

Freelancing Online for Creatives

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Create a Personal Website

- Your website is a pitch to potential clients about why they should hire you. How easy is it for them to find the evidence that proves you can do what they need?
- Text should be short and sweet. Don't over-explain - your work should always speak for itself. Don't let too much text stand in the way of your client getting right to your content.
- Your bio should add flavor and help you stand out. It's not a good time to present your life story or a creative manifesto.
- Include a creative resume that highlights the projects you've completed so far. School projects (outside of publications) may not get you very far. Don't include your old day job work history unless it's specifically related to what you're doing creatively.

Personal Branding

- Your "brand" should capture snapshot of who you are. Your personality, the things you like, and how you prefer to be perceived.
- Create a style guide around your brand. Style guides usually include the images, logos, fonts, and colors that identify your brand and identity. Hire a graphic designer to help you if at all possible. This should help keep your website, business cards, social media icons and banners consistent!

Social Media

- Identify who your peers are. On which platforms are they the most successful?
- Create a dedicated account for your work as a freelancer. Keep it focused on content directly related to work. Maintain separate accounts for your personal life, and decide what information you're comfortable with having visible to the public. (Also don't use your professional accounts to engage in social media drama!)
- Always link back to your website in your biography space.

- Followers who don't just like your content, but who leave comments, carry on conversations, and leave reviews are extremely valuable and more likely to buy your products. Try to make time to respond if you can - social media sites prioritize this kind of engagement. It will keep your content present and relevant in the feeds of people who follow you.

Communicating with Clients

- Unless you've made a client aware that you won't be available during certain days or hours, try to prioritize responding to client communication within 24 hours. Even if it's just a quick "Got it!" or "Saw this email - let me get back to you as soon as I'm at my desk tomorrow."
- Keep emails short and to the point. Save details for the actual discussion of your work or when your client has asked for clarification. Your rates, availability, and confirming whether or not you can do the work requested shouldn't take more than a sentence or two to describe.
- If your client asks you to do something you're never done before, always try it before you tell them you can't. Show your client a sample of your attempt (don't spend more than 30 minutes on this) and let them decide if they want to hire you to finish the work. Whether or not you get the job, your client will appreciate the effort you took for them!
- Always inform your client immediately if you will not be able to make the deadlines you gave them. They don't need all the nitty gritty details, but they do need to know when (or if) you'll be able to finish your work for them. Even if they need to ask someone else to finish the work for you, most clients are very understanding and won't hold situations beyond your control against you. They will be much happier to work with you again because you took the time to make sure that they weren't left in a hard place themselves.
- Always express gratitude to your client for their time and thank them for thinking of you for the job!

Thinking About Money

- Beginners typically work for less, but not so little that rates dip below minimum wage (such as working for experience, Fiverr.) Try to find a good balance and have a mentality that as you grow and take on more clients, your rates should evolve with you.
- It's always okay to volunteer for things if you choose to do so! Volunteering is great for collaborations with friends, profit shares, or micro/zero budget projects that are being released for free and do not make money through other sources. However...
- If someone is using your work for profit, you should be compensated for it. A good rule of thumb is whether or not your client is doing this as a hobby or not. If the service you are providing them is related to their primary job and income source, they need to pay you.
- Doing occasional favors for family is great, but you can and should ask them to pay you just like everyone else if they start asking for more than you are comfortable giving.
- If you are being considered for a position (especially one that is asking for quotes,) don't offer to take less money than your peers as a way to edge out the competition. This is both rude and deeply unprofessional.
- Keep track of your money. How much money did you make and how much did you have to spend to do your job? Keep your receipts and invoices. Spreadsheets are a great place to start organizing things, but simple accounting software like waveapps.com is friendly for beginners too!

When in Doubt, Study Someone Who's Already Doing It

- How much work do they create on a regular basis? What variety of content do they share? What do they charge?
- What social media platforms do they use? What types of posts receive the most engagement? How frequently do they post?