

SOS editorial marketing strategy

This SOS marketing strategy is designed for those editorial freelancers who want to make changes to their business right now and achieve quick-fix results.

- Perhaps you've lost your only client and have zero work coming in.
- Perhaps you still have that client but the work is making you feel underpaid, undervalued, underwhelmed or just plain under the weather.

It by no means constitutes a comprehensive marketing plan but it will help you take immediate and positive action to expand your client base and acquire alternative editorial revenue streams in the short term.

Good luck!

Louise



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1. Beyond involvement – be committed

The difference between involvement and commitment is like ham and eggs. The chicken is involved; the pig is committed.

– Martina Navratilova

The SOS marketing strategy requires commitment to action.

If you're simply waiting for a solution to present itself, you're merely involved.

- If you're client-reliant, commit to dedicating several hours a week to your new marketing strategy.
- If you've lost your only client, and you now have an empty schedule, fill it – all of it – with business promotion. Use your now-free time to build the tools for change.
- The focus is on taking positive action to find new clients rather than dwelling on what a bum deal you're getting. The former will enable you to effect a better future, while the latter will wedge you in an unsavoury present.



**Be the hog, not
the hen**

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2. Perfect your marketing message – prepare the core ingredients

This is about gathering together all the bits and pieces to help you spice up your marketing message.

Consolidate this information in one place so that you can pick and choose what you need when you start updating your profiles and sending out letters and emails.

- Create or update a portfolio of all your completed projects.
- Create or update a summary of your skills and experience – your qualifications, the type of editing you do (e.g. substantive, line or copyediting, proofreading, indexing etc.), and how long you've been doing it for.
- Create or update your past and present client list – if it's only one client, develop a summary case study that tells a story about the value you brought to this client's business (e.g. the problems you solved and the impact you made).
- Create a list of what your potential clients' problems are and how you can solve them.
- Make a list of your subject specialisms and the media in which you can work.



**Spice up your
message**

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- Ask every client (past or present) to give you a testimonial (if you don't already have one from them). These people are your happy campers – praise from them will instil trust in others.

You might feel nervous about asking for testimonials. Don't worry – we've all been there. Do it anyway. Your client won't see your trembling hand and blushes as you hit the Send button.

Publishers and businesses are used to being asked for testimonials so there's no reason to hold back. Indie authors, students and academics are intelligent people who understand the value of an endorsement and, if they're happy with your work, will likely leap at the opportunity to provide one.

Keep it simple, something on the lines of 'Dear Ms Poppins, I hope you are well. I really enjoyed copyediting your article 'Feed the Birds' for the *Journal of Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious* in May 2014. I'm currently updating the list of client testimonials on my website. Would you be kind enough to provide me with a few words of endorsement? I'd love to include your testimonial in the list. With very best wishes, Burt.'

The worst thing Ms Poppins can do is say no, but there's a very, very high chance she'll say yes – trust me!



Celebrate your happy campers

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- Write a short headline that summarizes your business – a mission statement that reflects your brand values and tells your customers why you're a good fit for them. Think about William Blake's 'world in a grain of sand' concept. Then condense the big picture of your business into a few words – the macro to the micro, if you like. For help with brand values, read *The Hippo Campus* by Andrew and Pete. Here are just a few examples:

The fiction proofreader and copyeditor

Edit with elegance. Honour the voice. Respect the journey
– Louise Harnby

Expert editing for publishers, businesses and independent authors
– Liz Jones

Wordsmiths for science, medicine and engineering
– Stan J. Backs

Intelligent editing for writers of mysteries and thrillers
– Cally Worden

Knowledge transfer & editing technical copy
– Adrienne Montgomerie

Write with meaning. Edit with purpose
Book editing for authors & training for fiction editors
– Sophie Playle



**Your world in a
grain of sand**

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3. Get your tools in order

Make a list of all the professional platforms and tools you can use to access or engage with colleagues and potential clients. These should include:

- Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter
- your business website (your shopfront)
- your CV/résumé
- template cover letter/email
- editorial freelancing directories
- local/regional business directories
- national editorial society forums and directories
- local/regional business and editorial meetups

If you don't have online profiles, create them. If you aren't attending the meetups, find out where and when they take place and ask the host if you can attend. If you don't have a website, build one using, for example, customizable Weebly (probably the easiest for beginners) or WordPress templates.



**Check your SOS
toolbox**

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4. Revise and shine!

Use the information from (2) to revise your marketing materials and online profiles in (3) so that they're bang up to date and polished to a shine that would make a sergeant major happy!

Include the following:

- who you are, what you do and how you can be contacted
- a clear statement that you're an experienced editorial professional who's ready to hit the ground running
- how your work fits with the client's business – that is, how you can solve their problems
- relevant qualifications and training
- the experience you have (core content from your portfolio) and those you've helped (clients; include a testimonial)
- that you're happy to take an editorial test at the client's earliest convenience (in the case of emails or letters)



**Prepare for the
parade**

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5. Client focus – target what you know

In an emergency, focus on those who match your existing client base – you've already proven you can acquire work in this field so you're more likely to hit the spot by targeting what you already know.

