

Chimezirim
Odimba

Yes, I made over 20 million naira in 2017 as a freelance writer. That's about \$56k, for international readers.

Now, let's be clear: That's a big amount in my part of the world. But that said; I could have made twice that amount within that same time frame without doing much differently. In hind sight, I actually performed much below my true potential.

Now I know the question you want to ask is: How did you do it? Or better still, you want to know...

How you can do it.

Right?

So I'll be showing you how I made \$56k in 2017 by walking you through the steps you should take.



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Now before I go any farther, I need to show incontrovertible proof that I actually made this amount within the said time frame...

Proof of earnings

First I'll show you my earnings certificate from Upwork (that's the platform I used in 2017).

So here it is...



Tel (650) 316-7500
www.Upwork.com

December 27, 2017

441 Logue Avenue
Mountain View, CA 94043

To Whom It May Concern,

This letter is to provide documentation of earnings to Chimezirim Odimba, who is an independent contractor performing services as a freelancer for third party client companies through Upwork. Upwork provides an online workplace, where companies hire, manage, and pay freelancers through our web-based platform.

While Upwork is not the employer of Chimezirim Odimba and does not control their ongoing earnings on Upwork, we can confirm that Chimezirim Odimba has been paid the following amounts as an independent contractor in the past 12 months.

Freelancer profile

Name	Chimezirim Odimba
Title	Expert Copywriter With Extensive Article Writing Experience
Upwork Profile URL	http://www.upwork.com/users/~0177f8b80e1ab3968c
Active on Upwork Since	March 17, 2016
Address	3 Metropolitan College Rd, Isolo, Lagos, Nigeria

Service contract payments received

Since Jan 1, 2017	Since Jul 1, 2017	Since Oct 1, 2017	Since Dec 1, 2017
\$55,945 USD	\$28,959 USD	\$12,191 USD	\$2,019 USD

Upwork Certification

This Statement of Earnings is issued upon the request of the above-named freelancer for reference purposes and Upwork certifies to the truthfulness and authenticity of the same on the basis of company records.

Elizabeth Tse
SVP Operations, Upwork Global Inc.

The total by the 27th of December, 2017 was \$55,945. That's approximately \$56k. Now this didn't take into account any payments that came in between the 27th and 31st of December.

But any fool with a bit of skill in any graphics program can easily fake this. Therefore, let me do one better. Here's the link to my Upwork profile...

<https://www.upwork.com/o/profiles/users/~0177f8b80e1ab3968c/>

Note the time I joined and verify things for yourself.

Full disclosure: This isn't my first platform or stint as a freelance writer. I actually earned my first \$8k dollars in 2 weeks sometime in 2006. I did that on Elance. