



Presented by [Eric's Tips](#)

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Chapter 1

Introduction

How many times have you said you wished that you could work on your own terms? How many times have you had to force yourself out of bed and into the shower so you could commute to work? Perhaps you have hours that don't work well for your lifestyle, or you have to work on holidays.

If you have children, placing them in daycare so you can work may be a necessity. Yet it is also a huge expense. When they get sick, you may have to call off and that can upset your boss. Wouldn't it be nice if there was a way for you to make money from home? To end the hours of commuting and the daycare costs?

There is! Working as a freelancer from home provides you with the freedom that you are looking for. This is a way for you to make money and you can work the hours that are perfect for you. Work from home in your pajamas if you like or create a home office environment.

If you would love to stay at home with your kids, but finances don't allow it, this is an option. Even if you only take them to daycare a few days per week instead of all week long, it will save you money. It will also increase the amount of quality time you get to spend with your family.

Working from home as a freelancer isn't a get rich quick scheme. It is a proven way for you to be able to make money on your own terms. You will get to pick the projects you complete and the people you work with. No more being forced to take on tasks that aren't going to make you happy!

It doesn't take very much money to get started. In fact, if you already have a computer with internet, you have the most important items. We will cover what you will need in a later chapter in more detail.

There is already a demand for freelancers out there, so the work is there. The various sites serve as 3rd parties. They are a bridge between those that need work done and those that can provide such services. Perhaps you have thought about your own business before. Yet the cost of getting started, of creating a product, and of trying to find a market for it was too much.

With freelance work, you can eliminate all of this risks and barriers. This is a wonderful way to get to learn new things and to meet new people. At the same time, you can make money for your household.

Perhaps you are out of work due to the tough economy, and you need to a way to generate some income. Maybe you would like to save money for a vacation or to pay off bills. There are plenty of retirees and college students that also do freelance work.

What often holds people back though is that they are intimidated by the concept. Sure, they like the idea of making money from home, but they

aren't sure how to go about it. They also worry about scams. Unfortunately, there are some, but the good news is that they aren't the norm. We will talk about them more later too.

Many businesses would rather pay a freelancer like you to work from home for them. They don't have to provide you with office space or pay you benefits. You can send them the materials via the internet most of the time. Occasionally, there are jobs where you need to send a physical CD or other item too.

You can work from any location too, so that makes it a wonderful opportunity. My husband works out of town often for work. It is easy for me to come along and to bring my laptop to get my work done. I can do work while I wait for the kids to get done with sports practice sessions or other things they are involved with.

Working as a freelancer is your opportunity to stop stressing about income. It is also your chance to break from a job you hate or a job that results in many hours of commuting for you day after day. If you are interested in doing so, continue reading!

Chapter 2

Is Freelancing a Good Fit for Me?

Freelance work isn't a good fit for everyone, and you need to ask yourself some tough questions to determine this. While making money is a reason to get involved, it can't be just about the money. You need to be disciplined and motivated. Remember, no one will be looking over your shoulder. It is going to be up to you to get work done on time.

If you frequently procrastinate, freelancing isn't going to work out well for you. Waiting until the last possible minute to get the work done is going to create issues. Sometimes, files don't open, the internet isn't working, or you have questions as you get into the project.

Why do you want to make money? I have found those that NEED to make money as a freelancer seem to be a better fit for it than those that just want to kill time. However, this doesn't mean you can't use it as a means to make money. There is a lady down the street from me that does work for a few hours a week.

She doesn't need the money. However, she uses it as a resource to help her learn new things. She is always surfing the internet so she may as well get paid to do so is her philosophy on it.

Are you organized? You are going to need to be able to juggle deadlines with your daily plans. You will need to keep track of deadlines and you will need to be able to break larger projects up into smaller ones.

Are you responsible? If your attitude is it isn't a big deal if you finish the job or not, then this isn't a good fit for you. Someone on the other end of that equation is waiting for you and depending on you. They expect you to do a good job and to be done on time.

If you don't get the work done, you don't get paid. However, for that recipient, there is also the loss of time involved. Now they have to go post their job again and they have to wait for someone else to get the work finished. That isn't fair – and it shouldn't be the result due to a lack of commitment or a lack of responsibility on your part.

Are you motivated? Are you going to be able to get busy working and to take care of things? I had a friend who was making very little money working from home as a freelancer. She was working 50 or 60 hours a week too. I was puzzled, and she was frustrated.

I went through her history, and found that she wasn't really motivated to work. Sure, she was at the computer 8 or 9 hours a day. Yet she was playing games, she was talking on Facebook, and she was watching videos on YouTube. That time was adding up, and she wasn't getting much else done.

Do you enjoy learning new things? Part of the thrill for me with freelance work is that I enjoy learning about new topics. You will find that there are cycles of what is trending and you get to help spread that information for others.

Are you willing to accept change? We all know that technology can change very quickly. Being able to embrace that and to use it to do well as a freelancer is very important. It means being willing to dive right in and to learn as you go.

Are you a fast learner? There can be multiple things you need to understand and to incorporate for a given entity you complete a job for. This can be your chance to learn some very useful skills. Those skills can be used to further expand the umbrella of freelance work you complete.

Hopefully, you are able to identify with many of the elements in this chapter. They are an important part of the overall puzzle for a successful freelancer. If you are weaker in some areas, don't worry. Just knowing that can help you to come up with a plan of action that works for you.

Chapter 3

Organization is a Must

If you are going to be happy as a freelancer, you need to organize your work space and you need to organize your time. I know people that work for 14 hours a day, but don't get much done. I also know those that work for 7 hours a day and they get plenty done.

They know how much they want to earn per day or per month and they set those goals. Once they have reached that dollar amount, they feel free to do what they please. For example, \$100 per day achieved within 5 or 6 hours. Once that is done, they turn off the computer.

There are plenty of ways you can get yourself organized so that organization is a big part of your work from home elements. As a general rule of thumb, eliminate those things you wouldn't do in a typical office setting. However, take some of the perks of being at home. For example, being able to do several loads of laundry throughout the day is awesome!

Time Management

What time of day do you work the best? That is a big part of time management for freelance work. I don't do very well early in the morning. I

have too much going on with kids getting ready for school, walking the dog, etc. However, I don't stress about it too much.

I check my email first thing in the morning to see what I have incoming. There may be someone that needs me to do something in a hurry for them. Touching base with them is important so that they aren't kept waiting for my reply.

Then I am free to take care of what I would like to. I work best in the afternoon, especially when the kids are at school. I can work without interruptions. When it comes to writing, I also work very well late at night. I am a night owl, so working from 10 pm until 2 am is perfect. The kids are in bed and my friends aren't calling to visit with me.

Find what works best for your own cycle so that you are happy. Some people like to get out of bed and work early in the day. That gives them their entire evening free. I also know those that work a few hours here and a few hours there. This is mainly people with small children as they can't work well with little ones and their demands.

Avoid Distractions

Distractions can eat up your time to work, so you need to be careful. Don't get into the habit of surfing the internet for fun when you are working. Instead, carve out time when you can go enjoy your personal emails, social media, etc. Limit that time so that you can get back to work without it being a problem. Set a timer if you need to.

Other distractions can add up quickly too. For example, your friends may be calling to see if you can go to lunch or if you want to go shopping. Think about your time schedule and what you have on your agenda. If you can get out of the house for lunch and to visit, do so. You need that social interaction. If you really can't, decline and make a plan to do it another time.

Avoid chatting on the phone with friends during your work hours. If they call, keep it short and tell them you are working. Let them know you will call them back later when you can. It is going to take some time for them to understand those parameters you are working within. However, if you set those boundaries early, you will find that most people do respect them.

If you have a hard time saying no to people, you may struggle with avoiding distractions. The fact that you are home all day means that people may need your help. You may get calls from a friend asking you to watch their child who is too sick to go to school. You may get called from the school to donate time for a committee.

Maybe your sister needs to go to work but the plumber is supposed to come by with a 4 hour window. If you can go to her house and work, that can be perfect. If you can't, then you have to decide if you can fit that into your schedule. Help people out when you can, but don't say yes all the time and then run into time problems on your end.

Comfortable Place to Work

You definitely need a very comfortable place to work. I have a large computer screen and wouldn't have it any other way. I also have my printer right next to it and a file cabinet underneath. My desk is L shaped so I can move my chair over there and have access to paperwork instantly.

A chair that is comfortable is essential so that your feet and back don't ache. I have room in my basement for an office, but haven't set one up. Why? I prefer being upstairs where I can open the curtains and allow the sunshine to come in. In the summer and spring, I have been known to take my laptop out to the porch on a TV tray and work from there.

From time to time, there are days when I feel like stretching out on my bed or couch. I will do so with my laptop. The key is to always make sure you are comfortable enough that you can be productive. There are many ergonomically correct products out there that make freelance work easier on your body.

Keep Track of Deadlines

Many of the types of work that you will do as a freelancer are time sensitive. The person that is on the other end would like them by the end of the week or even by the end of the day. You have to be very diligent about keeping track of those deadlines. You don't want to miss them.

If you miss a deadline, you let down the person you are working for. They may have plenty of other deadlines waiting for that information. For

example, if you are writing a sales letter for a product they are launching, they are now waiting for you to get it done before they can initiate that launch.

If you often miss deadlines, you are going to have a hard time building up a quality reputation. Even if you do quality work, you won't be trusted or considered to be dependable. You may find that you don't get paid if you are delivering work late. It all depends on the contract stipulations that are in place for that given project.

Now, there are going to be times when you have to miss a deadline. It does happen, and those you work for will understand from time to time. You may get ill or have a sick child and that throws your schedule off. You may have a power outage so you aren't able to get research done.

Make sure that you contact the other party as soon as you can when there will be a deadline delay. Communication is a huge part of doing well as a freelancer. We will cover that in more detail in a later chapter.

Don't procrastinate when it comes to those deadlines. If you have 2 weeks to get a project done, work on it as you are able to. Break it down into manageable pieces so that you can move forward with it. Don't leave it all to do the day before it has to be turned in, and then realize you have an unexpected problem to contend with.

Calendar

Use a calendar that is specifically for your freelancing time to be scheduled. I do this and it has worked very well for me. I write down on the calendar what I plan to work on that day. I also have the deadline for a project next to it.

I add to that calendar anything I need to do outside of the home that day or for the kids. This allows me to carve out my work schedule based on what is taking place. With three teenagers, we have a very busy household and I have to plan accordingly.

Anticipate Interruptions

While you may be very determined to always stick to your schedule, there will be some interruptions. You will have to deal with them and try not to get stressed. You may have to rearrange that calendar in order to make it work out. You may have to move some of your work tasks to the next day. Being ready for such an interruption is important.

Don't let them deter your objectives or to shake your confidence. It is how you handle such issues that will really determine if working as a freelancer is right for you. If you spend that time worried and upset, you aren't being productive.

Don't over Schedule

If you find that you are consistently not getting everything on your calendar done, one of two things is happening. The first is that you aren't allocating

your time as you should and you need to get back on track. The second is that you are over scheduling work and activities.

