

C R E A T I V E L I V E

## **FREE EBOOK:**

THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE  
TO LAUNCHING A  
SUCCESSFUL  
FREELANCE CAREER



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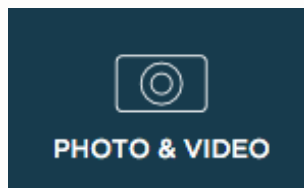
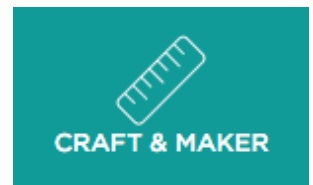
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# 11 Things No One Tells You About Freelancing

By [Hanna Brooks Olsen](#)



Here is what I knew about working as a full-time freelance writer before I actually did it: Yoga pants and working from my bed. I have a feeling this is the idea that [most people have about freelancing](#) — that it's all slippers, lazy mornings over giant mugs of coffee, and dreamily, blissfully rejecting cubicle life.



But the thing about working for yourself, whether it be as a writer like me, or as a photographer, crafter, consultant, or whatever else your field might be, is that most of us do it alone, which means there isn't that much talk about what the life — and the work — is really about. What the struggles are and, yes, what the non-9-to-5 rewards are. How the finances work, and how the taxes work. How to stay sane when you potentially don't speak to anyone for eight hours straight.

Here are just a few of the things I learned during the years I was freelancing:

**1. It's a slow burn:** When you first quit your full-time job to do your own thing, you'll probably have one or two clients that help you make the list. Sara Horowitz, [founder of the Freelancers Union](#), calls these your "blue chip" clients — the ones you base your financial portfolio on. You need these clients. However, expanding beyond those clients can be tough and take time. Know that when you see really successful peers with long lists of previous clients that making those connections has probably taken months or years. Expect the first few months of freelancing to be, well, pretty lean.

**2. You will need seed money:** Once you do start assembling a client list, freelancing is a death by a thousand paper-cuts/tiny checks. In a [recent piece on PTSOTL](#), Luke O'Neil documented his many clients, and how much each of them pays — which, to people who work on a freelance basis, wasn't that surprising, but may be a little startling if you're just starting out.

# 11 Things No One Tells You About Freelancing (Cont.)

By [Hanna Brooks Olsen](#)



Working for yourself often feels like a game of gathering, wherein you're constantly trying to cobble together the money for rent and resources out of small amounts of money...or, often, no money.

There will be slow months, and there will be months where you face surprise expenses. For that, you're going to need to draw on your savings and credit cards. This is a fact of self-employed life, and you need to be prepared.

**3. Calendars and lists are crucial:** Seriously, have a calendar. Have three. Have them organized within an inch of their lives. Hold yourselves to them. Because missing one client deadline is possibly excusable, but if you get a reputation for delivering late/incorrect/otherwise unacceptable work, it'll be hard to shake. Your calendar serves as a proxy for your brain, where you can dump not only deadlines, but also important information, like who to email and what kind of file they prefer. Apps like [Google Calendar](#), [Wunderlist](#), and [Sunrise](#) are your friend.

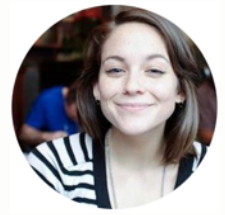
**4. Boldness is a valuable commodity:** Self-marketing is hard work, and can include anything from tweeting out your most recent work to actively approaching the people you want to work with and directly asking if they have anything for you. Timidity is the difference between successful self-employed people and people who sit at home in their jammies "working."

**5. There are resources:** No freelancer is an island, even if they feel like they are. Resources like the aforementioned [Freelancers Union](#) and your local Chamber of Commerce are there to offer you support and community. When you've got questions, they've got answers.

**6. Coworking is an option:** Coworking spaces — where you can rent a small amount of space, or work in a large communal area, with access to the internet, phones, printers, and other business necessities -- are cropping up across the country, and many creatives find them helpful to both stay focused, and to bounce ideas off others. They can serve as a stand-in for traditional office perks, like community and social interaction.

