

Like Minds 2011, Exeter Devon, October 19th, 20th, 21st.

Creative Business Development

How to get clients to value what you do before you do it

A programme of three linked immersive sessions divided into easily digestible daily instalments – with Malcolm Sleath of 12boxes

The programme is divided into three easily digestible daily instalments so that you will be still be able to experience Like Minds keynote speakers and panellists from around the world and attend the lunch time talks taking place in restaurants and cafés across the city.

The style of the programme will be highly interactive in the spirit of a Like Minds immersive. There will be many opportunities to share your experiences with others and learn from their experiences too. You will work on real issues that you can begin to apply immediately you leave Like Minds 2011 – and perhaps even during it!

This programme is included free in the price of the conference registration. Places are strictly limited. You have to register for all three immersives.

Who is it for?

Business owners, managers and freelancers engaged in selling and delivering creative services who want to improve the value and profitability of the relationships they have with clients.

It is for people involved in providing any type of creative service, including: branding, digital, media, illustration, writing, PR and marketing.

What is it about?

Common business development issues for creative industries include: doing too much work before starting to charge the client; lowering the value of work by giving away solutions to client problems in advance; and undervaluing one's personal contribution when quoting for a job.

This programme will enable you to avoid these problems and develop more profitable business by guiding clients to understand the true value of your professional service or creative input. You will learn a conversational approach that is a million miles away from an off-putting 'sales pitch'.

What will I get out of it?

You will leave with a totally new perspective and skills enabling you to acquire new clients who: want to work with you; value your work properly; and are prepared to pay rewarding fees. You will discover how to set up and maintain a healthy and mutually profitable client relationship.

You will find out how to create the levels of client satisfaction that lead to repeat business, referrals, recommendations, and enhanced reputation.

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Programme overview

Immersive One: **Fitting the Jigsaw together**

- How do you feel about business development? Attitudes to 'selling' and business development are often shaped by experiences of being sold to badly. You will learn how a conversation that helps people to buy feels totally different to a sales pitch for everyone involved.
- The problem of 'selling yourself'. Because people don't want to think of themselves as a commodity, they can find it difficult to convey the value of their personal contribution to a creative relationship. Discover how to separate out your private multi-faceted self from the value you are capable of delivering. Learn to identify what the client needs that matches what you can offer.
- What is the client really buying? Most professionals already know a great deal about existing and potential clients and their needs, but they only use a fraction of this information and experience effectively. You will learn how to think through and organise what you know (or suspect) is happening in your client's world and construct a picture that makes sense. It's a little like fitting a jigsaw together.

Immersive Two: **Planning your part in the conversation**

- The picture of the client's situation that you have created is limited by what you know. It might be biased towards your comfort zone and even contain a certain amount of wishful thinking. Discover how to use your initial thoughts as a starting point for testing your ideas.
- How you begin a conversation depends on where the client is in their buying process. This session will enable you to identify where that is and decide how to test your assumptions in a way that clients find engaging and attractive.
- In many situations you will need to build confidence and trust by demonstrating that you understand what clients want. But your professional knowledge and experience may lead you to have different ideas about what they really need. In this session you will learn how to show clients you understand what they want, communicate what they need in a way they are likely to accept, and get them to want and truly value what they need.

Continued ...

*Immersive Three: **Making it happen** - putting your plan into action*

Much of the stress that people experience when they are influencing, persuading, or selling comes from the idea that the conversation is going to result in either a 'yes' or a 'no': success or failure.

- The first effect is that we unconsciously try to reduce the uncertainty by pushing the client towards a conclusion – even if it is a negative one. In this session you will experience how to focus on where the client is in the buying process, so you can stay in control of where you are going. You will learn where and how to slow down so you can take more time over some parts of the conversation so that other parts, such as achieving 'buy-in' are smoother and often faster.
- The second effect is that every unexpected piece of information represents a threat to you because it appears to take your conversation off track. The client does not feel they have been listened to and experiences the typical 'sales' behaviour that everyone hates. In this session you will discover how to stay open to new information so that you can quickly adapt to the unexpected and update any preconceived ideas you may have had. Because the prospect of exploring the unknown is not so daunting, you will stay open to the opportunities that go with discovering a richer picture.
- The third effect is that, while most people like talking with other people, as soon as it the encounter turns into 'business development', they start to feel lonely and isolated and compensate by 'projecting themselves' or just talking too much. In this session you will learn how to stay connected to your client and be comfortable with seeming to do less. You will be more relaxed and the client will respond with greater confidence and trust.

Like Minds

To join the 'Creative Business Development' immersives, register for Like Minds 2011 today at

<http://wearelikeminds.com/events/exeter>

If you need to check with Like Minds for availability of places on 'Creative Business Development' in advance of registering, speak to the team in Exeter on +44 (0) 1392 425 070 or contact via Twitter at @wearelikeminds



For more information and advice about this programme, call the 12boxes team on +44 (0) 7100 1528, email malcolm@12boxes.com or contact via Twitter @Malcolm12boxes.