

## JULY MEETING

*Writing a Book Could Be Your Best Advertisement*

BY DAVID EPSTEIN

**D**o you need to: (1) Win new clients? (2) Open up new markets for your writing? (3) Prove your credibility in a subject area? (4) Raise your profile as a writer?

What writer doesn't need to do these things, especially in today's tough market? But it sounds like a lot of work, you say?

Well, it is, but perhaps not as much as you think.

At the IWOC meeting next Tuesday, our own Jim Kepler, a two-time IWOC president and an expert on helping authors develop and publish their books, will explain ways to build the expertise you already have into a book, and how to use that book as a billboard for your writing business.

And you may already have a head start on writing a book. If you've written a dozen or so articles on, say, green building construction, traveling with children, designing training programs, coaching business speakers or writers, or any marketable topic, you might easily gather them into a book-length manuscript. One first-time book author even broke in recently with a bestseller on how he taught himself to stop cussing!

Your book doesn't even need to be on a subject in the client's field; it can still add to your credentials and boost your reputation as a writer. The potential client's immediate impression is, "Wow. You've actually written a book." That's a great start to convincing clients you can do a terrific job on their assignment.

In his talk, Kepler will cover each step in the process. He'll start with the "hunting and gathering" stage of collecting information and sifting it, looking for patterns to find your theme, and identifying potential sidebars and illustrations. He will also describe how to build a usable chapter outline, how to use that to identify and fill in the blanks in your research, and how to develop an outline into the framework or treatment for a book.

Kepler will also discuss various options for publishing the book, including traditional royalty publishing and self-publishing. He'll explain the differences between developing an outline and proposal targeted to royalty publishers and literary agents, and the process of organizing and writing to become your own publisher.



But the main focus will be on how to use the book as a marketing tool with new and existing clients as well as how to market the book itself and how to position yourself as an expert on your subject. Kepler will talk about the importance of building a web site early on and using a blog to create a buzz around your book even before it comes out. Other topics will include how to write chapters as stand-alone feature articles that you can sell during the writing process, and how to tweak these features for various audiences so that you can pitch each one to several different publications.

These days, whether you self-publish or publish through a traditional book publisher, promotion will be mainly up to you—which is fine, since the ultimate goal is to promote your own writing talent and business. Kepler will talk about the many ways to get in front of audiences who are interested in your book, including finding the names of people who arrange programs for social, civic, and other organizations appropriate to your subject areas.

Here are some examples:

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## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN/ROGER RUEFF

# What Color Is Your Lemonade?

**F**orget parachutes—the business world these days is handing out lemons. Lots of them. A big, yellow bumper crop from California to Florida and everywhere in between.

But these are not your ordinary lemons. These are sneaky, invisible, gorilla-in-the-room lemons. Up-all-night-staring-at-the-ceiling, snap-at-the-spouse, refill-the-antacid-prescription lemons. Boy-that-savings-account-is-dwindling-fast, so-this-is-what-my-grandparents-were-talking-about, we-need-a-plan lemons.

And their juice stings more than your eyes.

As the pestilence of financial insecurity sweeps over the economic orchards of this great land (let's see if we can stretch this metaphor until it snaps), only the lemon trees seem immune. More than immune... hell, they're thriving! Projects get put on indefinite hold. Publications institute hiring freezes.

Clients get bought out, consolidate departments, or disappear.

And citrus fruit rolls out into the streets.

As freelance writers, we're better equipped than most to handle the downturn—or should be. Many of us gave up our illusions of corporate security years ago. We're accustomed to fending for ourselves—of beating the bushes and howling out mating calls in the night, hoping a client will answer. Of putting our ears to the ground to listen for movements of the herd. Of following hoof prints and broken twigs. Of huddling around campfires and picking the lice off each other. (That's not actually

what we do at the monthly IWOC meetings, of course, but in principle...)

We live by our wits, our fingers, our software.

And we know how to make lemonade.

It can be quite difficult to find an upside to this temporary economic downturn (and let's think of it as temporary, shall we?). But the upsides are there, nonetheless. Belt-tightening can lead to a renewal of fiscal discipline—a good trait in any economic climate. A reduction in disposable income can lead to an increase in nights spent in—reading or chatting and getting to know someone else... and reducing one's carbon footprint in the process. Standing amidst the rubble of one's IRA can sharpen one's sight and make highly readable the small-print phrases like, "Past performance is no guarantee of future results."

But perhaps the greatest upside to the downturn is time—the time that would, in a healthier world, tick off as billable hours.

Bear with me.

As freelancers, whose hands and mouths are timed to the ticking of that clock, it's easy to feel a little frantic when its second hand falls silent. A primal sense of urgency naturally compels us to use all our efforts to get it going again. But what if, instead, we rested peacefully in its unmoving silence and used the time for something else?

