



VITTORIO RIVABELLA

# THE CUSTOMER FUNNEL.

KICK START YOUR FREELANCE JOURNEY,  
FIND YOUR FIRST CUSTOMERS,  
AND BUILD WEALTH OUT OF YOUR BUSINESS

*A special thank goes to all the people that have helped me reviewing and proofreading this book:*

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# THE CUSTOMER FUNNEL:

## Kickstart Your Freelance Journey

A five steps guide to find and retain your first customers

*“I just love how simply Vitto has laid out the stages of starting your freelancing career” – Aadit Sheth*

*“Choosing freelance as a career path is a bold move and Vitto makes sure that you are heading the right way” – Meenakshi Sankar*

*“It teaches you how to find clients, how to deal with them effectively, and how to price your work.” – Catalin Pit*

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**BONUS: 1 HOUR FREE CONSULTING**

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## Chapter 1

# Introduction

*I've written this guide hoping to help people building wealthy businesses, giving them the knowledge I wish I had when I started.*



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# Thank You!

*Thank you so much for downloading this guide.  
You've just chosen to take the first step, towards a better  
future.*

## 1.1 What Will You Learn?

I will update this guide *monthly*, to share with you tips and tricks I've acquired while working as a freelancer developer and VFX supervisor.

In this guide you will learn the fundamentals of **building a successful freelancing business**:

- Find your first customers.
- How to deal with people.
- Make sure your customers trust you.
- Price your skills.
- Make a customer not a sale.





**This is not a shortcut to success**, it will take time, consistency, effort, and dedication. You will need to work smart for quite some time to build enough wealth and create a better future.

## 1.2 Why Is This Guide Free?

I have one BA and one MA, as well as one BSc in Applied Software Dev, which I'm currently finishing. I have worked in 10+ startups over 6 years, consulting 30+.

*Half of the stuff I know comes from the internet and its communities.*

*The other half comes from practice and experience.*

I want you to have the knowledge I wish I had when I started my journey as a freelancer, without the hassle of spending money, and the drive to make some.

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**Inside this eBook You'll find a couple of Affiliate Links:**

Please consider using them whenever you'll want to buy one of the books listed here.

This will help me to keep working on this guide and producing valuable content.

## 1.3 The Customer Funnel

*The Customer Funnel simplifies the customer acquisition and retention process for a freelancer, using a five steps approach.*

During the years I've noticed more and more a clear pattern in my customer acquisition process: first a message, then a meeting, questions, one week of silence, and then another email, a quotation, and finally the job (best case scenario).

***When you want to buy a new laptop, what do you do?***

**You look at the specs**, then look at the price and if the price fits, you search the internet for some review. Finding great reviews will create trust convincing you that that laptop is a great choice.

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What do you do now? **You check for alternatives**, to make sure you are not losing any great deal.

At this point, if nothing else satisfied you more than that Asus ROG Mothership, this is the point, **you buy the laptop**.

The same happens when looking for clients. You are a laptop (or a microphone, it doesn't matter). If your first impression is good enough, people will search through the internet trying to understand if you are worth their money.

*You need to be ready to hook your customers at each step of the process.*

## What is the customer funnel?

The *Customer Funnel* is a list of the steps required to find your first customers, create a network that builds wealth, and make your **freelancing business a success** thanks to word of mouth.

Think about finding customers like a 5 steps funnel:

- **Find and contact.**
- **Gain trust.**

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- **Sell yourself.**
- **Price your skills.**
- **Make a customer not a sale.**

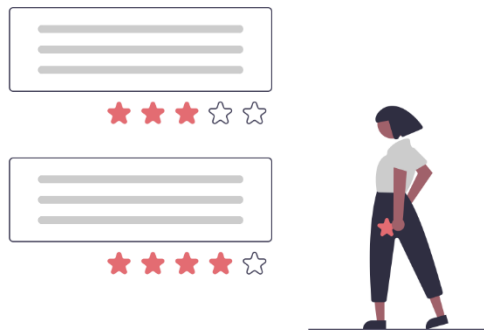
**In this guide, you will find one chapter for every step of the Customer Funnel.** In every section, I will walk you through the necessary actions required to find your first gigs, optimize your customer acquisition process, build trust, create a network that converts, and retain your clients.

