



# **A FREELANCER'S GUIDE TO GETTING CLIENTS**

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# Promoting Your Freelance Business

Any freelance business requires a lot of time and commitment in order to be successful. If your plan is to go full-time, you're going to be doing a lot of promoting, especially in the beginning.

Getting clients for your freelance business can become a full-time job in itself. While there are many ways to get started, here are some affordable ways to get the word out and get some clients.



## **Ask for Referrals**

Your family and friends are a gold mine of potential new clients. Look at your social media friends list - all of those people you went to high school and college with are grown up with careers of their own. **Ask them if they're interested in the services you provide or if they know anyone who might be.**

You never know who they might be in contact with unless you tell them that you've started a freelancing business.

Former colleagues and bosses can also be great resources for getting clients, especially if you left on good terms. Also, consider all of the small businesses that you utilize in your daily life. Depending on what your business is, you

could reach out to your hairdresser, dog groomer, dentist, plumber, or cleaning service. After all, you hire these people for their expertise, so you should tell them about yours.

You may be able to pick up some clients through referrals from previous clients. If your client is happy with your work, ask them to put the word out within their network that you're accepting new clients.

**A large percentage, in fact up to 84%, of B2B buying happens through referrals.** A majority of the buyers are influenced by their peers to make a purchase. It can even be helpful to offer some kind of incentive to your clients for giving you referrals.



## Launch a Website or Blog

One of the simplest and least expensive ways to promote your business is by launching a website or blog. A blog is a great place to offer

value to prospective clients by giving them information relevant to your niche.

**Be sure to include social media sharing buttons because social media can be another great way to promote your business.**

Your website should contain a portfolio of your best work. Be sure the portfolio is easily accessible through an online link or by pdf file.

Regularly update your portfolio with your most current work and be sure you can easily customize it for the client. You will want to be able to make sure they see the work that is most relevant to their particular needs.

**What to include in your portfolio:**

**A clear description of exactly what you do.** Try to niche it down to fit the job you're trying to get. For example, if you're a freelance writer, try to get specific by saying you're a content marketing writer, or an email marketing writer. Of course, be sure it's tailored to meet the requirements of the specific client you're sending it to.

**Your best work.** Include pieces that you feel represent your best work while also being

relevant to the specific client. Try to briefly describe the results your client was able to obtain with the work you did.

If you're just getting started and don't have a lot in your portfolio yet, create something on your own that maybe isn't for a specific client but still represents the kind of work you put out.

**Testimonials from happy clients.** Ask your clients to provide a 1-2 sentence review of the work you did for them. If you want them to comment about something specific, let them know that. Another tactic that many freelancers are using now is video testimonials. These are powerful because the client can see and hear the authenticity in the video.

**Your most recent resume.** Some businesses require one before they hire a freelancer but regardless, a resume is a great way to give the client a snapshot of your background and qualifications.

**Case studies.** Get into the habit of writing up a quick case study when you finish a project that covers what you did for the client as well as what the outcome was. Include the problem, the service you provided, the process, and the

results. Maybe you wrote a drip-email campaign that increased revenue by 29%. Just write up a quick paragraph about that and include it.



## Cold Emails

The dreaded cold email. Still, cold emails are one of the most effective, inexpensive ways to promote your business and get clients. The key is in writing them so they get opened and then get a response.

**Here are some tips to getting better response rates from your cold emailing efforts:**

**1. Make it about the prospect.** You may be tempted to try to sell yourself in your email but that would be a mistake. You see, prospects don't really care about *you*, they care about themselves. So, your goal has to be to talk about *them*.

Clearly tell them how you can make their business better, how you can alleviate some stress for them, and always offer value.

**2. Don't be too salesy.** Your goal for this first email is for them to learn you exist. Really, just getting them to open the email is a win. Treat cold emailing just like meeting face to face. If you met someone in person for the first time, you wouldn't start the conversation with "Let's book a sales call this week!"

Be funny, be clever, but never be sales-y.

