

What to Name Your Freelance Business

by copywriter and marketing coach Chris Marlow

New freelancers are often confused whether they should create a name for their business, or simply use their own name.

The answer is simple: if you want to become known as an expert at something, then use your own name. However, if you plan to grow a business that has employees, or that you'd like to sell down the line, then it's best to create a business name.

If you want to be known as an expert copywriter, for instance, then it pays to "brand" yourself by getting your name known in certain circles. Think of the famous copywriters you know of...people like John Carlton, Dan Kennedy, and Gary Halbert. You know them by their name.

In fact, virtually every notable copywriter is known by his or her name. I have a list of 27 well-known copywriters and every one was recalled by name, although many undoubtedly have brick-and-mortar or Internet businesses in the background.

Master marketer Jay Abraham is one. Having written copy for Jay (whom I doubt writes a lot of copy these days), I can report that he has a beautiful office in Palos Verdes, California from which he conducts his product-oriented marketing campaigns.

If you do decide to create a company name, be sure to look to the future. Many ad agencies use founder names in their company name, as did my former employer, Rosen/Brown Direct.

After some number of years Bill Brown retired, making that portion of the company name without lasting value or relevance. Sometime later, Richard Rosen, the CEO, changed the agency's name to AlloyRed at great risk to lost branding. I have never asked, but I suspect that the new name will help when it's time to sell the business.

One thing is certain, however, and that is that many who knew the Rosen/Brown name will not recognize AlloyRed as one and the same. So it pays to choose your name wisely, and to look ahead. My personal belief is that you should brand your name if you're a freelancer, and

create a separate company in the background if and when you decide to sell something other than your freelance services.

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