*We are 7+ Billion people on this planet: what makes you the one worth my money?*

## Chapter 2

# Finding Your First Customer

*First customers are always the hardest to get.*



*You have no reviews, references, a small portfolio if not none, no contacts, no clue on where to start.*

You've maybe posted a gig on Fiverr once, with scarce success, and are now fumbling on the internet, trying to land your next job or looking for a guide that will teach you how to do it.

**No worries**, it is normal, you just need to find a method that works, and this book is the right starting point.

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## 2.1 How to Find and Contact Your First Customer

We are **7+ Billion peoples on this planet**, do not expect to be found out of anywhere only because you're cool. Unfortunately, being cool is not enough.

*You will need to go out and get your money, sell yourself.*

Luckily there are different choices you can make to find your first customers:

- Job, Freelancing, and gig boards.
- Social Media Platforms.
- Cold emails and messages.
- Network and word of mouth.

All those methods have their **pros and cons** and are effective at different stages of your business.

*Think of your business as a Lego Castle, you need to build it brick after brick, better if you have the instructions.*

## 2.2 Job, Freelancing, and Gig Boards

Job and freelancing platforms are a **great way to kickstart your career**. If used in the right way, those can help you build a good wealth out of occasional gigs and strong visibility.

There are tons of websites out there where you can post your services, or find a job:

- Upwork.
- Fiver.
- Freelancer.
- Indeed.
- Guru.

All of them have their pros and cons, let's explore them broadly.



## 2.2.1 Freelancing Platforms Pros & Cons

As said, there are platforms like **Upwork** that are an amazing way to start **creating your network of customers** as a web developer or designer, but there are also platforms like **Fiverr** where you might have to lower your prices a lot, especially if you are just starting, due to competition.

Pros of using a freelancing platform:

- **It's easy to start** you create a well-converting profile and start selling your services.
- **It's already popular:** you'll throw your name and skills in a pool of hundreds of thousands of users. If you are good enough to make a good impression and retain your users, it's a Bingo.
- **It's secure:** usually those platforms are protected by strong payment and regulatory systems. You will usually be sure to receive your payments on time, and of the right amount.

Cons of using a freelancing platform:

- **Low conversions:** the competition is high and is hard to stand out
- **High competition:** due to the high competition you might have to lower your prices or become a web and sales wizard.
- **No customer filters:** initially you will literally get any kind of customer.

I've rarely used websites like Upwork or Fiverr to find my customers, but I have used them a lot to find professionals to hire for occasional jobs.

The biggest limit of those platforms is and will always be, the ability to broaden your network of customers bringing them outside the platform.

*It's not easy, because the Terms of Service that are protecting users from being scammed, are also preventing you, your gig, and your customers, from moving outside the platform.*

I love to create real connections and give value to my customers, and I love when my customers give value to me. To do this, you need a network.

Social media platforms are, in my opinion, the best way to

create real connections and promote your skills and expertise, while meeting stunning personalities.

**Let's see how we can find customers using Social Networks.**

## 2.3 Land Your Next Job Using Social Networks

I can't stress enough, **social media and online presence are key to acquire customers**, retain them, and create a network of people to empower others, yourself, and build wealth.

No matter if you are just starting out, or are a kung-fu programmer coming from Microsoft then turned freelance:

*You might be one message away from your next 6 figures freelance job.*

At first, to be honest, I wasn't sure where to put this section, it sits right in-between the contact and the trust steps of this customer funnel, why?

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Having a strong social presence will allow you to:

- **Establish connections** with like-minded people.
- **Have the right visibility** to advertise your skills.
- **Find job offers** right from the source.
- **Showcase your skills** and become an expert in your domain.

The real power of Social Media platforms like Twitter, and LinkedIn **resides in the network**. There's nothing stronger than a community to find and nurture your relations, and potential customers. Remember, we're used to trusting those we know.

We will talk more about socials, later, in the "Gain Trust" section, just keep in mind their importance.

