

YOUR GUIDE TO

Becoming a Super Successful Creative Entrepreneur

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INTRO

This Is Not a Book for Tortured Artists

YOUR GUIDE TO BECOMING A SUPER SUCCESSFUL CREATIVE ENTREPRENEUR

This Is Not a Book for Tortured Artists

...IT'S FOR THRIVING COMMERCIAL CREATIVES

History is chock-full of stories of tortured but uber-talented artists, unappreciated in their time – perhaps even dying penniless.

To be clear, we love their work too.

But if that's the future you have in mind for yourself, this isn't the book for you.

Instead:

We want to see you thrive, earn your worth, maintain your creative mojo and manage a steady roster of happy clients, building relationships that are mutually rewarding.

If you want to turn your creative passion into a successful commercial endeavor this is the book for you.



CHAPTER 1

Why It's the Perfect Time to Be a Creative Entrepreneur

YOUR GUIDE TO BECOMING A SUPER SUCCESSFUL CREATIVE ENTREPRENEUR



Creative talent is surging back to life as the cost of production and distribution falls to a level where artists can build direct relationships with their audience, change the balance of power with labels, studios and publishers, and find new ways to profit from their work.



– SAUL KLEIN,
Wired



Learn More: [The dawn of a new creative economy](#)

Creative Entrepreneurship Is Taking Center Stage Like Never Before

CREATIVITY IS THE NEW ECONOMY

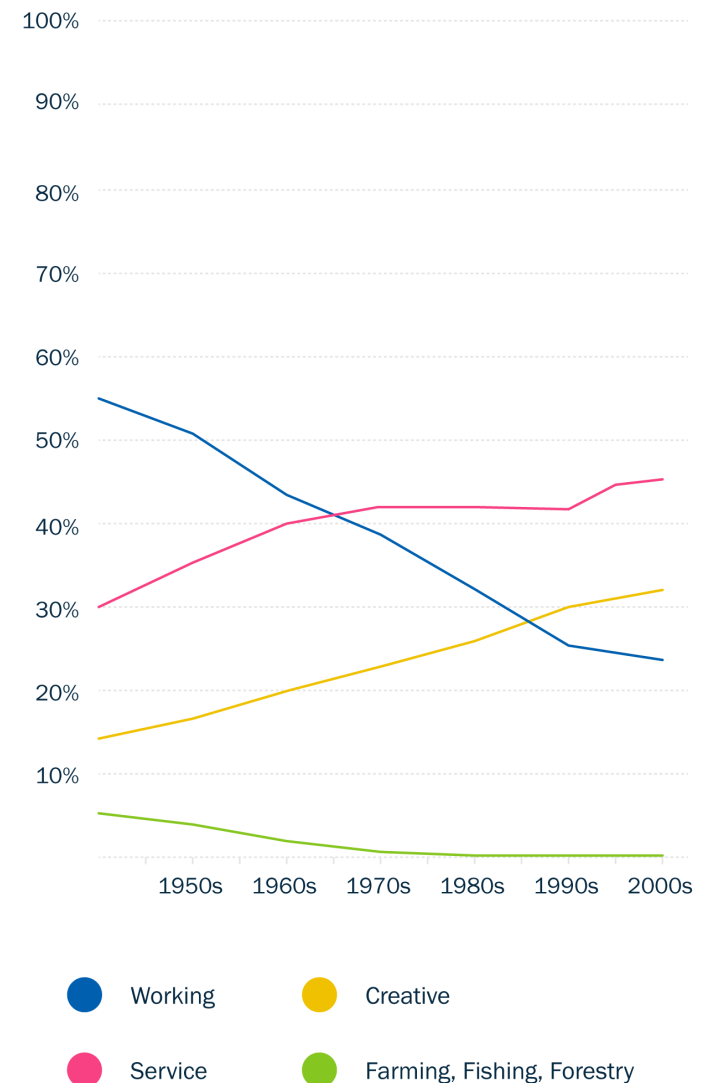
While some sectors are showing a steady decrease over time, the so called “creative class” has been steadily growing since the ‘80s.

“The Creative Class, which comprised less than ten percent of the workforce in the late 19th century and no more than 15 percent for much of the twentieth, began to surge in the 1980s. Since that time more than 20 million new Creative Class jobs were created in the United States.

This epoch-defining class now numbers more than 40 million workers, a third of the workforce, and it generates more than \$2 trillion in wages and salaries—more than two-thirds of the total US payroll. An additional seven million or so Creative Class jobs will be created over the next decade, according to Bureau of Labor Statistics projections.

Members of the Creative Class engage in complex problem solving that involves a great deal of independent judgment and requires high levels of education.”

[Source](#)



More Reasons To Put Your Creativity to Work for You

5 REASONS TO BECOME A COMMERCIAL CREATIVE

1. Creative Skills Are in High Demand

According to a report by the World Economic Forum, the creative sector is booming - growing about 14% per year globally.

2. Creative Skills Are Recession Proof

"In a time of high unemployment, when traditional skills can be outsourced or automated, creative skills remain highly sought after and highly valuable." – [TechCrunch](#)

3. Creative Freelancers Are Thriving

Despite living in some of the largest US hubs, self-employed creatives still maintain an annual income well above the cost-of-living in their cities.

Ready to launch your Creative Business? Read on...

4. Creative Freelancers Have More Freedom

By 2020, more than 40% of the American workforce—60 million people—will be independent workers, such as freelancers, contractors and temporary employees - [Fast Company](#)

5. Freelancers Have Higher Job Satisfaction

Research shows that the freedom and independence that freelancers experience generally leads to a better work-life balance, and higher job satisfaction.



CHAPTER 2

Articulating Your Creative Product or Offering

What Is Your Creative Offering?

BE CRYSTAL CLEAR ABOUT WHAT IT IS YOU'RE SELLING

When you start out as a creative freelancer, it can be tempting to market yourself as a Jack or Jill of all trades.

The more skills you can offer, the more jobs and clients you can bring in, right?

Wrong.

