforts

17. **Value Stream Mapping:** Once you have a work flow going, start keeping track of how much time you are spending every day on the following tasks:

- Paid work
- Trade or comp work
- Marketing your business
- Administrative tasks

18. **Figure out a goal income** (keep it realistic and start with a budget of your living and business expenses) and then figure out how much money you need to make every day in order to reach this goal.

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