

CAVE OF MONSTERS PRESENTS:

# How to Get Your First Few Clients As A Freelancer

**A SPECIAL REPORT WRITTEN FOR  
FREELANCERS FREAKING OUT  
OVER LANDING THAT FIRST GIG**

(Calm the f down. We'll get through this)

By Tony Leung

Hey there freelancer!

Tony here.

What you're about to read is a bonus report I wrote on October 15, 2011 at 2:19 A.M. while staying at the San Diego Marriott Marquis & Marina in California.

Why did I timestamp my original report? Who knows? (Who cares?)

You're reading this report because...

You're a freelancer (or you're about to become one).

Maybe you're a copywriter, consultant, coach, graphic designer, digital marketer or whatever.

Regardless of profession, you haven't landed your first client yet. Or you've closed a few, but you have no idea how you got them to say yes.

**Here's what this report is about:**

It's about how to close more clients, more consistently and land bigger contracts... even if you're just starting from scratch.

There's no magic here... (it's actually a lot of work)... but it's *effective*.

I've shared this report with several other aspiring copywriters over the years. Those who put it to work are doing well for themselves. Those who didn't... well, we don't talk about them.

I hope you're part of the former group. ("Doing Stuff" is kinda embedded in this report)

When you land your first client, I would love to hear from you. Please write us at [hello@caveofmonsters.com](mailto:hello@caveofmonsters.com)

Be kind and stay zen,  
Tony

# Cowboy Hates Tony

In certain circles, I'm known as "Cowboy". It's a nickname John Carlton bestowed upon me.

I won't lie to you. The origin story is mind-numbingly bland... and it's not the point of this report.

What you need to know is this:

John sometimes refer to Cowboy and Tony as separate entities.

And right now, there's a 3x5 index card taped to my monitor.

It says: *"How am I fucking this up? How would Cowboy be mad at Tony?"*

It's something John told me to write down in New York during a Mastermind session.

You're probably wondering what it is "Tony" would fuck up that would get "Cowboy" mad.

The "Tony" in this case is the intellectual, corporate guy who used to work at a Fortune 500 company as a project manager. He would complicate stuff and draw process maps for everything, trying to organize the universe into neat little boxes.

That "Tony" sometimes forget he's in the entrepreneurial world, where it's messy, chaotic and DIS-organized.

And in honor of Steve Jobs who passed away recently as I write this, I quote:

*"You can't connect the dots looking forward; you can only connect them looking backwards. So you have to trust that the dots will somehow connect your future. You have to trust in something - your gut, destiny, life, karma, whatever. This approach has never let me down, and it has made all the difference in my life."*

Fact is, going from A-Student slash Good Employee to Self-Employed Freelancer (unless you've done it before) is probably the biggest challenge I've ever faced on my journey towards becoming a freelancer.

More than learning how to write copy<sup>1</sup>.

I quickly realized there was a LOT of B.S. in my head about money, about how the real

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<sup>1</sup> I originally wrote this report for aspiring copywriters, but what I write here applies to all freelancers including coaches, consultants, and all shades of nine-to-fivers going ~~rogue~~ entrepreneurial.

world works and how to prioritize *what to do next*. There's no boss telling you what to do, how to do it and when to do it.

As most freelancers quickly find out...

It's all on you, you can't fire yourself, you can't quit yourself and you can't talk behind your own back. (And if you can do that last thing, you should probably be working for Cirque Du Soleil. Not writing copy).

For an academically smart guy like me, who (was) obsessive about categorizing, organizing and archiving... I had a hard time giving up details, a clean desk and planning out everything at work.

Freelancing is messy.

### **And the most important advice John Carlton gave me...**

... was not so much advice he gave me face-to-face. It's actually something in this manual you hold in your hands right now. It's the story of how John hopped from ad agency to Jay Abraham to Jim Rutz to Gary Halbert. Basically, the mini-history of how John got jobs<sup>2</sup>.

Read that story again a few times. It's worth it until you "get it." And the only way for you to fully "get it" is to experience it. Which you will if you stick around.

I know this because I've done it myself. I've also talked to other freelance copywriters and I can confirm it's happened to them as well.

But the gist of the story is... you go out there, you do work, you look for opportunities and you reach out and... **one thing leads to another**.

It could be a referral, a business owner, a consultant who has clients, a marketing manager... whoever it is, you've put your name out there, made an offer... and you could be getting business or referral business.