# 11 Things No One Tells You About Freelancing (Cont.)

By [Hanna Brooks Olsen](#)



However, co-working spaces can be cost-prohibitive; if the idea of paying a second rent is just too much for your current budget, consider reaching out to other friends or colleagues who you know work for home, and offer to have a co-working "date" at a coffee shop. Not only does this break up the bed-to-desk routine of working from home, but working with friends can also provide valuable creative input.

**7. Taxes!:** And finances, generally. But mostly taxes. Oh, freelance taxes. Most freelancers are contractors, which means they don't pay taxes as they go, out of their paychecks, but rather quarterly or yearly. Saving money is extremely crucial — which is hard, when you feel like you're not making enough. Tax prep companies [like TurboTax](#) can help offer explicit information on this subject, which you should check out if you're considering making the switch, though even that can be confusing.

Balancing the books is a really challenging thing for those of us who aren't financial experts by profession. One of the things I wished I'd had when I was freelancing was someone to explain the financial and technical elements of my small business. Chiefly, I wished I'd known about the Money & Life classes that CreativeLive offers. Courses in QuickBooks, funding, and other resources can be really, really useful.

**8. Don't forget your physical health:** When you're not walking to work (or, really, walking beyond your own apartment), it can be easy to get stuck on a routine that neglects your physical health. Which is unfortunate, because most freelancers and self-employed people have way more flexible schedules than traditional workers — meaning they can hit the gym at unusual times. Take advantage of that 11am Power Yoga class at your gym, or take a jog around the neighborhood while the sidewalks are mostly empty. Even just a long walk can help keep you healthy, while [also boosting your creativity](#).

# 11 Things No One Tells You About Freelancing (Cont.)

By [Hanna Brooks Olsen](#)



It's also a good idea to stock your house with healthy snacks and meals. The temptation to graze while working from home is strong, so set yourself up successful munching. Oh, and figure out your best healthcare option, whether it's under the ACA or on your significant other's plan. Just going un-covered is not a good idea.

**9. People will want to "pick your brain" a lot:** Almost everyone has fantasies about working for themselves, which means, once word gets out that you're doing it, contacts will come out of the woodwork to ask you about it. And while giving some advice is fine, if you start to get the inkling that the person you're talking with is trying to get valuable business strategies (or, often, leads and ideas) for free, let them know that your services are available... at a price.

**10. Pets are both great and awful for productivity:** I have a dog. For a while, during my freelance life, I had two dogs. The regularity of their needs (walking, mostly) was great, because it ensured that I got dressed and left my house and walked around the block three times a day. However, there were also times when they were exceptionally distracting. You never realize how much your pets demand your attention until you're home all day and they suddenly think it's always cuddle-time. Just something to consider.

**11. GET DRESSED:** Seriously, get dressed. Even if you're not going anywhere. It's so tempting to live your life in softpants as a freelancer, but getting dressed helps to solidify that your work matters, that you matter. It's as much a mental exercise as a physical one. Your cat may not care if you're fully prepared to leave the house, but you will. Get dressed.

Take it to the Next Level with this Class:



Becoming a Successful Freelancer

with Arianna Orland

# How to Find Motivation When You're Freelancing

By [Erin Blakemore](#)



You're sore and bored so you skip the gym. You reschedule an appointment that's making you break out in hives. You take a rain check on that social event—your friends will understand. But when it comes to freelancing, a

case of the “I don't wannas” could well derail everything you've worked so hard to build. Read on for some strategies to help you power through when you'd rather do anything but work:

## Get Small

There's a reason productivity gurus (ugh) sing the praises of [breaking work down into manageable tasks](#). Sometimes, focusing on the forest means you miss out on each non-threatening tree. Instead of freaking out about your daunting deadline, your nerve-racking commission or the hundreds of hours you'll surely spend getting 'er done, try micro-focusing. Commit to the smallest task first, then the next, then the next. Voila: it's done.

