

The Complete Guide To Freelancing

By

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Introduction

Not everybody wants to build a business, and there is nothing wrong with that. There are many ways to make money online without having to go through the hassle of creating a full blown business model complete with business plan, budget, projections, product creation and so on. As a matter of fact, some income generation methods are so quick and so easy that they can be done with almost no expense whatsoever.

The purpose of this ebook is to expose you to what I feel is the best quick cash method you're going to find online...one that requires very little setup, if any at all. Yes, there is work involved, but of all the things out there, this one is hands down the fastest and the easiest.

I'm talking about freelancing.

In this book I'm going to explain what freelancing is, how to find work and how to prepare yourself to actually get a freelancing gig. One mistake along the way can prove to be costly to your success.

So let's get into the first money making gig that I ever did before becoming an Internet marketer.

What Is Freelancing?

This is probably the best model that you could possibly want to be able to make some fast cash online. It requires virtually no setup at all. You can do this without a web site. All you need to do is get yourself a payment processor so that you can accept payments online.

Okay, what is freelancing?

The best way to explain freelancing is with an example.

Let's say you have a friend who knows that you can come up with some pretty cool web site designs. You've been doing this for a while but you never thought of doing this for the purpose of making money.

Anyway, your friend emails you one day and asks you if you'd design a web site for him. He says he wants to put up a site for doing comic book sales. He then says the magic words.

"I'll pay you."

Now, think about this. You don't have your own web site advertising your service as a web designer, you've done no advertising, you've done nothing but respond to an email asking for your help.

And the person is willing to pay you for it.

That's really all freelancing is. There are **millions** of people out there who need to have various odds and ends jobs done for them. They're willing to pay for this service. All you have to do is go to where these people are, find out what they want, and offer them your service.

Yes, it's **that** simple.

Okay, the first question is, what are you going to freelance?

This is really the hardest part of the whole process. See, most people who have skills don't realize that they have skills that others want. That's because they don't value what they know. They think that because it's something that they do and do well, and pretty much take for granted, nobody could possibly have a use for it.

This is so wrong it's sad. I used to think the same way. If I could do something, it couldn't be worth very much, that's for sure. I have since come to learn that I have many skills that people will pay for.

Okay, but how do you know what skills you have and then, once you recognize those skills, how do you know where to go in order to offer them? That's what we're going to cover next.

Assessing Your Skills

There is only one way to do this. Sit down with a piece of paper and write down every **skill** that you have. Don't write down your interests. An interest is just something you're interested in. It doesn't necessarily mean that you have a skill in that area.

For example, **pop music** is an interest.

Composing music is a skill.

Here is a list of my personal skills.

- Article Writing
- Salescopy Writing
- Musical Composition
- Ebook Creation
- Simple PHP Coding
- Simple Web Design
- Video Creation

Okay, there is my list. What's next?

The next step is to see if anything **on** your list has any kind of a demand for the service.

How do we do that?

The best way is to go to the Google Keyword tool and see what people are searching for.

Here is the URL:

<https://adwords.google.com/select/KeywordToolExternal>

Okay, so what do we look for? This is where many people have problems. They know what they want, but they don't know how to go searching for it.

This is where you have to put yourself in the shoes of the person who is **looking for the service**.

Let's take my article writing skill. If you know anything about Bum Marketing, you know that many marketers are into this and many of them don't want to write their own articles. Instead, they look for **others** to write the articles for them.

So what do **they** type into the search engines to find these people who write articles for others, assuming that they don't already know?

Well, here are a few things that they might type in.

Article writing services

Services that write articles

Where can I get articles written?

People who write articles for money

Where can I find people who write articles?

And so on.

I went to Google and typed in the first one to see what I'd get.

I came up with about 720 monthly searches for people looking for this keyword phrase. It's not a lot, but it does show at least a few people looking for this service.

So the next thing I did was go to the Google search engine itself and typed in this same phrase.

Doing that, I came up with a few sites that you can now go to in order to offer your services.

Here are a list of a few of them.

[Direct Freelance](#)

When you go there, you will see a link at the top of the page that says "Freelancers".

Directfreelance.com - Freelance marketplace

Directfreelance.com allows to quickly locate **writers, graphic designers** and **programmers**. Freelancers can find jobs and get paid directly from clients posting projects.

New Members

[Hiba Fahour Bazz](#)

[Ina Krasteva](#)

[Lorena Patino](#)

[melissa carlson](#)

If you click on that link, you'll find all the different categories that the site supports. You'll find that article writing is one of those services along with **graphic design, photography, programming, website design**, and a lot more.

The Alexa rank for this site is not great at 145,000 but that also means that you won't have a lot of competition for your service either. A lot of people don't realize that less competition means you can charge higher prices. So don't automatically go looking for the top freelance sites. In many cases, they're just going to prove to be frustrating to win a bid that is worth taking.

To register with this site, just go to this URL:

<https://www.directfreelance.com/register.aspx>

[Content Current](#)

This site is actually quite new and their Alexa Rank is only about 500,000, but they are using PPC advertising which is appearing at the top of this search. So they are aggressively looking for content providers and people looking for content.

Ordering Center

Writing Services

Article Writing

SEO Article Writing

Community Building

Forum Posting

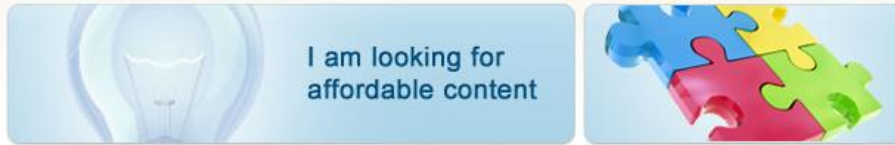
Support

Client Signup

Client Login

Contact us

FAQ



Forum Booster is now **Content Current**. We have a new brand, a new website, and a completely revamped service.