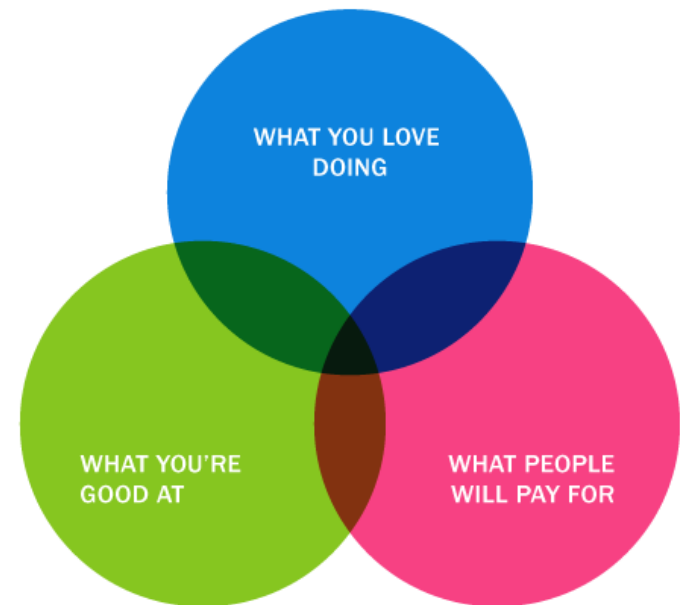
When your message is unclear, prospective clients might be unsure where to place you on a project.

In clearly articulating your specific creative offerings, you are letting clients know, “this is the problem that I can solve for you”.

Learn More: [Finding Your Offering as a Creative Master](#)

There are a few key components to articulating your creative offering:

1. What you enjoy doing
2. What you are good at
3. What people will pay you for



Step 1: What You Love vs. What You're Good At

FOLLOW THIS EXERCISE!

You may love singing anything else, but if you're always off key, you might want to keep it as an enjoyable hobby rather than trying to turn it into a career.

Jon Acruff, Author of the book “Do Over”, recommends the following exercise:

1. Write Down Ideas

Take a stack of note cards. Using one card per skill, write down all of the things that you're good at. When you're done, repeat the same exercise, instead writing all of the things that come naturally to you.

2. Look for Patterns

This might sound silly, but you'll start to see patterns in the skills that you've written down, and this can help to give you a better sense of where to focus your efforts.

Learn More: [A simple 2-step exercise for figuring out what you're really good at](#)



Step 2: Figure Out What Jobs Can You Do With That

YOUR TALENT CAN POINT IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS

Now's the time to look at your creative skills and match them to the marketplace.

For example, if writing is the core thing you're passionate about and good at, there are still many ways you can package that into a career.

You may certainly decide to offer a few of these complementary writing services (e.g. copywriter and content marketer).

But beware branding yourself too generally as a “writer” who can “do it all”.

After all, each writing field has its own nuances and while the core skill may be common to all these professions, each writing field has its own expertise and best practices to learn and know.



Another Example: So, You Love Illustration...

YOUR TALENT CAN POINT IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS

Maybe you've always loved illustration. Perhaps you pushed that passion away to make more "sensible" career moves. But now you're stuck in a cubicle and all you do is doodle.

Before you march into your boss' office to tell her you're quitting to follow your dreams, spend a little time unpacking how to turn that passion into a new career.

To become a successful commercial creative, you'll want to understand how you can turn that love of illustration into a job.

To the right are just some of the many paths an illustrator could take.

The point is, whether it's writing, drawing or performing, there are probably many different career paths to take.

Choose yours wisely and you're more likely to maintain your creativity and also to thrive commercially.

A word cloud of career paths for an illustrator. The word 'illustrator' is the largest and most central. Surrounding it are various other career paths in different sizes and orientations. The words include: teacher, muralist, animation, posters, fashion, drafter, storyboard, logos, editorial, tattoo artist, forensic, prints, comics, stationery, games, and medical artist.

teacher muralist
animation
posters fashion
drafter storyboard
illustrator
logos editorial
tattoo artist
forensic prints
comics
stationery games
medical artist



The smartest independent creatives aren't the ones that sit alone, polishing off the perfect finished product. The smart ones release their work early and often, building a community of supporters who pay not for the art itself, but for its byproduct.



– SEAN BLANDA,
GrowthLab



Learn More: [Talent is Persistence: What It Takes To Be An Independent Creative](#)

Step 3: Make It Real with Market Research

CHATTING WITH REAL PEOPLE IN YOUR CHOSEN FIELD WILL HELP YOU FIGURE OUT WHAT'S RIGHT FOR YOU

1. Do a Google Search

The Internet is your friend. And the best place to start is with Google. Start with something as simple as “What’s it like to be a _____?” This can give you a good idea of a day in the life for a given career path.

2. Reach Out to Your Network

After you’ve done some basic research, it’s time to get personal. Start by asking around in your network, to see if you know anyone working in your chosen field. If you’re connected with someone, ask if you can schedule a call, or take them for a coffee to ask them about their work.

3. Try Cold Calling

If your extended network doesn’t provide any coffee chat options, try using Google and LinkedIn to look for professionals in your area. Again, check with your

network to see if anyone you know could provide an introduction. But if not, reach out with a polite and friendly email to ask if said professional might be able to answer a few quick questions about their work.

4. Go to an Industry Event

Is there a freelance writers meetup in your city? Check it out! Especially in major cities, it’s common for creative professionals to host regular meetups or talks. A quick online search can help you find events in your city.



CHAPTER 3

Finding Your Creative Voice and Branding

Discover (and Believe In) Your Creative Voice

BELIEVE IN YOUR OWN UNIQUENESS

Your creative voice is what makes you different from all of the other creatives out there. There may be many writers, but you're the only writer with your unique experience and style. Your creative voice is what makes your work distinctive, and makes it stand out from the work of other creatives.

1. Believe in Your Uniqueness

Chances are, you have had a nagging feeling telling you what you should be doing creatively for some time. Listen to that voice, and believe it.

2. Talk to Other Creatives

People who have already found their creative voice, will be able to help you navigate the path to yours.