**3. The subject line is the most important part of the email.** The subject line alone is what will determine if your prospect opens the email or discards it. Luckily, you can easily track what works and what doesn't, so try a couple of different subject lines out and see which one gets the best response.

**4. Do some research on your target prospects.** Just because there's a screen between you and them doesn't mean you shouldn't still try to have a quality conversation. Do some basic research on the company you are prospecting and tailor the email accordingly.

If you're sending the exact same email to 100 different prospects, your responses will not be very good because people who own businesses get hundreds of emails a day. Yours needs to stand out.

**5. Be respectful and cultivate the relationship.**

While it may be super exciting to get a response from your email, don't immediately start barraging them with follow-up emails trying to set up a meeting. Let the conversation flow and let a little time pass before you reach out again.

**6. Personalize your outreach emails.** Even if you have a great template, you still need to personalize each email according to the research you did back in step 4. Find out something personal you can include in the email (but don't be a stalker).

Maybe their company was just in the news or their website is really top-notch. Maybe comment on something you noticed that they're doing really well. Use that in the email so they know you put some time into sending this email.

This may seem like a lot of extra work but the results will be worth it.

**7. Always provide value.** If you can't give the prospect immediate value or demonstrate what the possibilities could be in doing business together, it will be really hard to get to the next step.

Cold emailing has been around for as long as email itself and it's not going anywhere. Add some humanity into your emails, as well as tons of value, along with a snappy subject line. Do these things and you'll be on your way to great open rates and tons of new clients.



## Networking

Another really effective way of marketing your business is by networking. There are really two main types of networking:

- In-person networking
- Social media networking

In-person networking is exactly what it sounds like. You go to events, trade shows, conferences, or even events put on by your local Chamber of Commerce. At these events, you meet people who might make good clients for you.

Just remember, this is not the time to ask for a meeting. However, be sure to exchange business cards so you can reach out to them later.



## Social Media

The other form of networking is through social media. It doesn't involve you posting to your social media account or trying to get a bunch of new followers. Social media networking is about you finding pages and groups where your clients might hang out.

Think groups about small businesses, women in small businesses, health coach forums, health and wellness pages, etc. **The trick is to figure out where your target client hangs out and then join those groups or follow those pages.**

Once you've done that, get in the groups and look at the comments. It's almost guaranteed that people will be asking questions related to the services you provide.

Answer their questions, and maybe provide a link to an article on your blog about the subject they're asking about.

Just keep giving value and eventually people will start coming to you for help. That's when you sit down to deliver your pitch. Always be honest in your answers. This is what giving value is all about and it does more than answer their question. It creates trust between you and your prospect. It creates a space where you are the expert in the field and they will come to you when they are ready to pay for services.

**Here are some tips on how you can effectively use different social media channels:**

**LinkedIn.** LinkedIn was specifically built for business networking. Take the time to create a professional profile and keep it up to date.

Recruiters and human resources professionals alike use LinkedIn to search for freelance

talent, as well as full-time employees. A LinkedIn profile will also show up near the top of the search results when someone searches your name, which is a good thing.

You can also use your LinkedIn account to post articles and to comment on other posts. Plus, you can make valuable connections at companies you'd like to freelance for, which may give you a leg up in the selection process.

**Facebook.** It may seem weird or uncomfortable at first but letting your circle of friends and family know that you are freelancing can open up tremendous opportunities for you.

As mentioned previously, utilize Facebook pages, groups, and forums where your target clients are hanging out and make yourself known to them.

**Instagram.** If you work in a more visual field, like photography, website design, or graphic design, Instagram can be a great tool. A picture is worth a thousand words and Instagram is an awesome way to showcase your work. Don't forget to use hashtags so people can quickly and easily find your work.

**Twitter.** Twitter is another great way to build business connections. Follow companies you'd like to do work with to gain valuable knowledge about them. Commenting on their tweets will put you on their radar and make it easier to reach out to them about potential collaborations.

You can also try following building relationships with other freelancers, which could lead to referrals down the road.



## **Set Yourself Up as the Expert**

If you want to get noticed for your expertise and skills as a freelancer, set yourself up as an expert within your niche.