Our Services

Content Writing

Community Building

SEO Article Writing

Forum Posting

365,036 posts and counting...

That's what the site looks like. They specialize in article writing only so it is a very specialized site.

If you want to sign up, here is the URL:

<http://contentcurrent.com/write>

Because article writing services is not a widely searched phrase, finding other freelance sites is going to require we go outside my initial search, which was solely designed to target article writing.

Now, if you want to continue to look for specialties in your skill area, you'd do the same thing I did, except you'd do it for **your** keyword phrase.

However, if you just want to find general freelancing sites then what you'd do is simply type in "freelancing sites."

Ironically, freelancing sites doesn't get a lot of searches. However, these keywords do.

Freelancing	14,800
Freelance work	22,200
Freelance job	12,100

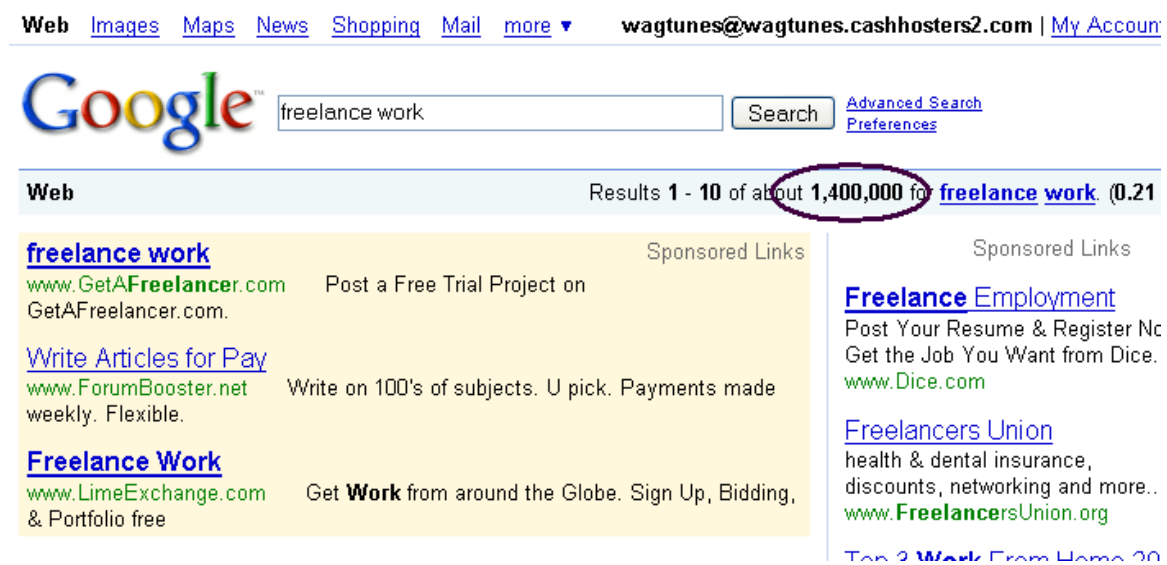
Freelance jobs 165,000
Freelance writer jobs 12,100
Freelance writing jobs 18,100

And I could do on and on. Just type in the original search phrase and you'll find all the alternatives.

Now, if there are these many searches, then there are certainly some bright marketers who have taken advantage of these phrases. All we need to do is go back to the Google search engine and find the sites that are offering freelance services. If the service is geared to the consumer (buying the service) they have to have a provider (the freelancers) and thus, you can find places to sign up at.

See, you can back your way into anything.

Here are some of the sites I came up with.



The screenshot shows a Google search interface. At the top, there are navigation links for Web, Images, Maps, News, Shopping, Mail, and more. The search bar contains the text "freelance work" and a "Search" button. To the right of the search bar are links for "Advanced Search" and "Preferences". Below the search bar, the results are displayed. The first result is a sponsored link for "freelance work" from GetAFreelancer.com, with the text "Post a Free Trial Project on GetAFreelancer.com." The second result is a sponsored link for "Write Articles for Pay" from ForumBooster.net, with the text "Write on 100's of subjects. U pick. Payments made weekly. Flexible." The third result is a sponsored link for "Freelance Work" from LimeExchange.com, with the text "Get Work from around the Globe. Sign Up, Bidding, & Portfolio free". To the right of these results are two more sponsored links: "Freelance Employment" from Dice.com and "Freelancers Union" from FreelancersUnion.org. The number of results is shown as "Results 1 - 10 of about 1,400,000 for freelance work (0.21)".

I typed in freelance work (without quotes to get a wider range) and as you can see, quite a few sites. Over 1 million of them.

Now, look at the first paid ad. It's for GetAFreelancer.com

I went to Alexa and their rank is currently 4,749.

Okay, this is a HUGELY popular site. So, if you want to offer your services as a freelancer, this is one place to go.

[GetAFreelancer](http://www.getafreelancer.com)

Here is what the main page looks like.



See at the top where it says **Sign Up**? Just click on that link.

Here is the URL:

<http://www.getafreelancer.com/users/signup.php>

After you register, you can begin to offer your services.

Anyway, I decided I wanted to stop pussyfooting around so I went back to Google and typed in **Top Freelance Sites**.

I came up with the following results based on a ton of reviews and analysis. You can thank me for all the work I saved you later on. 😊

Guru.com

As if this printing, their Alexa rank is 13,133. According to most of the reviews that I've read, this is the "top" place online. I'm not 100% sure I agree with that but at this level, it's arguable at best.

