

Stet

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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE INDEPENDENT WRITERS OF CHICAGO

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JULY PROGRAM

Learn how new technology can help boost your productivity

BY GEORGE BECHT

Mark Ertes, a past president of the Chicago Computer Society (CCS), will address IWOC's July 13 meeting with information on current trends in technology and how we can apply them to save time or money without compromising quality.

In particular, Ertes will discuss PC industry news, such as new and prospective hardware developments. He'll also share ideas on how to use hardware, software, and the Internet to boost productivity. A question and answer session will conclude the meeting.

Sorry, Apple users—CCS is a PC-oriented group. However, Ertes is conversant with Linux and other non-Microsoft applications and has experience solving technology puzzles.

THE 7-STEP PLAN

In addition to his active involvement in CCS, a non-profit organization whose motto is "Users Helping Users," Ertes is president of Elm Enterprises. His company designs, develops, maintains, and supports custom database applications and provides PC hardware and software consulting services.

So, bring your questions and get answers from a pro!

The meeting on Tuesday, July 13, will be at the Feltre School, 22 West Erie, in Chicago. Networking starts at 5 PM and the program begins at 6 PM. ✍

USING TECHNOLOGY TO BOOST PRODUCTIVITY

with Mark Ertes

Tuesday, July 13

The Feltre School

22 West Erie

Networking 5:00 PM

Program 6:00 PM

Professional members FREE

Associate members \$5

Nonmembers \$15

IWOC meets for a program and networking the second Tuesday of every month.



Let your genius out!

Do you have ideas for topics you would like to see addressed at IWOC meetings in the months ahead? August will be the summer get-together and September will be the annual round table. After that, it's up to you.

Please let Jim Ardito or George Becht know what topics interest you most, and they'll do their best to build a meeting around the topic, beginning with the meeting in October.

E-mail Jim at betsydog@aol.com and George at ood@big-foot.com.

iWOC

Independent Writers of Chicago

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jimleman@comcast.net

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Web site: www.iwoc.org

Joel Kinnan 708/366-8573

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Editor:

Elaine Fiedler
708/386-3796; map133@aol.com

Contributors: George Becht, Richard L. Eastline, Marilyn Hopkins

RECAP JUNE PROGRAM

Guerrilla marketing has weapons every writer can use to win clients

BY MARILYN HOPKINS

It wasn't a Boy Scout or Girl Scout meeting, but when speaker Doug Florzak stepped before the IWOC audience on June 8, he asked them to take a pledge. "I am NOT..." said Florzak, with the audience repeating "...a writer."

There was an audible gasp from his listeners, but Florzak quickly added and his audience repeated, "I AM a marketer."

"No one will know how good a writer you are," explained Florzak, "if they don't know you and can't find you. You've got to market yourself if you want to be a writer."

Thus the tone was set for a lively evening of discussion on the best, cheapest, and easiest ways to market yourself and your freelance business.

Florzak's latest book is *The Free Agent Marketing Guide—100+ Marketing Tips for Free Agents, Independent Consultants and Freelancers*. Florzak said that his work is based on the concept first propounded by Jay Conrad Levinson in his 1984 book *Guerrilla Marketing*.

"It's a way for small companies and entrepreneurs to use inexpensive, unconventional methods of marketing. Like a guerrilla force versus a big army," he said.

Florzak has used the technique himself, transitioning from a technical writer and consultant for large companies such as Wang Laboratories to a successful career as an independent writer, consultant, and guerrilla marketing coach.

THE 7-STEP PLAN

First, Florzak handed out his worksheet and walked the group through his "7-Step Guerrilla Marketing Plan."

Step 1: Your Purpose

What do you want your marketing efforts to accomplish? Make your goals "SMART"—Sensible, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-bound.

Step 2: Your Benefits

"These are not the features of the service you offer," said Florzak, "but what the customer gets out of it. Ask yourself what your client wants."

Step 3: Your Target Audience

"Who wants and needs what I have to offer?" Florzak suggested writing a profile of your target audience.

Step 4: Your Niche

You can't be all things to all clients. "It's great if you can find a niche an inch wide and a mile deep," said Florzak. "Then you're the expert in that area." You can define your niche by the type of writing you do and/or by the industry you serve.

Step 5: Your Identity

"How do you want your customers to think about you?" asked Florzak. Your identity should convey your values and give your clients a sense of confidence and comfort.

Step 6: Your Budget

Florzak recommended that 10 percent of what you expect to earn in a year is a good starting amount to set aside for a marketing budget. Then allocate 60 percent to current clients, 30 percent to prospects and 10 percent to general marketing.