**Speaking at business conferences is a great way to show people you know your stuff, as well as network with people who need your skills.** Also consider being a mentor to up-and-comers within your industry. High schools, colleges, and work programs usually have mentorship programs.

Also consider contributing to a trade magazine or blog within your industry. Guest blogging is a great way to get yourself out there, especially if you can do it for someone who already has a lot of followers.



## **Getting the Client to Say “Yes” to Your Pitch**

The ability to sell your services and ideas to clients can have a tremendous positive impact on your business.

Unfortunately, to most people, selling has a stigma attached to it that seems... *icky*.

If you're starting a career as a freelancer, coach, or other service-based business, it's time to reimagine the art of salesmanship.

**The first and most important step in getting clients to say yes is believing that what you're offering is valuable.** Your service has value and there are people out there who are in need of what you have to offer.

Once you know that, it's just a matter of convincing them that you're the right person for the job. But first, you have to get your foot in the door by convincing them to say yes to your pitch.



## Know Your Customer

When you're working as a freelancer, you are effectively working as a salesperson. **In order to be effective as a salesperson, you need to know your audience.**

You should know the key details of your audience so you can tailor your pitch to their needs and wants.

**Before you make the first appointment or get on that first call, find out what you can about the company or the person you'll be speaking with.** Visit their websites and social media pages to get an idea of who they are and what your best approach might be.

Determine what goods or services you can provide them that would be of benefit. Try to find out if they already have an option in place that provides the same services you do and be prepared to offer reasons why your service is better.

It's important that you don't disparage what they already have in place. Just talk about what you can offer them that their other option can't. You really don't even have to mention that you know they're using anyone else. By discussing what you can do better, they will begin to realize that you're a better choice for them.

**Notice it says a better choice for them. Always make it about them. How your service benefits them, what you can do for them, etc.**

Use positive feedback from your current and previous clients to back up your claims if needed. The more personal you can make your message, the better received it will be.

Try putting yourself in the place of the client. What would you be looking for if you were in their shoes? Most clients will be focused on how you can relieve some pain that they are experiencing. It's important to focus on how you can fix their problems.



## **Have a Conversation Rather Than a Pitch**

**If you want your client to say yes to your pitch, then you better learn to be a really good...listener.**

If you think you need to go into that meeting with your bragging guns blazing, you're wrong. People today are just too smart to fall for the sales pitches of days past. They want an authentic conversation about what they need,

what you can provide, and your relationship moving forward.

**Listen as the client explains exactly what their service needs are.** Don't be planning what you're going to say next. This takes practice and a lot of patience.

Repeat back what they've said to you so they know you heard them. Never underestimate how much the client needs to be heard. You can't know the client's needs if you're doing all of the talking.

Ask questions to trigger conversation. Then *really listen* to the answers and ask appropriate follow-up questions. Resist the urge to tell the client what they need. **Instead, continue to ask questions until they tell you what they need.**

Once you're comfortable that you know what they need, you can begin a discussion about what you can provide. Remember to focus on the benefits of what you can provide, not the product itself. How can what you provide make their life better or solve a problem for them? That's the key to making the sale.

## Here are a few questions you can use to get the conversation rolling:

- What challenges have you faced in the past year regarding \_\_\_\_\_?
- How much are you comfortable budgeting for this project?
- Have you tried a similar solution in the past and what were the results?
- Why is this a priority for you now?
- If timeline and budget were not constraints, what would the ideal solution look like?
- How can I help with this particular project?



## Know What You're Offering

If you're not excited about your product/service, odds are you won't be able to get the client excited about it either.

You should be very knowledgeable about your product/service and be prepared to answer their questions factually and meaningfully.

**In addition to facts and figures, be prepared to share examples of how your service helped another client or business.** Talking about your product or service in a way that draws the client into the experience is a powerful tool in building rapport and getting the sale.

Personal stories are a powerful sales tool, especially before and after stories. You can let the client know what another one of your clients was struggling with, along with how you worked together to solve the problem and create even more success for the client. It's hard to say *no* to an inspirational story.