Here is what the main page looks like.



Find freelancers at the world's largest online service marketplace.

[home](#)
[search](#)
[post a project](#)
[my admin](#)

Employers: Find freelancers, get free quotes, and get your project done.

Search for Freelancers	Post Your Project	Get Free Quotes	Award Work	Pay Freelancer	Use Guru find free quotes w work today
More than 100,000 active freelance profiles.	Only takes minutes to post!	Competitive quotes within hours.	Choose the best quote.	Risk-free with SafePay Escrow.	Fre
<input type="text" value="Keyword(s)"/>	<input type="text" value="Any category"/>				Pay Saf you con
					Get to u

To register, go to this URL:

<http://www.guru.com/emp/company-createnewaccount.cfm>

Eance.com

Personally, I think this is the top freelance site online. It's current Alexa ranking is 3,861. Most people I talk to mention this site first before any other. It's also the first freelance site I ever went to when I used to freelance a lot.

Here is what the main page looks like.

Eance Find Professionals Find Work Skills Central MyEance Water Cooler

Find Qualified Professionals (135,605)

All Categories

Popular searches: Javascript, Search Engines, AJAX, Action Scripting, Shopping Carts, Flash Designer

[Web & Programming](#)
[Design & Multimedia](#)
[Writing & Translation](#)
[Admin. Support](#)
[Sales & Marketing](#)
[Finance & Mgt.](#)
[Legal](#)
[Engineering & Mfg.](#)

There is no direct URL to register. What you have to do is go to the right hand side of the page and click on where it says **Sign in or Register** and you'll see a JavaScript form popup that you'll need to fill out.

The variety of services offered at Elance are off the charts. If you have **any** skill at all, you can offer it here.

RentACoder.com

RentACoder is specifically for people who have technical skills. In other words, if you're a writer, this place isn't for you. It's mostly for programmers and other technical persons.

The site has a current Alexa Rank of 13,290.

Here is what the main page looks like.

RentACoder

How Software Gets Done
RentACoder.com

Software Buyers
Need custom software? Receive bids from our pool of 238,069 registered coders. Review work histories and resumes online, and then conduct business stress-free using our "Safe Project Escrow"(tm).
[How Does It Work for Buyers?](#)

Software Coders
Earn cash with your high tech skills on 1,895 currently open bid requests. Then subscribe to our newsletter and receive daily bid requests from our 110,725 registered buyers.
[How Does It Work for Coders?](#)

Newest Bid Requests
From [1895 open bid requests](#).

Social Networking Set ups
By Zah Media on Jan 03
Max Bid: Open to fair suggestions

Flash for site
By Hajduk on Jan 03
Max Bid: \$150.00

[Put this ticker on your site](#)

Quotes

"After a visit to RentACoder.com...I got something I needed for a fifth of the price I would otherwise have had to pay."
the guardian
[...Other quotes...](#)

In the section that says **Software Coders**, there is a link that says **Register and be notified of new projects**.

Here is the URL:

<http://www.rentacoder.com/RentACoder/advertisement/CoderRegistration.asp>

Word of advice...make sure your skills are top notch. The people who come here are looking for professionals. A great way to kill your reputation and your career before you even start is to do shoddy work.

AllFreelanceWork.com

As of this writing, this site has an Alexa rank of 56,547

Here is what the main page looks like.

The screenshot shows the homepage of AllFreelanceWork.com. At the top left, there is a 'NEW' badge in an orange cloud. The main logo reads 'AllFreelanceWork' in a large, bold, black font, with 'Freelance Jobs & Community' in a smaller green font below it. To the right of the logo is an illustration of a blue notepad and a yellow pencil. In the top right corner, there is a 'Register' link. Below the logo is a horizontal navigation menu with links for Home, Portfolios, Forum, Chat, Articles, Jobs, Groups, Questions, Hot Resources, and Freelance Jobs. Underneath the navigation menu is a blue bar with category links: CREATIVE | IT | WEB DEVELOPMENT / DESIGN | ADMINISTRATIVE | SALES / MARKETING | FINANCE / ACCOUNTING. On the left side, there is an 'Ads by Google' section with a small 'A V' icon. The ad is titled 'Work from Home Jobs' and describes listing work from home jobs with no investment required, earning up to \$300+/day. On the right side, there is a post titled 'Foundation Repair In Kansas' with 0 comments, posted by 'snikkidoodle' on Jan-03, 2009. Below the title is a 'Summary' section with a yellow background, containing text about basements and foundations.

You'll notice in the top right hand corner is a link that says **Register**. Just click on this to sign up.

Here is the URL:

<http://www.allfreelancework.com/index.php?do=reg>

This site offers a variety of services. If you click on the link that says **Freelancing**, you'll find people looking for everything from writing services to graphic designers to PHP programmers and even people looking for those who can teach them how to use certain pieces of software.

ScriptLance.com

This site caters to all kinds of scripting such as Java, PHP, C and so on.

The current Alexa Rank for this site is 19,765, so this is a fairly popular site.

Here is what the main page looks like.

ScriptLance
Connecting businesses with programmers

THOUSANDS OF PROFESSIONALS
OVER 200 NEW PROJECTS POSTED EVERY DAY!

SEARCH:

[Post Project](#) [Buyers](#) [Programmers](#) [FAQ](#) [Forum](#) [Contact](#)

MEMBER LOGIN

Login:

Password:

Remember me

[Forgot password?](#) [Logout](#)

SERVICES & FEATURES

- ◆ [Post a Project](#)
- ◆ [Signup](#)
- ◆ [Job Listings](#)
- ◆ [Featured Projects](#)
- ◆ [Certified Members](#)

Outsource your programming and design projects to freelancers on ScriptLance.

- ◆ PHP
- ◆ MySQL
- ◆ Website Design
- ◆ Graphic Design
- ◆ Flash
- ◆ CSS
- ◆ Script Installation
- ◆ Ajax
- ◆ SEO
- ◆ Javascript
- ◆ Marketing
- ◆ Writing
- ◆ Data Entry
- ◆ XHTML
- ◆ Java
- ◆ XML
- ◆ C/C++
- ◆ Multimedia
- ◆ ASP
- ◆ .NET
- ◆ Joomla
- ◆ Perl/CGI
- ◆ CMS
- ◆ Plus
- ◆ [more...](#)

Describe what you need and submit a project free and quickly.

POST PROJECT

FEATURED PROJECTS

Project Name	Budget	Bids	Avg Bid	Job Type	Posted
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Finding the sign up form is a pain in the rear because it's buried in their menu system.

Here is the URL:

<https://www.scriptlance.com/cgi-bin/freelancers/freelancers.cgi?new=user>

This should be more than enough to get you started and find yourself some work.

But...finding a site is just the beginning. Before you even get there, you better have your act together or you're not going to survive.

So in the next chapter, we're going to cover how to prepare for your freelancing life. There are a few things you're going to need to do.

Preparing For A Freelancing Job

This is where people torpedo their chances right out of the chute. You can't just sign up for one of these sites, respond to a job request and say, "Hey man, I can do that!" You need to present yourself in a professional manner.

Now, each site has a different means of responding to requests so it's impossible to go over them all here. However, they all have something in common...your proposal or offer. Whether it's done through the site or responding to an email or whatever, you are going to submit a proposal to the person looking for the job that they want done.

So that's the first thing we're going to cover. Again, because there are so many different types of freelancing assignments, we're going to have to keep this generic as there is no way to write a proposal for every contingency. So read the following proposal and adapt it to the job that you're looking to do.

Job Description: Looking for somebody to write 10 articles on Internet marketing. Topics desired are SEO, article marketing, pay per click, safelists, message boards, forums, list building, joint ventures, video marketing and affiliate marketing. Must be at least 500 words each. Please submit your qualifications and your rate.

Now, I am assuming a job description written by an intelligent person. Trust me, you'll get stuff at these sites that are just the first sentence and that's it. So don't dumb down your responses to the level of the poster. Be professional at all times.

Here is how I would respond.

Your Response:

My name is <name>. I have been an Internet marketer for over 6 years. I have also been writing for over 30 years of my life. I have written over 1,000 articles for various sites online.

You can see samples of my work at:

<list sites>

You can also see my own personal articles at my blog at <URL>

My rate is 10 cents a word, normally. However, for a bulk rate for 10 articles, I will consider doing all 10 for 8 cents a word.

If you're wondering why my prices are slightly higher than most, it is because I am a professional at what I do. Look at my samples and you will see that they are the highest quality. Most of the work you will get from the lower priced freelancers will in fact be of a lower quality and you will ultimately have to get it redone. This costs you time and money. It's better to simply have it done right the first time.

If you're interested, please reply to: <reply method>

The reply method will depend on how the site operates. It could be a member ID, a member name or your personal email. Just follow the instructions of the site.

That's how you reply to a job request. If you present yourself in a professional manner, you'll win a lot more bids that way.

The key is showing the prospect samples of your work.

You must do this!

I don't care what you have to do in order to show people your work.

Do it!

If you're a programmer just starting out and have never actually done work for somebody, write up a script or program or whatever that really showcases your skills and have it ready to send to the person as a sample.

Look, if you have no credibility in this business, you have to establish credibility. There is no way around this.

So whatever you do...I don't care what it is...you **must have samples** otherwise, you stand very little chance of competing with all the people out there who **do have samples**.

Now, if you want to **really** impress your prospects, you might want to go the extra mile and put up a web site explaining your skills and

experience. If you don't want to develop a full blown site, a Wordpress blog will be more than good enough.

For the cost of a domain and hosting, which comes out to about \$60 for the whole year, you can have a web presence that establishes you as a professional and not just a hack.

But what domain to choose?

This is easy. You want to brand yourself as a freelancer. So, use your name and use freelancing and you've got it.

So if your name is John Doe, you might get a hold of:

Johndoefreelancing.com
Johndoefreelanceservices.com

Or, if you want to be more specific, you might want to get something like:

Johndoewritingservices.com
Johndoeprogrammingservices.com
Johndoescriptingservices.com
Johndoewebdesignservices.com

Just tack on what you do to the end of your name and you have an instant domain that clearly tells people what you do.

Once you have your domain, just install Wordpress through Fantastico and you're done.

Put up a brief bio of what you do, what you've done and show some samples of your work and presto...instant professional look.

Whenever you do something, add it to your resume.

I've freelanced over 1,000 articles. Don't worry...I won't reprint all the titles here.

Think that doesn't give me credibility?

What To Charge?

This is a tough one and quite honestly, I can't tell you what to charge for your services. You have to ultimately charge what you feel you're worth.

However, I am going to give you some guidelines. Ignore these at your own peril.

Know The Market

If you're an article writer and the majority of the freelance article writers are charging between \$3 and \$10 per article, you're going to have a hard time getting \$50 for a 500 word article. I'm just telling you this right up front.

Supply and demand is a wonderful thing. The greater the demand and the lower the supply, the higher the prices. If the demand is low and the supply is high, the lower the prices. This is just basic economics and it applies to online and offline equally.

Now, there is a bright side to this for some freelancers. See, some skills are just valued more than others. For example, writing...forget about it. Why do you think I got out of the freelancing business? People don't want to pay for article writers simply because they feel anybody can write an article...untrue as that is.

Programmers are a different story. For some reason, if you can create a script to do something useful, you'll get paid well for it. Yes, there will always be those out there who will try to undercut you, but these people probably don't have very good skills. If they did, they wouldn't give their services away for peanuts.

So don't worry about those folks who charge very little for their technical skills...unless...

They come from a country where the standard of living is very low.

This is something that many marketers don't understand but they need to. I am not saying this is right or wrong, but it is what it is.

See, a person living in a country like India, where \$2 is a lot of money, will be making out very well writing 10 articles for \$20. If you're living in the US, this is almost slave labor.

This is the reality and there is very little you can do about it. Fortunately, if you're in the US or another more developed country, the general skills of these people are also above the general skills of the people in less developed countries simply because they don't have the same opportunity for education. As a result, in most cases, the work performed will not be up to the expectations of the person looking for the work to be done.

To see proof of this, just go to many of the forums and read some of the discussions of people who have had articles written by non English speaking people and hear about how they had to have them completely rewritten.

So the bottom line is simple. If you're good, you'll get paid what you're worth. It may not happen on day one, but it will happen.

My suggestion is to look and see what others are charging for the same service and position yourself as the "expert" in this area. Do this by pricing yourself just slightly higher than the top experts. So if you see a max of \$10 per article, charge \$12.

You don't want to be just another member of the pack. You want to set yourself apart. Naturally, you need to back up your demands. That's why you need a web presence with samples of your work.

Know The Site

Now, in addition to knowing the market, you need to know the kind of people that frequent these sites. I'm referring to those who are looking for work to be done.

Each site has its own reputation and its own kind of "typical" person going there looking for jobs to be done. Now, while it's dangerous to generalize (because you're always going to have exceptions on both ends of the spectrum) for the most part, you **are** going to find a certain kind of person at a certain kind of site.

For example, if you go to Elance.com, you're going to find that most people going there are looking for the most dirt cheap work that they can find. You'll also find many people from India and other similar countries offering services there.

This is the reality and it's one you have to deal with. So if you're looking for top dollar, Elance is going to be a tough sell, in my opinion.

Now, a lot of this will have to do with your experience. Once you have a great reputation in your field, you'll actually have people looking for you. But we'll get to that later.

If you're talking about RentACoder, that's a slightly better clientele. You'll find people willing to pay more for the work that they want done.

Why?

The answer is simple. These are people looking for programming work and they know that this isn't something that anybody can do which is why these people are going to RentACoder and not Elance. They **believe** that they are going to find better programmers there.

Belief is a powerful thing. It is not based at all in any kind of reality. It is merely perception because of the site itself. RentACoder specializes in coding...period. So the perception is that all the great coders hang out here. Truth is, you may actually find some better ones at Elance.

The best way to get a feel for the site itself is to simply hang out there. There is no other way. Take a look at the jobs requested. Pay very careful attention to how detailed the requests are.

At Elance, you'll find a lot of requests that are poorly worded or that give very little info. At RentACoder, you'll find more detailed requests.

Ultimately, you'll find the place that you feel most comfortable at. Once you do, establish a presence there. Become one of the experts to go to. That's how you make a name in freelancing.

In the next chapter we're actually going to go into the process of accepting an assignment and how to handle some of the problems that might crop up.

Accepting An Offer

How an offer is accepted is going to again, depend on how the site does business. Most have some great safeguards in place so that you don't end up doing work for nothing, but there is no such thing as perfection. You're always going to get folks who will take off with your work and then not pay up.

Now, if you're designing software for somebody, this is no problem. Simply disable the software if they forfeit payment. However, with articles, it's not such an easy thing. Once they have the articles, that's it...ballgame over.

So how do you protect yourself?

The best way is to have the funds put in an escrow account. That way, you don't have to worry about not being paid and the person asking for the service doesn't have to worry about you not delivering. If you don't, they simply get their money back from the escrow service.

Escrow.com has been in business since 1999. They are probably the most respected site out there.

Here is the URL:

<http://www.escrow.com/>

The screenshot shows the Escrow.com website interface. At the top left is the logo "ESCROW.COM" with the tagline "Secure Online Transactions". To the right are links for "Help and FAQ's", "Site Map", and "Home". Below the logo is a navigation bar with "SOLUTIONS", "COMPANY INFO", "CONTACT US", and "SUPPORT". The main content area is divided into two columns. The left column is titled "Start an Escrow Now!" and contains a registration form with fields for "New User?" (with a "Register" button), "Returning User?" (with a "My email address is" field and a "Sign In" button), and a "Remember me" checkbox. The right column features a heading "Escrow.com Protects Online Buyers and Sellers from Fraud" and two boxes: "For Buyers" (Receive merchandise before the Seller is paid.) and "For Sellers" (Protect yourself from credit card and payment fraud.). Below these boxes is a partial image of a red car. On the far right, a yellow sidebar lists frequently asked questions with arrows pointing to links: "Why use Escrow?", "How does Escrow work?", "How do I pay?", "Why can't I receive emails from Escrow.com?", "Other Frequently Asked Questions", and "Security Tips - Please Read".

Above is a screen print of the site itself. Just click on where it says **Register** to sign up.

This is what you basically need to know about this service.

How It Works

The buyer and the seller agree to terms of the transaction. This should include the following items:

Description of the service

Price

Time of delivery

Shipping info

Next, the buyer submits his payment to Escrow.com. The payment has to be verified and how long this takes depends upon the payment method.

