

## ATTACHED AT THE HIPS

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This newsletter is provided completely free of charge but there are a couple of things I would like you to take note of....please bear in mind that I have taken a lot of time to write the stuff in this newsletter. Since I write for a living, that means I am sacrificing my own time to come up with these things which means that even though I could be pissing my clients off right now, I am still doing this for you FOR FREE.

So, I would appreciate it if you want to use the stuff in here, distribute it or share with anyone, please include the newsletter in its entirety. Please do not claim this as your own, your brother's, your sister's, your cousin's or your mother's, etc. I still believe in Karma, so, I know that by doing this, I hope that you will treat me nice.

If you have feedback or want to give me a piece of your mind, log onto [www.marshamaung.com](http://www.marshamaung.com) and send me a mail through the feedback form.

Please be nice to me and do not copy, plagiarize or infringe copyright laws.

I knew you wouldn't, anyway. Well, like they always say....better safe than sorry.

p.s. If there are grammatical errors or spelling mistakes, it's because I write it so fast that I do not have the time to edit and proofread them. ☺ So, if you don't find any, I am damn proud of myself!

Issue 01

Aug 2007

Marsha's Musing

Hi everyone,

First of all, let me extend a very huge, enormous, gigantic **THANK YOU** for all of you who downloaded this newsletter. This is a huge step for me as a freelance writer because I have never found the time to do this kind of thing in the past. Believe it or not, eight whole painful yet fulfilling years as a freelance writer and it never occurred to me to write a newsletter to help all those who hope to and dream of becoming a freelancer one day.

To launch this thing off, I want to say welcome to my newsletter that I have loving named 'Attached to the Hips'. Attached to the Hips was actually derived from the fact that babies are carried on the hips of mothers. My kids and freelance business is the same....they're BOTH attached to my hips. I carry them with me wherever I go. What a laugh...but I thought it was a pretty cool name.

I've tried writing books and also tried novels but it took me away from my work. I didn't like that. The less time I have, the less work I do, the less money I earn. Which is a NO GO for me. Mark this down as LESSON NUMBER ONE in your notebook, please. But a newsletter....hmmmmm...enticing idea.

Through this newsletter, I will try to share as much information as I can with all of you because I am a very firm supporter of work@home businesses....especially mothers. Reason? Simple. Although I am not a traditional kind of person, I still believe that mothers are the best caregivers to their children. You can try to change my mind about this but amongst the very few things that I

am adamant about, **this is one of them**. I will do everything within my power to control my family, provide them with the essential love and care that a mother was born to provide. Therefore, I struggled for years trying to establish a proper network of contacts, clients and customers who were willing to thrust their businesses onto my lap. An ocean of tears later, I am finally earning a decent income through this freelance career of mine and happily (and tired, and exhausted, and poofed, and frustrated) caring for my kids at the same time!

My first musing is how difficult and unobtainable it may seem at the start. It is. That's actually not a musing but it's a statement of fact. What you need to establish are as follows:-

- Support. Support from your family members and friends.
- A business plan.
- Financial back-up for first year or so.
- Marketing strategy.
- Company name and registration of all legal documents in compliance with your country's employment and tax laws
- A website (almost a must but if you don't want it, it's perfectly fine as well)
- Work out a schedule....when to work, when to care for your kids, when to fetch them to their activities...etc. You don't have to decide on the schedule now because it will eventually change again later on but it would be good if you had a good idea on what it is going to be like.
- If you're going to need help with babysitting, find all the information that you need now!
- Office equipment. The computer, the printer, the various paraphernalia, all your working tools (if you're going to

knit, your yarn; if you're going to cook, your kitchen utensils

- Storage. If you are going to start a business which requires you to store raw materials, find storage space now.
- Trim down your spending.

I've probably missed out a couple of things here and there but I am writing on 'menopause' and 'US travel', so, my mind's a little muddled. I promised myself that I would write it as it is, so, I won't change what I've written above.

The most difficult hurdle to leap over where freelancing is concerned is, wait for it.....yourself. You have to find the courage to move out of your comfort zone. Every time you convince yourself to step out of that comfort zone, your tummy takes a tumble and you're all wiggly. Doubt will infiltrate your mind and you start wondering if it's, at all, a good idea. A series of onslaughts from 'what ifs' will attack you. most of us, at this stage, will chicken out.

But hang in there. As long as you persist and believe that you're doing the right thing for the right reason, you're going to be fine.

I am not going to lie. It took me more than 2 years to establish my freelance writing career. 2 years of complete HELL! But that's because I had no one to help me and I live in a country that believes in being employed. You won't believe the number of times my well-meaning grandmother tried to tell me to 'Get a job' and stop toying around with the idea of being my own boss.