Publishers and packagers are used to working with editorial freelancers; they're easy to locate, too. Advertising and marketing agencies often hire proofreaders and editors so are also a sensible target.

If your recent or current client is a business or charity, you have the advantage of knowing what this type of client wants and how it works.

- Make a list of all the relevant clients in your country who are working with content in your specialist field(s). (Yes, country! It's an emergency strategy and you need to max out your opportunities.)
- If the list is smaller than you'd hoped, go international; geography is often not a bar to editorial work. If your list is enormous, go regional; you can use your locality as a unique selling point (USP).
- Determine the names of the people in charge of hiring editorial freelancers. Then contact all of them.
- Customize the template letter and CV as required using the relevant information from (2). It may take a while if there are a lot. The more there are, though, the better your chance of ending up on a



**Hit the client-
match bullseye**

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freelance list. I sent out 70 letters to publishers in one hit when I started marketing myself back in 2006.

- Offer to visit. Take a leaf out of STM editor Jane Ward's book:

I acquired my new clients by writing a letter saying, 'I happen to be in X for two weeks next month and would love to pop in and see you at your convenience. I realise that you will be busy but if you could spare ten minutes to see me I would appreciate it.' To those who said yes, I then travelled to wherever it was!

Out of ten letters I wrote, two did not reply; two said they did not need anyone; two said they would send me a test when they next trawled for freelancers; and four invited me to visit. Of those, three offered me work after the visit and one has given me constant work, filling 50% of my diary for 20 years.

A Mini Cooper isn't obligatory – the train will do just as well (though I lurve a Mini Cooper – used to have one, in fact. Then I had a family and bought a sensible Ford Focus instead. Sniff!).



~~**Buy a cute car**~~
Be ready to travel

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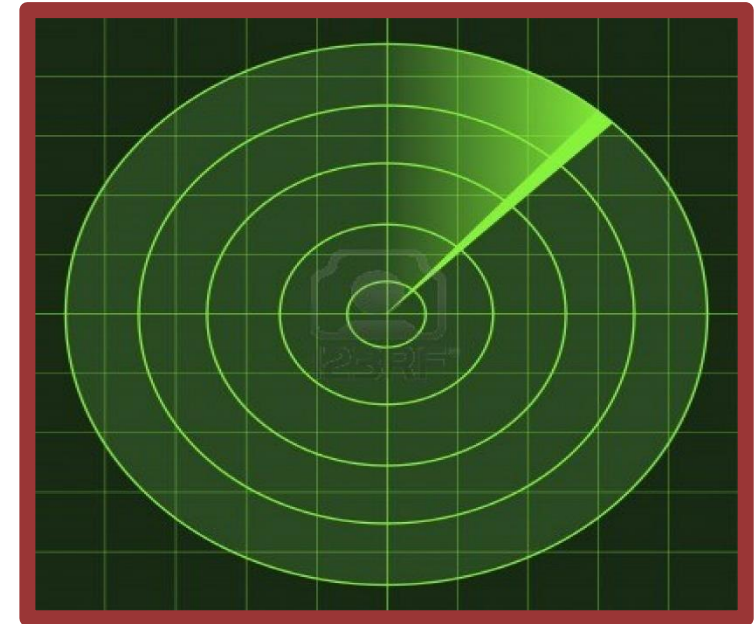
6. Say hello to those you know

You've already asked your existing and previous clients for testimonials. Don't forget to let them know you'd love to work with them again!

Sometimes we just fall off clients' radars. It's not about having done unsatisfactory work but just that other stuff got in the way.

If the client has a hundred and one freelancers on the books, you might have become lost in the noise. Or perhaps you turned down work during busier times and became less favoured because you didn't have the preferred availability at the time.

A quick prompt may be all that's needed to reignite the business relationship, especially when it includes super-marvellous selling points that remind the client of why you're such a good fit for them.



**Get back on
the radar**

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7. More resources

If you found this SOS strategy useful and fancy developing your marketing further (and outside of crisis mode!), I have four resources that will take you deeper into editorial business promotion.

- *Marketing Your Editing & Proofreading Business: Being interesting & discoverable* (my foundational business-promotion guide)
- *Omnibus: Editorial Business Planning & Marketing Plus* (includes Marketing Your Editing & Proofreading Business and Business Planning for Editorial Freelancers, plus additional content on marketing and business planning)
- *Content Marketing Primer for Editors & Proofreaders: How to add value to your editorial business* (an introductory guide to creating valuable content that will make you more interesting and discoverable).
- Finally, check out the FREE [Marketing Tips](#) archive on The Proofreader's Parlour.



Delving into deeper but calmer waters!

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