We all have the same 24 hours in a day to be able to get things done. You can't have them all accounted for on your calendar. As a general rule of thumb, I work 8 hours a day as a freelancer. However, I only schedule for 7. That way if a project takes a bit longer I am not cutting into my free time.

When you first start out, you won't get paid as much for your work. This is because you haven't established quality or reliability yet. As your work status and value improves, you will earn more money for what you do. As a result, you can choose to work less but still make the same amount or more money than you were before.

You will also find that there are various tools offered that help you to achieve your work goals as a freelancer in less time. In a later chapter, we will cover many of these tools. They will help you to get results that are professional and that don't waste your time.

For example, one that I use on a regular basis allows me to change PDF files into Word documents in a matter of minutes. Another helps me to ensure that a rewrite project is sufficiently different from the original so that the search engines won't classify it as duplicate content.

Chapter 4

Communication is the Key to Success

If I was limited to only share one piece of the puzzle with you, I would talk about communication. You can be the best writer or the best website designer, but if you can't communicate well it is going to be a struggle. A freelancer has to be able to take on a variety of types of projects.

Communication involves listening as well as speaking. Most of us don't listen well because we are too busy formulating our answer. Try to improve your listening skills and you will find that it improves your communication. You don't have to rush to be able to reply.

Don't assume

It makes some people crazy that what one person wants is different from the next person. Don't assume that because the last person you worked for liked double spacing that everyone will. Take the time to reply what you think the person wants. By doing so, miscommunication can often be eliminated.

Assumptions will get you into trouble. If you are a controlling type of personality, this can get you into plenty of trouble as a freelancer. It isn't about doing it your way, but about doing it the way that the person requesting the materials will be happy with.

One of my pet peeves is when someone types in all caps. To me, it feels like they are yelling. It also is hard on the eyes as it isn't the norm that I am used to seeing. Yet I have a person that I write articles for every few weeks that wants them all caps for her blog.

While it isn't the format that I would choose for my own materials, I am doing what she likes. This is why she contacts me month after month for more work to be done. If I was to argue with her about it or I didn't pay attention to that request, she would either be asking for revisions or stop asking me to do the work for her.

Ask Questions

No matter how long you have been a freelancer or how many types of work you can do, there will be questions. If you aren't assuming then you will be asking. Never be shy about asking a question for clarification. I have done this on several occasions. Almost every time, the person I am working for says thank you for asking and encourages me to do so if anything else comes up.

Keep in mind that language differences can affect the answers to those questions. Try to keep it all on the same level so that such problems won't

stop you from effectively communicating. For example, if you are working on SEO projects, understand that there is plenty about optimizing that many people don't understand.

If you are new to SEO and optimizing, don't worry. We will cover that in a later chapter. It is a great realm of work to be involved with, and easier than most people think once you fully understand it. Avoid the technical terms when you ask questions and you can get to the core of what you need in no time.

Index card file

You may be saying to yourself that it seems confusing to keep everything organized and to know what everyone wants. My way of ensuring I can do this is with an index card file. This is a physical file that I keep just in case there is a computer problem or power outage.

I have index cards with the person's name or business name at the top. If it is a business, I include the contact person. I file them alphabetically so that I never waste time trying to find what I am looking for.

Each index card also has the following details:

- Agreed upon pay for each type of work
- Email
- Pay dates they offer (some pay after each job, others monthly, etc.)
- Pay method they use

- Phone number
- Types of work I have done for them

It is so easy to create an index card for each person you freelance for. It may be months between when they contact you. However, you can quickly get rolling on the project. I always take notes too and place them on the card.

For example, I have some client's that like the articles to be written in UK English. I have that noted on the index card so that I can do that without them having to remind me each time. It definitely gives the appearance in their eyes that I am very reliable and an asset to them.

Be honest

There is a saying that being honest won't get you all the contacts in the world, but it will get you the right ones. Don't waste your time or that of someone else by not being upfront with them. Freelancing is a business and there has to be mutual respect in place. If that respect isn't there, it doesn't make sense to continue working with them.

Honesty doesn't come easily, and you have to build up trust over time. I have some people I work for all the time. I know that they will pay me, that they will communicate with me, and that they appreciate me. I have no problem jumping in and doing extra for them.

However, I don't always know how to do what they are asking. By being honest, there are times when they have told me that is fine they will find someone else to do it. For example, I am terrible at writing sales letters. I very seldom do it anymore as I am not happy with the quality of my work.

When I am asked to write sales letters, I am honest about where I stand with it. Most of the time, the issue isn't pushed. I have had a few people ask if I will just try, and they will pay me for my efforts. I hate to say it, but they almost always tell me that they aren't going to use it! They can't say I didn't warn them though!

Someone that I do customer service for asked me if I would set up affiliate accounts for them. This was completely new to me, and I let them know it. I didn't pretend I could do it. They were willing to teach me, and offered guidance and videos. It took several months for me to get it – I wasn't sure why I was doing certain things.

Therefore, if one of the results was wrong, I couldn't properly troubleshoot. As they explained things to me along the way, it all started to make sense. I can now set them up and have learned valuable skills. If someone is willing to teach you something new, take them up on that generous offer. However, never pretend to have a skill you don't as you will lose all credibility.

[Share Details](#)

You may not be the only one in the loop, so make sure you share details. I have had to communicate with office staff, fulfillment companies, credit card companies, and more. When you do your part to share details, that other entity can also complete their work efficiently.

It will become a two way street for you as well. I can contact one of many people in my email address book. I know with complete confidence they will aide me in resolving the issue. For example, by contacting a fulfillment company to get a shipment tracking number or to find out if a product has been returned.

Based on such information provided in a timely manner, I can then help the customer I am working with. Sharing details like this helps everyone to achieve the ultimate goal. It also helps with time management so don't hesitate to help when you are the one being asked for details.

Offer Starting Work to see if you are on the Right Track

One of the significant mistakes I see out there when it comes to freelance work is not offering starting work that is accomplished. This is very important when you are working on time sensitive projects.

For example, if you are going to write 25 articles for a new client, don't write all of them and then submit. If you do so, and they aren't happy with formatting or other issues, you now have 25 articles to revamp. That is going to be a significant waste of your time.

Instead, the best way to do it is to complete a couple of them. Then submit them and ask for feedback. If there is anything that needs to be changed or added, you can fix it early on.

Contact Information

Always share contact information with the other party. What you share though depends on how you work with them. If I work independently with someone, I make sure we have exchanged:

- Email
- Phone number
- Text information (find out if they accept text or not)

If you are connecting with the individual through a freelance site, it is important that you follow the rules for that particular site. Many of them only allow contact via that site email. There may be an onsite chat that you can use as well.

Make sure you read those rules and follow them. Many of the freelancer sites have strict rules about sharing phone numbers or personal emails. If you do so, they may ban you from finding work on their site in the future.

Chapter 5

Do the Types of Work you Love

One of the best things about working as a freelancer is you get to pick and choose the types of work you would like to do. No more rolling your eyes after the boss walks out because you just got stuck with a terrible task to complete and there is no one you can complain to about it.

It doesn't make sense to take on jobs that you don't like to do. As I mentioned earlier, I am not a fan of writing sales letters. They do pay well, and there is plenty of work out there involving them. However, I am intimidated by them, I don't like the end results, and I would much rather work on something else.

When you do the types of work that you love, you will find that you are highly motivated to complete it. You will find that you are able to meet those deadlines, your passion in the work will shine through, and you will earn what you get paid and feel good about it.

For example, I often contribute to a website that is for children. It is all about different types of animals. I have done all of the writing about the various animals. We cover where they live, what they eat, social interactions, and unique facts.

Someone else contributes anatomy photos of each animal. Another person contributes a coloring page for each one. They can click on the colors and they can do them online. They can also print out the color sheets and complete them at home.

I love being a part of this project because it is fascinating to learn about various types of animals and species. We have done a complete section on endangered animals too, and it is important to get the message out that their habitats and their future are in danger.

I have had a few very unique projects to work on over the years. They certainly keep this job from becoming routine! One of them was trying to fix an individual's reputation after his business had been a disaster. I helped him to get involved with some charitable causes and we were able to use that as positive publicity for the business.

One of my rush jobs happened to be a young man that asked me to write his wedding vows. We had to communicate a great deal in order for me to get the jest of their relationship. Yet he was very impressed with what I came up. He said it was better than Hallmark!

A how to project that I completed last year was for a lady that really liked a guy. He invited her to a football game, and she was giving him the impression that she loved the game. Truth be known, she did love football, but didn't really understand it. My project was to explain to her the basic rules of the game. She emailed me later and said she had a terrific time at the game!

While this list isn't all you can pick from, it does include the most common freelance types of jobs out there that you can pick from. Some of the categories are going to be far more appealing to you than others. Keep in mind to do what you love and do what you are good at!

About Us

When a new business goes online, they need people to learn about them. You may be asked to create the About Us page. This covers where the business is located, who they are, and what they offer. It may include information about their history of getting into the business. It can also include a mission statement, guarantee, and other details.

You will need to work very closely with them to gather such information and details. If there are several people that work for them, you may be asked to include a profile for each person. That would include several phone calls or emails to gather all of those details.

You may also be asked to complete additional pages such as a warranty page and a terms and conditions page. These tend to go hand in hand with the About Us page but they aren't always inclusive. Make sure you know all of the details of what they would like you to provide before you accept the job or the dollar amount for the job.

Articles

I spend plenty of time writing articles as a freelancer. They range on a variety of topics. In the past week, I have written about bidets and walking for exercise. My upcoming project includes pay day loans and back to school short cuts. Articles are typically going to range from 400 to 700 words.

Some articles are very simple and others require a great deal of research. Don't shy away from articles just because you aren't familiar with the topic. It is a wonderful way for you to learn new things and to make money at the same time. I am curious by nature, so it is a good fit for me as a freelancer.

Customer Service

One of my pet peeves is poor customer service – both online and in person. I think that is why I am passionate about customer service work. I enjoy being able to talk with people. I also enjoy being able to help them resolve issues. You may be asked to track orders, to handle damaged products, to find out about issuing a refund, and more.

With customer service jobs, you have to be able to really learn about the business. You need to be able to answer questions about how a product or service works. You also need to respond to the customer as quickly as possible so that they can have information to proceed with.

Depending on the platform used, you may need to enter payment information. For security, you may only be able to see the last four digits of the credit or debit card that was used. Customer service jobs can be very

difficult to get as the person on the other end has to know that they can trust you.

Another reason they are hard to get is that they are one of the favorites. They pay well, they are enjoyable, and they can continue to challenge the mind. Therefore, once someone obtains a freelance job in the realm of customer service, they are going to try to hold onto it.

The amount of time that goes into successfully training a remote customer service agent also means that the longer you stay, the more valuable you become to that business. Don't worry, customers aren't going to know they are calling you at home or that you are emailing and chatting with them from your home in your pajamas!