## Get Feisty

Yes, there's something to be said for the joys of [intrinsic motivation](#) and dedication to your task. But some tasks just, well, suck. When nothing can make you get excited about the to-do you absolutely must do, forget motivating yourself. Instead, get feisty. Get pissed. Get annoyed. [Get competitive](#). Do whatever it takes to rouse yourself, even if it's envisioning your triumphant win over a rival or how sweet it will feel to fire a crappy client once you've fulfilled your contract. Don't worry...nobody needs to know.

# How to Find Motivation When You're Freelancing (Cont.)

By [Erin Blakemore](#)



## Get Tricky

Sometimes, “I don’t wanna” manifests itself as “I can’t. No, really. I literally can’t.” When grappling with weapons-grade demotivation, you’ve got to fight fire with fire. Do whatever it takes to trick yourself into working. Maybe you need a [Pomodoro timer](#) that allows for one minute of work and one minute of rest.

Maybe you need to put your entire document into a wacky font that makes you giggle every time you open it. Maybe you need to commit to [writing just ten words](#) or calling a friend every ten minutes to stay on track. Now is not the time for half measures. Feel free to con, hoodwink, and deceive your way to done.

Even if you love your freelance career, it’s normal to hit the wall. Just remember: sometimes done is better than fun...and your everyday victories over the impulse to bail out are big wins for freelancers everywhere.

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With [Laura Vanderkam](#)



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In this video with productivity coach Laura Vanderkam, you'll learn how to get a productive start to your day, and you'll get tips on how to keep that burst going.

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WHAT THE MOST SUCCESSFUL PEOPLE DO BEFORE BREAKFAST

What the Most Successful People Do Before Breakfast  
with Laura Vanderkam

# How to Attract the Right Clients for Your Business

By [Michael Port](#)



If you're a business owner, consultant, or freelancer, you've undoubtedly been through the struggle of trying to grow your business without breaking the bank. In fact, chances are, the desire to acquire more clients, sell higher value services, or ship more products will consistently be one of your business goals. It should be!



Even if you already have an established offering that's proven itself to bring value to your customers, there's always the opportunity to take your business to the next level. You want to [book yourself solid](#) with not just clients that pay the bills, but clients who allow you to charge more and build your reputation as a leader in your industry. This is no easy feat.

Pulling it off requires a very strategic, well thought-out approach to formulating your value proposition specifically for your ideal clients.

**1. Identify Your Target Customers:** It's important to understand why you need a clearly defined picture of your target customers in the first place. If you don't understand the exact kind of person who not only needs, but is willing to pay for your products or services, you're going to waste a lot of time trying to pitch yourself to the wrong people. You're not going to be everything to everyone, that's just not possible - and you shouldn't want to be. Your goal should be to [build a powerful reputation](#) for your impactful services, within your niche.

In order to do this effectively, you need an intimate knowledge of the target customers you're going after. Learn their interests, what motivates them, if they're analytical or creative, and most importantly which goals you can help them achieve. For example, if you're targeting fast-growing technology startups for your PR services, they'll likely be evaluating you based on your industry knowledge, previous experience in their space, and contacts you have in relevant press outlets. Know your customers and address their needs head-on.

# How to Attract the Right Clients for Your Business (Cont.)

By [Michael Port](#)



**2. Build Your Authority and Create Trust:** How do you describe your business online? Before you can be widely acknowledged as an expert or an authority in your space, you'll need people to [trust and respect you](#). One of the most effective ways to build your reputation is by getting your customers to speak for you. It's much better to let your customers sing your praises, than to toot your own horn about your incredible results and innovative services.