## **One thing leads to another**

If you ask me about any one of my clients, I can do a six-degrees of separation for you and tell you exactly how I landed them, and from what source I met them.

And this is the MOST important advice I got from John Carlton because I know, right

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<sup>2</sup> *Again, more legacy stuff. This was originally written as a bonus report for John Carlton's course. If you'd like more ideas of how to network and connect with people, check out our posts on Cave of Monsters. [I'll update this footnote with specific posts later.]*

now, thousands of aspiring copywriters have taken tons of courses from other copywriters... but have yet to land a single client.

They may even be great writers. In fact, writers brimming with potential. But they're not *getting out there* and landing clients.

And some of those "copywriters" may be even reading this free report and be all bitter about it. How John had "lucky breaks" and they'll never get them.

That's B.S.

You make your own luck. You put yourself out in the universe, you take action and things happen.

It's really simple. When things happen, you have your brain to interpret, leverage, capitalize, connect and profit from them.

Anyway, ranting aside...

The next objection may be...

I don't have access to the people I want to work for. How do I get in front of future clients I want to work with?

## **Here's How You Make Some Initial Connections To Get Your Foot In The Door**

What I'm about to share with you came about during a mastermind call with John Carlton.

### **What happened was this:**

Someone in the group was having a rough time with their offline consulting business. Several long-term clients had suddenly dropped off the face of the earth and this member needed to get new clients... *fast*.

I knew this situation inside out.

Personally, I jumped into freelance copywriting two years ago without any advantages. I had practically no network, very little experience and frankly, *just* enough copywriting skills under the belt.

However, with a quickly diminishing severance package and a family to feed... I *had* to bring in the money.

And I got creative.

Now, before I jump in, I can't take all the credit for this client-getting strategy here. Mentor X<sup>3</sup> laid down the foundational ideas and groundwork.

I simply added a little of my own ingenuity to the implementation.

### **So here's the idea in general:**

Build a list of "centers of influence". People with access to your potential clients, and reach out to them.

It's *not* the most revolutionary idea. Maybe you know that already. If so, here's the big question – are you doing it? Knowing is not enough. That's why I'm sharing this with you.

### **Let's talk about it in further detail and what I did exactly...**

I thought about who would need direct response copy and lots of it because *their* clients needed it.

The reasoning behind this is simple.

Instead of reaching out to potential clients one by one, I reach out to centers of influence who could use my work *and* refer work.

Two groups popped into my mind right away.

Product Launch Managers and Business Consultants.

With PLMS, after meeting a few in real life, I realized MOST of them were drowning in doing *everything else* with a product launch.

If you've been through one, you'll know what I mean. There's so much work, the copy often gets shuffled into some strange corner until the last minute.

It made sense to me that these people would want to offload some of that copy work.

So let's break it down...

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<sup>3</sup> Mentor X is someone I talk about a lot on Cave of Monsters. He's someone I worked closely with between 2010-2013.

# STEP ONE: BUILD A LIST

So I started googling for PLMs (assuming they all had a site). I also thought about it laterally and typed in "Jeff-Walker Trained" because most PLMs are. Finally, I hit jackpot when I discovered the "official directory".

So the first step is to MANUALLY build a targeted list of potential clients.

This is important. It's not about hiding behind a squeeze page, or mass mailing a list. It's about *choosing* a very niche, very targeted group of people to reach out to.

Now, about the business consultants...

One thing everybody on the mastermind call found amusing was how I sourced the contact information for a certain group of them.

**Here's what I knew:** They all had a connection to a big name guru and were personally trained by him.

**So here's what I did...**

1. I went to the big name guru's site. (I was already a member in one of his "clubs")
2. I looked for a place where the directory would be. Clicked on some links...
3. Bingo. Over 50 names I can e-mail, call, and phone for work, partnerships and referrals.

The lesson here isn't in the TACTIC, it's in the STRATEGIC THINKING of it.

It's about "sourcing" names.

Groups of people are in clubs, associations, memberships... whatever, and they all have directories. The key is to find them.

And once I realized how freely available directories were, I tried this....

One of the clients I picked up from the PLM blast was a guy who wants to run a campaign to Yoga Teachers and help them launch Yoga classes and retreats.

OK... how do we get a list of Yoga teachers?

Well, there's a franchise call Bikram. Do they have a directory?

Let's Google it.

I typed in "Bikram Directory".

It's the first listing on the first page...

