

Topic No.18**Choose your craft (skills): What skill excites you?**

After setting goal and attaining self-discipline, the most important thing as a freelancer is to know what skills excite you? If you don't know about your skills, then you will be unable to offer your services in the freelance marketplace. If you have a special skill set but there is no demand of this specific skill set in the freelance market then you don't have to adopt this skill set, for example; manufacturing of any kind of goods.

Lucky are those people who turn their passion into profession. So, identify the skill which excites you, search it on the freelance marketplaces and check the projects related to your skill. Most important factor is market demand, if the projects are in high demand then their prices will be higher too, so you can adopt that skill set. Get knowledge and expertise in that particular skill, polish yourself, and most importantly learn to monetize that specific skill. Courses like Digital Marketing, SEO, Content Writing, Web Development, E-Commerce and Graphic Designing are being offered by DigiSkills.pk because these skills are high in demand in freelance marketplaces. If you do not want to learn these skills then go for Business Development skills, they are also very important in the freelance marketplace. By developing this skill, you will know how to communicate with your client and convince him to get the project. Learn business development skills and then polish them.

Topic No.19**Choose your craft (skills): How to learn a new skill?**

There is no survival in the freelance marketplace without having business development skills along with any skill that you have expertise in. It is also necessary to learn how to polish and enhance your skill. Now we are going to discuss 5-Key Points of skill learning:

1. Setting a Goal:

When you don't have a destination, you are missing the direction too. So, you need to specify a goal in order to achieve your objectives, learn a skill in a hard way as well as in a smart way. Specify the time period to learn a skill and manage your daily routine accordingly.

2. Breakdown Your Goals:

Breakdown your goals into smaller parts to make them achievable for you. When you see your goals as a big picture without splitting it into parts, it becomes difficult for you to achieve these goals. But when you break down your goals in different milestones, it becomes easy for you to achieve them. In entrepreneurship, milestones are essential for your success in different ways like fame, money and success.

3. Never Give Up:

If you ever decide to give up, then think why you started this journey on the first place and what were the reasons that made you learn this skill. If you have invested your time in a skill and now are deciding to give it up then focus on this point, identify all the reasons why you are giving up and why did you start at the first place.

4. Focus on 20%:

In learning a skill, the role of your effort and dedication is 20% and this 20% determines the desired outcome which is the rest of 80%. So that 20% is very important in learning and polishing of your skill.

5. Practice your Skill:

“Practice makes a man perfect.” If you do not practice your skill, then there is no way you will remain successful in freelancing. Technology is evolving rapidly, so, if you are depending on old skills, software and tools and there is no improvement, evolution and innovation then it will

become difficult for you to survive in the digital space. So, practice your skills, know the advancements, and become master of your skill set that is the key to success.



Topic No.20**Choose your craft (skills): The importance of YouTube for freelance, free learning**

YouTube is the largest video sharing platform in the world where you can easily access a lot of content in different skills and categories.

You can use YouTube for following two purposes:

1. Learn a new skill
2. Promote yourself as a freelancer

This video discusses the first point that how can you use YouTube to learn a new skill. For example, you are interested in learning Graphic Designing and you know the basic concepts of it, but you want to learn some advanced skills in Graphic Designing then you need to search it on YouTube, and you will find a lot of videos on Graphic Designing in different languages.

These are the advantages of using YouTube for learning purpose:

- You can find a lot of content for free.
- You have access to diversified content.
- You can watch videos in your own time zone comfort.

Topic No.21**Choose your craft (skills): How to practice your skill?**

If you choose your passion as your profession, only then you are able to monetize your passion, and you love to put an extra effort in it. In this way you learn a lot about advancement and evolution in that skill to pursue your career. In freelancing, the most important things to be considered are:

- How to practice your skills?
- How to polish your skills?
- How to advance your skills?

You need to learn, advance and polish our skills in order to survive in the market because technology is evolving on regular basis. When you have advanced your skills then you can bid on those projects where there is less competition and you will have competitive advantage over others. To learn and practice your skill, you can watch videos on YouTube, learn the things, and then do practice after learning.

Topic No.22**Choose your craft (skills): Avoid all the freelancing mistakes?**

The mistakes that freelancers mostly make and that affect your long-term career are:

1. Setting Random Rates

Some freelancers make this fundamental mistake of setting up random rate. If you set standard and consistent rates, it shows that you are a professional freelancer representing a brand.

2. Ignoring Referrals:

Referrals are important just like the testimonials and reviews of a product. You can also get orders from social media and website with the help of referrals.

3. Contract:

You must write all the terms and conditions of the project in the form of contract while finalizing a deal with client. A contract defines the milestones, deliverables, price, legal limitations, legal privileges and most importantly expiry date of that deal between the buyer and seller.

4. Overfilling your Plate:

Overfilling means taking number of projects more than you can complete. It results in losing money and damaging yours as well as your country's reputation.