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## 2.4 Network and Word of Mouth

No matter if small or big, **networks are gold mines.**

*Do something that brings value to someone, and you'll become an expert in his/her eyes.*

Think about this guide, I may or may not be an expert, but you are hopefully getting some value out of this eBook. If you would ever need some advice on how to start your freelance business, would you think of writing me a message?

***When you are just starting out your journey, it's great to ask family members, shops, and people you know, if there's something you might help them with.***

Do you want to find your first customer as a web dev?

- Ask your network.
- Ask your relatives.
- Ask local shops.
- Ask Friends.

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If you think you can improve someone's business, GREAT! Go for it.

Do not become spammy though, sell solutions only if needed.

**Can you create a landing page?** Great that's your first job!

Can you set up a LinkedIn company page or my business profile? Go for it and add it to your portfolio! (We will talk about portfolios later)

If there's no one in your neighbourhoods, try to broaden the scope.

How? **Cold emails and messages!**

## 2.5 Cold Email Potential Customers

Cold Emails are a double-edged sword:

- A powerful tool if used correctly
- Shameful torture if used wrong

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If used wisely, **Cold Emails and Cold Messages, can bring a lot of wealth to your business.** You might be surprised by how many businesses need your skills without even knowing it or knowing it but having no clue on where to find you or someone like you.

But, as said, *those might also end up torturing yourself* or your reader, putting you under the light of "the one begging for a job" or, worst, a scam.

**You need to know how to write effective messages, communicating trust, and looking authentic.**

Here are a couple of tips to write effective emails or messages without looking automated, spammy, or being completely ineffective:

- Do not be spammy.
- Sell solutions, not yourself.
- Be interested in the persons you are writing to.
- Be kind and gentle.
- Know your target.

Let me focus on the first one, which is probably the most important:



**Do not write a random list of 80 contacts**, with the same exact message, talking about how cool and good you are, just because you are looking for a job, multiple times a day hoping for a reply.

This doesn't work. It will result in instant trash of your email, and a complete waste of time.

**Write laser-focused emails to targeted contacts** instead, showing sincere interest and willingness to help the right people. You need to study and understand your target and find a reason it might need your skills to improve its business.

How and where to find the right people is the question, let me give you some clues.



## 2.5.1 Where Do I Find Contacts to Send Cold Emails?

*Finding contacts is not too hard, getting a reply is.*

The web is cluttered by contacts, agencies, consultants, websites, platforms, career pages, LinkedIn, contacts. You just need to make the bold move and send your email.

If you have no clue of where to start:

- Do you want to work with creative agencies? Search their contacts on google.
- Do you want to work with consultants? Search and contact them on LinkedIn.
- Do you want to work with developers? Search and contact them on Tech Twitter.

**The hard part is not how to find the contacts but how to improve your response rate and the chances to get a reply.**

Let's see how being genuinely interested in our potential customers, pays back in response rate: using a technique **called Ego Booster by Mustafa Khundmiri**.

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*Be aware that almost 60% of the time you won't receive any response, but in that 40%, there are an awful lot of opportunities.*

## 2.5.2 The Ego Booster Technique

Stealing it from Mr.Mustafa Khundmiri, **the Ego Booster is an effective method to send cold emails.**

This method suggests that the first time you cold contact someone, you shouldn't mention your services or any kind of job-related question. You should just show **genuine interest** in your prospect and **establish a connection**.

Then if you get a reply, that breaks the ice, start selling your skills and the value you might bring to your customer:

- Problems you have found in your prospect's assets that you might solve.
- Services you think might be useful.
- Results you have achieved and might help your customer to achieve the same.

The first time you contact someone:

- Do not talk about yourself.
- Appreciate his/her/their work.
- Be genuine.

If you receive a follow-up email:

- Start selling solutions.
- Tell your contact how you could bring value to its business.

This will improve your response rate to almost 60% giving you the possibility to sell your skills in a follow-up email.

## 2.5.3 Why the Ego Booster Technique is effective for cold emails?

**People always love feeling appreciated** about themselves, their work, or their company. So why not reach out to them with a few kind words?

- Don't panic, I know talking with people is not easy, so:

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- Here's a Twitter thread I've written some time ago on [how to appreciate and motivate people](#)
- In the next session, I will tell you briefly about the **fundamental principles to deal with people**.