Step 7: Your Marketing Weapons

Florzak suggests choosing five weapons or tactics and tracking their effectiveness for a minimum of three months. "You don't want to keep doing something if it doesn't work," said Florzak, "but you don't want to stop before you succeed."



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Want to build your own Web site?

BY RICHARD L. EASTLINE

The new IWOC Web site and our recent program featuring self-promotion for profit—which emphasized creating your own personal Web page—prompted reviewer Richard L. Eastline to share information and some timely book references with you.

Presentations about Web sites are not new to writers. The message is plain—use a site to promote your freelance services inexpensively via a persuasive résumé and a display of samples. OK, the concept is understood and applauded. As for the execution, well, that’s another story. In spite of the almost convincing arguments that creating a self-promoting Web site is easy these days, a smidgeon or two of self-doubt is equally prevalent. What scares most Web-challenged writers is that those typical examples so gorgeously projected on a massive screen seem incredibly sophisticated. And that means that they’re complicated. Won’t you be pleased to know that you’re probably right?

ONE LESS EXCUSE TO PUT YOUR SITE ON THE WEB

However, that should not be your “out” for creating a place of your own on the World Wide Web. If you have talented friends who happen to be graphic designers, fine—let them do those moving titles, flashing banners, and multi-hued backdrops (assuming you want them). But, reflect for a moment on what you yourself are selling. Not CDs, fashions, vacations, or vinyl siding. You’re not even faced with promoting a multi-service organization. You’re offering words, words that meld into text, text that will sell products and services. Plain text. For that you don’t absolutely have to decorate the word chunks with photos, jazzy borders, or gee-whiz typography. In fact, those tacked-on enhancements could

well detract from your prime purpose in showing off your skill in mixing and matching words. So, of all the purveyors of Web site promotion, writers are in the fortunate position of doing the right thing by going the simple, basic route. With that concept in mind, the act of creating a personal Web site becomes a satisfying exercise, if not necessarily a piece of cake.

KEEP IT SIMPLE

Nearly every major Internet Service Provider (ISP), such as AOL and EarthLink, will offer free “starter” Web pages to subscribers of dial-up or broadband service. That’s a good way to meet the public without risk—other than possible embarrassment brought on by misspelled words or omission of contact details. If you’re limited to choosing among some pre-configured page templates, go for the least “creative” and delete obtrusive or irrelevant elements. Made a mistake in judgment? No problem in going back to the site and revising content. Doing this gives you confidence as well as awareness. You may not be able to post complete samples, so excerpts might have to do. Just make certain that an e-mail address is visible on the same page, inviting a request to you for furnishing the full versions or companion documents.

Eventually, you may find that limitations in such site construction are bothersome and feel that you’re now prepared to move to the next level, a personal site hosted by an ISP of your choice. But, that’s another story for another time. For now, the objective will be to start something Web-wise.

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Guerrilla marketing for writers (continued)

Then Florzak riffed on some of the 112 marketing weapons printed on the flip side of his handout.

“Show your face,” he said. “Put your picture on your business card, Web site and brochure. You’re your own brand, and it’s a lot easier to remember a name if someone has a face to connect with it.

“Use both sides of your business card,” he advised. “It’s your #1 marketing tool. It’s small, easy to carry, and people will easily take it from you.

“Carry some blank business cards with you, and if a prospect doesn’t have a card, write down the pertinent facts and follow up with information on your business card,” said Florzak.

Be sure to use an e-mail signature on all your business e-mails. “You can create a standard signature with your name, company name, contact information, tagline, and even a photo. Most online services allow you to have one or more standard signatures,” said Florzak. Check the Help menu or search by keyword.

Florzak also recommends putting your contact information on every page of your web site. Don’t make the viewer go back to your home page to find it.

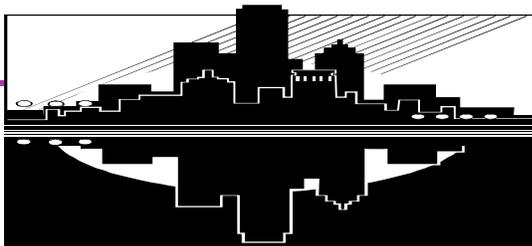
If you don’t like cold calling, hire an intern or a company to do it for you, says Florzak. “You may have to spend time writing the script and training the

intern, but it frees you to do the work you like to do.”

And, finally, Florzak advised, **“Write a book. It’s a great business card** and instantly establishes you as an authority on the subject,” he said.