Ask your best clients for a review that you can publish on your website, social media channels, and use in your prospective client materials. If you've done a great job for them, they'll be more than happy to take a few minutes and write you a glowing review. You'll want to carefully choose who you ask for reviews - make sure they're from organizations or people that you would



like to have more clients like. If you want more BMW dealerships as your dream clients, then you probably won't want to ask your friend's dog-grooming service to give you a review. Don't be afraid to use your positive results and testimonials in your reach-out strategy. If you've already helped one business in a specific industry accomplish their goals, chances are you're very well-equipped to help another similar business - show them that!

**3. Give Away Free Resources that Instill Confidence:** In today's business landscape, so much information is available for free in the world if you know how to find it. That's why it's more important than ever to [build a meaningful relationship](#) with your prospective clients. Provide value before they even ask for anything, and they will be that much closer to signing a contract by time you reach out.

Offer a free download of something that'll be of value to your ideal client's business, give free consultations to those who fit that ideal profile, or create a free online course that addresses some of the issues basic you've found your clients struggling with. If you can show your potential clients that you can clearly solve their challenges (or give them the tools and empower them to solve their own issues), you'll be a shoe-in for the first person they call once they're ready.

# How to Attract the Right Clients for Your Business (Cont.)

By [Michael Port](#)



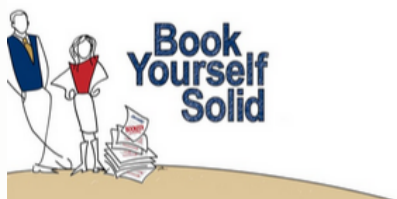
**4. Develop Your Red Velvet Rope Policy:** What values do the people have, with whom you do your best work? Come to terms with the reality that you don't just want clients who have huge budgets and deep pockets. Sure, you need all of your clients to be able to afford your fees, but sometimes those clients with the most money will also have the highest demands that drain the effectiveness of your business, they may not pay on time, or they may have a misaligned value system that doesn't match with your priorities.

Find your clients at the intersection of those who can afford your services at a price point that helps you effectively grow your business, and yet also allows you to [produce your most effective results](#). If your client has all the money in the world, but never pays on time, that doesn't empower you to be confident in creating the best possible work for them.

**5. Don't Be Afraid to Say No:** Once you've developed your [Red Velvet Rope Policy](#), you'll have a very clear picture of the clients that you need for your business. As long as those expectations are realistic, then don't bog your business down by accepting clients who aren't going to help you perform at your best.

When you work with your ideal clients, you'll produce your best work. Join me in my online class and learn how to [Book Yourself Solid](#) with only the clients that'll grow your business the right way.

Take it to the Next Level with this Class:



Book Yourself Solid  
with Michael Port

# Minimizing Risk When Starting a Business

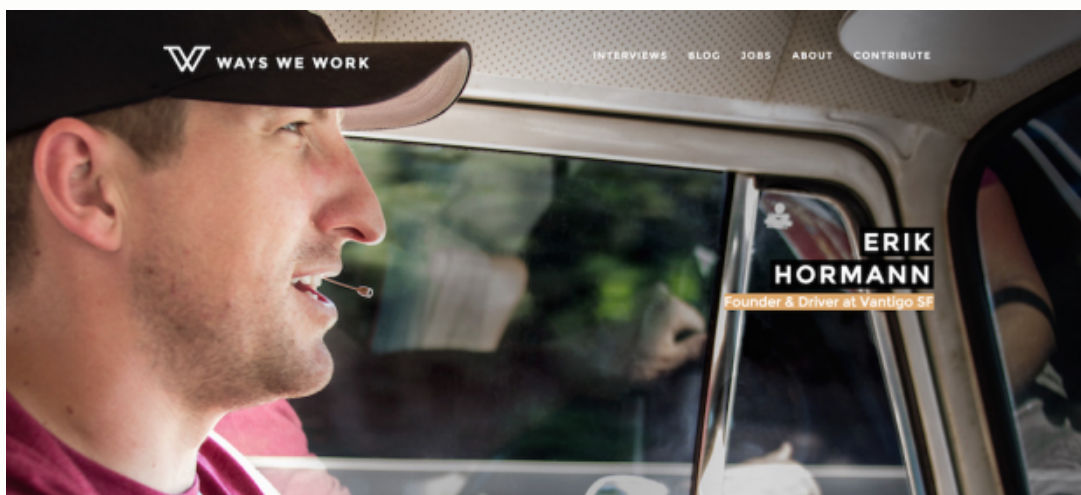
By [Amandah Wood](#)