Obviously, there are more ways to write effective cold emails, but this would take an entire guide to be explained.

## 2.5.4 Cold Email That Work

Luckily the inventor of the Ego Booster, Mustafa Khundmiri, wrote an eBook called: '**Cold Emails That Work**' that will make you a kung-fu master at cold emailing prospects.

I'll leave you the link here:

<https://gumroad.com/a/601658483/aRwuzn>

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## Chapter 3

# How To Deal with People (briefly)

*The most important thing in communication is to hear what isn't being said.*



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*When talking with a potential customer, you need to be able to persuade, communicate your value, and your intentions clearly.*

Do not worry if you are not a wordsmith by nature, *communication is an art that can and should be learned*. There are lots of amazing books about this topic but let just me go through the three main principles, to give you some concepts to start with.

There are **three fundamental principles** to deal with people:

- Don't condemn, criticize, or complain.
- Give honest and sincere appreciation.
- Overlap your and other's needs.

Mastering those key concepts will help you to build strong connections with people while developing your network, and helping you promoting or landing your next job.

**Let's analyze them one by one.**

## 3.1.1 Do Not Condemn, Criticize, or Complain

*"If you want to gather honey, don't kick over the beehive"*

This principle is not strictly related to dealing with potential customers, is more about life and human interactions in general. Let me be brief.

**Criticism is futile**, it simply creates resentment demoralizing the person you are talking with and putting her/him on the defence. It hurts people's pride.

Criticizing someone causes that person to:

- **Become emotional.**
- **Justify his/her/their behavior.**
- **Condemn you.**
- **Perform worse.**
- **Eventually, leave you.**

Instead of condemning people, try to understand them. Ask yourself: "Why is this person behaving like that?", try to understand the underlying motivations, and find the right

solutions. Trust me, the ability to find the right solution to the right problem will always pay back.

## 3.2 Give Honest and Sincere Appreciation

When writing to a potential customer, be sure to be sincerely interested in her/his business. Ask questions, be curious.

One of the greatest differences between humans and animals is the **desire for a feeling of importance**. Appreciating someone's work, greeting someone for her/his/their efforts, is the best way to fulfill this desire.

***Showing sincere appreciation can change lives.*** When we aren't thinking about something else, we spend most of the time thinking about ourselves. Focus instead on others' needs and find a way to appreciate them. People will always remember who sincerely valued them.

Do you remember the **Ego Booster techniques**? It works because people love to be appreciated.

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### 3.3 Overlap Your and Others Needs

*Increase your tendency to think in terms of other people's points of view and see things from their angle.*

***People don't want what you want, they want what they need, you need to understand where yours and their needs overlap to create a win-win deal.***

If you contact a potential customer, asking to create a landing page, but they sell fruits at a local scale, to private people, it won't work.

**If you ask the same to someone that has just launched his/her product on Gumroad, it will probably work.**

Contacting clients and knowing how to communicate is not enough, especially if your words are not backed by a strong portfolio and social presence.

Interested in learning more about communication?

Let me share with you two books I think are a must-read when it comes to dealing with others and closing deals:

- [How to Win Friends and Influence People – Dale Carnegie](#)
- [Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion – Robert Cialdini](#)

## Chapter 4

# Gain Trust from Your Customers

*We are used to trusting those we already know.*



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*Once you have gained someone's interest you need to prove your value.*

When you want to buy a brand-new laptop the first thing you do is to check the price, then you probably watch a couple of reviews on YouTube, searching for an alternative. Now, if you are enough convinced by the reviews, the product, the description, and thousands of different cognitive stuff, you go back to the website and buy the laptop.

*The same happens with your customers.*

No matter if you are on Fiverr, Twitter, or LinkedIn, if you are interesting enough, people will search for you, look at your experiences, jobs and **understand if you are trustworthy enough to be hired.**

The problem is, how can you convince your customers? How to communicate your value?

*One rule: show, do not tell.*

- **Create an online presence.**
- **Write effective and on-point descriptions.**
- **Be sure to be consistent and professional.**
- **Create a Portfolio that converts.**
- **Show off the value you bring.**

Be sure to invest your time in projects, content, and blogs, to showcase how awesome you are, and what you have done.