So, be ready for a little bit of struggle but if you persist, you're going to be love the fact that you're there for your kids when they

need you. Love the fact that you don't have to count on other people to help educate your kids for you. You can spend time imparting important principles of living and life to your kids at your own pace. You can share your values and principles with them all day long.

There are downsides but since this is the first musing, I will leave it at that. I'll get to the downsides later on.

I sincerely hope that you will find this newsletter useful and enjoyable. Please feel free to log into my website and provide me feedback on how to improve this newsletter, ok?

Enjoy.

Marsha M

[www.marshamaung.com](http://www.marshamaung.com)

## ONLINE MARKETING

Where to find online business?

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I will give it to you **POINT BLANK**....right between the....eyes.

### IT'S NOT GOING TO BE EASY.

Don't expect shortcuts and you won't lose hair over stuff like this. Just take it one step at a time. The first step is for you to build a portfolio. Or find people who like your products.

It would be best for you to have your own website. As far as websites are concerned, we will deal with that in another issue because I can literally write **BOOKS** on the topic. But in short, if you ask me if you should have your own website, the answer would be a very **LOUD** 'yes'.

Here are a couple of ways you can do this.

- Tell everyone you know that you're going to do something for them for free. **COMPLETELY** free of charge! Or you can do what one of my friends did....told some of her potential clients that she would design stuff for them and show them. They pay only if they thought it rocks. Some of the clients took up her logos, brochures and simple icon designs and gave her good testimonials. With those who decided her designs didn't rock, she asked for feedback and testimonials too. She recorded every bit of it down and periodically looks over it.

So, if you plan to sell baby pacifiers, hand some of them

out as investment to mothers with babies. If you sell promotional products, print your logo onto some of your products and give them away. If you sell hand-knitted stuff, knit up small hankies and give them away. You're trying to get feedback and this is one of the best ways to get your foot in through the door. Free of charge...and people, young or old, **love free stuff**.

Hey, this is your investment in your business. You'd better budget in cost for such things right from the start. The free service is actually a good thing. it helps you develop your product/service, modify it to suit the market need, and most importantly, it helps you build up a portfolio. So, everything that you do for free, file it up, post it up, ask for testimonials and show it off!

- **Bid your way through to your first project.** This is how some of us....wait, most of us, got our breaks. We fight it out on hand and foot with our competitors for the business. we go low, we go cheap, we go fast and we go deep.

Websites like [www.getafreelancer.com](http://www.getafreelancer.com) is mighty popular with freelancers and also business people looking for freelancers. And it's no secret why....they're cheaper than most! Look, instead of paying a high price for a POTENTIAL project with sites like [www.elance.com](http://www.elance.com), beginners like us would rather go for the cheaper option. Hence, [www.getafreelancer.com](http://www.getafreelancer.com) gained popularity.

But I said the word 'cheap'.

So, yes, when you bid for projects in getafreelancer, you would have bear with the really low on your price. You're

fighting with college students trying their luck and building their portfolio. You're fighting with people from third world countries with access to internet and would go really low with their prices in order to get the project.

Although, what you get is peanuts through getafreelancer, what you get is a new database of clients! That's precisely what you need! It's funny but I just got a message from a client whom I knew from getafreelancer WAY back when and he was just asking me if I was still writing. He wanted to recommend some friends to me, you see. This client of mine turned into some sort of a friend, actually, because when his homes got hit by Twisters and Hurricane Katrina, everything collapsed. So, he didn't need my services anymore. But the truth is that he remembered me and I remember him.

As he slowly picks up pieces of what's left of his business (and life), he remembers me and messages me.

So, you see, even when you have to sacrifice a lot at the beginning, it will be worth it in the end if you do your job well and with commitment. So, at the beginning of your freelance career, don't be stingy with your services. There are many other freelance bidding websites including....

<http://www.allfreelancework.com>

<http://www.jobsformoms.com>

<http://www.allfreelance.com>

<http://www.freelancers.net>

<http://www.moneymakingmommy.com>

<http://www.hotgigs.com>

<http://www.contractedwork.com>

<http://smarthunt.com>

There are lots more in the market today. The resources I provided above are a little outdated but this only goes to show how useful they are. Try them out and don't be afraid.