3. Get Cracking

The important thing isn't where you start; the important thing is that you get started. If all you can

do right now is one drawing a week, start there. If you wait for that huge opportunity before you ever get cracking, you might find yourself waiting forever.

4. Try and Try Again

Once you've set out on your journey, there are still times that you might have to adjust your course. The only way that you will know to do this is through trial and error.





In the creative world, we get incredibly hung up on the creative offering—the product and service. We think success is about our work being better than everybody else's and our execution being more reliable, punctual, etc. And we think that should be enough. But when a client is choosing between two creatives who match on product or service, they're going to choose the person they know, like and trust. This is where personal brand comes into play.



– ANDY J. MILLER,
Commercial Artist & Podcaster



Learn More: [Harness the Power of Personal Brand \(Without Selling Your Soul\)](#)

Embrace the Power of “Personal Brand”

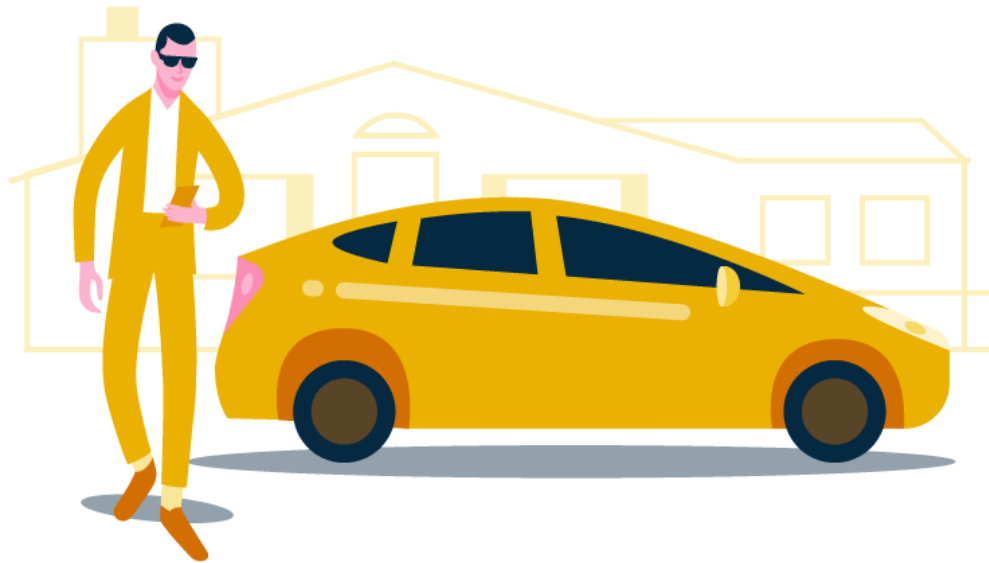
“PERSONAL BRAND” SHOULDN'T GIVE YOU THE HEEBIE-JEEBIES

What Is Personal Brand and Why Is It Important?

Personal brand helps you to build a relationship with potential clients. If the client feels like they know you, they can get a better sense of whether you're a good fit for them. It helps them to trust you, and your work.

Personal Branding Builds Trust

You may want to let your work “speak for itself”, but unlike a customer purchasing a completed piece of art, a freelance client needs to trust that they can work with you and that you'll reliably deliver what they need. They're putting their reputation on the line by hiring you, so they need to know that you won't put their reputation at risk.



Personal Branding Helps You to Stand Out

By sharing yourself with your audience, you're also making yourself more relatable to potential clients. A lot of freelance work builds on relationships, and incorporating your personality into your work and branding, makes it easier for potential clients to build a relationship with you.

How Do You Build Personal Brand Without Feeling Gross?

Having a personal brand that feels authentic comes from really getting to know yourself, and creating and sharing work that is a true reflection of who you are. Simple, right? Oftentimes, this comes with lots of practice, and regular personal reflection on the work you're creating.

Learn More: [Andy J. Miller: Harness the Power of Personal Brand \(Without Selling Your Soul\)](#)



Okay, Now Make Your Brand Sing Online!

BEING COMPELLING, KIND AND RESPONSIVE ARE KEY

Find a Consistent Voice

If your personality is light and jokey, let your brand be too. If your creative style is more dark and broody, it's ok to go with that too. Whatever voice you choose, keep it consistent across platforms.

Always Respond to Followers

Being active online can help you build your voice, and let's potential clients know that you're engaged.

Make Friends with Other Brands

Social media is a great way to network with other creatives in your field. It can also be a way of connecting yourself if other companies and artists that you'd like clients to associate with your brand.

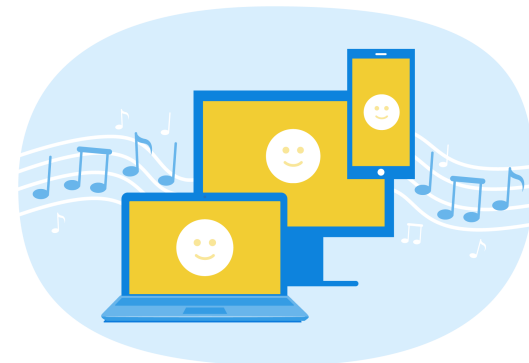
Build an Inviting Home for Your Brand

Your website is a great place to showcase a portfolio of your work, and develop your brand identity in more depth.

Use Compelling Videos and Images

As they say, a picture (or video) is worth a thousand words. Images and videos are a great way to build the look and feel of your brand.

Learn More: [Stand Out From the Crowd: 5 Ways to Create a Joyful Brand](#)



Format

The _____ _____ online portfolio your work deserves.

Build your brand and your business with the
#1 online portfolio for creative professionals.
Format is easy-to-use, intuitive and
customizable—no coding required.

Try Now

No Credit Card required.



CHAPTER 4

Finding Your Customer

You've Found Your Niche. Now, Find Your Customers!

IT SEEMS DAUNTING. BUT DON'T WORRY- YOU GOT THIS!

Create an Online Portfolio

Set up a home base online where your work and contact information live, along with a page clearly articulating the creative services you're offering.