**Create an online presence.**

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## 4.1 Create an Online Presence

Imagine Parvin writing to you on Twitter, asking for a job.

You watch at her image:

*"is a building."*

You read her bio:

*"is a quote."*

You google her name:

*"Only a restaurant in Nevada."*

You stop reading right away, without even thinking for a second about the remote possibility of hiring Parvin, unless you already know her, of course.

**The first thing people see when you contact them is your online presence, your ID on the web.** Be sure to take care of your social profiles, especially the ones you are using to contact potential clients. Create a portfolio to show your projects and write some tech posts to publish a blog.

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Make sure to internally link your contents and profiles together

When a potential customer will look for “reviews about you”, just like you would when buying a new laptop, you will have to make sure to be there, ready to make a great impression, **not missing a shot.**

**Let's start optimizing social profiles**, a low-effort easy win.

Where to start? How do you choose which social networks are worth using? Where should you invest your time to create a stunning profile? Turns out, it depends.

## 4.2 Best Socials to Promote your Freelance Business

As a rule of thumb, use the following socials in the following cases:

### Twitter

*Great for web developers, UI, UX designers, business founders, machine learning researchers.*

Twitter is essentially great for anything that has a **textual context** and can be occasionally associated with an image or a post.

### LinkedIn

*Great for consultants, digital marketers, and freelancers in general.*

You can create a hugely valuable network out of LinkedIn, and it's also a great place to showcase your past experiences and give a 360 view of your experience and curriculum at a glance.

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# Instagram

*Great if your work is mainly visual.*

UI and UX designers, as well as artists, will benefit from the huge engagement and contact opportunities given by Instagram.

I'm not touching Facebook or Tik Tok here because I've never tried to land a job there. To be honest I think there's already so much value in the others that are not worth the effort.

Of course, there's no one rule fits all, if you think you can obtain some reward out of a social network, from a professional perspective, go for it.

## 4.2.1 No One Rule Fits All

Once you picked the platform that fits your needs, it's time to optimize your profile to communicate trust.

*No matter the social media, you will need a great bio and a fresh-looking high-quality portrait as a profile image.*

Your profiles need to look:

- Authentic.
- Trustworthy.
- Professional.
- Coherent.

To communicate those feelings, the first thing a person will see is your profile image.

## 4.3 The importance of Your Profile Image

**Avoid using generic avatars as a profile image**, especially if you are looking to build trust in your customers. Make sure to use a high-quality portrait that clearly shows your smiley, serious, trustworthy, expression.

*"But I don't like myself"*

F\*\*k you. You want to work, to become a successful freelancer. You are not a 5-year-old kid. You are a professional.

Put on some makeup, or not, wear your best outfit, wait for a cloudy day or sunset, and get a snapshot on a white background.

If you don't like the background, use [remove.bg](https://remove.bg) and change the background. No excuses.

*Having a great profile image will give a sneak peek to your potential client into your personality, be sure to look professional.*

Now that you have a fresh-looking profile picture, it's time to tell the world who you are, and how valuable you are. Writing an effective bio.

## 4.4 How to Write a Bio That Converts?

*Writing a bio that converts is an art. You have only 5 seconds to hook your user's attention, and another 10 seconds to create an impact and convince your customer.*

To create a bio that sells, you need to follow a couple of principles:

- **Do not be egocentric.**
- **Clearly state the values you bring to your customers and your experiences.**
- **Be short / Do not be spammy.**

## 4.4.1 Avoid Your Ego While Writing Your Bio

***Here's a harsh truth:** No one cares about what you did or do unless it's useful.*

I know you like pizza so much, that you are different, with curly hair, but unfortunately, no one cares. Do you know what people care about though? **Facts.**

Do not tell me you love playing the guitar. **Tell me your tech stack.**

Do not tell me you love JavaScript. **Tell me what you did with JavaScript.**

Do not tell me how much you studied conversion, **tell me how much my e-commerce will convert following your advice.**

## 4.4.2 Clearly State the Value You Bring to Your Customers

*You need to clearly state the value you bring to your customers, tell them why you are a better choice than someone else of the 30millions developers in the world.*

This is an example of my LinkedIn Bio:

### About



Freelance full-stack developer and technology consultant with a demonstrated experience in the startup ecosystem and the content creation world. Background in Art shifted to full-time tech, I'm fully focused on solving problems and creating tools/SaaS using Typescript, NextJs, React, Express, GraphQL, Mongo, Postgres, AWS, and IBM Cloud. I'm a natural team player, firmly believing that a team aligned around a common goal, is a successful team. Currently running a tech community on Twitter with discrete success, while hosting a podcast for junior developers and experienced mentors.

