

Seven Habits of Effective Freelancers

Notes from the 2006 GAMA Trade Show

seminar led by
Matt Forbeck
608-289-8502
matt@forbeck.com
www.forbeck.com

© 2006 by Matt Forbeck

With thanks to Aaron Rosenberg and other participants
for handling the heavy lifting in previous years.

1. Be Proactive

Proactive freelancers seek out work. They've done their homework about the industry. They're familiar with the games produced by the publishers they want to work with. They attend conventions and help out if they can.

2. Begin with the End in Mind

Good freelancers ask questions about things like payment, deadlines, and the details of a contract. If they can't be bothered to read the contract—if they don't care about what's in it for them—they might not be too concerned about what their obligations are either.

3. Put First Things First

Good freelancers always establish what's expected from them for the project before they begin. They ask about style guidelines, they request references, and—most importantly—they submit an outline, assuming one isn't already provided.

4. Think Win-Win

Good freelancers work well with others. They take direction from their editors, and they communicate regularly. They try to impress on every project because they want to establish a long-term relationship with their publishers. Often they will work with several publishers at once because their interests are varied and they want to become established in more than a single niche.

5. Seek First to Understand and Then to Be Understood

Good freelancers ask questions when they don't understand something. They provide thoughtful answers when asked. They respond to questions quickly and never dodge deadlines.

6. Synergize

Good freelancers come up with ideas of their own to pitch to publishers. When a publisher doesn't need any new ideas, good freelancers put as much energy into improving the ideas of other peoples as they do their own. Suggestions from others do not threaten them, as their primary concern is to create a great product.

7. Sharpen the Saw

Good freelancers push themselves to do something new. They keep up to date with the advancements in the industry, or at least their chosen part of it. They always have their eyes on the horizon, looking for the next project.

Magazines

Comics & Games Retailer
Dragon
Dungeon
Games Quarterly Catalog and Magazine
Game Trade Magazine
InQuest Gamer
Scrye

Online Resources

BoardGameGeek.com
BoardGameNews.com
ENWorld.org
GenCon.com
GamingReport.com
ICv2.com
OgreCave.com
OriginsGames.com
PodcastEntertainmentNetwork.com/gaming/
RPG.net