Let Your Network Know That You're Looking

Talk to everyone in your network about your new freelance endeavor. Share it on your social media, and make sure that friends, family and old colleagues know that you're available for hire.

Go to Events Relevant to Your Creative Skills

Search for talks, meetups and other events in your city that creative entrepreneurs in your field, but also related creative fields. They're a great way to network, learn and open the door to collaborate with other creative professionals.



Set Up More Coffee Chats

Just like you had coffees with other creative entrepreneurs to learn more about your field, coffee chats can also be a great way to connect with potential clients.

Start Writing

Writing a blog can help you to establish yourself as the go to person for a given skill. It can also give you a resource to point clients to to give them a better sense of your voice.

Be Active on Social Media

If your work is visual, start posting it on Instagram. Check for relevant tweetups where you can chat with other professionals in your field. The more active you are on relevant social channels, the easier it will be for your work to be seen your extended network.

Learn More: [Networking Doesn't Have to Suck](#)



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I know a lot of artists aren't stoked about the words “sales” or “marketing” but I'm sold on selling and here's why. Zig Ziglar gives the example of having that teacher who really sold them on a subject at school. If you think of selling this way, it's not at all insidious – in fact it's a talent that elevates a subject!



– ANDY J. MILLER,
Commercial Artist & Podcaster

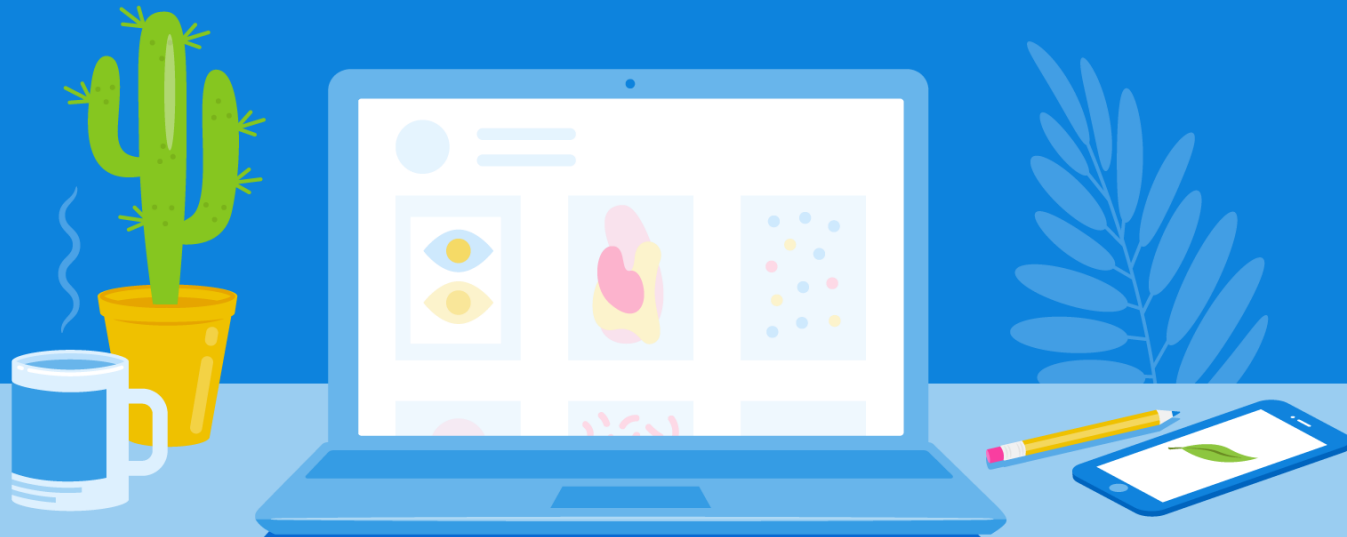


Learn More: [Be a Commercial Creative Master \(& Why it Matters\)](#)

Your Small Business Website: How Does it Rate?

Every small business needs a website. Test your knowledge with this short quiz and learn how to build a winning website that attracts customers—and keeps them coming back for more.

Begin



Now, Close that Sale!

WHEN SELLING, IT'S IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER:

Freelance Work Is Never About You

Instead of selling yourself, you're selling the dream of how much better and easier your client's life will be when they hire you.

Find Opportunities to Build Relationships

Relationships are built on association and interaction. The association comes from you building interest in your creative services by creating great content. The interaction piece comes from showing interest in the work of prospective clients through social media, comments on their blogs and other interactions.

Develop Interesting Ways to Add Value

When contacting a prospective client, make sure that you've done your research. Reach out with some concrete, relevant ideas of how your skills could solve one of their problems all ready to go.

Don't Underestimate the Follow-Up

New client contracts rarely close after one interaction. Use social media to continue showing your love for what the prospective client is putting out, and follow up with a quick hello by email.

Landing Freelance Work Is Never-Ending

Even when you're not taking on any new clients, The Freelance Formula is a great way to keep building and maintaining relationships until the next time you are.

Learn More: [The Secret Formula to Get Freelance Work Quick](#)



Caution: Not All Clients Are the Right Clients *for You*

SELLER BEWARE!

The Good

Know Your Worth

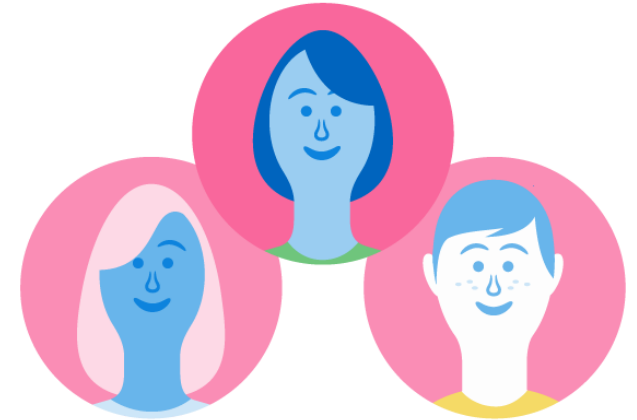
Setting your rate can be tricky, but it's important to go into conversations with clients feeling confident about what your work is worth.