5. Work Lead:

As a beginner you will not get projects without any effort and bidding. To get projects without any effort you need a profile with good ratings and earnings.

Therefore, it is recommended to avoid all the above listed mistakes.

Topic No.23**Choose your craft (skills): Learn to win your client's trust**

Earning client's trust in the freelancing career is very important for the freelancer. There are some important points to win your client's trust:

Your Profile:

An effective and strong profile can help you in winning your client's trust. So, make your profile effective, comprehensive and briefly explain about yourself, your portfolio, your work experience, industries you have worked with, and tools and software that you have expertise in.

Your Portfolio:

Portfolio also plays an important part in winning the trust of your client. It includes links, images and screenshots of your work.

Your Feedback:

When a client orders your services on any freelancing platform, you complete the work according to client requirements, and satisfy him then he will leave a good feedback for you. So, this positive feedback will work as a review of your service, quality and communication, and new buyers will read it. Your satisfied client can also refer you to other clients.

Profile Video:

Video tells the clients about your communication skills. English is a worldwide language, so you need to record the video in English to give the client an impression about your communication skills.

The above mentioned are the few important things which can play an important role in your freelancing career, and you can easily earn your clients' trust.

Topic no: 24

Set high hourly rates in freelancing

Before setting the rates, you must know the value of your work, value proposition of what you are doing? If you don't know your value, then you can't calculate the price of your work.

Suppose a content writer takes \$20 for 250 characters that is very less because it is the market rate. Whereas, another content writer charges \$2000 for 1000 characters that is a high amount because he is a pro in his skills.

The reason of this example is that the charges vary according to your expertise in that skill. First one is a simple content writer who will get orders from individuals and the other one is a professional content writer who will get orders from the top brands.

There are two steps for determining the Budget Rates:

- First: Follow the rates of marketplace
- Second: Identify your worth, notice how much time you need to successfully complete the task, how much money you spend, i.e. Internet, Electricity etc., on completing the task and then charge according to your ability and expenses.

So, the factors you should consider while setting the price are your worth and value you are adding to your employer's task.

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Charge more from your client

In freelancing the best advantage is that you can increase your charges as your profile and experience grow. There are three main ways to charge more:

1. Quick Turnaround Time:

If you complete your task before the deadline, it will benefit you in below mentioned three ways:

- You will win your employer's trust, and in future client will definitely come back to you.
- As Employers retention increases, your income will increase too.
- Quick turnaround will make you earn good Feedback.

2. Communication:

This is the best step for freelancing as well as for any other profession. While working on your project, you must have good communication skills to successfully switch your client on skype and convince him about yourself (i.e. who you are, what value you can provide to the client, how quickly you can complete their project, what resources will be allocated to the project and how much time you will be giving on daily basis to the project).

Another important point is that if you have done your project before specified time, it will be most beneficial for you as well as for your client. For better and mature communication with clients, three factors are of main focus:

- Lighting
- Voice
- Internet

3. Prove your value:

Convince your client that you are the right choice for your business because you are a hard worker, you have a portfolio, you are ready to work on weekends, and so on. It is the first impression that matters the most, make it count by doing effective communication.

Topic no: 26**Cheat freelance system when you are stuck**

Here cheating doesn't mean manipulating the system. By cheating, we mean understanding the system, and finding a solution to problems. **For example**, you have an attractive profile, strong portfolio, effective bidding structure and good reviews, but somehow you are unable to get any response. There are four suggested ways to overcome these problems:

- **Look what other Freelancer are doing:** you can do this by checking their profiles, reviews, how they earned monthly, checking their bidding ratio. You need to understand your competitor, his price and the quality of work he is offering. By doing this, you can become a business leader.
- **Post a project as an employer:** Sign in as an employer, post a project, and then bid on it as a freelancer. Other freelancers will bid on it too, analyze their bids, their profile and prices. Send message to the one whose bid was effective, and through conversation you will get to know about his/her communication skills. You will realize that what type of bid attracts a response most quickly, what is the price of competitor, and how an employer awards a project to a particular freelancer.
- **Communication Skills:** As discussed before, if you don't have communication skills, you can't do business as a freelancer. For this, these factors are most important:
 - i. Selection of words
 - ii. Eagerness to get the client on skype
 - iii. Conciseness (to the point) - There is no need to tell the whole story, just convince by telling why you are the right choice for their project.
 - iv. Price - See what the competitive price is related to your project by fake bidding and analyzing the prices.

Topic no: 27

Level of skills

Learning the basic skills of any software or a field is not enough because you cannot compete with the professionals of that field with your basic skills. Your level of skills determines the extent to which you can show your competency in a profession. If you will not polish your skills and invest time on your skills, a high skilled competitor will run over you.

