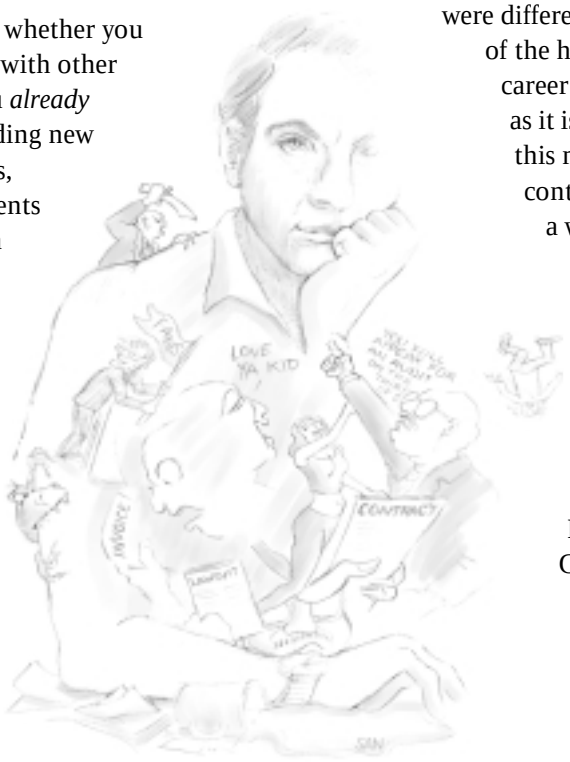
LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

I'M GOING TO MAKE a little admission that may not help my credibility as the editor of a business magazine (if that's what this is). Before I helped launch the *1099* webzine (this magazine's older sister) in early 1999, I'm not sure I had ever read a business magazine at all. I read them now, but I suspect you may not have the time or patience to read most small-business magazines. They're pretty dry, mostly, and they rarely distinguish between entrepreneurs building companies and soloists building their own careers.

This magazine is a little different. *1099* isn't for people who aspire to become bosses, but for people who just want to be their own boss. As for our attitude — well, we figured that if you lusted after dry respectability, you'd be doing time in the corporate world. So we said to hell with dry. And respectable.

By the way, we had a small problem dealing with the many labels commonly used by self-employed professionals in different fields. Management specialists call themselves "consultants," creatives call themselves "freelancers," athletes call themselves "free agents," computer experts call themselves "contractors," and so on. So back when we were first planning the webzine, we coined the term "independent professional," or IP for short, to refer to *all* our boss-free readers. Numerous other Web sites followed our lead, in this as in many other things — which we thought was great.

However, it doesn't really matter whether you choose to share a common label with other IPs. What's important is that you *already* share common challenges — finding new clients and nailing down projects, raising your rates and getting clients to pay you on time, persuading a suspicious broker to sell you health or disability or liability insurance, convincing a landlord to rent to you or a bank to grant you a mortgage, dealing with the IRS. The list goes on and on — and it applies to most IPs regardless of their specialty. *1099* is here for all of you.



BEING SELF-EMPLOYED has always been both rewarding and tough, but it was probably much tougher when I started decades ago. The concept seems less strange to people now; today you're less likely to be asked when you're going to get a "real job," an antagonistic question that was repeatedly thrown in my face. Things have improved somewhat, but society, for the most part, is still set up for the convenience of corporate wage slaves, not IPs like yourself.

In spite of that, your biggest challenges may come not from society but from within yourself. When I started doing gigs as a teenager — building bookshelves for friends, illegally extending the wiring in homeowners' basements — I never thought of myself as being "in business." In fact, it seemed like *avoiding* business: paying the rent while evading the 9-to-5 world. Even later, having graduated to design and illustration and copywriting, I would have laughed if you'd called me a businessman.

Eventually, though, I kind of stopped laughing. Eventually I noticed that guy over there, who worked for himself in the same field that I did but earned more money. He didn't seem smarter or more skilled than I was, and he didn't work longer hours. He just earned more, and suffered less. What did he know that I didn't know?

Well, for one thing, he knew that he was running a *business*. Even if the business was "just" himself.

1099 Magazine didn't exist then. Lots of things were different — in fact, in the entire history of the human race, change (including career change) has never been as rapid as it is at this very moment. We'd like this magazine to both reflect and contribute to that change. We've been a webzine for almost two years now, so this "first issue" in print is both a new thing and a continuation. We hope it will make your life as an independent professional just a little bit better, a little bit easier.

– Lawrence San
Editor in Chief and
Creative Director