Show Clients That You Have Solutions to Their Problems

Have a dream client? Research the types of creative services they're looking for, and then come of with a plan for how to bridge your skills with their needs.

Leverage Your Current Network

Happy clients who already know you and your work are your best asset. Let them know when you're looking for more work, and the next time a colleague is looking for creative services, your name will be top of mind.



The Bad

Know Your Worth Pt II

If a client insists on paying you well below market value, or in *shudder* exposure, it might be time to walk.

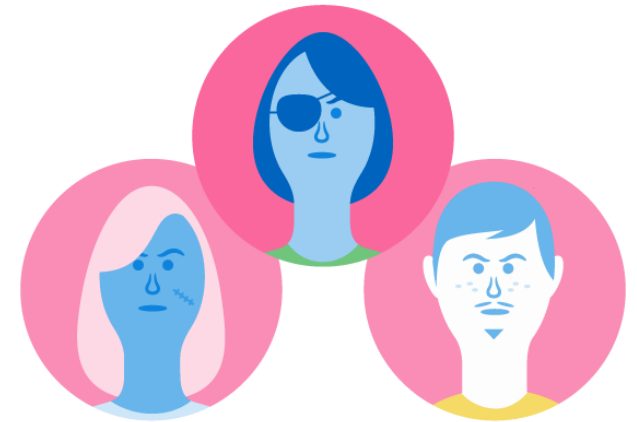
Stick to Agreed Upon Deliverables

Outline the project in writing at the beginning, and stick to the terms that you agreed to. If a client is constantly pushing you to go beyond what was discussed, this should send up a red flag.

Value Projects Over Pay Increases

A well-paying project outside of your interests and skills might be tempting, but if the paycheck is the most exciting part of the project, it will quickly turn to drudgery.

Learn More: [Creatives: Avoid Clients from Hell, Attract the Good'uns](#)



CHAPTER 5

Finding Your Rate

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If you are on Craigslist to get a sofa, and you see one for free. You think there's something tragically wrong with it – maybe there are bedbugs. But if you see a sofa on there for \$2,500, you think 'oh man, that sofa must be amazing'. It's the same thing with art – you set your own value.



– JESSICA HISCHE,
Lettering Artist, Author



Learn More: [Interview: Jessica Hische on lettering mistakes, why you should code & why cheap designers are like free sofas](#)

Should Creatives Work for Free?

EXPOSURE DOESN'T PAY THE BILLS

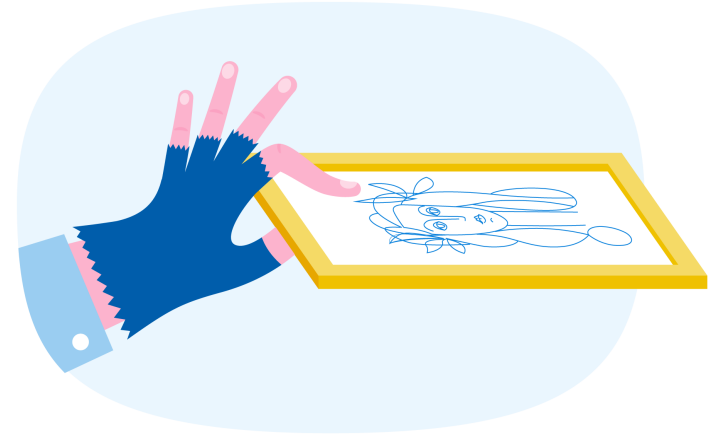
NO WAY!

It Undervalues the Work of Others in Your Field

Freelancers are definitely a group that's stronger together. When some work for free, it can undermine the going rate and make it difficult for freelancers to charge for the true value of their work.

Unpaid Work Begets More Unpaid Work

Just like signing a high-paying client can attract other high-paying clients, the same is true with projects that pay nothing. Starting off with the expectation that you're not getting paid makes it difficult to change this expectation on future projects.



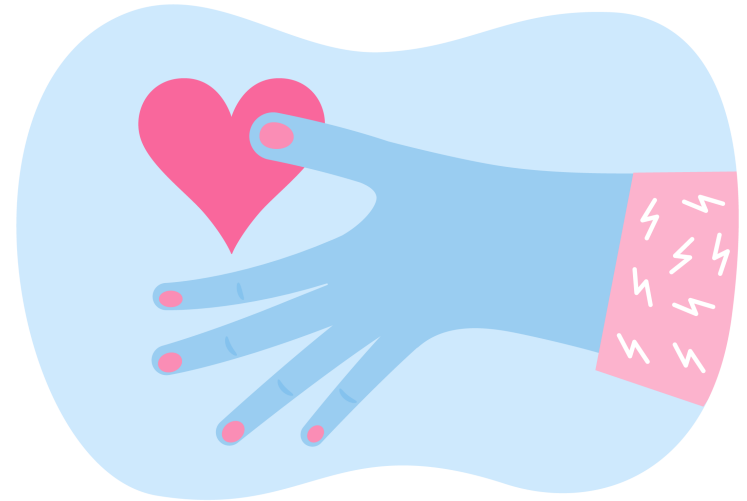
OKAY, MAYBE?

If the Client Is a Non-Profit

Non-profits can sometimes be an exception. While larger non-profits may have a budget for creative work, many smaller ones do not. Non-profit work can be a great way to use your creative offering to help a cause that you are passionate about.

Trading Your Work for Goods or Services

Not technically working for free, but in some cases trades just make sense. Maybe you trade a photographer headshots for some web copy. Or you trade a local designer that you love some bespoke clothing for a logo update. Trades can be a great way for creative entrepreneurs to exchange skills. But be wary of large brands that only offer to pay in product when they should be paying cash.



Starter Tips for Finding Your Freelance Rate

HOURLY vs. PROJECT-BASED BILLING

Start by Listening

In any conversation with a client, start by listening to their needs before pitching a rate. The more you know about the project and the value it has to your client, the better sense you'll get of what you should be charging.

Find the Trigger

Ask the client what led them to reaching out to you. This can give you further insight into their pain points, and how you can help them to solve their current problem.