What then?

What if we dedicated at least part of the time to assessment and learning and renewal—as a service to the freelancer we'll be next



year... not the one who's reading this now? What if we allowed ourselves to believe for a long, delicious moment that everything will be okay in the end, and we put on our corporate marketing hats and turned our attention to the overall look, focus, and direction of our businesses... with an idea toward making them better? What then?

What if, instead of making those ten extra cold calls, we sat down with a cup of coffee and a notepad and examined the types of work we do... and jotted down ideas about how we might develop and market them... and make an actual plan? What if we allowed ourselves to fantasize about the kinds of writing we want to do—regardless of whether or not we've done it yet—and researched how to break into or increase our share of that market? What if we took a good, hard look at our websites and asked, "What's here that would entice a potential client... and how can I make it more attractive, more focused, more visible, easier to use?" What if we rethought our logos... our business cards... our billing policies? What if we strategized? What if we started our blogs? What if we pored over the thousands of pages we've written over the years and pulled out just three samples to post on our IWOC profiles?

Or what if (get ready to gasp)... we put our feet up and let our minds wander the landscape of our busi-

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# Cold-Call Marketing: Working the Phones to Improve Your Business

BY CYNTHIA MIKAL



If you are finding that business is not as good as it could be, June speaker Jim Leman's cold-calling techniques should help. In 1992, Leman left corporate marketing. His last assignment was to carry out a project that used outbound telemarketing to sell computers. In the three years he was involved in the project, he never did any cold calling. But the project did show him how structured cold calling can create business.

But first, as a beginning freelancer, he started promoting his business with advertisements and expensive direct mail. Pretty much all that got him was a call from a life insurance salesman who offered Leman \$600 to write his life story. He moved on to cold calling because it is a proactive way to develop business and to feel more in control of your business. He still does not love it, but it works. Cold calling is a numbers game: the more calls you make, the more business you create. He has found that when you dial a legitimate number, it takes 92 dial outs to get to talk to fifteen people and five of those may get you work. Leman will get voice-mail 15 out of 20 times but he will leave a message and gets some return calls.

Leman has a script that he uses for calls. You need a plan, a list of potential customers, and time. Before you call, verify the contact name and e-mail of the person you are planning to contact. There is also a cycle

to calls. Late afternoon or early in the morning seem to be best. He calls late in the day on Friday. Remember to consider time zones if you are not calling locally only. Speak confidently about who you are, what you do, and how and what you can do to help the potential client. Select a block of time and work the calls. Be patient and keep calling. Once you slow down, you won't want to start up again, so don't delude yourself that a quick game of solitaire on the computer will get you going again. It won't. Stay with it for the time you've allotted.

Leman called one company for two years before getting great results. He has found there is a karma to cold calling; when he is making lots of calls he get calls to do work and if he is too busy working to call, he stops getting calls. He also uses cold calling in combination with networking; he is on LinkedIn (so is IWOC).

Someone from the audience asked, "How do you make time to call when you've got work?" Leman advised us to schedule it and stick to it. One way to do this is to pick a day that works for you and plan to spend two hours calling. While on the phone, Leman also takes notes and later sends e-mails to those he's called. He never gets any actual abuse on the phone. The worst has been "we don't need that so please don't call," and most people are pleasant. He has found that people respond better to e-mails when he has talked to them first. He sometimes cold e-mails and

when he does, Leman puts in the subject line: "Your Industry Here" writer, and his name.

When prospective employers ask for samples of his work, he sends his website information or PDF files. He has always looked at writing as a sales job. The audience wanted to know how to find a list of marketing directors. Leman advised us to look on the websites of the industry we want to work in. Once there, check for a list of executive officers and check news section for PR people. If there is no name, dial the general number.

Before the internet, Leman always marketed locally; now he markets internationally. He says that some potential clients still want local writers, but he's gained enough business to make it worth the calls. He does believe that new and emerging businesses are worth looking at for work, even in this economy. Another tip was to follow up in other ways besides calls. He uses a program with reminders to call back or send e-mail. He does not use snail mail at all.

Some audience members who've done cold calling added their tips: 1) You'll come across better if you have a written script. 2) Look into a mirror and smile into it during the call. Leman said that a smile does come across in your voice. He added that standing up with a headset helps him reduce fidgeting and increases his confidence. Leman also suggested that when calling a potential client for the first time, use the formal salutation "Hello,

Mr. or Ms. \_\_\_\_." (In other words, don't call someone you don't know by his/her first name until you've established a relationship. However, if the surname is unpronounceable, you might be better off to skip it and just announce yourself.)