Data Compiling

It can take a tremendous amount of time to gather data that can be used for a variety of purposes. You will find that there are lots of jobs out there asking for such information. They have to be able to rely on you because their financing, their business decisions, and even how they present information can all depend on those results.

If you enjoy crunching numbers, this can be a wonderful type of freelance work for you. The pay is very good, and there are fewer freelancers out there trying to take on such work. Time management is essential though if you are going to get involved with it. Those deadlines approach quickly and you must have the time invested in the research to make it work.

Graphs and Charts

Along the same lines as compiling data is putting it into usable forms. You may be asked to expand on it in the form of a report, graphs, and charts. In other scenarios, you will be given the data. You will be asked to put it formation so that it can be visually an aid for various presentations.

e-Books

The demand for e-books continues to grow due to the dependency on the internet. When a person would like to have information, they want it quickly. With the purchase of an e-book, they can download it as soon as they pay for it. They don't have to wait for it to arrive in the mail.

Sometimes, a shorter e-book may be offered for free by a business on a topic that is related to what they offer. One reason it may be offered for free is to share information. However, it can also be used as a hook. When a free e-book is offered online, it often is contingent upon the recipient opting in. This means the company can now send them email marketing materials.

There are always freelance jobs out there for writing e-books. I have done so on a variety of topics including:

- Diet and exercise
- Divorce
- Finances

- Parenting
- Wedding planning
- Weight loss

e-Book Covers

Along the same lines as writing e-books is the process of creating covers for them. Sometimes, you will find that a request for one to be written also demands a cover. Don't let that stop you from asking about the job. I don't create e-book covers, but I am a very good writer.

I have gotten around this problem in two different ways. First, I have told the person requesting the book that I am not able to do the cover but that I can create a very good e-book for them. I provide samples and that is often enough for them to agree to hire someone else to do that cover portion of the e-book.

If they insist that they go hand in hand, I outsource the e-book cover. This means I write the materials, but I set up a project on a freelance site and ask someone to create the cover. I pay them what I will get paid for it, and that enables me to be able to complete the e-book project.

If you outsource the e-book cover, there are a couple of things to keep in mind. First, make sure you set up the project as soon as you start working on the e-book. You want it well before the deadline so that you aren't waiting on it. If that person should fail to provide what you need, there will be ample time for you to hire someone else.

The second part of the risk is that if you pay someone for an e-book cover and then the person that the e-book is written for doesn't like it, you are out that money. You will then have to pay them to make revisions or pay someone else to get it done again. However, an e-book cover is typically only going to cost from \$5 to \$10.

Formatting

There are e-books offered for many different resources. For example, those that are sold on Amazon. However, for them to be sold there, a particular format has to be followed. If you become familiar with that formatting, you can offer your freelancing services for getting it done.

With formatting, you are given the materials and then you just take care of that part of it. I know several freelancers that hate to write, but they format quite well. In fact, I have outsourced to them at times when an e-book project I write for does demand that it is also formatted.

Images

If you enjoy photography, you may really like freelancing to find images. Perhaps someone needs a photo for each chapter of an e-book. Maybe they need some images to make their website more appealing.

There are royalty images online and those that are royalty free. With a royalty photo, you actually buy it and then you own the rights to it. With

royalty free, anyone can use them free of charge. Make sure you find out what the user of these images would like. If they are going to pay for them, find out what the budget is.

They should have a budget to buy them as well as to pay you for your time searching for them. I don't do image work very often, but it can be fun. What often occurs is that the project owner just wants links to the potential photos I think they should buy based on the criteria they gave me.

This saves them a tremendous amount of time as all they have to do is click on the URL's I provide them with. If they like the images, they will buy them. If they don't like some of them, they didn't waste their money. Then I will have to search for a few more to complete the job successfully.

In the resource chapter, I will provide you with a few resources that you can use for finding both royalty and royalty free photos.

Product Reviews

The economy is tough, and people are watching how they spend money more than ever before. As a result, they want to find out about products before they purchase them. Product reviews can be fun, and I often learn a great deal about them.

Recently, I completed a project where I was comparing different brands and models of robotic carpet cleaners. What I learned is that they can be very useful and the more expensive ones often have features that the

average consumer won't use on a regular basis. Therefore, it is economical to buy a base model and program it to clean the flooring for you.

There are more and more online freelance jobs for product reviews all the time. This is because consumers are demanding them. Studies show that products without reviews sell far less volume than those that have positive reviews and feedback about them.

Just make sure you are including both the pros and cons when it comes to product reviews. They should never be biased or one sided and that can be difficult. If the person that asks you to write them is promoting a particular product, they may ask you to spin it so that theirs is the best.

We will take more about ethics and the freelance projects you take on in a later chapter. It is very important if you want to be happy and to make money with such work.

Professional Papers

If the thought of APA style makes you cringe, the category of professional papers isn't one for you to complete. I will write them, but it sure makes me feel old doing so. I don't enjoy them much, but will do them as a special favor to someone that I do enjoy writing articles for.

The concept of writing professional papers though is also an ethical dilemma. I have had people ask me to write them for high school or

college. I have also been approached by some people asking me to write them for them to turn into their boss as they didn't get them done.

Proofreading

Even though we all have grammar check and spell check, there is a need for proofreading to take place. Otherwise, small but significant mistakes can slip through the cracks. Make sure you are diligent with this type of work. You must go beyond just using the tools on your computer.

It requires a very good eye to find those small mistakes. For example, you may find that a person typed an instead of and but the spell check and grammar check let it pass. No one wants to post to their website or put something in print form to later discover such mistakes.

Resumes & Cover Letters

Two essentials that come to mind when looking for work is a powerful resume and a professional looking cover letter. Yet not everyone is good at writing or formatting and this can turn into freelance work for you. Keep in mind that both a resume and a cover letter should be limited to a page each.

In order to do this type of work successfully, you will need to communicate well with the project owner. They need to supply you with their data including personal contact information, education, skills, and previous work

history. They will also need to provide you with the names and contact details of their references.

Re-Writes

If the thought of writing new articles on your own is intimidating, re-write work may be a stepping stone for you. I enjoy this type of work because there isn't any thinking or research involved. If you can type fast, this is a wonderful way to make money quickly too.

A re-write basically means you take materials that are already out there. Then you write them again. The idea is to keep the same context but to change the materials so that the search engines won't pick it up as duplicate content.

Here is an example:

Original – It was very cold and the snow was getting deep. The car wouldn't start and I was terrified to spend the night out there in the unknown.

Rewrite – I could feel the fear rising as the thought of sleeping in the cold all night worried me. My car wouldn't start, and it was already so cold. I could see the deep snow all around me.

There are spinning tools out there that you can use, and I urge you NOT to. It may be tempting but you will get caught. These tools allow you to copy and paste original material. Then it spins it and gives you a new article to

use. Yet they are often lacking in context and the quality isn't going to be there. Don't take on re-write work unless you are willing to do it line by line.

Sales Letters

If you are able to write powerful and compelling sales letters, you are going to make a ton of cash as a freelancer! This is perhaps one of the most sought after characteristics out there in the world of freelancing. Only a small percentage of people can write a great headline, a body that is enticing, and a call to action that gets people to make that purchase.

If you have never done sales letters before, give it a try and see what you think. It can also be useful to read some of the sales letters online. Identify what you really like about some styles and what you hate about others. This will help you to decide how you will write them.

For those that are very creative with words, the appeal of writing sales letters can help them to stay motivated. It is often that you get a base pay for sales letters. However, you also get an incentive to do well by them offering you a percentage of the sales it generates for a set period of time.

For example, you may be offered \$50 for the sales letter. They are going to use it to promote the product for the next 48 hours. You will also earn \$1 extra for each sale that is generated in that window of time. If they don't make many sales, you won't make much from that bonus offer. If the sales are through the roof, you will be raking in the cash!

Search Engine Optimization

I am only going to touch on Search Engine Optimization here as a type of work. It is very important, and therefore a complete section is dedicated to it in a later chapter. Basically, this is a type of writing for websites, articles, and even social media with keywords strategically in placed.

By doing so, it helps to move the business up the ladder in the search engines. The goal is always to get on that first page of results that come back. Think about that the next time you type in specific words into a search engine box. The results you get are connected to the optimization of that particular webpage.

Social Media

If you thought social media was only for fun and for staying connected with friends, you are mistaken. Social media is a low cost way for online businesses to connect with their target audience. They may ask you to write posts for Facebook or to create teasers for Twitter.

You may be asked to monitor social media accounts for a business. Perhaps you will be looking for questions that customers have and get them answered. Maybe you will be watching out for complaints so that they can quickly be resolved. It is possible that you are also trying to weed out SPAM.

Blogs are very popular, and many people enjoy writing them as a freelancer. They are less formal than articles, and a great way to interact with others. You may be asked just to write and then the website owner will post. In other scenarios, you will be asked to write and then to post.

You may be asked to monitor the posts too and to reply to them. In order to do so successfully, you will have to learn about how the business functions. Many business owners realize the value of a blog that is current and trending. However, they freely admit they just don't have time to manage it. Turning that responsibility over to a freelancer is becoming more and more common.

Transcription

One of my least favorite types of jobs is transcription. I do type fast, but I often have to rewind and stop frequently with such work. This involves listening to an audio file and typing it. There is plenty of this type of work available that you may be interested in.

There is general transcription, business transcription, and medical transcription. If you choose to get involved with medical transcription, you do need to be able to spell those medical related terms. Investing in a medical dictionary can be a valuable tool that you rely on often.

Translating

If you speak more than one language, you may find that translation is a great option for you as a freelancer. There are translator tools out there but they aren't going to get you terrific results. Don't take on this type of work unless you can fluently understand and write that other language.

Website Design/Maintenance

Most of us take for granted when we click on a link or type in a URL that a website comes up. It doesn't just appear, someone is working behind the scenes. If you enjoy programming, website design, or maintenance, then there is plenty of freelance work for you.

You do need to be able to work under pressure and to face unique challenges in such a role. Most of the time, this will be an ongoing type of work. You will be responsible for the upkeep of a given website. From time to time, you may be hired just to complete some design changes.

Getting Started

I recommend only selecting a couple of project times in the beginning. This will allow you to really learn the best practices for them. As you become increasingly skilled and organized with them, you can branch out. Ideally, the more types of projects you can complete with ease, the more valuable you are as a freelancer.

The variety will also keep you challenged on a personal level. It is nice to mix it up rather than to do the same thing day after day for me. Yet I do

know freelancers that only transcribe or that only proofread. Find what works well for you and you will be happy and making money as a freelancer!

Chapter 6

Create your Home Office

Create your home office so that it works for you. Some people need a room in the home that is completely quiet. Others, myself included, like some noise going on around them. Of course the amount of space you have in your home can also influence what you decide.

Here are the basics you should have in place to get started. Most of them, you likely already have in place so it won't be a huge investment to get started.

Card File

In a previous chapter, we talked about why you should have a card file in your home office. I use mine all the time, and it sure does cut down on mistakes. It also reduces me asking questions that they have answered in the past.

Computer

You will need a computer with plenty of memory. You are going to start accumulating quite a few files. You don't have to go out and buy a new

computer, but make sure you aren't trying to do freelance work on a dinosaur.

Copy Machine

You may need to have a copy machine for some types of work. I recommend a printer/scanner/fax combo. They aren't expensive, they are simple to use, and they don't take up too much space in your home office either.

Fax

It is my experience that more and more project owners are asking for a signed copy of the agreement. They aren't content with just an emailed response. A fax allows you to read, sign, and send to them without much time in between.

As mentioned, a combo set up with fax is a great idea. It also allows you to get incoming faxes right to your home. If you don't have this option though, don't worry. I know many people have gotten rid of their landline phones and just use mobiles.

There are several sites online that allow you to send and receive faxes. Some of them are free and others have a monthly fee. They will be listed in the resource section for you.

File Cabinet

If you don't have a file cabinet, it is a good idea to get one. I have one that fits under my desk, on the right hand side. Right above it, there is my three in one fax/printer/scanner. Your file cabinet will help you to reduce time looking for items.

Flash Drive

I always keep work that is in progress on my flash drive. I encourage you to do the same. You never know when the power will go out or when your computer may crash. Always be ready with a backup plan in the event you have to work from another location temporarily.

Headset

I find it is hard to type and hold the phone at the same time. I have dropped it once to many times to continue to do so. I have a headset that plugs into my computer with a USB. It has a microphone that I can speak into. This is a great way to be able to talk and either type or take notes at the same time.

Internet Access

Of course you will need internet access in order to find work, to communicate, and to send completed work to the project owner. Make sure you have high speed internet access or you will be wasting time every single day waiting for pages to open and files to download.

Laptop

While it isn't a necessity that you have a laptop, I strongly recommend that you get one if you are going to take part in freelance work. This will help you to be mobile if you need to do work away from home. It is terrific if you travel often or you need to take kids to various events.

Phone Line

You will need to have a phone line in order to do freelance work successfully. Some people get a separate line just for work. I use my mobile for everything, including work. I have unlimited minutes and I also can call to any location in the world. That may be important as some of the project owners may be in another time zone or another country.

Software

The types of software that you need to have will depend on the work you wish to do. As a freelancer, you may find that you should purchase some graphics software for e-book covers and other artistic options such as logos.

The basics you should have include Microsoft Word and Excel. You can get by with these two basic options of software for a wide spectrum of freelance work projects. As you expand and as you make money, you can decide if you would like to invest in some additional software.

Hopefully, you already have a powerful anti-virus protector on your computer. If not, you must have one. It isn't just your information at stake now. If you are doing various forms of work such as customer service, you definitely don't want to compromise that information that belongs to someone else.

Chapter 7

Understanding your Tax Responsibilities

They say in life, only two things are guaranteed, death and taxes! If you live in the United States, you are responsible for reporting your income and paying taxes on it.

If you live in any other country, you need to make sure you are in compliance with any laws or regulations that exist. The information in this section is going to pertain to your tax responsibilities within the USA only.

EIN vs. Social Security Number

When you sign up through the various freelance sites, you will need to set up your account. Most of them are going to ask you for either an EIN (Employee Identification Number) or social security number. This is for income tax reporting purposes.

Many people are hesitant to use a social security number. This is due to the risk of fraud. However, if you work with freelance sites that are verified

to be legitimate, you should be fine. Still, you never know if their database will ever be compromised.

A way to protect your social security number is to apply for an EIN. The application is through the IRS (Internal Revenue Service). Anyone who classifies themselves as a sole proprietor can apply. The application can be completed online. It can also be printed out and then mailed in.

An EIN is only offered for tax related purposes. You will still have to use your social security number for your personal accounts. You will still have to provide your social security number for verification of the various payment methods such as Paypal. We will cover payment methods in a future chapter.

It is a personal decision to use your social security number for everything or to get an EIN. Sometimes, an entity will take you more seriously if you have an EIN as they identify it with a professional business versus an individual. Most of the time though it doesn't matter so do what works best for you.

If you do get an EIN, make sure you are consistently using it. The IRS will have the EIN tied to your social security number. This makes it possible for them to ensure that your tax reporting purposes have been completed successfully.

1099 Forms

When you work as a freelancer, it is your responsibility to make sure all of your tax information is reported. For various freelance companies that you work through, they can send you a 1099. This is a miscellaneous income form with the gross amount that you earned through them for the reporting year.

Any freelance entity that you work through that pays you more than \$600 in a reporting year has to provide you with a 1099 form. However, that law only applies if they are based in the USA. If they are based in another country but you live in the USA, you won't get one.

However, you are still legally obligated by law to report that income. You should report all of it regardless of receiving a 1099 form or not. For those entities that pay you less than \$600 for a given reporting year, they won't give you a 1099. Even if you only make \$200 from them, report it. You don't want any issues with the IRS.

Document Earnings

There are many ways you can document your earnings. The key is to find a method that works for you. It also has to be consistent. You need to document your earnings the same way all year long.

My method is very simple. I get paid on different days of the week depending on when the work is finished. It also depends on if I did the work independently or through a freelance site.

I document for each person that I get money from in a given month. I document:

- Business name
- Amount
- Date
- Method of payment

Unpaid Earnings

Hopefully, you will get paid for all of the work you do. Sadly, there are times when that isn't going to happen. Maybe you were set up to work on a job worth \$500 and it was a mess from the start. After communicating with the project owner, it was decided they would accept the work but only pay you \$300.

You accepted it to gladly get out from under it. Still, you feel you lost out on \$200 due to the time you put into that work that you didn't get paid for. Document that on your taxes as unpaid earnings. At the very least, it will count as a deduction. It will reduce the amount of overall tax liability you have. A small amount of recourse for the money you missed out on.

Document Expenses

Just as important as documenting your income is documenting your expenses. Any time you spend money for something that

is business related, you can use that as a business deduction. You need to document:

- Date of purchase
- What you purchased
- Total dollar amount
- Dollar amount for business use

Fees online are a big deduction that add up so don't forget about them. For example, if you earn \$400 on a job and get paid through Paypal, they keep a portion of that money. Typically, just a few dollars for their role as a 3rd party in the transaction. Keep track of all of those fees as you can use them for your tax deductions.

Deductions to Consider

Some types of deductions for your freelancer business you will think of right away. Others though can easily slip by if you aren't thinking about them. Always check with the legal part of tax filing to make sure that there isn't anything you are overlooking.

Office expenses are very common when you operate a freelance business. I have two computers, one is for business use only. Anything I buy for it include software is a deduction. For example, I annually buy a new anti-virus for it.

However, I only have one printer. When I buy paper and ink for the printer, it is for both computers. Therefore it isn't 100% business use. I can only legally count $\frac{1}{2}$ of the cost of the ink and $\frac{1}{2}$ of the cost of the paper. Should I buy a new printer, I would be able to use $\frac{1}{2}$ of that price as a business expense.

I use my phone for business daily. I only have one phone so there again it is also a $\frac{1}{2}$ deduction. However, I do know people that have two phones – and one is solely a business number. If that is the case for you, then that would be a 100% deduction for that particular phone.

If you do any types of advertising for your freelance business, those are business expenses. For example, if you hire someone to spread your information through social media. If you create business cards you can deduct the cost of them.

Being able to connect with others that do freelance work is an eye opening experience. There are often workshops and gatherings that are hosted by the various freelance sites. I have been to a few of them, and they are amazing. I learned so much in a few days that I was able to apply to my work habits.

I also made some terrific contacts when it comes to the work I do. I consider some of these individuals both business associates and friends. If you travel to such events, those expenses are deductible on your taxes. This includes:

- Car rental
- Air fare
- Meals
- Registration fees/Materials
- Hotel cost

If you decide to go enjoy other events while on a business related travel, you can't deduct those costs. For example, when I went to New York for such an event, a group of us went on an evening cruise. That wasn't considered to be a tax deduction as it was a leisure activity.

A home office is a very often overlooked tax deduction. The specifics for this can change often, so keep up to date on the laws when it is time to file your taxes. Typically, you will need to measure the dimensions of your home office. This includes computers, equipment, desks, file cabinets, etc.

There is a formula that the IRS uses to calculate your deductions for a home office. You will take the dimensions and also enter the overall square footage of your home. This offers a percentage of your home that is used for your business office. Once that is established, you can deduct a percentage of your utilities and home owner's insurance.

Spreadsheet

Staying organized with your tax information is very important. Don't leave taxes until the end of the year or you are going to have a huge mess. I use

a spreadsheet and it is clean and simple. I keep a copy on my computer and a printed copy in my file cabinet.

I have each month on the spreadsheet, and at the top is the income section. At the end of the month, I add up all of my income for that timeframe and I enter it. Only add the income you actually received. If you have work in progress and the funds in escrow, count such money in the month you get it.

At the bottom of the spreadsheet, I have each month and a space for the total expenses. Add them all up that you incurred in that given month. It is as simple as that. For the end of the year taxes, that spreadsheet is my lifesaver. Hold onto your verifications though in case you ever get audited by the IRS.

Business Savings Account

I strongly encourage you to set up a business only savings account for tax purposes. As a freelancer, that amount of money you earn is going to add up quickly. You don't want to get to the end of the year and realize you owe quite a bit to the IRS for taxes.

When you have your own business based in the USA, you will have to pay self-employment taxes. This is a percentage of your income after all of your deductions have been calculated. There are many variables that play a role in this including your number of dependents and any other income for the household.

Therefore, it is extremely hard to predict what your tax liability will be from the freelance work you do. I have a business savings account set up that I use as a safety net. I only use it for tax purposes and occasionally for a business related expense. I put 15% of what I earn as a freelancer into that account.

Last year, I owed about \$700 on my taxes. I has significantly more than that in my business savings account. With the extra, we painted our home and I paid off a vehicle loan. Then I started the savings account all over again. The previous year, I owed almost \$2,600 in taxes so it was important that I had that money in the savings account.

Tax Laws

Keep in mind that tax laws and responsibilities change often. Make sure that you stay on top of them if you do your own taxes. If you use a tax software program, you will be asked a series of questions. Then you will get the correct documents completed as it takes you through all of the forms that pertain to how you answer.

If you pay someone to prepare your taxes for you, make sure you talk to them about what you can use as deductions. Save your receipts throughout the year so that you can verify the information on the spreadsheet you provide to them.

Chapter 8

Setting up Accounts for Payments to be Received

You will need to consider your payment methods and set them up. How do you want to be paid for the freelance work that you do? First of all, you need to explore what the freelance sites you work through allow.

Most of them accept the following:

- PayPal
- Physical check sent to you
- Direct deposit to a checking or savings account

Paypal

The payment method that gives you the most flexibility as a freelancer is Paypal. It is universally accepted, and many people are familiar with it. It is owned by eBay and it offers many types of transactions every single day all over the world. The majority of the payments I receive for my freelance work are done through Paypal, and I love it!