Another important facet to knowing what you're offering is knowing what your competition is offering. Do the research and make note of what they're doing well and what they're not. This will be very helpful in directing a conversation with a potential client.



## Be Prepared for Objections

**Most effective salespeople are confident in their ability to make the sale but are also humble enough to know they need a good backup plan.**

Every person who's ever tried to sell anything has encountered objections. An effective way to combat objections is by interpreting the objection as a question and then offering a clear, concise, informational response.

For example, the person you're talking with may tell you that they are not the person in charge of making this decision. If they do, ask them if they are comfortable recommending your service to the person who is in charge of making that decision.

If their answer is no or seems ambiguous, give them more of what they would value to push them over the edge to yes.



## Follow Up and Ask for the Sale

If you left the sales meeting without a firm commitment, it is operation critical that you follow up. If the client asked for more information, be sure to provide it. Send a thank-you note. Distinguish yourself from all of the other people vying for the person's business.

Keep sending them information and providing opportunities to answer questions. Maybe set up a demonstration or another meeting.

**Don't ever just leave the meeting and hope they call you back. Ask for the sale in an original and remarkable way. Stand out.**

Always end your conversation with a comment like:

- Shall we get started?
- Can I send you the paperwork?
- May I present this at your next board meeting?

Believing in yourself and your product or service and then initiating your plan will have you well on your way to gaining clients. Remember to always stay true to your values and be ethical.



# Convincing the Client That You're the Best Choice

Your success as a freelancer hinges on your ability to get clients to work with you. If you can't do that, your journey will come to a crashing end.

**There are really only three core reasons someone will choose to work with you:**

- They want more customers, clients, traffic, etc.
- They want more profits
- They want to feel better about themselves

No matter what kind of business you're operating, your clients will basically fall into one of those three categories.

Selling anything is uncomfortable for most people and selling yourself is even harder. In order to successfully convince clients that you're the best choice for them, you're going to have to sell yourself.

The truth is, *you can* convince the client that you are the best choice. Follow these tips to set yourself apart from the competition and snag the client every time.



## Connecting With the Client Emotionally

Offering quality service or product is a great start, but that isn't going to propel you to the kind of success you're looking for. You need to stand out - because there are a lot of people who are good at what they do.

**It's important to tell your clients why you do what you do.** Because, when your why matches their why, an emotional connection is made, and that gives you the advantage when it comes time to pick you over the other guy.

**Another way to connect emotionally with the client is to clearly explain to them the benefits they will receive by working with you.** Don't only tell them how much money they'll make or how much traffic will increase. Tell them how much time you can save them so they can focus on other aspects of their business.

**Here are four ways you can connect with your clients on a more emotional level:**

**1. Provide a sense of comfort and order.** Most customers want to feel like they are in capable hands. Provide a confident, consistent, and organized journey through your pitch. Also, be prepared to answer their questions, concerns, and/or objections with confidence.

**2. Get personal and don't be afraid to use humor.** While it's important to be professional, don't be afraid to show your personality. Try talking about hobbies or sports, and find out what they like to do in their free time. This will open new levels of connection between you and the client. Having fun during the sales meeting develops rapport with the client.

Don't be afraid to be warm and personable. Clients tend to respond favorably to this and it may be the thing that puts you over the finish line to win the business.

**3. Keep your promises.** The biggest part of any successful client relationship is trust. Show your clients that you honor your commitments and keep your word. Over time, the trust you build will garner you more business from the

client and you'll become their go-to person for whatever service you provide.

**4. Really listen.** Nothing creates an emotional connection with a client faster than listening to their needs. In fact, listening well is one of the top skills you can teach yourself in order to be successful in sales or relationships.

Listening is not the same as not talking. Many times, people are so busy trying to think of what they are going to say next that they forget to listen to what the other person is actually saying.

**It's okay to not have the perfect response right away.** Repeat back what they've said so they know you heard them and then ask more questions.

Authentic, human relationships are an integral part of connecting with your clients. Listen, ask questions, be funny, comment on that photo on their desk or their dog. Don't be afraid to connect to your clients.