If the payment is made via check or money order, it takes about 10 days to verify. If it's made via credit card, it takes about 2 days.

The next step is the seller ships the merchandise when the job is completed. Do not do this until you know the payment has cleared through escrow.

After the merchandise is shipped, the buyer accepts it and examines it. The buyer has a certain number of days, set by the escrow service, to examine the merchandise.

Finally, once accepted, the escrow service pays the seller.

That's it. The process is basically very simple as long as everybody holds up their end of the bargain.

Now, Escrow.com has something in place that protects the seller if the buyer neither accepts or declines the merchandise. After the examination period is over, if the buyer does **not** accept the merchandise but doesn't reject it either, the funds are automatically sent to the seller at the end of the examination period.

Let me go right on record as saying, this is not fool proof, especially with digital goods. If the buyer doesn't accept, he gets his money back, but let's face it, he's already got your articles. This is going to

happen. But, people who are willing to go through this process are less likely to try to cheat you out of your hard work.

Now, in addition to using an escrow service, I also suggest you do the following things:

Put It In Writing...ALL OF IT

I will be the first to admit that I just don't trust people. It comes from years of experience having quite a number of folks try to rip me off. So now, I don't assume anything. Every buyer is a potential con artist and must thus be treated like one until proven otherwise. I'll get to that later.

Whatever job you're going to have done, put it completely in writing and present it to the buyer. Don't skip one detail.

For example, if you've been contracted to create a menu driven piece of software, each menu item must be mapped out in detail...what it is and what it does.

If you've never made a spec sheet for a piece of code, get used to doing it if you're a programmer. You don't want to give the buyer one excuse to say, "This isn't what I asked for" or "This menu option doesn't do what I want it to do."

Does a spec sheet take a long time to do? Based on how big a job it is, yes, it can take a very long time. I used to program for a company in East Brunswick, NJ called Dezine Healthcare (now out of business) and we had to spec out everything.

Get used to it if you want to have a happy buyer who will have a hard time finding something to complain about.

If you're writing articles, same thing...write down the title of each article, what it will cover and how many words it will be.

If you're writing an ebook, give a complete chapter outline. Let the buyer know exactly what the book will cover and how many pages it will be.

The only response you want to hear out of the buyer when they get your spec sheet is, "Wow, you really have all the bases covered."

This is how you build your reputation.

You also want to put down how long it is going to take for you to finish the project.

Now, here is where you impress people even more. If you're going to take 7 days to finish it, tell them it's going to take 10 days. If they get it 3 days sooner, they'll be pleasantly surprised.

The last thing you want to do is promise 7 days and it takes 10. That does not make you look good.

Finally, you want to make sure the price is included. Don't let this be a verbal agreement. The price is just as important as the work itself. The buyer should know, right up front, **exactly** how much the job is going to cost him.

In the last chapter, I'm going to cover how to really build up your reputation as a freelancer. This is for people who want to take this to the next level.

Building Your Reputation

Building your reputation as a freelancer is no different from building your reputation as a marketer, whether it is selling affiliate products or your own products. The only difference is, instead of selling your product, you're selling yourself. Having said that, there are differences to the approach.

With sales, if you're doing affiliate marketing, the best approach is to write unbiased reviews of the products you're selling. This will help increase sales immensely.

If you're selling your own products, you need to get testimonials. In order to do that, you have to give away copies of the product at the start. After a few people use it, you can then use their testimonials on your sales page to assist in the selling of the product.

But what about if you're selling yourself as a freelancer? You certainly can't review your own work since you can't possibly be unbiased. And there's no **product** to give away.

However, you can do one of two things.

First and quickest way to build your reputation as a freelancer is to offer your services for a number of people at no cost. If you go to a forum that specializes in whatever it is you do and make this offer, you'll get tons of people taking you on. Just decide how many jobs you want to take. Make it clear that you are doing this in exchange for a testimonial **if** they are happy with the work.

Now, it is **critical** that you complete the assignments on time and do the absolute best job that you can. You do **not** get a second chance to make a good first impression. This is it. Screw this up and your reputation is shot right out of the gate.

Once the jobs are complete and the testimonials are in, the next step is to put together a sales page promoting your services. If you can't write killer sales copy yourself, get a professional to do it for you. Now, if you're a copywriter, you better be able to do this yourself. If you can't write killer copy, you have no business going into the copywriting freelance business. Obviously you can see that, right?

After the sales page is completed, the next step is to get it online. You need to get yourself a domain and hosting. You want to pick a domain that is going to brand you and your service.

Once you have yourself setup, the next step is to promote yourself. This is where the hard work comes in.

See, people who want to really make a lucrative career out of freelancing, and not just do it for a few extra bucks, ironically, need to become Internet marketers...whether they like it or not.

See, it doesn't matter how good you are at something. If people don't know you exist, they're not going to seek you out.

Now, you can get the ball rolling with the people who you did the free jobs for. Ask them to spread the word around about your services. To give them incentive to do this, offer to pay them a percentage of each job you get from them. If you're writing copy for \$2,000 a letter and you offer them 10%, they'd be nuts to turn down a \$200 payday just for saying, "Hey, you need a sales letter? Go contact so and so."

Referrals are probably the best way **to** get a freelance gig going. But it's not the only way.

I am going to list just a few excellent ways to build you reputation as a freelancer.

Blog

On the same domain that you got to put up your sales page for your services, setup a blog. This is easy enough to do through your control panel of your hosting account using Fantastico.

Update the blog regularly with articles related to what you do. For example, if you're a copywriter, write about the importance of strong sales letters. Maybe even give some copywriting tips.

You want to update your blog at least a couple times a week.