In the world of startups and technology, there is endless talk of risk and failure. Of failing fast, of bouncing back, of [quitting your day job](#) and pouring every ounce of your time and money into your business idea. Failure is, of course, always a possibility; some entrepreneurs simply aren't so lucky when starting their own businesses and bad things happen. But the word "luck" isn't the right one, really.

There are ways to minimize risk of failure. Like growing your business before you quit, and ensuring that the leap you're making is the right one.

Erik Hormann, the founder of [Vantigo SF](#), a creative San Francisco-based adventure tour company that takes customers around the San Francisco Bay Area in a classic VW van, managed to walk the line by launching a business without risking everything.



# Minimizing Risk When Starting a Business (Cont.)



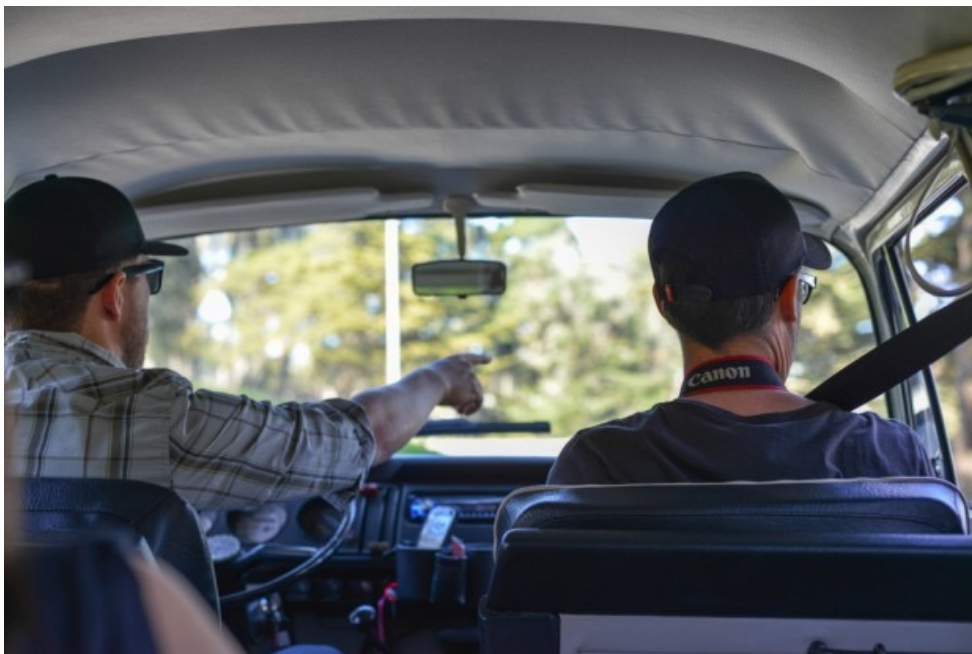
By [Amandah Wood](#)

Hormann says he's experienced very quick initial success, largely because he focused on an existing market where he saw improvement. Rather than buy a van, quit his job and launch a business, he started small.

"We thought of the whole tourism idea and in San Francisco there's a lot of tourism so that was the easy thing to do. February of 2013 is when I got a bonus at my job and started thinking things through. Two weeks later in March is when I flew down to Los Angeles and bought Lily (our first van) and drove her back up to San Francisco," he explains. "It got real, real quick after that."

To carve out his niche, Hormann created an alternative to large tour groups and with his themed tours, including a [Brewery Tour](#), Winery Tours in Sonoma County, Oyster + Cheese + Mead Expeditions, and more.