As you can see, I've tried to keep my bio as short as possible, starting broad about my experiences and narrowing it down to the programming languages I am focusing on.

I did a similar thing for Twitter, where I didn't want to find a job as a programmer, but to grow a community, so I needed to clearly state why someone should push the follow button:

I help developers reach financial freedom | Fail-Safe, Ship Fast, Learn Faster |  
Posting about Business & Web Dev  
⚡ Building [birdlr.com](https://birdlr.com) in public

Here I kept the bio minimal, clearly stating my purpose, a great quote, and how I'm achieving my goal.

**Do not waste space using superfluous words, emojis, ask yourself:**

*“Would you care about it while reading someone else's bio?”*

### 4.4.3 Be short / Do not be spammy

I can't say this enough: you have 5 seconds to hook attention, create trust, and look authentic:

- **Keep your bio as short as possible.**
- **Do not stuff it with keywords.**
- **Do not use hashtags or fancy texts.**

People need to give you money. Would you give yourself money?

Unfortunately, a great bio is not what will ultimately convince your future customer, what works though, is a portfolio.

### 4.4.4 Master the Art of Twitter

If you want to learn more on how to **optimize your social media profiles**, find customers and build wealth out of your posts, I suggest you read “[Start Building Your Twitter Audience](#)”.

An amazing book by [Catalin Pit](#), on how to master building an



audience on Twitter and create connections that can change your life.

## 4.5 Create a Portfolio that Converts

When starting your journey, a great and well-curated portfolio is what sets apart a new customer, and your emails getting trashed.

*Having a portfolio capable of showcasing your projects, skills and expertise, will hook your users' interest and build trust.*

If you want to convince users you are worth their money, make sure to have a portfolio that has:

- **Authentic code.**
- **On point projects.**

**One self-made project is worth tens of projects made following a tutorial**, make sure to have original projects, made by you, your brain, and StackOverflow.

**It is also important to showcase projects aligned with the jobs you are applying to:**

Do you want to develop SaaS? Develop a Netflix clone.

Do you want to make landing pages? Make landing pages.

Do you want to design UIs? Showcase interactive designs.

Having projects and showcasing technologies relevant to the needs and domains of your customers, will exponentially improve your conversion rate.

The question now is: how many projects?

## 4.5.1 Quality Above Quantity and Best Stuff First

Three projects are enough, the complexity determines your skills hence your hourly revenue, but three authentic projects are just what you need to tell:

*" Hey, I know how to do this stuff, I'm not telling you that, I'm showing you ".*

If you have more projects to showcase, that's great but:

- **Make sure to put the best stuff first.**
- **Showcase your projects properly/exhaustively.**

Showcasing your best projects first and presenting them properly will both hook your viewer's attention and increase the perceived value of your skills.

Make sure every detail is curated.

If you developed a landing page, you should insert the reasons you've made button red, or inserted that CTA.

If you developed a SaaS make sure to mention your stack.

If you are a developer, you want to include the repositories as well as creating a well formatted readme.md for them.

As a designer, you might want to create a well-designed page to show off your latest designs or user interactions, as well as the fonts and the palettes used.

Sometimes you could end up having project you are not sure if are worth to be published or not.

## 4.5.2 Should I Put Bad Projects in My Portfolio?

**I love seeing bad old stuff in** portfolios because it tells me the journey of an individual and looks authentic, but you guessed that it depends.

The rule is:

**Show your kickass stuff first and hook your viewer.**

If you have projects that are not super-refined, but you think are relevant because you did something fancy, go for it but be cautious.

Bad or beautiful though, if you're not able to **sell yourself**, and communicate your value, you'll end up empty-handed. You need to learn how to sell yourself.

