How I Got Paid $1,200 for a 2-Hour Build

And How You Can Too

By: [Nate Herk](#)

🔍 The Story in Short

I built a simple AI automation using n8n.
It took me 2 hours.
I didn't have a big following.
I wasn't an expert.
And someone paid me $1,200 for it.

This wasn't some fancy multi-agent setup. It was a basic LinkedIn content system with a value-driven outcome. And that's the point, you don't need to be a coding wizard or AI researcher to get paid for your skills.

If you're building, learning, and sharing what you create, you're already ahead of 99% of people. Here's exactly what happened, and how you can follow a similar path.

⚙️ What Did the Agent Actually Do?

The system ran three times every morning. Each time, it would:

1. Use an AI prompt to generate content ideas aligned with the client's tone, mission, and target audience.
2. Aggregate the ideas and structure them into usable LinkedIn post formats.
3. Send them back to the client, ready to use or edit.

That's it.
No memory.
No voice interface.
No fancy API chains.
Just value.

The client needed help with content creation. The system gave him back hours of time per week and saved him the cost of hiring a VA or writer.

💰 Why Did Someone Pay $1,200?

The client didn't pay for how long it took me.
He paid for the outcome.

Here's what made this project valuable:

- He was spending **hours per week** creating posts.
- This was a task he **didn't enjoy** but knew was necessary.
- Hiring help would have been a **recurring expense**.
- A one-time build gave him **ongoing value**.

Instead of selling the *workflow*, I sold the *results*:

- Time saved
- Energy saved
- Systemization of something he struggled to stay consistent with

That's what made it worth $1,200 (and probably more, in hindsight).

💬 Let's Talk About Value and ROI

You're not getting paid for your tech stack, your time, or how many nodes are in your workflow.

You're getting paid for the **value** you provide — which ultimately comes down to how much time, money, and energy you're saving or generating for someone else.

Here's how to think about it practically:

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1. Providing Value

The first step is actually **solving a real problem.**

Business owners don't care about fancy automations or cool tech. They care about:

- Getting time back in their day
- Reducing costs
- Increasing consistency or quality
- Removing bottlenecks
- Freeing up mental space so they can grow their business

Value is created when the system you build helps them:

- Avoid hiring someone
- Cut down on manual, repetitive work
- Get better outcomes with less effort

Examples of value-based solutions:

- A lead follow-up system that runs 24/7 and responds instantly
- A content generator that eliminates 5 hours of writing per week
- A chatbot that handles customer FAQs without human support

The more **painful** the original problem was, the more **valuable** your solution becomes.

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2. Proving Value

Once you build something useful, you need to **quantify how useful it actually is.** This is where most builders fall short.

To prove value, ask questions like:

- How was this task being done before?
- How long did it take them or their team?
- What was the cost of doing it manually (time, money, mistakes, lost leads)?
- What does that time translate to in dollars (either saved or generated)?
- Are the results now more reliable, more frequent, or higher quality?

If you can attach numbers to those answers, even rough estimates, you have a **value baseline** to work with. That gives you the confidence to price fairly and helps the client feel confident too.

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3. Communicating Value

You may have built something amazing, but if you can't clearly explain what it does and why it matters, you'll lose the sale.

Here's a simple structure to communicate value:

- **Problem**: What was frustrating, slow, or expensive?
- **Solution**: What does the system now do automatically?
- **Outcome**: What's the measurable benefit?

Example:

> "Before, the client spent 8 hours a week writing content they didn't enjoy. Now the system generates those posts daily, saving them a full workday every week and allowing them to focus on closing new business."

You can also use analogies:

> "This system is like hiring a personal assistant who works 24/7, never gets tired, and only costs a few dollars a month in API credits."

The easier it is for the client to **visualize the benefit**, the faster they'll say yes.

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4. Talking About ROI (Return on Investment)

When it comes to pricing, forget hourly rates. Start thinking in **multiples of ROI.**

If your system saves someone:

- 10 hours per month at $100/hour = $1,000/month
- That's $12,000 per year in savings

Now compare that to:

- A one-time build fee of $2,000
- Or a monthly retainer of $300

It becomes a no-brainer. They're making their money back many times over — **and you're not pricing based on effort, you're pricing based on results.**

Always tie it back to one (or more) of these three outcomes:

- Time saved
- Money saved or generated
- Increased output or consistency

If your solution improves two out of the three, you're in a strong position. If it improves all three, you can charge a premium.

🧩 The Value Framework (TL;DR)

Step	Question to Ask	What You're Showing
Provide	What problem am I solving?	This system creates real impact
Prove	How is life better for the client now?	This solution is measurable
Communicate	Can I explain the result clearly and simply?	The client understands why it matters
Price with ROI	How much are they saving or gaining?	The price feels like a smart investment

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🛠️ How You Can Replicate This (Even Without an Audience)

Step 1: Start Sharing

Pick a platform that suits your style (LinkedIn, Medium, YouTube, Skool). Talk about:

- What you're building
- What tools you're using
- Why the system is useful

- What you learned in the process

Step 2: Listen for Pain Points

Most business owners don't know where to apply AI or what's even possible. If you can ask the right questions, they'll often uncover the problems for you.

Try questions like:

- What repetitive tasks eat up your time every week?
- Is there something you do often but hate doing?
- Are there bottlenecks that stall your process?

Step 3: Prototype Fast

Don't aim for perfect. Build a rough version quickly, test it, and improve from there. This keeps you moving and shows the client quick progress. Position it as a collaboration, not a hand-off.

Step 4: Sell Based on Value

Before pricing your project, ask:

- How do they currently do this?
- How long does it take?
- What's their time worth?
- Could this save them hiring someone?

If you can save $1,000+ per month with a one-time build, that's massive value.

✅ Recap: Your Playbook

1. Build a simple, useful agent or automation
2. Share your journey and projects online
3. Get on calls with people who reach out
4. Listen first, prototype fast
5. Price based on value, not time or tech
6. Repeat, improve, scale if you want

💡 Final Thought

You don't need 10k followers, a full-blown agency, or a certification. You just need the courage to show your work, the curiosity to ask questions, and the mindset to solve real problems.

Most people don't care what tool you use. They care if it works.

If you focus on saving people time, stress, or money, you'll never struggle to find someone willing to pay you.

Want to connect with others building and monetizing AI automation?
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