At first, he started by doing tours himself on weekends and evenings, until it grew large enough that it would justify quitting his job to pursue growing his business full-time. In the end, he thinks taking this approach to starting his business really helped him launch more effectively, and under much less stressful conditions. Rather than quitting all at once and starting the company, Hormann created the company, then let it grow.



# Minimizing Risk When Starting a Business (Cont.)



By [Amandah Wood](#)

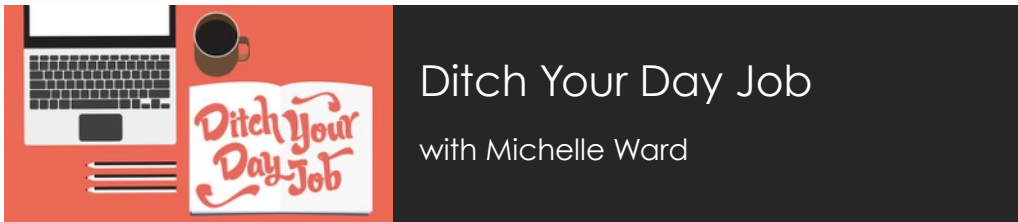
"It was great because it was a company that I could start on weekends and nights part-time," he says. "I didn't have to quit my day job, but once it started to get successful on nights and weekends, that's when I was like 'okay!'"

By March of 2014, he'd quit his day job. In August of 2014, "we brought on our first employee and got a second van rolling."

It's a great example of how you can take small steps towards your goal, and test your product or idea before going all in.

Read the full interview with Erik Hormann on Ways We Work, [here](#).

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Ditch Your Day Job  
with Michelle Ward

# VIDEO: Tips for Home Office Setup

With [Tobi Fairlet](#)



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In this video with award-winning interior designer, Tobi Fairlet, you'll get tips on how to set up your home office for enabling maximum productivity.

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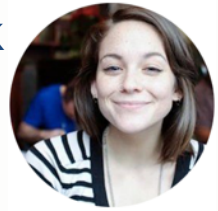


Becoming a Successful Freelancer

with Arianna Orland

# Why Freelancers Never Charge Enough for Their Work

By [Hanna Brooks Olsen](#)



In the world of business, it's pretty easy to find out how much your peers get paid; [GlassDoor](#), [Indeed](#), and other websites make it easy to estimate what's a fair salary, based on the competition and the market. But for freelancers and small business owners, it's a little trickier. Short of actually calling around to ask after the rates of others offering similar services (which actually is [not a terrible tactic](#)), how do you know how to set rates for your business?



First, it's important to note that there's a big difference between "rates that keep you afloat" and "rates that make you real money." Photographer Sue Bryce refers to the former as the "survival rate." This is the amount of money that's required to keep the lights on, but it doesn't actually help you get ahead. So why do so many freelancers and other independent workers charge settle for offering their services at a cut rate?

The main reason creative entrepreneurs end up charging too little "is because they confuse fees or services with their personal value/worth," says Ilise Benun, founder of [Marketing-Mentor.com](#).

"The two have nothing to do with each other. If you can see that, the value of your services has more to do with what the client will get out of what you have to do for them, then you can charge more. Its not about YOU. Its about the value to them."

Figuring out how much to charge means divorcing your self worth from the services you offer -- you're not asking people to buy you, you're telling them how much your time, energy, and talent are worth, and then letting them make the decision.

# Why Freelancers Never Charge Enough for Their Work (Cont.)

By [Hanna Brooks Olsen](#)



Additionally, says Ilise, conversations about price make most people uncomfortable. They just don't like to talk about it, so often, they don't. They pick rates that they think people will pay, and hope that that will make the negotiation process easier.

"People think broaching the topic of money will make the client run away." But, she says, that's actually not true. In fact, talking about money -- and [charging what your work is actually worth](#) -- will make client negotiation and relationships better.