- **Let others bid for your products**

The market is huge on the Internet and it is entirely up to you how to want to get your share of the big pie. Selling *services* is one thing, I think it's harder to sell **products**. If you do not have your portal, online store or website yet, you can test the market first by posting them up in sites like [www.ebay.com](http://www.ebay.com), [www.ecrater.com](http://www.ecrater.com), [www.froogle.com](http://www.froogle.com)

Posting them up can only do so much if you don't make an effort to get people to come in and bid for them. For example, participating in online forums, joining in discussions in related message boards, getting yourself a blog and actively update it...etc. There are millions of other ways to bring attention to yourself. And one of them is listed below.

- **Write free articles and publish them for free.** By now, you must be thinking badly of me. Everything that I am saying here is 'do it for free', 'write for free', 'give things away for free'. Where's the money going to be coming from?!

Yes, yes, yes, I get you. I hear you. But the thing is that the money won't come in unless you spend some time getting the word out. So, bear with me. Be patient and invest some money into your business. There's a Chinese saying that goes something like this.... "No money out, no money in". Which simply means that if you don't spend money

marketing and promoting or investing in your business, you will be earning no money at all.

So, here's what I am getting at....write articles, short and sweet ones about what you're good at and related to your business. Publish them through article factories. This is where people send their free articles to for free utilization by other webmasters or website owners. Another Chinese saying, there's no such big frog jumping all over the place. Which translates into 'there's no free meal in this world'. So, when you provide these articles for free, in return you want them to help you link back to your website or promote your business via a phone number or email address. At the end of your article, the webmaster will have to publish your byline which may contain any information you want to display there. be it your blog, email, phone number, website or message board...the bottom line is...EXPOSURE!

As far as article factories are concerned, [www.ezinearticles.com](http://www.ezinearticles.com) is really good with [www.google.com](http://www.google.com). So, this is always my first choice. There are others you might want to consider.

<http://www.articlecity.com>

<http://www.articlesfactory.com>

<http://www.goarticles.com>

<http://www.articledashboard.com>

Even if no one finds your articles interesting (touch wood!), you'll get the links into your website, if you have one. And let me tell you a secret, the more links coming into your website, the better search engines think you are! So, instead of investing your money on promotion, you're

investing your time in trying to get more traffic to your website and increasing your popularity with search engines.

The result is not immediate, so, don't expect a miracle after 5 articles. I took me a lot of months of free writing to become remotely popular among search engines.

But whatever it is, this is a worthwhile investment. It doesn't shrink your budget and it's free. So, there's literally nothing to complain about, right?

- **BUSINESS BASICS**

Useful stuff that I find on the Internet or...any place else

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Every single day, I pass two petrol stations facing each other. It's like they're frozen in time in a face-off guns aimed at each other. They have the same color theme too. They probably get their oil from the same country! But I feel bad for one of the gas stations...the one with the man standing outside with a huge glow stick waving away at the cars entering the intersection.

One gas station is always so full that cars have to wait and lineup to fill up their tanks. The other one is literally swatting flies and five cheerleading teams could perform there at the same time. Why the difference? How come everyone's flogging to one gas station and not the other since they're close by and they are literally quite alike in a lot of ways?

Benefits! Yes, POPULAR gas station got it all right while the UNPOPULAR one lagged behind just a little bit because it didn't have an image and it didn't give their customers enough benefits! It didn't connect with the customers the way the POPULAR gas station did. To say that the POPULAR gas station was far more aggressive is an understatement. They roared ahead as far as forging deals with customers and companies is concerned. They side-stepped their competitors by going for associate programs, formed affiliations with large International companies and binding these big giants into an irrefusable deal. Therefore, at the end of the day, POPULAR gas station had these giant companies standing behind them giving them a steady stream of income and forming a mattress if the economy took a downturn.

Then there's the BONUSLINK connection: [www.bonuslink.com.my](http://www.bonuslink.com.my) which is a long-running popular rewards program in Malaysia. UNPOPULAR gas station wasn't signed up. I mean, it sounds so petty and simple but it works! Many retailers and outlets have loyalty programs these days. In fact, if you dig into your wallet, you'll find a whole stack of them....some of them belonging to stores you don't even remember buying from!

Imagine you're standing in front of two stores; you have the rewards card for one of the store....they are both similar and are outwardly competing with each other. Which one would you choose?

What I am getting at is this....do everything within your power to forge relationships with your clients/customers. Overdo yourself and over-delivering is extremely important in establishing a good reputation. By starting on the right foot, you already have an edge over others. Brand yourself properly even if you're just a small organization (or a man-mouse-computer-and-coffee establishment....who's to know??). At every turn, give something out to help people remember you.

Remember this, don't be stingy when it comes to doing business. whatever you fork out now, you'll get them back in the future ten folds! Provided, the investment is a sound one based on logic, of course. I mean, you don't expect to throw some hay to the chickens and expect them to lay eggs, do you?

Good luck!