Need portfolio inspirations? Go to [awwwards](#)

## Chapter 5

# Price Your Skills

*The more the demand the higher the price, the bigger the imposter syndrome.*



*As a freelancer, you are a sort of one-man band, a friend, a consultant, an expert, a developer, sometimes a designer, a professional. **You need to be able to communicate your value.***

When we talked about bios, and before about Cold Emails, I told you to sell your value, the solutions you can bring your customer, and not yourself:

***People are not giving you money because you are "cool" they are giving you money because you are what they need to solve THEIR problems.***

You are not an amazing front-end developer; you know how to create an eCommerce that has a conversion rate of 4%.

*Learning to sell yourself takes time, patience, but pays back generously.*

Let me suggest you again to read the books I've listed in the **How to deal with people** chapter. Those books will completely change the way you approach selling your services and converting people into customers. Read them and you'll have a stunning toolset of techniques and methods to express and communicate your intentions and value, the right way.

When pricing your skills is also great to know your market and how other professionals like you are behaving.

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## 5.1 Study the market to find your price

Pricing your skills is not always easy: sometimes imposter syndrome kicks in, and sometimes you just have **no clue on how to price your service**.



### **Imposter Syndrome:**

Impostor syndrome (IS) refers to an internal experience of believing that you are not as competent as others perceive you to be.

*The first thing you should do is to understand how much other freelancers are charging for the same services.*

### **Study the market to find your price:**

- Go on a website like Upwork and signup.
- In the search bar insert your domain like "web developer".

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*You will see how much other freelancers like you are charging for their time.*

Turns out *finding your price is a matter of balance*, and there are different methods you can use to start getting the revenue you deserve.

Now that you know how to understand how much you should charge, there are different philosophies about prices calculations:

- **Hourly rates.**
- **Per project rates.**

**You should choose the** first if the project you are going to work on has predictable length and you already know how much time you will work on it.

On the other side, you might want to *charge a calculated number of hours based on the needs of your customer* and, in case of variations from the original specs, charge accordingly.

Let me touch for a second a hot topic, free jobs:  
I receive lots of messages asking me if working for free is shameful, bad, good, or amazing. Here's my answer.

## 5.2 Should I Work for Free?

**You guessed that: it depends.**

If you have time for a Bootcamp: you can work for free.

If you have time to waste watching cats' videos: you can work for free.

If you have time to watch Netflix all day long: you can work for free.

*Otherwise, no, you should never work for free.*

What I mean is, Bootcamps are great, but instead of paying \$12k for a four-week course, take 6 months to one-year full focus vacation and go through all the amazing free resources that the web offers you. *Showcasing six months of work, or two, instead of a four-week Bootcamp, is better, even if you haven't seen a penny.*

Of course, if you see yourself fully booked, with jobs requests, overcharging your email, there's no point in working for free, you should instead maximize your price/hour to get the most out of your skills

## 5.3 The More the Demand the Higher the Price

*As a freelance developer, you don't want to work 9/5, trust me, you don't.*

This would kill all the advantages of being a freelancer, the possibility to develop your own stuff, and spend time with your loved ones. Decide how many hours you want to work, start high, 30/week? Great.

You need to **maximize the revenue produced by those hours**, how? Using an iterative process. Finding your price per hour can't be a one-time shot, you'll have time to find the right balance. **A method I love is starting low priced, rising based on demand.**

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Remember Upwork? Check the average hourly price for a junior web developer or similar, this will be your starting price. Now, every time you will see yourself fully booked for multiple weeks (2) in a row, raise your price/hr by 25%.

On the other side, if you see everyone complaining about your prices, you have two choices:

1. **Improve the perceived trust** you are communicating to your consumers.
2. **Lower your prices.**

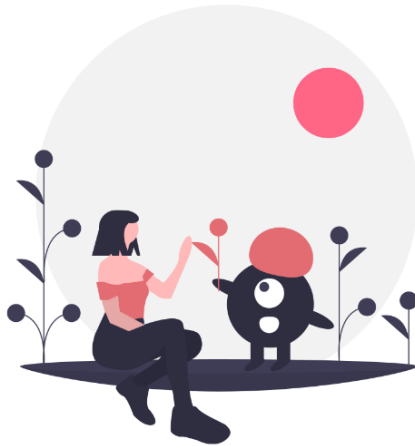
Remember, everything written here requires good sense, if you have no references or experiences, and you are trying to charge me \$50k for a website, it won't work.