<http://www.yogastudiosusa.com/bikramyoga.html>

Bingo. Here's a HUGE initial list of people we can direct mail our sales letter to.

No need to rent a list from a list-broker.

And if you're too lazy to scrape data off this webpage, you can hire a family friend, outsourcer or a high school kid. (Now, I don't recommend this if you're starting out. You have no cash flow coming in, and you need to do the grunt work yourself).

Which reminds me of something Scott Haines once told me about Gary Halbert.

He would force his protégés to spend a week licking stamps, writing addresses and sealing envelopes just to understand the *work* that goes into a direct mail campaign.

It sounds brutal, but I think you'll be better for it. Whether you're stuffing envelopes or scraping names off a directory. (I've done both myself).

Anyway...

Building a targeted list is the FIRST STEP.

OK.

## STEP TWO: REACH OUT TO THEM

I do a cold email at first. The formula is fairly simple as you will see below. Just keep in mind this is bare bones copy. You will need to customize and expand on it based on *your needs*.

1. **GREETINGS** - Hi Sarah, I see you sell rabbits
2. **RAPPORT** - I used to own a pet rabbit
3. **INTRODUCTION** - My name is Tony, I'm a copywriter
4. **REASON WHY** - I'm writing because I see 3-4 things I can improve on your site
5. **CREDIBILITY** - I've helped businesses just like yours increase sales by up to 50%. I've also worked with Mr. X, Mr. Y and Mrs. Z. (Big names in their industry).



6. **FIRST CLOSE** - I have an idea that I think you'll be interested in, but I want to make sure it fits your business strategy
7. **LIST OF SERVICES** - Here are some general ways I can help : Copy (add description), Strategy (add description), List Building (add description)
8. **SECOND CLOSE** - Let's get on the phone. It won't take more than 15 minutes to see if we're a right fit.
9. **CALL-TO-ACTION** - My number is XXX. You can also email me with 3 times that work for you in the next 7 days.

Then I send the emails out. One at a time.

**IMPORTANT:** Each email is customized slightly so it doesn't look like I'm sending out generic spam like those "SEO Consultants". (You know who I'm talking about...)

In the email, I will mention their website, a blog I skimmed on their front page, their product/service... things like that.

I use "mail merge" in Excel and Word to create variable data letters.

If that doesn't mean anything to you, look it up<sup>4</sup>.

What it is, is you can create a "template" letter with "blank spaces" for things like names, addresses and telephone numbers.

When you run a "mail merge" in Word, it will create 50 (or whatever number) copies of the same letter but each with a different name based on your list in Excel.

The beautiful part is you're not restricted to names, addresses and phone numbers. You can have a list of custom comments or rapport-building lines specific to each person you're going to reach out to.

You can be as creative as you want here.

## **STEP THREE: FOLLOW UP**

Not everyone will respond, obviously. So I email them again a week later.

Again, I use Excel to help me here.

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<sup>4</sup> *Man, you kids don't know how good you have it. Back in 2011, I was doing MAIL MERGE with Microsoft products. Seriously. There are some amazing apps now that help you do this better now. Look them up.*

Next to each name, I list the date I last contacted them.

So let's say it's been seven days since the *second* email and he still hasn't responded. Then, it's time to pick up the phone. Leave a voicemail.

"Hi Stan, I emailed you last week. Maybe you didn't get it. My name is Tony. I'm a copywriter, I help you get more sales on your website. I noticed 3 or 4 things... blah blah blah... Let's talk."

You basically use the same script as your email.

Still nothing? My next step is to direct mail them.

## Did People Get Upset?

Absolutely.

One guy called me the VERY next day after I emailed to his group.

I called back, see what's up. I was FREAKED out. Maybe he'll send an email to his consultants telling them I'm scum and shouldn't work with me.

What actually happened? NOTHING.

He just wanted to check in with me and see what my intentions were. I told him openly what I was doing and he was actually OK with it. In fact, he appreciated my work ethic.

Alright, here's the...

## Get Your Head On Straight Part

As you read this, you may be thinking to yourself, "Man, Tony's got guts".

Maybe I do, maybe I don't. *Alls I know is I gots to get money in the door.*

But I will tell you this...

Yes, there is an *attitude* you need to take on when you do something like this.

Here are five BELIEFS you must subscribe to.

1. Have **CONFIDENCE** and **EXIT STRATEGIES** in mind:

**I genuinely believe they need what I do.** And if they don't... they need it in the future. And if they still can't see using me, their PEOPLE need me. Consultants and PLMs all have clients and customers who need copy.