Paypal is very fast, which is important when you are tracking payments coming in. You will get an email every time that money is deposited into your account. You will also get an email every time that you pay for something out of your account. You can use your Paypal account to shop online. Many check out systems are designed to accept this method of payment for your convenience.

It is going to take about a week to get your Paypal account set up. This is why it should be one of your top priorities when it comes to starting your freelance business operations. The reason it takes time is that Paypal is going to verify who you are. This prevents fraud accounts from being easy for people to set up.

The application will take you about 5 minutes to complete. You will need to include your name, address, social security number, and phone contact. You will need to attach a savings or checking account to your Paypal account. The company will make a small deposit to that account in the days following your application. It is usually under \$1.

For verification purposes, you will have to enter that amount in the fields on the Paypal screens. There are some other security measures you have to go through to complete your account. They change from time to time to prevent fraud, so you may not know what all they ask for until you create your account.

Once you have your Paypal account set up, you can use it in a variety of ways. First, you can buy items online that accept Paypal as a form of payment. However, not everyone accepts Paypal. An easy way to get around this is to apply for the Paypal debit card.

It will be mailed to you within a couple of weeks of setting up your account. There is no annual fee and you do earn a cash back bonus each month. That bonus depends on how much you use your Paypal debit card and the total amount of money you use for those transactions.

It looks like any other debit card, and you can use it to pay for anything online you like that accepts debit cards. There is a 3 digit security code on the back just like your bank ATM card. You can also use this Paypal debit card at the grocery store, to pay bills, to pay for dinner, and even to get gas at the pump! Basically, anything you could use a traditional debit card for.

I don't keep all of my funds on my Paypal debit card, but you can if you would like to. I transfer a portion of it to my business savings account that was covered in a previous chapter. I also transfer a portion of my funds to my household checking account. It takes up to 3 business days for the transfer to be completed.

If you need funds right away, you can always take your Paypal debit card to an ATM. There will be ATM fees assessed, and they vary based on the location. Such fees have to be posted at the ATM for you to review.

If you work for people all over the world, you may have an issue with denominations from time to time. Paypal can really be a lifesaver in that regard for you too. I often do work for a real estate company in Canada. I help with writing up reviews for property sale based on the photos.

They are able to pay with their standard method of payment. The Paypal system will convert it to my selection which is the USD. You aren't going to have to negotiate with the person you work for in order to get a common form of payment set up. You don't want to let the barrier of a different country prevent you from working as a freelancer on jobs you really want.

Paypal also makes it convenient to see all of your transactions at a glance. Each month, you get a statement that shows your balance, income, and debits. You can search for transactions by date, amount, or provider information. Statements are a wonderful way to find out your fees paid per month too.

At the end of the year, the Paypal annual statement is a great benefit. It shows you all of the transactions for the year. The format is very simple to read and it helps you to see at a glance where you are getting the majority of your earnings from. It also shows you where you are spending your hard earned cash!

Paypal has a wonderful support system in place, and I have never been disappointed. You can call in and use the automated system. This allows you to check your balance and to transfer funds to other accounts.

You can also talk to live support. They can help you to identify a transaction that you don't recognize. They can help you to file a claim if you would like to get a refund on something you purchased online. It is important to know that you do have people in place to help you with fast, friendly service when you need it.

One of the newest offers by Paypal is called Working Capital. When you are self-employed, it can be much harder to get a personal loan. If you don't have a high credit score, it can be hard to borrow money. With this option, there is no credit check. If you have an established Paypal account in good standing, they can help.

The application only takes a few minutes to complete. Then you will be given a maximum loan amount. That amount is based on the average earnings in your Paypal account each month. Typically, the loan amount will be up to 30% of what you earn annually.

There is no set repayment schedule either. Instead, you choose a percentage of your earnings from freelance work that you want them to keep. It can be as low as 5% or as high as 50% of your income. There is no interest that accrues on the balance, but there is a one-time fee for the loan. That amount depends on the amount you borrow.

This may be a very good way for you to borrow money from time to time when you need to. Be smart about the debts you take out though, and only borrow what you really need to. Pay back the funds as soon as you can too.

Physical Checks

There are freelance sites that will send you a physical check in the mail for the work you do. However, they often require a minimum payout amount. They aren't going to send you a check for less than \$25 for example. This is due to the cost of processing.

Physical checks can be hard to cash unless you have a checking or savings account established at a bank. You can go to a check cashing/check advance location. However, they can charge you a fee for cashing the check, and it is usually ridiculously high.

Your local grocery store may have a service desk that is willing to cash a physical check for you. However, it can depend on the dollar amount. If it is too much, they may decline doing so. Cashing a physical check also means the risk of your cash getting lost or stolen.

It can take 7 to 10 days for a physical check to arrive. Are you going to be stressed waiting for the mail every day until that check arrives? If so, you may be better off going with another choice for payment.

Direct Deposit

Many of the freelance sites do offer direct deposit. You can avoid the hassle and delay of a paper check. The funds will be placed right into your checking or savings account at the bank.

Minimum Payouts

Many freelance sites do require a minimum payout amount. You can set this up on your account, depending on the site. For example, some sites won't offer you a payout less than \$10. If you only earned \$7 for that period of time, it carries over until the next payout. This is how it works at www.textbroker.com.

Payout Dates

Determining when you will get paid is very important so you can budget your household. Some sites have set pay days such as every Friday. Others offer payment on the 1st and 15th of each month. Make sure you pay attention to those payout dates so you can be sure you budget well.

There are sites including www.elance.com where there aren't any set payout dates. Once the funds are released out of escrow, you can ask for them to be released to you. If you don't need them just yet, you can allow them to accrue until you want them.

Payment Milestones

If you are doing a large job for someone, it is going to pay better. For example, there is a difference between writing 20 articles for someone and writing a 200 page e-book for them. You will still need to agree upon the overall amount for the job.

However, with a larger job, it is recommended that you set up milestones along the way. This allows them to review the work so far and to make sure you are on track with it. At the same time, it helps you to be able to have some funds coming in for that job.

For example, if you were writing a 200 page e-book, you can set up milestones for every 50 pages. When you reach such a milestone, send them what you have completed. They can review and then release $\frac{1}{4}$ of the funds that are in escrow. This process will continue until the project is completed.

I strongly urge you to have milestones in place for larger jobs. Not only does this help with cash flow, it is a safety guard. You don't want to spend weeks working on a project and then they don't accept it – and you don't get paid at all. Be proactive with offering quality work and ensuring you get paid for those efforts!

Chapter 9

Finding Work on Freelancing Websites

By this point, I know you are excited to find work and get started! Finding work on freelance sites isn't hard at all! In fact, there are thousands of jobs out there every single day. That is the good news... but the flip side to it is that not every job is right for you.

Never take job based on the money offered. Take jobs that you qualify for so that you can earn that money. You can learn new things later on so don't put the horse before the cart. Not all freelance sites are the same. They are designed differently and offer various features.

Take your time to explore the various options you have. At the end of this chapter, I have listed some great freelancing websites for you to consider. I am not associated with any of them. I don't endorse any above the rest. I list them simply because I have signed up for each of them and I have also done work on them.

If there are terrific sites missing from my list, it is either because I do not know about them or that I haven't worked with them before. I worked only

through Rentacoder.com for many years. Then they merged with www.elance.com.

Selection Versus Bidding

One of the main things you will find as differences among the freelance sites has to do with how you get work. The two main options are selection or bidding. With the selection process, jobs are listed until someone takes them. This is a first come, first served type of option.

With some of the sites, you take one article to write, edit, or proofread. You will have 24 hours to complete it and submit it for review. You can't take another until you finish what you have already taken. With other sites, you can take up to 5 or 10 articles at a time to complete.

There is going to be a set price given for that article. If you agree that you will write 1,000 for \$8 that is what you get. If you agree that you will receive \$15 for that 1,000 words that is terrific! All of it is there for you to decide before you take the work.

With bidding projects, there is a listed project and a time when bidding ends. You will create a bid for how much you will charge to get the work completed for that individual. They will select the bid from all of the offers. They are looking for a fair price but also for high quality.

Don't assume that your offer won't be selected just because you are a high bidder. If you have great feedback and quality samples, they will be

impressed. I typically charge \$1 per 100 words when it comes to writing articles. However, if there is SEO (covered in a later chapter) I will charge more.

I will also charge more if the work requires a great deal of research. For example, medical jobs or medications require lots of research. When you need to provide statistical information that data can also take time to gather and evaluate. Learning how much to charge takes time, and we will also cover that in a later chapter.

Too much Work?

Don't let freelance work become feast or famine for you. Control the amount of work that you take on. Now, that can be difficult when you place bids, but there are ways to control it. When you bid, you never know how many jobs you will get approved for.

If you get approved for a couple, terrific! Get them done! If you win 5 that day, it can be impossible for you to meet deadlines. Therefore, you can go withdraw from what you have won. Almost all of the sites allow you to do so within a given timeframe.

I don't bid too often anymore. I have other work that I do daily for people. When that is done, I prefer to go to the sites that allow you to take work and do it. Then I can complete such work all day long if I want.

There are plenty of days when I have requests in my inbox for work to complete. Therefore, I can do that and not even go look for work to take on for days at a time. This helps me to get the most out of my available work hours too.

What to Look for

Don't take a job just because it is there. Take your time to really look at what it offers. For example, many sites allow you to see how many projects a person has put up. It tells you how many they have approved, how many they have in progress, and how many they have declined.

This information is very valuable in your decision to do work. I never do work for anyone who has less than a 90% acceptance rate. If they aren't approving large amounts of work, it could be that they are hard to work for. It could also mean they don't give clear instructions.

I take my time accepting work from someone that is brand new. They may be a terrific person to work with, but I don't want to have high risks. If the job is just for a few articles or a small e-book, I will take it. Yet I hesitate to do a large job for someone who is brand new. It just hasn't worked out well for me in the past.

Look at the feedback for a person that has posted jobs too. With someone that is brand new, there is nothing to compare to. Feedback tells you the types of experiences that other people have had with that individual. Avoid working with anyone that people seem to have difficulties with.

Feedback is usually a double blind process. When you complete a project, take the time to leave feedback for that individual. If they offered great communication and approved the work fast, let others know that. Be fair in your reviews and warn others if there were problems.

The person that posted the project also gets the chance to leave feedback about you. Take the time to read what they share. Others that may hire you are going to use that to help them narrow down their final selection. If there are complaints about you, it can harm your chances of getting that work. If you notice a theme of complaints, it can show you where you need to make improvements.

The double blind process means you don't get to see the review that was left for you until you leave one. That ensures that people aren't basing what they write on what they have read about them.

Quality Listings

Nothing makes me crazier than someone asking me to do work for them but doesn't give me good details. Now, part of that stems from them not really knowing what you need. Your feedback can help to encourage them to create better listings.

A quality listing should tell you:

- What they need

- When they need it
- Special instructions

Here are some examples to give you an idea of what I mean.

Poor quality:

Write an e-book on fishing in Alaska with pictures

Such a listing is certainly open to interpretation!