Make sure you have a link to your sales page promoting your services at the end of each blog post.

You also want to include samples of your work that people can see from your blog. Put them up online and link to them from the relevant articles on your blog.

Giveaway Product

Create a short report about 10 to 20 pages in length. The report should focus on the importance of your particular specialty.

Make sure that you include, in the report, a way for people to contact you for your service. You can either give them your sales page link or an email address to contact.

Upload the report to your server. Make sure you include a link to it somewhere on your blog. If you want to require opt in, you can. You don't want to make it too hard for people to get this report though because ultimately you want them to use the info in it to get in touch with you when they need work done.

Online Radio Show

Having your own radio show online is the big thing today. BlogTalkRadio is probably the biggest one around.

Here is the URL:

<http://www.blogtalkradio.com/>

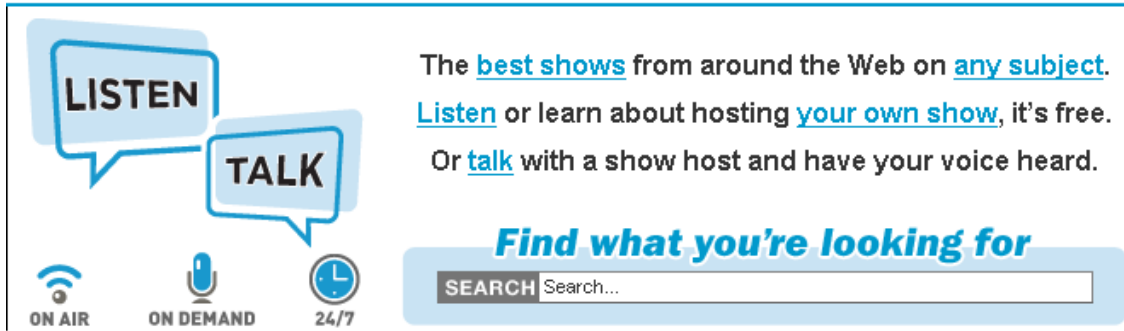
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Registration

Registration is easy. You'll be able to add favorites, message hosts and other listeners, and download shows in no time. Please complete the information below. All fields are required.

Display Name:	<input type="text"/>	Gender:	<input type="text" value="Choose..."/>
User Name:	<input type="text"/>	Date Of Birth:	Year <input type="text"/> Month <input type="text"/> Day <input type="text"/>
Password:	<input type="text"/>	Zip/Postal Code:	<input type="text" value="07740"/>
Password again:	<input type="text"/>	Country:	<input type="text" value="United States"/>
Email address:	<input type="text"/>	Time Zone:	<input type="text" value="(GMT-05:00) United States - Vermont"/>
Email address again:	<input type="text"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/> I want to host my own show			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sign me up for the BlogTalkRadio newsletter			

Make sure you fill in everything they ask for. All fields are required.

It does **not** cost any money to be a host of a call in show. In fact, you get to share in any advertising revenue generated by your show.

On your show, you'll essentially discuss the same things you would discuss on your blog. The only difference is that it will be live on the air.

I can't stress how big having your own radio show is today. This can dramatically build your reputation as a freelancer. Just make sure you post on your blog when you're going to be doing a show.

Follow Up

This is something so many freelancers fail to do and it kills more business than you can possibly imagine.

After completing assignments, most freelancers simply thank the customer for their business and move on. They think that just because

they did such a great job for the customer, they're going to be contacting them for more work. In many cases, this doesn't happen.

After completing the project, ask the customer what his future plans are. Ask him if he thinks he's going to need more work. Remind him to give you a shout if he does.

There is an old saying, "Out of sight, out of mind." Trust me, once you're out of sight, you're so out of this person's mind he may even forget you did the work for him.

Keep the relationship going.

Now, having said that, don't get overly friendly with your customers. You want to keep things professional at all times. The reason for this is because many customers, once you go over that line of service provider to friend, they expect you to start doing jobs for them at a reduced rate. Now, if they provide you with tons of work and you want to do that, that's your decision to make. Personally, I wouldn't do it. Why create more work for yourself for less money?

Some Additional Tips

These are just a few things that you might want to tuck in the back of your mind for your freelancing sanity, productiveness, or whatever. This is stuff that I learned over the years.

Confidence

This is a big problem for a lot of people. When I first started, just because I was new, I didn't have a lot of confidence, even though I had been writing all my life. I couldn't imagine anybody paying to have me write for them.

This was a **BIG** mistake.

People saw through this and tried to lowball me on every bid.

Do **not** let them do this. You **must** show confidence in everything you do. Remember, **you** are the professional and they need **your** help. It is **not** the other way around.

In other words, develop an ego and let people know that you have one. If you can back this up with the quality of your work, you'll have plenty of paying customers.

Trust Your Gut

This applies to many things. I'm going to cover just two of them here.

The first is whether or not to even take the assignment. I know this sounds crazy. After all, you need the money, right? Well, trust me on this. You're going to get project requests from people that sound like they're coming from the land of slave labor. These people come off as rude and arrogant and demanding. Your initial gut reaction is to tell them where they can take their offer, no matter how much they're paying you.

Trust that gut reaction.

I have found that almost all of these people were not worth the time to deal with. The headaches you will get from them just aren't worth it.

Bottom line...If you think somebody is a bad apple, don't take the job.

The second is on the project itself. Somebody is going to ask you to do something and you just know that if you give them what they want, they're not going to get the most out of it. This is especially true about software.

Tell them. Let them know that you've gone over the proposal and you think that you can do better than what they want. Explain to them why. Just don't make it your word. You need to back it up with facts.

