

How Do I Get Me Some Clients?

Yes, we know. You like being an independent professional. You miss your old boss and teeny, tiny cubicle not one bit. But still you wonder how the IP world really works. Your letters ask: "Am I doing this right?" Hold this thought . . .

Dan Pink answers that question in his new book, *Free Agent Nation*. Pink traveled around the United States Charles Kurault—style, talking and listening to IPs. You'll like what he has to say. In her review of the book, writer Nan Stone reflects on Pink's call to arms for what he considers a revolution in the making. Goodbye, Organization Man; hello, self-made man.

Of course, bottom line, *doing this right* means having work. Many of you want to know — and the sooner the better — how to find more clients. If your Rolodex is slightly understocked, we've got you covered.

Where Are They, Anyway?

Successful and battle-scarred IPs alike often wake up in the middle of the night in a panic, worrying how they're going to drum up new business. And for good reason: It's hard. And while you're thinking about how to get clients, your next mortgage payment comes due. So what's the best way to market yourself? I'm sure you remember all the dot-coms that have been screeching at you to find clients online. You know the hype: All the rules have changed, and now things are different. Oops. That was last year. Now it's *bad Internet, bad dot-coms*. Does this mean you're once again stuck glad-handing your way through IP life, shaking sweaty palms at conferences? No. At least not entirely. Our marketing columnists, Nancy Austin and Linda Formichelli, can help you network more effectively.

In "Hired thru the Grapevine," Austin describes how crucial it is for soloists to master the fine art of getting referrals through word-of-mouth marketing. It's low tech and certainly better than cold calling; and as a long-term, sustainable way to get clients, it's hard to beat. After you've read up on the many merits of old-fashioned schmoozing, check out "Will Search for

Work," Formichelli's good long look at online project boards and their promise of easy access to lots of clients. So, which will it be, hobnobbing with real live prospects, or clicking your way to IP success in solitary confinement?

Finders-Keepers

Okay, you've got clients. How do you keep them? Check out Peter Economy's Doing Work column, "Gimme an A: Getting Clients to Grade Your Work." Seems obvious that you'd ask your clients the simple question "How'd I do?" Yet quite a few IPs bungle this one in a big way. When it comes to IP bloopers, not asking for feedback is right up there with not keeping clients informed of

your progress. If you don't ask for feedback, chances are you're not communicating well either. If so, you're headed for trouble. Read our probably-not-as-fictitious-as-we'd-like case study by Regina Maruca about a communications problem that left consultant and client at odds. If you see yourself in this story, lesson learned.

And what if things seem to be moving along okay and then your client pool inexplicably dries up? In "Too Many

Hats," guest columnist Kevin Hyde, a self-confessed jack-of-all-trades, shares an important lesson from his IP education: how *not* to market services to clients. Hyde learned the hard way what happens when clients think you're a generalist, a "dabbler." His story is a poignant reminder for all IPs that how you present yourself is critical. In a word: focus.

As a group, IPs share certain needs: Getting work, doing work, and managing clients. None of that is easy. That's why you should chill out a bit and read our profiles of successful soloists who have found niches of their own. Last issue, we focused on the movie industry (full of IPs, by the way). This time around, we introduce you to three independent professionals who earn their keep in even more exotic surroundings. Not many of us get to spend our days in Africa on photo-safari. But heck, we all can dream, right?