Identify the Risks (and the Financial Impact)

Open up a conversation about what they hope to gain from this project, and the value that it adds to their company. This can help you to “anchor” your pricing based on its value to the client.

Uncover the Utopian Solution

To get a better sense of your client's dream outcome, ask them what their business would look if the problem they're hiring you to solve was magically resolved tomorrow.

Package and Present the Pricing Proposals

Offer your client a number of different solutions at a range of price points. By offering your client a variety of solutions, you're giving them options, and opening up a conversation.

Learn More: [What's Your Rate? Determine How Much to Charge Clients Using This Strategy](#)



How to Go About Calculating Your Rate

THERE ARE TOOLS TO HELP!

There are plenty of tools online to help you figure out a starting freelance rate.

You should also try talking to other freelancers in your field to get a sense of what's standard in the area you're working in.

Finally, we all have our billing blind spots.

Blind spots are not something to feel bad about, but they are something to solve for. Discover yours by [taking our quiz here](#).

Bonus: There's a free eBook to download all about how to earn your worth!

Uncover Your Billing Blind Spots

Learn about your billing blind spots so you can charge what you're worth.

Take the Quiz



And Don't Forget These Expenses...

MANY FREELANCERS CHARGE TOO LITTLE

Start with your target take home salary, then take into account:

Financial Costs

- Higher taxes

Overhead Expenses

- Office space
- Utilities and Internet
- Office Supplies
- Insurance
- Computer

Business Costs

- Software Licenses
- Marketing and Promotion
- Web Hosting
- Accounting
- Healthcare

Time For

- Non-billable Work
- Vacation Days
- Administrative Duties
- Sick Days
- Holidays



Pro-Tip: Want to find out if you're charging your worth? Complete the short quiz below to discover your billing style... and potential blind spots. We'll give you advice about how to overcome those blind spots — plus a free copy of *Breaking the Time Barrier*, an ebook by FreshBooks CEO Mike McDerment.

[Learn More](#)



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There is always someone cheaper. Negotiate Price, but don't compete on price. Compete on quality, value, and fit.

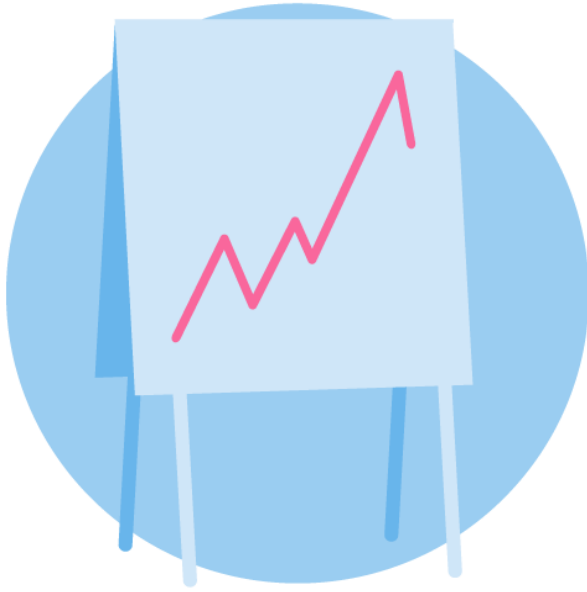


– MIKE MONTEIRO,
Design is a Job



Learn More: [Design is a Job](#)

When Is it Time to Raise Your Rates?



MANY FREELANCERS CHARGE TOO LITTLE

1. You've Never Raised Them Before

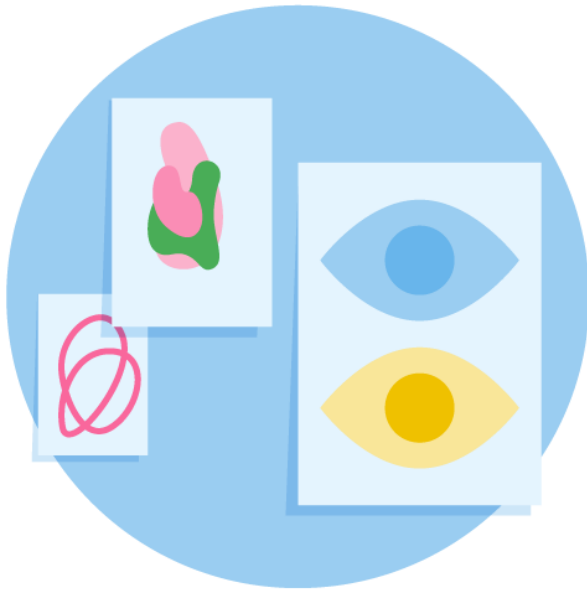
Just like a salary, your freelance rates should go up over time. If you've been freelancing for a while, and haven't raised them once, now might be the time.

2. You're Charging Less Than Your Competitors

Knowing what other freelancers in your field are charging will help you to make sure that you're not underselling yourself (and your industry).

3. You've Gained More Experience

Over time, you'll gain more skills and insight, and you'll work more efficiently. All of these things add to your value, and your rates should reflect that.



4. You Attract High Maintenance Clients

It might seem counterintuitive, but generally, low-paying clients are the most high-maintenance ones. If your current clients are emailing you 20 times a day, and asking for countless revisions, it might be time to raise your prices.

5. You Receive More Work Than You Can Handle

If you're stretched thin trying to handle all of the work you have coming in, but you're still not meeting your financial goals, raising your fees can help you focus on clients that will keep you from burning out in the long term.

6. Prospective Clients Never Negotiate Your Rates

If clients never even bat an eyelash at your proposed rates, it means that they'd be comfortable paying more. The sweet spot is where some clients agree right away, and some try to find wiggle room.

Learn More: [Chase What You're Worth: 6 Signs it's Time to Raise Your Freelance Rates](#)

CHAPTER 6

Managing and Maintaining Your Client Relationships

3 Tips for Maintaining Great Client Relationships

CLIENT RELATIONSHIPS SHOULD BE NURTURED

1. Conduct Regular Reviews

Setting up regular calls to check in gives the client space to bring up any small issues before they turn into bigger ones. It also sets the stage for open conversation about how current projects are going, and how they could be improved.