The key here is to realize how many useful ways you can apply your expertise, service and skills. *You are never "just a copywriter".*

2. **THINK IN PACKAGES** - related to number one...

**I knew exactly WHAT I was selling here.** It's not some broad topic like "copy" or

"marketing". It's clear cut. I do 5-page business websites. I do sales letters. I do direct mail campaigns. I can do a Copywriting Bootcamp for you and we both make money. Even if I don't "say it aloud"... it's very clear in my head.

3. **RELAX!** All you're doing is simply "reaching out" to see if you're a fit.

You're not selling anything. Just adding to your network with a friendly phone call. *That's all.* Maybe we can work together. Maybe not. It's no different than "friending" someone on FaceBook, or linking to someone on "LinkedIn".

The key here is to build a relationship with someone you don't know. But of course, as soon as you get them on the phone... your ears are *laser-targeted* and *listening with INTENSITY* for opportunities where you can step in and help.

4. **IF YOU GOT IT, FLAUNT IT** - I am totally NOT ashamed or embarrassed about my accomplishments here. I brag about how I'm a SWS teacher. I've gotten my main client access to GKIC, T. Harv Eker and Traffic Geyser. I've personally worked with Mike Koenigs, Arielle Ford and the John Carlton himself.

Toot your own freakin' horn, cause no one else is going to. Especially when you're just starting out. Every little accomplishment you have *so far* needs to be EMPHASIZED.

5. **YES, IT'S A LOT OF WORK** - Deal with it.

I would love to just send out emails to a list and wait for jobs to come in. I got into this "direct response" game because I thought everything could be automated. That's what all the marketing gurus teach right? Attraction marketing. Auto-responders. Make them come to you!

Mentor X had to BEAT IT OUT OF ME that no matter how great your auto responder is, AT SOME POINT in time, you're going to have to talk to a human being. You can't hide behind your landing page forever if you want to build relationships. When they call you, what's your plan?

Truth is, if you can't handle "reaching out" and talking to someone... how are you going to close the sale when they "come to you"?

Learn how to sell before you attract a bunch of prospects and waste them by not being able to connect with and close them.

Selling in your copy won't help you if you drop the ball on the phone.

There are tons of great sales books out there<sup>5</sup>. Study them. Practice them.

Fact is, a freelancer wears many hats. So, one thing I cannot emphasize enough is a coach or mentor to help you through all this.

A big reason most people like to freelance is the chance to be their own boss. Free to do whatever they want.

However, the more independence I achieved, the more I found I needed help in different areas of business I didn't anticipate.

For example -- With copywriting, writing well is just one part of the equation. There's going to be contracts. Negotiations. Different personalities, crazy deadlines...and there's nobody to blame. It's all down to you.

I'll go so far as to say you NEED a coach or mentor. The top athletes in the world have coaches.

Being on your own doesn't mean the jobs get any easier. It just means that while the rewards are higher, so are the stakes.

Keeping all of this in balance is something I try to help my coaching clients through. Because I'm going through the same chaos.

We all are.

The solitary superhero is a myth.

Everyone needs a team behind them. You can't do every task by yourself. So make sure you look for great people who are on the same page.

A good coach or mentor is a critical piece to building a strong team.

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<sup>5</sup> I personally recommend "Spin Selling" by Neil Rackham. The type of sales freelancers like us do is distinctly different from most salespeople. We do what's called "consultative sales". That means asking a lot of questions, listening, and prescribing. In other words, introverts are actually better at this type of sales.

One last thought...

## "Motion Beats Meditation, Any Day"

That's a Gary Halbert quote, by the way.

I wanted to share that with you because something *strange* is going to happen when you start putting my strategy into action.

Yes... you'll get people responding to your blasts... and some of them will turn into jobs.

And you'll get responses like, "You reached out to me at the perfect time! I was *just* looking for a copywriter!"

But that's not *the* strangest thing that will happen.

Other marketing channels you've set up will start sending leads your way.

Like referrals, or some old campaign you did a while back.

It's just the weird, woo-woo way the universe works. It rewards smart activity.

So you have a choice. You can sit in front of your computer and panic about paying the bills next month... hiding behind yet another eBook on SEO, PPC or whatever...

Or you can start building a list, *connecting with people* and getting jobs.

It really is that simple to land clients. (And it's free).