*This method is not mine though, I've stolen it from the amazing book "[The Art Of Twitter](#)" (3.4.4) by [Life Math Money](#)*

## Chapter 6

# Make a Customer Not a Sale

*Acquiring a customer is way much harder than retaining old ones, about 10 times harder.*



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You need to be good enough to see customers coming back asking for your skills and experience again and again. Remember the one-man-band analogy?

**You need to become of fundamental importance to your customer.** Not by creating an awful codebase that's maintainable only by you though, but by bringing consistent value and expertise at the right price.

*Become the resource people can't live without, to do so there are a couple of points I'd love to share with you.*

## 6.1 How to Retain Customer?

There are customers that you can't retain, they simply don't care, or it is better to let them go, then you have customers you want to retain, and following the right methods, it's not a tough task:

- **Be responsive and communicative.**
- **Set boundaries.**

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- **Include your customer in the process.**
- **Be proactive.**
- **Be passionate about what you do.**

## 6.1.1 Be Responsive and Communicative

*Have you ever worked with someone that never replies to messages or emails?*

Don't be that person. If your customers ask for a change, reply as soon as possible with time and prices. Try to reply promptly to questions; communication is key and will make your customer feel fulfilled by your attentions and will create trust in your person.

**You do not work 24/7** though, this needs to be stated clearly. It's equally important to clearly set boundaries of availability.

## 6.1.2 Set Boundaries, you don't work 24/7

*Clearly states your availabilities to your customer.*

Special availabilities should be avoided to take care of yourself, but if mandatory, **charge them accordingly**.

*Do not fall into the trap of the always-available plumber, communicate clearly.*

It's also important to **promptly align everyone about the job status**, being sure to include your customers in the development.

## 6.1.3 Include Your Customer in the Process

**Make your customer part of the process, establishing constant communication.** Whenever there's a design choice, a pivot in the architecture, a decision to take, involve your customer.

*This comes from the principle of failing fast to learn faster.*



Understanding what your customer wants is not easy: what if you spend 56hrs on an ultra-detailed design and end up wasting it because the company you are working with doesn't like it? **This should never happen.** Involving your customer right from the start, in an iterative process, will prevent this problem.

If you need to develop an application, you probably don't want to jump straight into backend development, unless you don't have very specific requirements. You want to start by understanding if your and your customer's visions are aligned.

*Start every work small, ask for feedback at every step, reiterate your product on that feedback, then ask for feedback again.*

Doing so will help:

- **Preventing you from wasting countless hours of work.**
- **Give your customer the ability to pivot along the way and charge accordingly.**
- **Prevent you from making huge mistakes because of a misalignment of visions.**

Anyway, I told you once, I'll tell you again:

This is not a shortcut to success, you got to be committed, and to be committed you need to love what you do.

## 6.1.4 Love What You Do

Everything we discussed until now is useless if you don't love what you do.

It won't be a string line to success, there'll be ups and downs, you will need to learn, fail, and rise again. If you don't love creating stuff, programming, designing interfaces, helping people, find a higher goal:

**Why are you doing it? Find a vision and optimize your environment to say:** *“Hey I have a vision and I’m working hard to reach my goals, here’s what I’m doing, my results”.*

## Chapter 7

# Conclusions

*This is not the end, is just the start.*



*No book, degree or Bootcamp will teach you everything you need to know to become a successful designer, programmer, or president. You need to get your hands dirty, try, fail, and learn.*

In this book you've, hopefully, learned how to get the most out of the internet, its free resources and optimize your online presence to convert more.

I've also wanted to give you some fundamental concepts on how to deal with others, and price your skills accordingly.

One thing I couldn't give you is experience.

**Now it's time for you to act and start walking your way through a successful freelance business.**

Leverage the internet, create connections, study, learn a lot. Everything can be achieved if you work hard enough.

Good luck.

*I wish you all the best,*

*Vitto*

*P.s Want to talk? **Read the next page.***

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