Quality:

Write a 40,000 word e-book on fishing in Alaska with table of contents.

I will provide the chapter titles

Need one royalty free photo for each chapter

Need this job completed within 10 days of approval

14 font, Times New Roman in both Word and PDF formats

The second listing gives you a good vision of what they are looking for with that particular project. When listings are vague you can choose to skip over them or you can ask questions.

Ask Questions

Always ask questions when you need to have something clarified. You can ask questions before you submit a bid/accept a job. You can ask questions while you are working on it. Always ask the questions through the official freelancer site. This ensures that there is a record of what the discussion entailed.

If the questions don't get answered, don't work on it. If they try to give you a poor rating, dispute it. The facilitators of the freelancer website can easily check that you gave it a reasonable effort to get into contact with that project owner.

Dispute Resolution

One of the reasons that I love freelancer sites is that they have amazing customer support. Some are better than others, but for the most part they all strive to be helpful. I have had to contact them before due to medical emergencies or power outages and work couldn't get done.

I have had to contact them when project owners weren't being fair in my eyes. They were asking for more to be added to a project than what they listed. You have to watch out for that! Now, there will be times when someone says to you can you also do this for me? It is possible you can add it in at no cost.

For example, if I am working on an e-book and someone says can you write me a ½ page synopsis for Amazon, I will throw that in at no cost.

However, if they want me to add tons more materials or create a workbook, then they need to pay extra for it.

Negotiate all of those extras through the communication system of the freelancing website. That way if it isn't honored, you can get dispute resolution involved to help you out.

If a project owner doesn't accept your work, they can ask for some revisions. If they are still being difficult and you think the work is great, get help. Don't continue to get wrapped up in a time consuming struggle. For the most part, you will never need such help. However, it is a treasure when you do need a 3rd party to step into the ring.

Escrow/Payment Information

One of the enormous perks of working with a 3rd party resource is the abundance of work. The other is that they can help ensure you do get paid for the work you complete. Once a project is accepted, the funds for it are placed into an escrow account.

When you complete the work, they have a period of time to review it. They can either accept it and release the money or ask for corrections. With that money safely in escrow, you know it is there. Should the project owner not release the money, contact the 3rd party.

They will evaluate the work. If it holds up to the verifications in the project request, they will get you the funds released. If it doesn't, then they will either opt for you to get a portion of the funds or none of the money.

For example, if you were to write an e-book with photos but there aren't images, they may deduct a percentage of that escrow and give it back to the project owner. If they find that the e-book is poor quality or copied, they are going to give all of the escrowed funds back to the project owner.

Escrow protects you and it protects those that set up the project. It is a winning outcome. Of course the 3rd party is going to keep a percentage of the earnings for the services they offer. Yet you will find those fees are very minimal.

Blocking

Should you have a difficult experience with a project owner, get it done and over with. Not everyone is kind to work with, and that is a part of life. Don't work with them again! Most of the freelance sites allow you to block particular members. You can block them from contacting you again. You can also block future projects that they offer from showing up.

Favorites

You will also have the option to add certain project owners to your favorite list! These are people that you have enjoyed working with, and that you will gladly work for again. When they list new work, it can be featured so that

you don't miss it. There will be those project owner's adding you to their own favorites list as well.

In fact, they may invite you to projects in the future. This means they have selected you to work on it rather than opening it up for the general population of freelancers to work from. This is a great honor, and something to think about. If you don't want to do the work, decline and they will find someone else. However, it could be the start of a terrific ongoing work relationship between the two of you!

The list of freelancing websites where you can find work continues to grow! There is no shortage of work out there, and that is what makes this type of business so amazing! If you want to work all day long, you can get the jobs that pay well and that interest you.

It is easy enough for you to get a few jobs going from several different sites. Keep in mind that you have to manage your time and you have to meet all of the different deadlines. Here are the main freelancing websites I work through and that I know are legitimate.

- www.textbroker.com
- www.zerys.com
- www.needanarticle.com
- www.elance.com
- www.freelancer.com
- www.Odesk.com

- www.guru.com
- www.iwriter.com

Take some time to review them and to decide what you like the best. I suggest you only set up a few accounts to start with. This will allow you to get a good feel of how their system works. As you get more work from these sites and you feel comfortable, add more to those that you work through. It does increase your chances of finding the work you really want to do the most.

Chapter 10

Working Directly with Clients

It takes time to build quality relationships with others, so go slowly. The decision to work directly with certain clients is up to you. Be very selective, and trust your gut. Don't feel pushed into working with them outside of the freelancer site.

You will find those that are looking for long term relationships. They don't want to spend the time setting up every project on those sites. They also feel that they are wasting money due to the fees on those sites. They want to work with you directly and pay you directly.

Now, this can be a scam or it can be a great opportunity. There needs to be several guidelines in place if you are going to work directly with clients. Ask them why they want to do so and see what answer they give you.

Do you feel that the level of communication is going to be there to ensure you don't have issues? You won't have the help of a 3rd party resource in the mix. Can they trust you to get the work done and to always uphold your end of offering top quality? It has to be a two way street with trust and mutual respect to make it work.

I have a few people that I work directly with. They are amazing people both personally and with their professional business endeavors. They treat me well, pay on time, and they answer my questions.

I hope to be able to continue working with them. Not only to build my own credibility as a freelancer, but I enjoy seeing their businesses grow and change too. Some of them I work with all the time. Others, contact me now and then when they need me.

When you branch out to work independently with certain clients, protect yourself. Don't provide them with bank account information. What if they turn out to be a scam? Sadly, you can't be too careful so you must protect yourself!

Once again, Paypal is my payment method of choice when I work with someone independently. In almost all instances, you should have them pay you in advance. Here is the reason why!

If they pay you in advance and you don't provide what you stated you would, they can get a refund from Paypal. They can file a dispute and Paypal will investigate it. Keep all of your correspondence in case you have to prove your side of things with Paypal at some point.

However, if you do the work, and they don't pay you are simply out the cash! I have been there and it is no fun! There is absolutely no recourse for you to get that money back. There are people out there that will take advantage of freelancers so don't let them do it to you!

Once you build up a relationship with someone, then you may wish to consider them paying you after work is done. I have some people I write for, and they just give me free range with a topic. I can write 1,000 words or I can write 5,000 words for them.

They want to make sure I cover all the key points. They don't want it to be missing information because I hit my word count. On the other hand, they don't want it to be full of fluff as I strive to get enough words to satisfy their requirements. They will pay me after it is all done and I send them an invoice.

I have a few people that I do hourly work for each week. I send them an invoice with Paypal each week. They have always kept their end of the deal. As a result, I am very dedicated to what they need. If they ask for something in a hurry or they ask for something additional, I will do it as soon as I can for them!

The decision to work directly with clients is a personal one. I don't recommend it when you are just getting started. However, it is something that you may wish to consider in time. I am very selective in who I work with independently, and that has served me well.

I do know freelancers that refuse to work outside of the 3rd party sites. That is certainly your option. If a project owner really wants you to work for them, they may consider staying through the site. It is certainly easier for them to do so than to try to find someone that offers them all you have.

Chapter 11

SEO

Throughout the previous materials, you have seen the term SEO. I promised it would be covered in a later chapter – and here it is! SEO stands for Search Engine optimization. It is a huge part of what goes on behind the scenes on the World Wide Web.

SEO practices need to be ethical and they need to be fair. You may find many jobs out there asking you to write for SEO purposes. Yet people tend to shy away from such work because SEO has such a bad reputation.

When you type in a word or keywords into a search engine box, you get pages and pages of content back. Most of us start at the top of that content and find what we need. If we don't find it by the time we get to the end of the first page, we are likely to enter another keyword or keyword phrase.

This means websites and webpages that are many pages deep get ignored and overlooked. The goal of every website owner out there is to get ranked very high on that first page. It increases the amount of traffic. With more traffic to the site, there are higher rankings.

You can't figure out the overall formula for search engines including Google and Yahoo. They keep a big part of it secret to reduce manipulation of SEO. However, adding new content that gets indexed regularly is one of the ways to improve SEO score and climb up that ladder in the search engines.

Of course once you are highly ranked, there is the fight to stay in such a position. There will be others in the same niche trying to get those few spots. That is where you can be a valuable asset as a freelance writer. You can create that content for them so that they can focus on other elements of their business.

You may be asked to write:

- Blogs
- Social media content
- Sales letters
- Webpages
- Articles
- Newsletters

A term that you will hear often with SEO is keyword density. You can't just pack the written materials with keywords and expect that they will get indexed. Instead, you have to balance it out. The goal is to write so that the materials flow well for the reader. At the same time, they need to be well written so that the search engines will index and rank them highly.

Keyword density refers to the frequency of how often keywords show up in the materials. For example, if you are writing a 500 word article, you don't want to have the keyword show up more than 3 times. If you are writing 2,500 words, you can include it up to 10 times and still have that balance.

Often, the project owner will give you specific keywords that they would like you to work with. You must use those words or phrases exactly how they have them listed. It can be tough if they don't make complete sense, but you must use them. This is because they feel people will be typing in those words exactly into search engines.

Sometimes, the words they give you will be intentionally misspelled. This is a clever way to improve SEO points. There are words out there that the average person will commonly misspell in search engines. When the materials have them and match, then that gets the materials a very high ranking.

Not everyone will give you the materials to work directly from. Instead, you will have to engage in a process called keyword mining. This involves you searching for the keywords that are the most relevant to that particular niche.

The best place to find them is in the various search engines themselves. Have you ever gone into Google and as you start to type something in, it will offer you options? This is called Google Instant. Pay attention to what comes up as you type in a keyword.

Make a list as those are your keywords to use for your materials when you are mining. Type in each one of those keywords, and you can dig deeper and deeper. The goal is to come up with a list of 10 to 15 keywords that you can use. This will get you indexed higher than if you have only 1 or 2 keywords that you continue to enter over and over again in your materials.

I generally charge \$2 per 100 words when SEO is involved. This is due to the additional time for keyword mining. You also have to be mindful of keyword density. If there are additional terms and conditions that the project owner injects, that can also influence pricing.

If you are new to freelance work, SEO may not be a good place to start. Give yourself some time to learn the ins and outs of the business first. Focus on writing general articles and general blogs for social media. Once you feel like you have a firm foundation in place, try out the SEO.

Not only does it pay very well, but it can be a challenge that you stay motivated by. It also pays significantly better due to the value it holds for the project owner. It is also very enjoyable to see what you have written ranking very highly on the various search engine pages!

Chapter 12

Take on the Challenges

In order to do well in the realm of freelance work, you need to face the challenges head on. We can run away from things that intimidate us or we can learn more and face them. I love to tackle challenges in my work and to grow as an individual.

I am always willing to learn something new, and I hope you will be too. The world of freelancing changes often due to the needs of the project owners. Being on board when they need something new or they need it quickly is important.