Therefore, level of skills actually determines your success as a freelancer in a freelancing marketplace. So, practice and polish your skills, learn new advancements in technology of your field and keep yourself up to date. Old technologies become obsolete with new advancements, so there is no limit for learning in freelancing. Higher the level of your skill more are the chances of you to become successful.



Topic no: 28

Communication Skills

Your communication skills are a major factor in completion of a mission. Your mission is to become a successful freelancer, to earn money as much as you want, to become financially independent, and to empower more people as your work grows. This mission can't be achieved without good communication skill.

The art of selling yourself is the most important thing. To sell your product and service, you should learn the art of an effective communication, you should know how to convey yourself and the message about your product or service.

In freelancing, communication skills have the lead role in your success. Some most important factors of communication skills are discussed below:

- Selection of suitable words
- The message being conveyed
- Staying connected (Ensure your employer that you are accessible whenever they want.)
- Conciseness

Stronger the communication skills are, higher gets the chance to become successful.

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Speed of response

In freelancing, where a lot of factors are associated with your reputation and success, the Speed of Response is also a very important factor. How fast you respond to your employer shows how serious you are about your business. The key factor of Speed of Response is to respond as soon as you get business lead. A person has two ways to follow this:

- a) The wrong way is to respond when you feel like (your buyer may award the project to someone else before the time you feel like responding)
- b) The right way is to respond as soon as you get the employer's message (this approach is best, try to use freelance apps or email to get the updates and increase your response time).

The best approach is to reply ASAP (as soon as possible). A person should install an email client in one's smart phone for staying updated with the clients' instant messages and responses.

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Professional behavior

A behavior sets up the passage to become a successful freelancer. When you are doing freelancing, your client may be anywhere across the globe, so the main points to convince him/her are:

- Video,
- Conversation,
- Selection of words,
- Conciseness,
- Profile.

A person should be accountable, to himself and to the employer/client. A client is spending his business and money on a freelancer and expects the freelancer to be answerable to him and be accountable for the deliverables.

A person should be disciplined and know how to manage his time. Moreover, a freelancer should have a positive attitude towards his work. Positivity in the real and digital world, both, helps you to go ahead of competition. Another major important factor is to know your worth. It is important to gain confidence, because it helps you to achieve your goals in a better way, and helps you keep motivated.

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Presenting your work

Work presentation is half your task in Freelancing. If you know how to present your work, you can excel in your field. Work can be presented in following three ways:

1. Work presentation at your Freelance profile - Description, Services, Portfolio and Experience.
2. Creating your Website – Who you are, your portfolio and means of contact.
3. Social Media Existence – Facebook pages, Pinterest and YouTube channel.

The more you give the information about you and your skills, the client will be more impressed. Social media existence is important because that can help you get more projects, people will know about you, and your brand will become popular. So, present your work and skills effectively.



Topic no: 32

Define project deliverables

For successfully completing any project, project deliverables and milestones very important.

Three main points are important in deciding the project deliverables:

1. **Draft Phase:** Suppose if you are doing a project of making a logo, and the fixed price is \$100 then definitely you will give two or three samples to your client. The client looking at the samples, based on his requirements, selects a sample and points out the modification. It depends upon the following two key points:
 - i. **Delivery Time** – One should deliver the main logo with samples at a particular time decided on the basis of your experience.
 - ii. **Price** – Price should be set according to the level of your expertise, experience and proposals.
2. **Final Output:** It is the output based on your draft that should be delivered at the decided time, at the set price.
3. **Output Deliverables:** This is the phase where all the required file formats are delivered to the client. Price of all the phases depends on you; either you can charge at the same time, or you can charge according to the milestones.

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Top in demand skills 2018

Most in demand skills vary from time to time. It is possible that the skill that is in high demand today may not be of any value tomorrow or vice versa. The list of top skills can be googled and verified from the top freelancing sites. According to Forbes 2017, the top most in demand skills are:

1. Adobe InDesign
2. 3D Design
3. Creative Design
4. HTML5
5. WooCommerce
6. Website Management
7. Branding
8. Angular.js
9. Business Card
10. React.js, etc.

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Which project should I take?

A freelancer should take a project according to his expertise in/ grip on the particular skill. Every project is not for everyone. If your expert skill is not among the top in demand skills, then you can develop or enhance some other skill too. You can analyze the freelancing platforms or look up for the highly demanded skills from the stats and start working and developing them.

There are no hard and fast rules to set the pricing of a project, but following points need to be considered in order to set the price:

- Rate should be set after comparison of your skill set, years of experience, profile, etc. with other freelancers in same niche
- Don't use unrealistic rates
- Take into consideration all indirect expenses before setting your rates
- While setting up the rates you need to consider, total time you will spend on a project
- The use of hourly pricing criterion should be limited
- Price yourself at the start of project based on the value of your work
- Discuss your terms of services with the client
- Don't be afraid that your price is too high
- Find freelancer networking groups
- Ask your client what they'll pay
- Don't be afraid to ask for more; it's all negotiable