## Convey Your USP

A USP is a Unique Selling Proposition. It's a statement about what separates you from everyone else who's selling the same type of product or service as you.

**You may have a similar product as someone else, but the way you market that product may make it seem more valuable than your competition.** It's what makes you special and it's the key, in many cases, to getting more clients and being able to charge top dollar for your services.

Let's say for example, that you're a freelance copywriter, and that you specialize in writing about health and wellness while battling cancer. You have chosen this particular niche because you have personally battled cancer and were able to avoid having to use all of the medications the doctors wanted you to take because of side effects from the chemo.

You could easily use this experience in crafting your USP and when choosing a writer, a health and wellness company may choose you, even over someone with more experience writing, simply because of your life experience.

**Try using your life experiences to bring a special focus to your business. Here are a few things to consider when writing your USP:**

- Relevant background experience
- Things that are unique about you
- Facts about your services
- Prices
- Hobbies and interests

Think about what's special and different about what you can offer that your competitors can't. Just keep it simple, effective, and compelling.



## **Tick ALL of Their Boxes**

You need to tick all of their boxes - even the boxes they don't know they have or want. Know your potential client better than they know

themselves. Know what they need and what makes the most sense for their business.

Start by asking the question: Why would this client NOT hire me? Take away the cons in your presentation and you're off to a good start.



## **Keep It Simple**

You may have the urge to cover everything in your first meeting with a new or potential client. You may want them to know all about you, every service you provide, all about your family, and how often you walk your dog. But don't.

Keep it simple. Make a connection, listen, answer questions, and ask questions. Let the meeting flow.



# **Strategies to Get Clients to Pay Top Dollar for Your Services (and Feel Good About It)**

Sooner or later, you're going to have to figure out ways to charge your clients more, because it takes a lot of time and effort to bring in new clients. It is much easier to garner more work from your existing clients than it is to onboard new ones.

The trick is finding ways to provide more value and services to your existing customer base. If they already love the work you do for them, this will be a piece of cake.



## Negotiate Retainers

**If you have a valuable service, odds are that your client isn't going to only need it once.**

There are a lot of professional services that already utilize retainers; think lawyers, IT companies, etc. This smart approach can be adapted to almost any service.

Retainers offer a win-win situation. You get a regular cash flow and your client gets priority service. Almost any service that's in demand lends itself to a retainer situation.



## Offer Packages and Long Term Billing

This classic strategy works exceedingly well with repeat customers. **Try transferring a client who's currently on a monthly plan to a yearly plan.** This gives your bottom line a major boost, while allowing you to give the client a decent discount.

Another good option is to package several services together. For example, a copywriter might offer a package with 5 emails, a sales letter, and 3 blog posts for one price. The price is less expensive than if the client were to purchase all of the items separately and the copywriter gets more work.



## Create Premium Services They Can't Resist

If you create a truly remarkable offering, chock full of value for your target customer, they will pay a premium price for it. By creating a more upscale version of your usual offer and allowing the client to choose between your regular offer and the upscale offer, you might be surprised how many times they choose the upscale offer. **The trick is for the client to feel like the value of the offering is worth the extra money.**

It may be surprising to you how many times your clients will choose a package with more value even if it costs thousands more. The truth is, you don't know what your clients will spend money on. That's why it's important to do some market research and figure out what your target market values. Then create a package they can't resist.



## Regularly Raise Your Prices

**This is probably the least used tactic to get clients to pay more for your services.** Many times it has more to do with your imposter syndrome over asking for more money than it does about the client being willing to pay it.

**Your price should reflect your growing expertise, your position in the industry, and the value you provide to your clients.**

Charging less than your worth will assure your work is treated like it's easily replaceable. Never compete on price, compete on value because most clients will pay more for more value. As long as you're providing tremendous value, you can charge what you want.



# Working as a Freelancer

Working as a freelancer is probably one of the most difficult yet rewarding things you'll do. Getting clients is tough, especially in the beginning, but once you get a system down that works for you, it gets easier and easier. If you want to get into the freelance world, now is the time to do it. Get out there and start finding your clients.