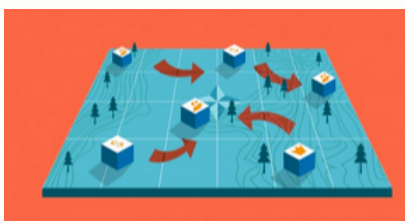
"You find better prospects and clients. It is that simple. You find people who can pay what you need to earn...then you ask them for it."

Another reason that many people charge too little: They forget that they are the expert in the room, and that they command the situation. Remember that your client is looking to you to lead the conversation, not the other way around. They are coming to you for the service -- a service they want -- and it's your job to let them know that they are in good hands and that you are worth whatever it is you're asking them to pay.

"The quality of the work really has little to do with the price you are paid. Clients have a hard time telling what is great and what is not. It's how you present it. That's why you see people who aren't 'great,' make a lot at what they do," she says.

In the end, it's much more about confidence and about understanding [what you offer](#).

Take it to the Next Level with this Class:



Command the Fees You Deserve  
with Ilise Benun

# Should You Work For Yourself (the Cheat-Sheet)

By [Jordan Rosenfeld](#)



Many creatives dream of quitting the drudgery of a full-time job for what seems like the ease and flexibility of working for yourself. Before you take the leap, however, see how many of these crucial freelance qualities you can say yes to:

**1. Every job you've ever had makes you miserable.** Yet you'll delightedly spend a whole day researching some obscure piece of information for your own project.

You might want to make the leap to self-employment when other people think you've got "a great job" but you're just slogging at someone else's agenda. Freelancers are notoriously drawn by their own powerful creative directions. Designer/Maker Klay Arsenault accepts this trade-off. "Working for myself, I continuously experiment and redefine what I do for money. I feel less like my personal talents or abilities are being wasted. In many ways taking on the risk of [freelancing] has also helped me follow through better and be more present in my daily life."

**2. You like organizational systems.** Even if you're the only one who can understand your own. Working for yourself may mean no more interpreting a boss's finicky organizational system, but you still have to organize yourself. Though your own version may involve lots of stacks and colorful Post-it notes, so long as you can keep track of key information and not get overwhelmed, you may be a freelance candidate. Marilyn Cole, a freelance writer, editor, and translator suggests, "You know you should work for yourself if you constantly find that your way of doing things is better than the way you're told to do them by your boss."

**3. You are comfortable with the unpredictable nature of your income.**

Perhaps the trickiest element of working for yourself is knowing that your income may not come in steady paychecks the way it does at a regular job. Going freelance means knowing, or learning quickly, how to budget and plan for the inevitable lean times. Whitney Pintello, a visual artist says, "To me, there's something romantic about me and my partner looking at each other and saying we need to tighten our belts and hunker down the next two months so we can pay the bills." But, cautions Marilyn Cole, "before you quit your job, make sure you have a couple of repeat clients lined up."

# Should You Work For Yourself (the Cheat-Sheet) (Cont.)

By [Jordan Rosenfeld](#)



**4. You know how to hustle.** Whether that's chasing after new projects and drumming up work in the slow periods, or getting your clients the best results possible, you work hard. When you're working a regular job, you might be full of ideas pressing to be created when you just get the time. Then, when you finally go freelance, the pressure is on to dream up new ideas all the time. Rachel Kramer Bussel, a freelance writer who focuses primarily on sex, dating and popular culture, draws from her own life as often as possible. "I try to use topics I'm genuinely passionate about to fuel my work," she says. "I don't go after stories so far outside my storehouse of knowledge that it feels like reinventing the wheel."

**5. You utilize your down time.** Can you make use of your time in the slow periods, rather than sinking into a binge-watching stupor? In the age of Netflix, this is no easy feat. When you work for someone else, you may covet those "slow" work periods, but as a freelancer they can mean your bills go unpaid. If you can use downtime to create fresh work or improve your business model, you may be ready to go solo. Lisa Rowan, a freelance writer, editor and vintage clothing shop owner says, "Slow periods can be scary if you're not yet in a position to be saving more of your freelancing income than you're spending. But if you have projects that keep your creativity going, it can ease the pain of a dry spell and maybe even get you additional work."



