



Why Freelance Writing Should be a Total Cash Grab

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Have you heard of the game Codenames? Here's the description from the BoardGameGeek website:

Two teams compete to see who can make contact with all of their agents first. Spymasters give one-word clues that can point to multiple words on the board. Their teammates try to guess words of the right color while avoiding those that belong to the opposing team. And everyone wants to avoid the assassin.

Codenames was the 2016 Spiel des Jahres winner, which, if you don't know, is a pretty big deal.

My husband is the news editor for BoardGameGeek, meaning he shares news on games hitting the market. Last week he reported that the makers of Codenames have signed a license with another publisher to come out with Codenames Disney Family Edition and Codenames Marvel Edition.

On Twitter, the news received this response from one boardgamer: "Cash grab."

My immediate thought was, "Is that supposed to be an insult? **Oh no, a business wants to earn more money creating products people will love!** Horrors!"

WHAT'S A CASH GRAB?

On Encyclopedia.com, *cash grab* is defined as "an undignified or unprincipled acquisition of a large sum of money with little effort."

I guess people who see the new Codenames games as a cash grab imagine the company execs sitting around a long mahogany table in a glass-walled conference room, flashing designer watches and smoking cigars. One of them stands up and says, "Hey I know! Let's make a Marvel-themed version of Codenames. It will be exactly the same as the original game, but with Marvel characters. It's stupid, but people love that crap."

And then the rest of the execs set down their cognacs and say, "Anderson, that's brilliant! Those suckers will buy anything. Let's crank that out so we can add more money to the piles we sleep on every night, surrounded by beautiful ladies."

And then they all go, "Bwa ha ha ha ha!"

Does that really happen outside of children's movies?

SPIN IT!

You know, boardgame publishers are often a lot like writers. Like the company that publishes Codenames, Czech Games Edition—this is what their About Us page says.

We are a group of people who love board games. Back in 2006, we worked together on the first edition of Through the Ages, and we decided that this is the work we want to do for a living. One year later, Czech Games Edition was founded and published its first two games—Galaxy Trucker from Vlaada Chvátil and League of Six by Vladimír Suchý.

Doesn't that sound like a lot of writers' About Me pages? "I've loved writing ever since I was old enough to hold a pen, and decided this is the work I wanted to do for a living."

In order to make that living, we need to actually produce things other people want. **And if we're smart, we reuse our ideas, research, and writing to produce as much of it as possible.** For example:

- If you run a blog people love, you might compile some of the posts into [a book](#).
- If you write a white paper for a technology company and it helps them make more sales, you turn around and sell them case studies.

- If you self-publish a sci-fi novel that takes off, you'd darn well better turn it into a trilogy.
- If you write a marketing column for a restaurant trade magazine and get tons of positive reader mail, you start offering marketing consulting to the restaurant industry.
- If you're a writing coach and have had success helping other writers kick-start their careers, you offer [classes](#).

This isn't a cash grab. It's called "Staying in business." If you do it right, it's called "Doing really well in your business."

The attitude that providing products people love is a bad thing is one that keeps us writers from earning a living. We don't want to look like we're only in it for the money, so we neglect to spin off successful products into more products, and we carefully engineer our identities so as not to look like greedy bastards who create new products for—ugh—cash.

Different clients want different things. There's no shame in recognizing that and providing what they want. Some readers like blogs, some prefer to read books. Some people get their marketing advice from a trade magazine column, but some would rather have a one-on-one with

a business coach. Some people are convinced to purchase by white papers, some by case studies. It would be ridiculous to *not* offer solutions for all of these people, all to avoid looking like it's a cash grab.

BUT WHAT IF SOMEONE CALLS ME OUT?

Many writers quake in fear that someone might point out they're sullyng the great profession of writing by spinning off multiple products to suit multiple types of client.

Let me tell you something. (Warning: Possible slight exaggeration ahead.) That who guy whined that you're selling out by creating products people love so you can earn more money? He then went to his job, where he wouldn't dream of earning one cent less than he possibly can—and where he goes to his boss annually to ask for a raise simply because he made it through another 12 months without keeling over. This guy receives and cashes a weekly paycheck, even though he knows his most valuable contribution to his employer has been to surf Facebook and not create too much trouble.

You, on the other hand—you only get paid when you add value to people's lives. **If you're not creating, or if you're snubbing opportunities to earn more, then you're not doing your job.**

Do your job. Make more stuff. If you wrote a popular book on housecleaning and think you'd sell more by creating a *Walking Dead*-themed housekeeping book, it's your freaking *duty* to create it. This is not a cash grab, it's smart business.

Now put down your cognac, stub out that cigar, and get to work.

Your Freelance Writing Success Coach,

Linda Formichelli

P.S. Ready to start getting more freelance writing jobs? Check out the [Volume Marketing Challenge for Freelance Writers](#), which goes on sale at a super-low price on March 3, 2017! You'll learn how to market in volume to generate more freelance writing jobs and earn better—and benefit from a different free teaching resource every week, contributed by Copyblogger and other top experts. The price goes up by 50% on March 8, so don't wait!