Leman brought some handouts and this is a condensed summary: Your job as a freelancer is to be a business problem solver. First: know what it is you bring to the table –what do you do? Second: Know your strengths and be able to telegraph them quickly. Third: act as a doctor and get your potential client to tell you about the problems he or she is having and then show them how you can fix their problems for them. Ask questions: What do you need? Why do you need this? How was it done before? What did you like/dislike about the previous provider? What do you look for most from a freelance writer? (This usually gets a response of equitable fee which means "cheap" and that the writer understands their company or product.) What is the scope of this project, when do you need it?

When you make a cold call, be sure to use the person's name (see above for exceptions), identify yourself and what you. Be sensitive to their time needs – Do you have a minute? If not, when is a good time? If it is a good time to talk, let the person know you know your way around writing and the

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## June Recap

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product. Drop names if possible and focus on the company/product. Continue to probe for weaknesses that you can fix for them. Share your expertise. Use closing questions to generate more business such as: Is there any reason I can't start on this project today, this week, and this month?

Some of the resources: [www.freelancewritinggigs.com](http://www.freelancewritinggigs.com), [www.writersweekly.com](http://www.writersweekly.com), [www.monster.com](http://www.monster.com). For business database sources: [www.salesgenie.com](http://www.salesgenie.com) (has fee) and the local library which is tedious but no fees: *Hoover's Handbooks*, *Crain's* and Lexis Nexis. 📌

## July Program

*Continued from page 1.*

Send them a one-page overview or press release about your soon-to-be-released book and offer to speak at one of their meetings. Avoid a hard sell, but don't forget to relate whatever you say to your book. You can also send press releases to community newspapers and use those clips to get coverage in larger publications. When a news item related to your book topic occurs, call a reporter covering the story and offer background. Ask that you be quoted.

The trick is to make yourself an expert. After all, by now you've written a book on the subject.

As you can see, this will be an information-packed program. You won't want to miss it. Networking with snacks and beverages begins at 5 p.m. and the meeting at 6. Nonmembers are cordially invited. The meeting is free for IWOC members and \$15 for non-

## President's Column

*Continued from page 2.*

ness lives, getting the lay of the land?

There's no telling what might happen.

History is filled with the happy, successful results of feet-up thinking. Chaos mathematical theory. The molecular structure of benzene. Lasers. And in my own case, a procedural change to a century-old process at the Amoco Whiting Refinery... which, when implemented, increased wax production by 50% with no capital investment and led to two U.S. patents—an idea that came to me on a dreary December afternoon in 1985 when, as a new hire, I found myself a vacation-less ghost at the Amoco Research Center with my feet up on the desk (literally), staring out my office window at the traffic on the highway, letting my mind idle and having no idea that among the passing cars was a fast-moving truck with a license plate reading "EUREKA!"

Idle time is wasted time only if we allow the Tyrant of Urgency to declare it so.

So grant yourself a time out. Turn off the computer. Put the cell phone on silent. Go outdoors. Find a spot in the shade and a place to put your feet up. Lean back and stare up at the sky. Look for figures in the clouds. Order something to drink.

I recommend the lemonade. 📌

members. Plan to stay for a buy-your-own dinner at a nearby restaurant after the meeting. Remember: the location is National-Louis University, 122 South Michigan, Room 5008. National-Louis U. is across the street from the Art Institute. See you there! 📌

# Calendar

## July 14

**IWOC Monthly Meeting.** "Writing a Book Could Be Your Best Advertisement" Past president Jim Kepler has a tip-filled presentation about how you can write a book and use it to gain clients. Tuesday, July 14 at National-Louis University, Room 5008, 122 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago. Program 6 p.m. Networking 5 p.m. Nonmembers, \$15; IWOC members free. Buy-your-own dinner follows. Nonmembers welcome. For more information, call 847/855-6670 or visit [www.iwoc.org](http://www.iwoc.org).

*The monthly food and networking get-togethers listed below meet at the same time and place each month unless otherwise noted, but call ahead in case of cancellation. The groups welcome nonmembers. If there's no group in your area, why not start one? Contact [webmaster@iwoc.org](mailto:webmaster@iwoc.org).*

## July 23 (4th Thursday)

**IWOOP Monthly Lunch.** Join near-west suburbanites for a noon lunch at Poor Phil's, 139 S. Marion St., Oak Park. For more info, call Barb Dillard at 312/642-3065. Check before you come. This lunch is monthly only if there are enough people who can attend.

## August 6 (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 info, call Esther Manewith at 773/274-6215.

## It's Happening on the Web!

Check Out Writers' Line

Browse Resources

See What's Doing in IWOC Events

**WWW.IWOC.ORG**

## IWOC Welcomes New Member

**Rick Hyer**