2. Regularly Get Together To Brainstorm Ways to Work Better

Every relationship evolves over time. If you've been working with a client for a while, it's important to check in and assess what's going well, what isn't, and ways that your relationship could improve. This also opens the door to discuss new projects that you could work on together in the future.

3. Explore the Effectiveness of Your Work from the Client's Point of View

To get a better idea of how effective your work has been for your client, set meetings with your client to discuss outcomes. Looking at the data will help you to see how successful your work was in achieving its goal, and how you could improve your next project.

Learn More: [3 Ways to Improve Client Relationships](#)



“

If you do good work for good clients, it will lead to other good work for other good clients. If you do bad work for bad clients, it will lead to other bad work for other bad clients.



– MICHAEL BIERUT,
Partner at Pentagram



Learn More: [Let's Talk About Clients](#)

How to Avoid Common Client Pitfalls

IMPORTANT STEPS TO AVOID STUMBLING BLOCKS

1. Always Have a Contract

Setting up regular calls to check in gives the client space to bring up any small issues before they turn into bigger ones. It also sets the stage for open conversation about how current projects are going, and how they could be improved.

2. Manage Scope Creep

Every relationship evolves over time. If you've been working with a client for a while, it's important to check in and assess what's going well, what isn't, and ways that your relationship could improve. This also opens the door to discuss new projects that you could work on together in the future.

3. Invoice Regularly

To get a better idea of how effective your work has been for your client, set meetings with your client to discuss outcomes. Looking at the data will help you to see how successful your work was in achieving its goal, and how you could improve your next project.



Tips for Getting Your Invoices Paid Faster

MONEY IN YOUR POCKET SOONER...

1. Manage Client Expectations

Use a contract to outline terms of payment, your rates and deliverables up front so that your client knows what to expect.

2. Build Strong Client Relationships

Touch base with your client regularly to make sure that you're on the same page, and to keep them updated on how the project is going.

3. Accept Online Payments

FreshBooks customers who accept online payments get paid an average of 11 days faster than those who rely on snail mail and checks!

4. Carefully Craft Your Invoice Terms

Including polite language, leaving out jargon and implementing late fees all work to get more of your invoices paid.

5. Be on Top of Invoicing

The sooner you invoice your client, the sooner they can pay you.

6. Follow Up

The right software can make it easy to see when invoices are late and even send automatic reminders so you don't have to handle those awkward conversation.

Learn More: [Make it Simple to Get Paid Fast: 7 Tips for Freelancers](#)





Get Paid 11 Days Faster with FreshBooks

Small business owners get paid quickly and painlessly
with FreshBooks cloud accounting.

Get Started for Free



CHAPTER 7

Keeping Your Business Ducks in a Row

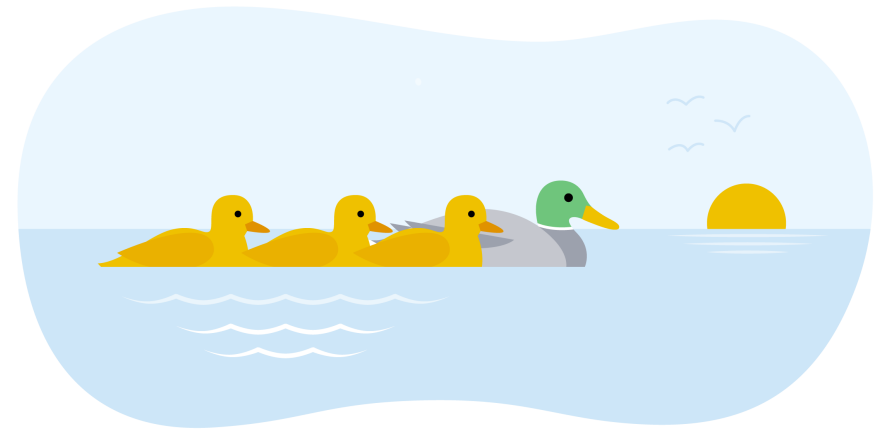
Get Over Your Dread of Business-y Things

ALL YOUR DUCKS, IN A ROW...

You've found your voice, articulated your offering, you've got a few clients under your belt, and the bills are getting paid.

Your venture into creative entrepreneurship is going great, but there are still a few other pieces you need to make sure you have covered.

While many creative entrepreneurs dread the administrative work associated with their business, it's absolutely vital to keeping your freelance career running smoothly in the long term.



Pro-Tip: This is where FreshBooks should become your business BFF. We're here to help with the icky paperwork that comes to run a business – whether it's invoicing, managing expenses or tracking time. [Sign up for a free 30-day trial today.](#)

Shake on It? No. You Need a Contract

MAKE SURE EVERY CONTRACT INCLUDES:

1. An Outline of the Services You'll Provide

Include a clear description of the deliverables you'll be completing for the client. Make sure it's easy for both parties to understand what services or products you're responsible for providing.

2. Details of What Is *Not* Included

This is just another step in making sure that both parties know exactly what's included in the project. For example, you might agree to "complete all content" for a report; while you see this as the written content, the client might assume that this also includes graphic design unless you specify otherwise.

3. Provisions for Scope Creep

Especially if your fees are project-based, addressing scope creep is key. Include a clause in your contract about the number of allowable revisions, or what to do if project goals change.

4. A Timeline

Include parameters for when work and feedback are due, time needed to reply to client requests, and business hours. If you don't answer emails after 6pm, make sure that the client knows this upfront.

5. A Project End Date

Outline a project end date, and include a clause on how the relationship should end if things aren't working out.

6. Payment Method & Terms

Clearly outline your preferred method of payment, and information about due dates, retainers, and late fees.

Learn More: [6 Simple Steps for Creating an Impactful Freelance Agreement](#)



Let's Talk About (Copy)Rights

NAIL THESE THINGS FOR SUCCESS

In her blog post, “[The Dark Art of Pricing](#)”, Jessica Hische makes a good case for being specific about copyrights up front.

