



Show Notes

Season 2, Episode 1:

Common online portfolio mistakes (and how to avoid making them)

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What's in this episode?

Hosts Rachel Smith from [Rachel's List](#) and journalist and content creator [Lynne Testoni](#) talk about the common mistakes freelancers make on their websites. Here's our checklist – how many of them do you need to fix on your site?

- ☐ **Not being clear about who you are and what you do.** Vague is annoying. It's better to say, 'Hi, I'm Lynne Testoni and I'm a content writer and journalist' than 'I'm passionate about words'.
- ☐ **Not inserting your personality into your copy.** This is what sets you apart from other freelancers. As [Paul Jarvis says](#), 'be the pistachio of your industry, not the vanilla'. He's so right!
- ☐ **A bad design.** If it looks a bit dated or decidedly homemade, hire a designer. If you're online savvy, you could re-do it easily in WIX or Squarespace, or do the bare bones of a Wordpress.org site and hire a developer to finish it off nicely for you.
- ☐ **A confusing navigation menu.** Keep it simple – About, Services, Projects, Contact. If you want to add more menu items, keep them clear; your nav menu isn't the place to be clever!
- ☐ **Dodgy clippings.** Are yours unreadable or really bad scans of magazine stories? It's not a great look.
- ☐ **Tiny fonts.** Lose the 10pt fonts or cursive that's really hard to read (or you'll lose visitors).
- ☐ **Being hard to contact.** You should have your contact details on every page – ideally above the nav menu so you're easy to find.

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- ☐ **Playing music when someone lands on your site.** Just no.
- ☐ **Using the wrong images.** You should choose bold images that suit your theme and don't infringe copyright (see episode 10's [show notes](#) for where to find great free images). Make sure images are optimised for the web so they don't slow your site down. If using images of yourself, don't use selfies; hire a photographer to take a great portrait photo of you. Some options include [Fancy Boy Photography](#), [Teo and Jazz](#) and [Alex Weltlinger](#). Many of these offer low-cost portrait days.
- ☐ **Not checking how the site loads.** You should check it on every browser (Firefox, Safari, Chrome).
- ☐ **Not having any testimonials.** Super important for building trust in your brand and your abilities. Start collecting testimonials from clients and make them prominent on your site. If a client doesn't want to give a testimonial (if, say, you were hired as a ghostwriter), see if you can use their company logo instead.
- ☐ **Not having a great contact form.** Use this form for basic lead generation and to weed out tyre-kickers who aren't serious about working with you. Instead of just having fields for 'Name, email, your message' – include extra fields. Perhaps one saying, 'What's your project?' and another: 'What's your budget for this project?' You could also include a pull-down menu asking people where they found you (LinkedIn, FB page, via referral etc) which can be a great insight into where you could post more or advertise your services.

That's it for this episode. Hope you've found these show notes useful.

Cheers,

Rachel and Lynne

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