**6. You're an optimist.** It's not required, but it helps. Staying hopeful about the future is key to motivating yourself through drought and stuck times. It's not necessarily a skill you can learn, but if you already lean in this direction, you're ahead of the game when it comes to freelancing.

# Should You Work For Yourself (the Cheat-Sheet) (Cont.)

By [Jordan Rosenfeld](#)

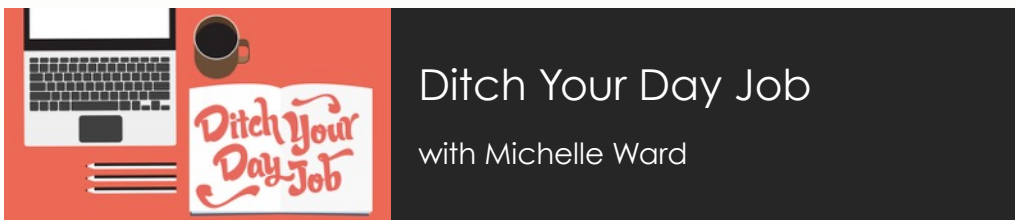


**7. You are self-motivated.** To work for yourself, self-motivation is non-negotiable, because now there's no boss to crack the whip (though there are clients). Food and travel writer Mary Luz Mejia socializes to keep herself motivated. "The more people you know and manage to include in your own personal "network," the more likely they are to be able to suggest you for a job or think of you when something comes up," she says. "I always try to return the favor."

**8. You don't mind giving your money to the IRS.** When you work for yourself, it's up to you to pay your own taxes every quarter. However, you may be surprised to learn how many deductions you can take. Finding a good CPA who knows your particular creative field will help.

**9. You love freedom and independence.** Though you work harder than at any other job, you have a lot of room to do what you please as a self-employed person. Lux Alpatram, a freelance writer, consultant for sex tech companies, comedian and co-founder of the conference Binder Con has always hated operating under someone else's rules. "Working for myself means that I don't need to worry about keeping myself busy just because I'm supposed to work an eight hour day. And there's also the benefit for being able to work when I feel most productive, rather than forcing myself into a 9-5 schedule."

Take it to the Next Level with this Class:



Ditch Your Day Job  
with Michelle Ward

# How to Calculate Your Freelance Hourly Rate

By [Ryan Robinson](#)



Here's a hard question: What is your time really worth?

When you're a freelancer, it can be really hard to tell. As a full-time employee, your salary also takes into consideration business costs [like health care, licensing, taxes](#), and [other business essentials](#) -- but when you work for yourself, you've got to cover all of that and more.

This is a serious consideration if you're thinking of [quitting your job](#) in pursuit of leading a more fulfilling, self-employed career. Join Michelle Ward's free [Ditch Your Day Job](#) Class on June 11-12 and learn how to develop your game plan for hitting the ground running with your own business.

How do you find out how much is enough to really grow your business? What's your thriving rate?

We've created a handy graphic to help you figure it out.

[\(Click to View Full Image\)](#).

## HOW TO CALCULATE YOUR HOURLY RATE AS A FREELANCER

1. START WITH YOUR TARGET ANNUAL SALARY.

I WANT TO KEEP MAKING \$75K PER YEAR!

\$ 75000

CREATIVELIVE

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## Ditch Your Day Job

with Michelle Ward



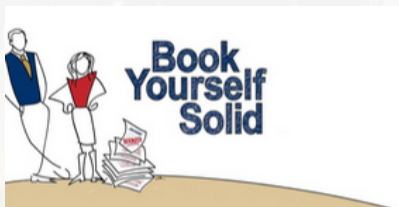
## Command the Fees You Deserve

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