Hische outlines a variety of scenarios, where a company asks her to design an image.

In one case, the contract includes the rights to use the design in newspaper ads for one year.

In another, the company has the rights to use the design in print, or online, for any purpose they want forever. These rights carry widely different price tags.

While Hische's example applies to the lettering and illustration world, different versions of this exist in every creative field.

Read up on standard copyright agreements in your sector, and make sure that your contract works to protect you.

Learn More: [The Dark Art of Pricing](#)



Stay on Top of Paperwork!

THINGS TO KEEP TRACK OF

Many creative freelancers see invoicing and accounting as one of the most tedious parts of their business. But it is arguably one of the most important things that you need to stay on top of.

Proper invoice, expense, and time tracking will save you time, money and heartache.

Invoices

Using a professional invoicing system will help you to keep track of client payments, view your incoming earnings, and learn how long it usually takes clients to settle their invoices.

Expenses

Tracking expenses is key for knowing how much money your business has coming in and going out. Business expenses should also be tracked so that you can include them when you file your taxes at year end. Like your invoices, the more organized you are year-round, the easier things will be at tax time.

Time Tracking

This is obviously important when you're tracking billable hours for a client, but it's just as important to know how much time your spending on project-based work, and different administrative tasks. As your business grows, this will help you to get a better idea of what tasks you should cut back on, or ones you could think about hiring out.



Pro-Tip: FreshBooks makes managing your paperwork a breeze!





Hate Paperwork? You'll Love FreshBooks

Join 10 million small business owners who use
FreshBooks to make accounting less painful.

Try It Free



CHAPTER 8

Maintaining Your Creative Mojo

Don't Let Your Passion Burn Out

HOW TO KEEP YOUR CREATIVE FIRES BURNING

1. Cultivate Good Taste

This is the number one thing that you can do to feed yourself creatively. If you aren't continuously adapting and cultivating your taste, then there's no way for you to know if your own work is good or not. Be curious, challenge yourself, and always take opportunities to learn something new about your craft.

2. Hone Your Skills

Along with cultivating your taste, you should also be cultivating your skills. Even the most exciting creative work can become mundane over time. Learning new skills, or improving on the ones you have will keep your creative work fresh.

3. Find the Innovation

Innovate by experimenting, combining unexpected elements and reinvigorating old ideas in new ways.

Don't be afraid to test out your skills in a way that might not work. Not every blog post that you write, or design that you create, will be amazing, but if you don't test out new ways of looking at your work, you'll never grow.

Learn More: [Andy J. Miller to Creative Professionals: What to Do if Your Work Isn't Working](#)



Assemble Your Creative Crew!

COFFEE DATES ARE GREAT DOOR-OPENERS

Coffee chats or “informational interviews” are one of the best ways to find out more about what it’s actually like to work in a given career. What does a typical work day look like? What’s the average salary? Is it difficult to find work in your chosen field?

1. Be Respectful of Their Time

Remember, the person meeting with you to chat about their career is busy, just like you. They are doing you a favor by meeting to share their experience, so be extra respectful of their time, and always offer to grab the coffee.

2. Do Your Research

Just like any interview, it’s important to do your research. Make sure that you learn a little about the person who you’ll be chatting with so that you can ask them about their specific experience.

3. Come Prepared

Prepare a few questions in advance – especially if there are some specific things you’d like to learn about. And don’t forget to take notes!

4. Make a Good Impression

Again, prepare as you would for any other interview, and follow up with a thankyou note the next day.



Look After Your #1 Asset: You

REMEMBER TO TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

Be Rested

"There is a lot of research that says we have a limited pool of cognitive resources," says Allison Gabriel, an assistant professor of management at Virginia Commonwealth University who studies job demands and employee motivation. "When you are constantly draining your resources, you are not being as productive as you can be".

Be Active

It's well documented that a small amount of exercise every day helps you to stay healthy, decrease stress, and also boost creative thought.

Be Nourished

Your food is your fuel. It follows that fueling your body with the right foods will keep it running more efficiently. Reaching for sugar and caffeine might give you an immediate boost, but eating well actually helps to improve overall productivity.

Be Bored

We live in a world where we're constantly bombarded with information, and entertainment is at our fingertips 24/7. But "recent research finds that being bored promotes creative association and pushes one to find deeper meaning and satisfaction". – Fast Company

Be Outside

Whether you're a city slicker or you love the outdoors, data shows that spending time in nature restores mental energy, improves concentration and boosts creative thinking.



APPENDIX

Resources

Live Creative. Breathe Creative. Be Creative.

RESOURCES

Read as Much as Possible

There are infinite blogs and books out there about creativity, entrepreneurship, and specific creative skills.

- [99U](#)
- [CreativeLive](#)
- [Seth Godin](#)

Attend Events

Checking out creative events in your city is a great way to learn, be inspired, and meet other creative entrepreneurs.

- [Creative Mornings](#)
- [Meetup](#)

Check Out Online Talks

If you can't make it out to events in person, or you live in a smaller town where events might not happen frequently, you can always check out inspiring talks online.

- [Creative Mornings](#)
- [The DO Lectures](#)



Take Some Classes

Need to brush up on your skills? No problem. Check out continuing education classes at a local school, or sign up for a course online.

- [Lynda](#)
- [Skillshare](#)
- [CreativeLive](#)
- [IDEO U](#)

Listen to Some Podcasts

There's a podcast for just about everything these days, and creative entrepreneurship is no exception. Here are some of our favorites.

- [Creative Pep Talk](#)
- [Magic Lessons](#)
- [Design Matters](#)
- [The Great Discontent](#)

Find Some Mentors

The mentorship model has changed. You don't need to find one older mentor to guide you through your whole career. Anyone who you can learn from could be a mentor. Have conversations, take people whose work you admire out for coffee, and ask questions.

- [Having Business Mentors is Key for Success as a Leader](#)
- [Forget "Informational Interviews" – Just Start Having Coffee With People](#)





Does Accounting Give You the Heebie-Jeebies?

FreshBooks makes paperwork less painful
for all you creative types.

Get Started for Free