There have been quite a few challenges that I have faced in my work as a freelancer. I used to be intimidated by SEO until a terrific person that I worked for was patient enough to walk me through it. The learning process was time consuming but it has helped me to complete an abundance of work.

Another area where I have had to work hard is with learning Excel. Figuring out formulas has been frustrating at times. Use the help that project owners are willing to give you and when they offer to teach you something. You

can also use online tutorials to help you. Remember, the more you use a tool or a given platform, the more you learn about how it operates.

If you are familiar with blogs, then you may have some experience with WordPress. For years, I was writing blogs for people. I would provide them the information on a given topic and that was the end of my part of the equation. One day, a project owner asked me to not only write on a weekly basis, but to post to WordPress.

I let them know that I was new to WordPress and that I was willing to learn how to do it. They spent some time creating a video for me to follow and that was how I began to understand the fundamentals of WordPress. I saved that video as a learning tool that I could refer to any time I needed to.

When you are willing to take on new challenges, it does allow your skill set to increase. You are more valuable to a frequent project owner if you can do a variety of tasks for them. They don't want to have to look for someone they can trust to do this part of it and then someone else to do that part of it.

Technology changes all around us very quickly. By being up to the challenges as a freelancer, you will be able to really learn more than you ever thought possible. When it comes to technology, I often feel inadequate. My kids will tell you that it has just been in the last year that I can even sync my own iPod. Yet I am always encouraging myself to see what I can do. More than once, I have really amazed myself with the outcome!

Even though you do take on the challenges, there are going to be areas of freelance work that you just aren't able to do. That is okay, none of us can take on all of these areas. For me, sales letters are my downfall. I am not creative when it comes to sales pitches or ideas. I have to look at other headlines and formats to see what I like.

Yet in the end, I feel like what I offer is just too similar to what is already out there. As a result, I no longer try to challenge myself with this type of work. I feel that it eats up too much of my time. I also feel that what the results are that I submit to the project owner aren't high enough quality for me to be proud of.

Chapter 13

Confidentiality and NDA

As a freelancer, you should hold yourself to a high level of responsibility. What you do is affecting other people. If you are in the role of offering customer support, you need to be fair to everyone. You need to apply the rules that the project owner has in place regarding refunds/replacements and assistance.

Just because you are having a bad day, you can't take it out on them. Just because they were hateful to you doesn't mean you hold off giving them what they need for a few days. You have to be thick skinned and not take what is said personally. Just do your job and move on.

This doesn't mean you let people yell, scream, and treat you terribly all day though. It just means that you be selective in what you pursue to a higher level and what you handle on your own within the realm of rules and consistency. Always remember that you are representing that other party and their business.

With that in mind, never share customer service information with other parties. Don't sell lists of names or email addresses. Don't disclose address

information or credit card details. You have to uphold your end of everything so that it will be secure.

Confidentiality is very important when it comes to freelance work. You will find that you are very rarely offered any credit for your work. It is all done as a ghostwriter or behind the scenes entity. You have no legal right to use that work again once you are paid for it.

You shouldn't be sharing with any other parties who you have done work for or the scope of that work. There are times when you will have competitors in the same type of niche asking you to do work. That can be a conflict and you may just have to tell one party that you have to decline their job offer at the time. You don't have to disclose to them why.

Think about all of it as you would within the brick and mortar world of a business. You wouldn't be out there sharing those details with others about clients or about what has taken place in the spectrum of work. Have that same level of privacy and confidentiality for every project owner you work with.

NDA

I have found that more and more project owners that I work for are asking for NDA to be completed. This is short for Non-Disclosure Agreement. This is a contract that they create between you and them. It states that you won't share the information with any other entity.

There can be other specifics included too. For example, I was working on a project recently where they stated that I would agree not to create any similar work for any other entity for a period of 6 months. The topic was about video games and I agreed.

No one in that 6 month period of time asked me to do any such work, but if they would have, I was bound to turn it down. Make sure you very carefully read everything in the NDA before you sign it. Some of the templates look the same but the specifics that are included can vary.

If you don't understand something or you don't agree to it, don't sign. Ask for clarification or for changes before you complete it. If you can't come to a full agreement, decline the job. Remember, a signed NDA is a legally binding document.

Most of the time, the project owner is going to ask for an actual signature rather than a computer signature on the NDA. When that is the case, they can email it to you and you can print it out. Sign the document, scan it, and send it back to them. You can also fax the document to them.

Chapter 14

Ethics

I think it is important to think about ethics if you plan to be a freelancer. You aren't going to have anyone looking over your shoulder to make sure you are doing what you should be. Your character is what you do when no one is looking. Make sure you are doing what you would like others to do on your behalf.

When it comes to the types of work you will do, you need to be looking out for scams. Not just what will scam you, but will also scam others. A couple of years ago, I had a great customer service job. It paid well and the guy was very nice that I worked for.

The problem though is that I felt he was ripping off those that were in need of money. He sold online products that taught them how to start their own home based business. They would buy a DVD that was just a few bucks and it was shipped to them.

The catch though was that this also enrolled them in an auto payment plan where they would be billed almost \$100 a month for a membership. They could cancel at any time. Even though all of this was clearly stated in the offer, very few read it. So we were always getting calls from upset customers.

Legally, what he was doing was legitimate. He was sharing with them in the terms and conditions that they would be charged in 10 days that additional fee. The fact that so few actually read that information shocked me. Yet when people would call in crying and upset because they didn't have money for gas or food due to that charge, it was hard to ignore.

Some people had bounced checks due to the debit, and that caused more fees for them. This niche of people didn't have lots of money in their accounts, so it was a hardship to be out that \$100. I pointed this out to the guy running the website, and he didn't bat an eye. He told me to just do my job and that it was their fault if they didn't read the information.

I decided at that point I no longer wanted to work for him. I wasn't content getting money from someone that I felt was harming others with his practices. I am sure that he found someone to fill my shoes in no time at all. However, it was an ethical decision on my part.

I have been approached numerous times to write high school and college papers. I won't do it! I have helped with documenting resources and with editing/proofreading for them. However, I don't think it is ethical to do work for pay for someone that is getting a grade on it.

The same is true with college admission essays. I think those should come from the heart, not from a freelancer. You don't have to agree with what I have to share here, so if that is something you would like to write it is your opportunity to do so. I don't judge – just stating my stand on it!

There are plenty of colleges that offer online classes. Once a person is signed up, they get a username and password. Then they ask for a freelancer to be THEM for the duration of that class. They want you to write their papers, do their assignments, and participate online in discussions. This is also work that I decline.

Online dating sites are a huge hit, but be careful! Not all of those profiles are of real people! I know, because I have been asked many times to write up profiles for various people. They provide fake photos and names, and they want me to make something up that works. Sorry, but if people are online looking for friends or lovers, they should be getting the real deal.

I also don't take part in writing reviews for products. When I contemplate buying something, I go online and look for reviews. I want to get honest opinions from people who have used such products. I want to know what they like about it and what they didn't.

It bothers me to think that many of those reviews stem from people like me – sitting at home – writing them. They have never used that product. They are told by the project owner to make the reviews either positive or negative. If they are promoting the product, they want them to be positive. However, if they are a competitor then they want negative reviews out there. I believe there is enough legitimate work to avoid these that don't fit well on my ethical radar.

Spinning Articles

Don't use spinning tools to create any articles you write. They will be poor quality and they aren't going to be accepted most of the time from the project owner. Spinning articles involves copying and pasting an article and then it will change it around for you. Within 15 seconds you have a new article.

If you aren't going to write it, then don't take the job. If the project owner just wanted a spin to it, they would use this same software on their own. If they are paying you for the work, do the work. It is as simple as that in my opinion.

Outsourcing

The issue of outsourcing is a sore spot when it comes to freelance work. This involves you getting the work. Then you hire someone else to do it, and you get paid for it. You pay that other party less so you are making money by being a link for them.

From time to time, I do outsource a portion of a job to get help. As I mentioned, I may have a job for an e-book and a cover. I write the materials but create a new job for someone to create the cover for me. I always fully disclose in the job listing that I am writing an e-book for someone else and need a cover.

I know people that will take jobs for 50 articles and get paid \$250 for them. They will outsource them to people in India, giving 10 articles to 5 people.

They will pay \$50 for that work and keep the other \$200. I don't like this at all, and feel it is wrong.

There are also issues with it that can come back to haunt you. There is no way to know the quality of what someone else will write. What if you pay \$50 for it and then the project owner rejects those articles? Once again, if you want to be a freelancer and make money, then put in the time it takes to do it yourself and to do it well.

Blowing it Off

Deadlines are very important, and it isn't fair to blow them off. Don't tell someone you will tackle a project and then you don't do it. Don't take on a better paying job either once you have already committed to working for someone. Don't decide to go spend the day at the beach instead of working. If you say you will do it, honor our word.

Fair Pricing

Never take advantage of a project owner and charge them too much for work. Be fair with your pricing. If they ask you to do something time consuming or above and beyond, it is fine to charge them for it. Just make sure you all agree to the cost before you start the work.

If they ask you to take a rush job, it is fine to charge them more for it. After all, you are rearranging your schedule to fit their job in. You may be staying up all night to get it done. As long as they agree to the price then it is fine.

Report all Income

Don't get yourself into trouble with the IRS because you didn't report all of your income. It may be tempting to leave out certain jobs you got paid for. I encourage you to always report all income. If you ever get audited, you will be stressed enough. You don't need the dark shadow overhead too because you know that you didn't report all of your income details.

Be True to Yourself

What it all comes down to with ethical behavior relating to freelance work is what you feel comfortable with. NEVER get yourself involved with anything that is illegal. Think carefully before you accept work that is in those gray areas as so many of them won't be black and white. In the end, it is your judgment and your decision that you have to count on.

Always be true to yourself as a freelancer. It isn't worth it to compromise your values and who you are to make a few bucks. Not when there is honest money to be made out there. Always think about the value that you are creating for others.

Chapter 15

Ask Questions

If you are curious by nature, you are going to be a very good fit in the world of freelance work. Never make assumptions, always ask. Of course, take notes as you go. Most project owners are very simple to work with, and they will communicate. They don't mind answering questions for you.

However, if you work with them often, they won't be happy to answer the same questions again and again. Remember the card files that we talked about in an early chapter? That is where you document what they need in terms of font size, etc. It means you don't have to ask them again and again.

Don't be shy at all though if you need something to be clarified. Don't invest your time in work that won't be accepted. If you need help, ask for it. You can create a video or take a screen shot of things that aren't easy to explain without someone seeing what you are doing on your end.

The more specific you can get with regards to what they are looking for, the better. Ask for details so that you can get the end result to be something you are proud of and they don't mind paying for. If there are lots of open ended elements, you need to narrow them down.

For example, you may be asked to write a 15,000 word e-book on planning a wedding on a budget. If they don't have a list of what they want included, I encourage you to create one. Come up with the chapter titles and some subheadings for what you will include under each of them. Submit this to the project owner for evaluation. This helps them to make sure you are both on the same page.

