



Communications Digest

Because Good Copywriting Should Grow on Trees!

Welcome Mid-April!

With spring now finally here (and we hope no more snow), I'm pleased to send you another issue of "Communications Digest."

In last month's issue, I visited Dr. Jenn Bennett on how "mindfulness is more than just a fad" and psychologist Dr. Joshua Gowin, on how meditation can improve our brain functioning. And in "Word Nerd's Corner," I cited "word doctor" Bryan Garner on the case of "no holds barred."

Thank you to those of you who responded to those articles.

Since you, faithful readers, have much to read these days, and less time in which to do it; and since my schedule is overflowing, I've reformatted "Communications Digest" to include only one major article (not two), in addition to "Word Nerd's Corner." This revision will help me to focus better and will make your reading faster and easier.

In this month's issue, I discuss Amy Ballon's and Danielle Botterell's article, "How to say yes to new business" (from You.inc) and I share Bryan Garner's blog posting on the case of "nonprofit" versus "not-for-profit."

Enjoy the beauty of spring in Saskatchewan! Since we have such a short growing season, I hope you are planning your gardens, whether they be full-fledged gardens, small flower beds or container pots!

Sincerely,
Elizabeth
Principal
Elizabeth Shih Communications

IN THIS ISSUE:

→ **ARTICLE 1: How to say "yes" to new business**

→ **WORD NERD'S CORNER:**

Wordsmithing with Bryan Garner: The case of "nonprofit" vs. "not-for-profit"

→ **SHOP NEWS**

→ **ABOUT US**

Article One: How to say 'yes' to new business (with Ballon and Botterell)

Toronto-based entrepreneurial consultants, Amy Ballon and Danielle Botterell, penned a recent article in "You.inc" on thinking through how service-based entrepreneurs should accept new clients.

They refer to entrepreneurs "who are in the habit of turning away work when they feel their plate is too full" as "Turning Away Business for Dummies." The strategy, they say, is simply "dumb." Most entrepreneurs "are looking for more work, not less," so declining work is "a sure-fire way to make sure you never grow."

I was glad to see that Ballon and Botterell acknowledged that sometimes turning down a project is an act of self-preservation, however, if it is outside your area of expertise and interest; if you can't work within the constraints of the job (low fees, too tight deadlines, etc.); or if the client is not someone you wish to work with.

For these cases, I have developed a referral list with three or four other writers and designers in my community, for the good of clients and their projects. This arrangement also assists fellow service providers who have shared with me, in the past, and whose work I respect. The referrals don't always pan out, but I do try to connect others, just the same.

Ballon and Botterell are in fact warning against turning away work only if you feel "overloaded," don't have adequate staff or are just "intimidated" by the work. For these cases, they suggest these tips for taking on new business:

(1) "Staff Up": If you don't have enough people to meet the flow of work, hire more staff: "If you can't find the time to train new staff, then odd are good you're not interested in growth." If you're worried about funding, then seek part-time staff or contractors.

2) "Get Your House in Order": Create the processes and enlist the resources in your business to scale up, which is "the only way to grow a service-based business." So investigate that business loan and outsource the bookkeeping, if those issues are holding you back.

(3) "Get Over Yourself": The writers distinguish between "taking on work outside of your expertise" and a more healthy "stretching yourself to learn new skills." The latter they recommend as an

opportunity for growth. And while it will involve a learning curve for "which you may not be compensated," that work may yield new expertise that "you can turn around and sell in the future."

I particularly try to stay open to working on projects with a learning curve, recognizing that sometimes that the distinction Ballou and Botterell make between work beyond my expertise and that which is a healthy stretch for my mind can be hard to make: some healthy risk-taking is often involved. A quality client should be open to taking a small risk on their part, too, to see you complete that demanding project.

An example would be providing technical writing on some science-based topic, for an audience of lay persons and not necessarily (or not only) for specialists. Such projects can provide a healthy stretching of the mind and are often well-paying.

What do you think of Ballou and Botterell's tips for how to "say yes to new business?" Do you find their tips "hit home" for you? Please share on my "contact" page. I'd be delighted to hear back from you!

WORD NERD'S CORNER: The case of "nonprofit" vs. "not-for-profit"



In his March 20th blog posting, American etymologist Bryan Garner addressed the difference between the terms "nonprofit" and "not-for-profit."

Garner indicates that "nonprofit" is more common in (UK) English usage, but that "not-for-profit" is "increasingly used in American English for greater accuracy." And the latter usage is one that also applies to Canadian English.

Garner writes that "not-for-profit" is increasingly used in North America for "greater accuracy." That is, it indicates that the purpose of the organization is not private gain, although the organization may well profit.

He warns against using the phrase "nonprofit corporation," because it "misleadingly suggests that the corporation makes no profits, but such a corporation actually does earn profits and then applies them to charitable purposes." And he writes that the hyphenated form of "non-profit" is a colloquialism that "sometimes appears in corporate literature and in unedited copy," and tends to cause confusion (and so should be avoided).

The not-for-profit sector is large and does crucial work in our business communities. The term is worth getting "right." For that reason, Garner's distinctions here strike me as timely and relevant.

Do you find Garner's distinctions helpful? Please feel welcome to share your word bugbears on the "contact" page of my website (www.elizabethshih.com). I'd be delighted to hear from you!

SHOP NEWS

Thank you this month also to Deanna Litz, who facilitates the new "GroYourBiz" group which I recently joined. We will discuss business strategy and goals for development in the year ahead.

Another nod of appreciation to watercolour painter Bob Pitzel, who painted a beautiful retirement gift for Kent Smith-Windsor, retiring Executive Director of the Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce, on behalf of the Raj Manek Mentorship Program.

To view some of Bob's extraordinary paintings, please visit www.bpitzel.com.

Thank you also (in no particular order) to fellow women of the Freelancers' Roundtable Group, convened by Ashleigh Mattern. It includes Ashleigh, Katherine Duncombe, Julie Barnes, Leanne Bellamy and Amy Rederburg. I'm often impressed by the quality of these colleagues' work and the mutual support is always welcome.



ABOUT US

Since 2011, Elizabeth Shih Communications has chronicled the stories of small- and medium-sized businesses (and selected not-for-profit organizations) on the Prairies and across Canada.

Do you need help telling your entrepreneurial stories?

Please contact me through my website, via the CASL-compliant email form, on the right-hand side of each page (www.elizabethshih.com).

I specialize in entrepreneurial storytelling--chronicling how small- and medium-sized businesses succeed and at the same time give back to the community.

I tell such stories primarily through articles, case studies and newsletters. But I also adapt stories to write press releases, blog postings, brochures, website copy, annual reports and other documents.

****New to my portfolio****: I now edit professional resumes and prepare award applications (e.g. SABEX, ABEX and more) for my clients.

Please visit my website for more information and email me for a free consultation!

Please visit my website for more information (www.elizabethshih.com)