Trust me, they will have so much respect for you for doing this you have no idea.

Remember, you're the professional.

Expect Down Times

Freelancing is a quirky business. There are going to be times when you have to turn people away. That's one of the reasons I got out. I couldn't handle all the work I was getting and I realized I could probably make more money as a marketer if I did all this writing for myself.

Then there are times when there just isn't any work. You can't let yourself get so high during the great times and so low during the bad times. You'll end up on a rollercoaster that is sure to lead to a severe depression down the road.

And because of this fact, you need to...

Budget

That's right. As you do this more and more, you'll get a feel for when the slow times are. You'll see when you'll need to cut back on some living expense and when you can live it up.

The way to keep this on an even keel for the whole year is to simply forecast what your yearly income is going to be after year one. Then, divide that income by 12 to get the average monthly income.

So, if the first three months are good and you're making \$5,000 a month, but the next three months you're only making \$2,000 a month and when year end comes you've made \$36,000, you need to take the average (\$3,000 a month) and then take that extra \$2,000 a month from the first three months and add it to each of the slow months, in order to keep your standard of living the same throughout the year.

My wife works 10 months a year as a school teacher. So when we compute her yearly income, we do it based on 12 months and take the extra money and apply it to the summer months.

Trust me, this will save your life.

Make A Schedule

As you get more and more work, this is going to become more and more critical. There are only so many hours in the day and only so many of **those** hours that you're actually going to work.

In the beginning, this is easy to manage as you won't have a lot of orders. But as you become more popular, trust me, you're either going to have to start putting people on a waiting list or start turning them away.

The schedule you make will depend a lot on what it is you do.

For example, if you're cranking out articles and you know it's going to take you 1 hour to research and write each article, more or less, and somebody requests a 10 pack, that's 10 hours of your time. If you plan to work only 4 hours a day, that's 2.5 days to get the work done. That's just basic math.

If you get three people ordering 10 packs, that's 7.5 days of work or a little more than a week. So if this is your normal routine, then you know you can't take on more than three clients each week and stick to your routine. Having said this, you're not going to get rich working 4 hours a day.

Point is, it doesn't matter what hours you work. Just make sure that you write them down and adhere to them. Otherwise, what's going to happen is you're going to get orders and you won't be able to get them completed in the time promised.

When that happens, you end up with angry customers.

Make a schedule.

Work Everyday

I don't care whether you have an assignment or not. You **must** do something everyday. You're probably wondering why I am so adamant about this.

Let me explain.

Getting into good work habits is not easy. It takes a lot of time to discipline yourself to do freelance work. I know this better than anybody. When times slow down and there isn't as much work, or worse, no work, when you **do** get offers, it's very hard to get back on that horse.

You get lazy.

This is human nature. All of a sudden you're saying to yourself, "I don't feel like working today." It happens to the best of us. I've even gotten lazy with some of my regular routines because they weren't so regular anymore.

So whatever you do, DON'T stop working. If you're an article writer and there are no clients for a few days or a week, keep writing.

Research some niches you've never written for. This will keep you sharp AND it might give you content that you can actually use because it fits an assignment.

Diversify

I'm not talking about having more than one job. I'm saying that as a freelancer, there are many markets for your services that you can target.

For example, let's say you're a graphic artist.

You don't have to just do ecovers and mini sites. You can create artwork for T-shirts too. Why not? Art is art. If you have the talent, there are many places where you can use it.

Always keep your eyes open for new markets.

Learn To Recycle

Over the course of time that you're doing this, you're going to find that you're going to get requests for things that you've already done. There is no reason why you can't take some older work of yours, polish it up and provide it to a client. Do it at a reduced rate if you want, pointing out that this is an old job with a few additions.

If you've designed a custom script to do a specific thing and you get many requests for it, there is no reason why you can't sell it to others. If anything, if you find that a particular script is very popular, you may decide to market it.

Point is, don't let your old work be a one shot deal if you can help it.

Advanced Pricing Of Services

Remember I said earlier to charge a little more than what the top guys are getting so you set yourself apart from the crowd?

Well, another way to go about pricing your services, certainly after you've built up your confidence, is with a simple formula.

You take your desired income that you want to make for the year, or month or whatever time frame you want to work with, and divide it by how many hours you want to work.

So let's say you want to make \$3,000 a month and you want to work 120 hours a month. That comes out to an hourly rate of \$25. So if you can write an article in 1 hour, then you should charge \$25 per article.

Let's say you create software and you know you can create most scripts in 8 hours. In that case, each script should sell for \$200. Therefore, when somebody asks you what a custom script costs, you can tell them \$200.

This makes things a lot easier for you and the customer.

If You Want The Really Big Money

Get offline. I'm serious. Go target the major publications. Yeah, you better be able to show some serious writing skills, but here is where you're looking at making \$500,000 to a million a year...or more.

To do this, you're going to need a professional resume put together, which means you're going to have to start out doing the lower paying jobs. But, after you have enough of these under your belt, you'll be able to command top dollar for the big guns.

This will **not** happen overnight. Don't let anybody fool you into thinking it can. You need to be able to show these people a body of work that would impress a company the size they're going to be representing.

The top freelancers today who are making over a half million a year have been doing this for over 25 years. Yes, there are exceptions, but for the most part, experience is the only thing that's going to get you that kind of pay day.

Another thing you're going to need to learn to do, if you want to earn some serious cash, is learn to outsource.

There are many things, such as research, that you don't have to do. Your job, if you're a writer, is to write. So pay somebody else to do the research. This will free up more of your time to write more. And, you can charge the same price for your work.

The above tips should greatly help you maximize your efforts as well as your income.