As it happens, Florzak and a self-published colleague present an all-day seminar on July 10 at North Central College in Naperville, Illinois, on “How to Get from Manuscript to Published Book.”

Go to www.LearnToPublish.com for more information. By the way, Florzak even offered a special, one-day-only price for IWOC members who signed up for the seminar on the spot. Is that guerrilla marketing or what! ✍



IWOC Fest Set for the Rooftops

On Tuesday, August 10, IWOCers will be viewing the city's panorama from the rooftop of the Pegasus Taverna in Greektown (130 S. Halsted). Once again, catering captain Yianni promises to "bombard" us with food, from shrimp and chicken kebobs to lots of salads, yogurt, and vegetarian dishes. Cost to participants is \$27 for reservations sent to the office before August 5 and \$30 at the door. Festivities begin at 6. We'll toast the sunset with the libations from a cash bar.

TAKE NOTE, POTENTIAL PAYPAL USERS

Currently we are considering using IWOC Fest as a test for our new online payment process (Paypal).

Before you make your reservation, go to the IWOC Web site at www.iwoc.org and click on the events page to see if Paypal is up. With Paypal, you can register for \$27 even after August 5.

If Paypal is not up, download and complete the flyer sent with *Stet* and get your checks into the IWOC office at PMB 119, 5465 W. Grand Ave., Ste. 100, Gurnee, IL 60031. ✍

**Check out
IWOC's Web site at
www.iwoc.org**

Web site building (continued from 3)

GET DOWN TO BASICS

To gain some insider guidance on do-and-don't or to prepare yourself to graduate from the ISP-based site to a privately-owned domain with many more options, consider acquiring one or more easy-to-understand printed guides. There are a zillion titles to choose from, true, but limit your picks to those that tend to be shelved in the beginner's section at your bookseller. And don't be put off by that ubiquitous "dummies" nomenclature on so many covers. (Admit to your sparse knowledge and just avoid displaying the

book too conspicuously in public.) For the record, here are a few to consider (and note that the prices shown are without common discounts):

Web Style Guide by Patrick Lynch & Sarah Horton. Yale University Press, 1999. 161 pp. ISBN-0-300-07675-4 \$14.95

A highly rated, brief guide to organizing and displaying information.

Creating Web Pages for Dummies, 6th ed. by Bud Smith & Arthur Bebak. Wiley Publishing, 2002. 384 pp.

ISBN-0-7645-1643-4 \$24.95

The most basic of all basic manuals for getting started.

Web Site Tools. A title in the publisher's Learning Series: Vol. 8, No. 1, Smart Computing, 2002. Magazine format. Approx. 150 pp. \$7.99 prepaid. Order by phone at 800-733-3809.

The issue is a collection of Web site-related articles that include site construction.

Short Order HTML 4 by Molly Holzschag. Hayden Books, 1999. 246 pp. incl. tag reference (sort of a dictionary of hyper-text terms). ISBN-0-

7897-2049-3 \$19.99

Here is a next-level-up reference for using and deciphering the source code that represents your Web pages. It's something that's needed in preparing, revising, and troubleshooting the appearance and usability of Web sites.

Creating Web Pages with HTML, Simplified by Ruth Maran. Wiley Publishing, 1999. 240 pp. ISBN-0-7645-6067-0 \$27.99

This is a more nuts-and-bolts approach than *Short Order HTML*. ✍

Calendar

July 13 (2nd Tuesday)

IWOC monthly meeting: Using Technology to Boost Productivity. Technology guru Mark Ertes will solve PC problems and share ideas on boosting productivity. At The Feltre School, 22 West Erie, Chicago. Networking at 5 PM; program at 6 PM. Professional members free, associates \$5, nonmembers \$15.

August 10 (2nd Tuesday)

IWOCFest! Celebrate the summer! Join us on the rooftop at Pegasus Taverna, 130 S. Halsted. \$27 before August 5; \$30 at the door.

The monthly food and networking get-togethers listed below meet at the same time and place each month unless otherwise noted. The groups welcome nonmembers.

July 1 / August 5 (1st Thursday)

IWORP monthly breakfast: Join the Rogers Park IWOC contingent for breakfast at 9 AM at the A&T Grill, 7036 N. Clark St., Chicago. For more information, call Esther Manewith at 773/274-6215.

July 22 / August 26 (4th Thursday)

IWOOP monthly lunch: The West Suburban group meets at noon at Poor Phil's at 139 So. Marion, Oak Park. Contact Barb Dillard at 312/642-3065.