If they want changes, that is the time to do it. Not after you have taken the time to write 15,000 words on the subject! The idea is to work smart from the first steps all the way through. I HATE rework and I have learned that asking questions really does eliminate that occurring.

If someone doesn't answer your questions within 24 hours, that can be a red flag that they won't be easy to work with. We all know that people are busy, but they can't expect you to get the job done if they don't communicate with you. There are times when a person is sick or has an emergency, but typically you will get a reply in that 24 hour window.

I strongly discourage you from moving forward until you have your questions answered. You may be saying that you only have 3 days to get the work done and they haven't replied after 1 of them. If you are working through a freelance 3rd party site, you can ask for a time extension.

The project owner should grant it if you contacted them for assistance and it took them time to get back to you. However, if you are contacting them on

the day the work is due and they don't reply, don't expect them to be overjoyed and offer that extension since you were dragging your feet.

If they won't give you the extension, most of the 3rd party freelancer sites will allow you to cancel the project without any penalty. That is only the case though if you communicated with the project owner through the onsite form of communication.

If you are working independently with someone and they don't reply, hold off. If they have already paid you for the work to be started, just let those funds sit there. When they do contact, you discuss the changes to the due date and make sure you both agree. If not, give them their money back. If they agree, then you can keep it and work on the project.

As the saying goes, hindsight is 20/20. There can be questions you think of AFTER you get the process of working with someone in motion. Don't panic, go ask! Don't worry, after you have done your first few projects, things won't be slipping through the cracks anymore. It is a work in progress and you need to be patient with yourself as you learn.

Chapter 16

How Much to Charge?

Perhaps one of the most difficult things to determine when it comes to working as a freelancer is how much to charge. It really is a personal decision, but you need to balance that thought. If you charge too much, your offers will be bypassed. Project owners are looking for the best value for a reasonable price.

Yet if you charge too little, you still may not get the job. Many project owners have learned that it is best to pay more and to get high quality than to save a few bucks. There will be plenty of projects too where the project owner gives a set price and that is all they are willing to pay. If you aren't accepting of that amount, don't accept the job.

The majority of my freelance work falls into one of two categories. The first is writing. I charge \$1 per 100 words for basic articles. I charge \$2 per 100 words for SEO or research related articles.

The other category for me is customer service. I generally get an hourly rate for this service. That hourly rate is often set by the person I work for. If you do an excellent job with your freelance work, there will be those project owners that give you bonuses or a per hour raise.

There are many other forms of freelance work that I don't take part in. I would have no idea how much to charge for creating a website or other similar types of work. I would think though that the price often has to do with the amount of time involved. It would also take into consideration the level of difficulty in completing that project.

It is a good idea to do some searching around the freelance sites. Get a feel of what other people are asking as a price for various types of work. Find out what set prices are offered by project owners for similar work you are interested in. Such information can give you a good starting point to decide what you are going to charge for the work you complete.

Chapter 17

Scams and how to avoid them

Your ultimate goal is to find work that you love and that allows you to make money. This also means that you have to be diligent in your efforts to protect against scams. Listen to your gut when it comes to some job offers and you will do just fine.

A common scam is that projects will be listed on 3rd party sites. However, they will then ask you to give them your email or skype information. They want to contact you outside of the realm of that 3rd party. They may tell you that they want to save on fees so that they can pay you more for the work.

What they will do though is get your money and run. They may send you a check for work. When you go to cash it, you discover that the account isn't real. You may get the check deposited, but it is going to come back to your account as either no money available or they put a stop payment on it.

Yet they already have the work you have completed for them, and there is no way for you to get it back. Should anyone ask you to work outside of a 3rd party freelance site that you haven't worked with before, it should be a red flag.

Firmly tell them that you will continue to work only through the website. Chances are you won't hear from them again. It is a good idea to report them to the site too so that they can be blocked. Yet they can easily come back with a new account. If this gets reported enough, such predators will finally get discouraged.

Pay Money to Start

You should never have to pay any money to get started. Not on a freelancer website or for a job. Some scams tell you that they want to hire you, but that you have to buy certain equipment or a company only phone to work with them. Once you pay for what they ask, you never hear from them again.

There are businesses that want you to have a software program or headset to work with them. They may ask you to buy that separately, but not through them. Many companies will send you software free of charge to use for work you are going to complete on their behalf.

Almost all of the 3rd party freelance sites out there are free to sign up. However, some of them do offer upgraded memberships for a monthly fee. You can sign up for them. However, I haven't ever done so and I still find a significant amount of work. Therefore, I say stick with what is free.

Luckily, scams are few and far between when it comes to freelance work. Most of the project owners out there are legitimate. They have a need for

work, and they love being able to outsource it. Don't be in such a rush to work though that you take everything at face value.

Scammers are looking for easy victims. Never give them your social security number or your banking information. If they continue to push for information, that is a sure indicator that they are after your money or to get work for free. Ignore them and they will go away. They will go look for someone that is easier to prey upon.

Chapter 18

What do I need to get started?

Hopefully, by this point you have decided that you definitely want to work from home as a freelancer. It is time to get started and to put it all together for you. I have given you information on what works for me. You may find when you dive in that a different type of set up works better.

Don't hesitate to try something new and to change it up. You may find a way that works so much better for you. There are few things you are going to need in order to get started. Here is a quick checklist for you so that you can get things in motion:

- Computer
- Internet service
- Payment methods set up
- Set up accounts at the 3rd party resource websites

These are the basics you need to get it all rolling. Go get a recipe box and some index cards too so you can keep track of information early on. Create some samples relating to the types of work you plan to do. For example, create a couple of articles and blogs that show your quality of work.

Clear your mind of any negative thoughts about making this work for you. Focus on the positive outcome. Have a positive attitude and get started. Be dedicated to stick to it even though it is going to be a challenge initially. As you build up your reputation, you will have more work to pick from than you ever imagined.

Chapter 19

Tools and Resources

The idea is to always offer quality work at a fair price. You want to complete your work in the least amount of time possible. There are plenty of tools out there that will help you to be able to get results in less time. These are free tools too so there is no investment for you to worry about.

CopyScape

When you are doing rewrites, you need to be able to prove that the new article is different than the original. Many project owners require 80% different or higher. Otherwise, there are copying issues to contend with. A lower difference can result in information being categorized as duplicate content.

With CopyScape, simply enter the original in the box. Then copy and paste the new article next to it. You will get a percentage of difference in a matter of seconds. If it isn't high enough, you will need to make some updates to the article and try it again.

Zamzar

Converting information can be very difficult and time consuming. For example, if you need to edit something in PDF. Maybe you want it as a Word document so that you are able to make changes on it using Google Tracking Tools. Go to www.zamzar.com. Upload a file and then pick the type of file you would like it changed to.

You will get an email within a matter of minutes that tell you the conversion is done. Click on that link and open the download. Then you can save it to your computer and work from that. I often write in Word, but have customers that want the finished product in PDF. I use this conversion tool often to complete that part of a given project.

Faxes

You don't need to go out and buy a fax machine. There are a couple of resources online where you can send faxes from your computer. At www.faxzero.com there is no charge. You can fax up to 3 pages at a time and up to 5 faxes per day. You will get a link to your email that you click on. Then you will get a confirmation once the fax is successfully sent.

Another great tool is www.smartfax.com. There is a monthly charge for this site, but it is very low. If you send lots of faxes daily, this resource will more than pay for itself in no time at all.

Google Tools

Many project owners want to improve the design of their website. They want to increase overall traffic. They aren't sure what is taking place though. However, they expect you to be able to figure it all out.

Go to www.google.com/webmasters/tools/home and you can get information at your fingertips. You will be able to explore the traffic for that website. You can also identify where that traffic is coming from. You can get suggestions from Google about better overall optimization.

Google Trends

I frequently get asked to write blogs about current topics for a niche. I can be coming up empty handed. When I go to <http://www.google.com/trends/> I am able to locate what is buzzing around the world at that point in time. There are plenty of categories to pick from. You can also type words into the search box. This is a great way to get ideas for completing relevant blogs.

JetChecker

When you write new content, the project owner may be worried that it is too similar to something else on the World Wide Web. Perhaps someone has said that they won't approve your work for this reason. You can use the tool found at <http://www.jetchecker.com/> to find out. This tool is amazing and it

can quickly check content all over the internet. Just enter a few lines or paragraphs of what you have written.

APA

Writing in APA style takes me back to high school – and I am NOT sharing with you have many years that has been! I use this great resource to help me with remembering the right way to create an abstract, to complete resource citations, and more. Check out www.owling.purdue.edu/.

Keyword Mining for SEO

I used to spend hours conducting my research when it came to keywords for SEO purposes. That was until I found out about <http://www.googlewonderwheel.com/>. Just enter a few keywords and it will bring you up a wheel that has relevant words. Click on any of those words, and you get a sub-wheel with more words.

Chapter 20

Conclusion

There is a huge door of opportunity that awaits you with freelance work. I have unlocked it for you, but it is up to you to decide to walk into there and see all that it offers. The experience can be different for each of us based on the types of work you do and how much you do.

You get to be in control of the types of work you will do. You get to decide how much work you are going to be able to take care of. Think about how much money you need to make and that will assist you with getting your goals set up.

Make sure you balance your time and that people know you are working. You aren't just home doing nothing so they can't just stop in all they want to

and visit. With a flexible schedule, you are going to have less stress when it comes to work. I love to work late at night when my kids are all sleeping.

You may like to work during the day and that is fine too. Find the rhythm that is right for your body and for your responsibilities in life. Find that balance so that you are working hard and making money. At the same time, you will have the funds and the freedom to play hard.

My son has to go to Denver for three days for military testing next month. I need to go with him, but I don't have to take days off from work. I can take my laptop with me. In February, my daughter will be going to Florida for cheerleading competition. I can go for the week and watch her and still work too.

If you have often felt that you missed out on things with your family due to work, now you can make it much more manageable. Select only the work that you enjoy doing so that you are happy and content. There are too many people out there working jobs that they hate.

Doing what you love means you stay motivated and you reduce your stress levels. Be honest with project owners about what you can do. You will be surprised at how well they communicate and ways they are willing to help you. Be honest with yourself too when it comes to the work you complete and why.

Think about the ethical challenges that I talked about. You will have to decide on your own where you draw that line in the sand. I hope you will

take all of this information and put it to good use. I hope it enables you to challenge yourself, to learn, to grow, and to make money!

Special Bonus:

Discover how to build a real business online that generates income for you each month. This is NOT a scam or a "get rich quick" program. These are REAL methods that are used by myself and thousands of successful entrepreneurs:

[Click Here to Get Your FREE Bonus Lessons](#) (\$197.00+ Value)

Resources for you:

- 1) [Coaching for Success Online](#) – Coaching from three real-life marketers, and the reseller content for you to start selling right away!
- 4) [Push Button Marketer](#) - Automates tasks like email, writing, creating websites, checking stats, blogging, website maintenance, posting ads, research, product reviews, and so much more. We've cracked the code to getting more done and making more money online with less work. Perfect for freelancers!