

How to survive and thrive in Facebook groups, even when the rules constantly change

By Mandy Marksteiner

That was awkward...

A few weeks ago I interviewed Edward Reay, a 17 year old copywriter who gets 100% of his work off of Facebook. Specifically, he did it by writing personal, slice of life, posts in the Cult of Copy Job Board, a Facebook group where people can hire copywriters and copywriters can get work.

I thought, "If it works for Edward it can work for me too." So I started writing slice of life posts and posting them in the Cult of Copy Job Board.

No sooner had I jumped on the bandwagon, the rules changed. Colin Theriot, the administrator of The Cult of Copy changed the rules. Here is what he wrote in his post:

[New Rule for Hire-Me Posts : Stop Blogging In Here]

I'm tired of posts that are long unrelated stories and "day in the life" anecdotes that have a one line ending about hiring you to write stuff.

No more of that.

...

No one who would hire you here wants to read that, and if they do, it should be on your portfolio.

If you want to offer your services for hire, detail what they are and tell people why you're good at it, and how to contact you. Simple. Sure, be clever and creative.

Don't tell me about a picnic or a wedding or a rat infestation or whatever, and act like hiring you is an afterthought at the very end. This place is for posting ads, not writing samples.

Maybe that works for selling stuff on your email list or whatever, but this isn't that. We aren't there.

I'm just deleting that kind of thing from now on, ok?

And listen, commenters. Remember that the only comments allowed are comments about hiring or interest in the job offer. Comments that just ruminate on the content of the post, even if positive, might get you banned.

Thank you.

When I first read that post I was a tad embarrassed, because I had just written the “rat infestation” post... I couldn’t help but worry. Did I just make an idiot of myself online? How do you find clients online when the rules are always changing?

It’s a jungle out there, and understanding the rules of the Facebook Groups that you join is an important survival skill.

The rules in Facebook groups can change at any moment; if you don’t know them you can get kicked out, or have your post deleted.

When you join a group, you need to find out what the group is about, familiarize yourself with the rules, decide if the group is actually going to help you, and then participate. In my defense, I hadn’t technically broken the rule - *it hadn’t been made yet.*

And when I gave it some thought, the new rule made sense. Other people agreed.

Jay Makoni, an email copywriter from Zimbabwe, made an excellent point: the potential clients in that group are looking for copywriters and expect to be pitched. In the book *Great Leads*, Michael Masterson and John Forde say that story leads work best with prospects that are unaware of your product and services. But since these prospects are aware and ready to buy, it doesn’t make sense to use a story lead. You would use an offer lead.

Colin Theriot said the reason that he made that rule was entirely technical. He said, “The group needs to be useful for people who want to spend money hiring copywriters. The story posts tend to get comments, which makes those posts bump to the top. And when that happens the posts from people who are hiring go down. Anyone who’s trying to find work or hire someone will immediately see several of these posts and get discouraged and leave.”

Another problem was that there is already a rule in the group that says that all comments need to be about whether you want to take a job or hire people. The story posts were leading people to break the comment rule, leaving comments about the stories rather than the jobs.

“I didn’t spend a lot of time explaining my reasoning,” said Theriot. “I just laid down the law. If people don’t listen I’ll delete their posts.”

Why did Colin start the Cult of Copy Job Board?

Theriot didn't originally set out to run a job board. He was trying to run his main group, The Cult of Copy, which is supposed to be a discussion group where people gather and where he sells his own courses and consulting services to the 27,162 members.

But too many people were posting jobs in there, and it was detracting from the main purpose of the group.

So he created The Cult of Copy Job Board as a spin-off dedicated to the job postings.

There are better ways to find work online.

It's true. The members of the Cult of Copy Job Board have landed a lot of work. (Edward Reay brought in over \$2,000 his first month. I got a few monthly retainer clients who may help me double my yearly income.)

Still, Theriot doesn't advise writers to rely solely on job boards to get work.

You see, when you respond to a job posting dozens of other copywriters doing the same thing, often offering lower prices. As a freelancer, this puts you in a disadvantageous position.

Theriot described how he used to get freelance copywriting work this way: "Rather than look for job postings, I found companies that I wanted to work for."

Once he identified a company that looked good, he would study the company and look for opportunities for them to make more money.

He would find holes in their existing marketing. "I'd find the job that they didn't know they had. I'd call them and say, 'This is my fee and this is how much I think you could make.' It's an easy sell and nobody outright told me no."

This approach helped him quickly build a career making six-figures as a writer. And they weren't comparing him to a dozen competitors, like they would in a Job Board situation.

A better way still - make passive income as a writer.

If you spend a lot of time on an online job board like The Cult of Copy Job Board or Upwork, you quickly realize that there is a lot of competition in the copywriting world. But that can be a good thing for you. Theriot said, "Your competitors can easily be your customers, especially if they're not as successful as you."

If you are successful at what you do, you can turn your specific knowledge into a course that you can sell for passive income.

“You don’t have to be the guru at the top of the mountain to start teaching other people how to be successful,” said Theriot. “Instead, you just need to be two feet ahead of them. Turn around and tell them how you got to the next step.”

If you start teaching others right away, it won’t take long for you to build up an audience. If your audience follows your advice you will have some awesome testimonials from successful writers.

Here is how Theriot approaches his info products

First, he accomplishes something or learns something new that will benefit his audience.

Now, normally with information products, people create the entire info course ahead of time, and write all the materials for the launch ahead of time.

But since Theriot mainly creates info products that will help in-the-trenches people who are learning as they go, he has a more streamlined approach to creating his courses.

He starts everything by having a webinar on the topic. He will let his audience know before he creates the webinar that they can pay \$100 to attend live. They will get the recording for free. And after the webinar has been recorded, he will sell the course for \$200.

That means that people save money when they make a quick decision and he gets paid before his course even existed. This simple process made it possible for him to completely replace his six-figure copywriting income. He no longer works with clients, but focuses on creating courses and selling them to the people that are in his groups.

If you’re looking for work on Facebook, it’s there for the taking as long as you can stand out from the crowd while respecting the rules. But keep in mind that there are better ways to find clients, like observing what companies are doing and finding ways that you can help them make more money. And when you learn something that can help other people succeed, you can turn your competitors into customers by creating a course and selling it.

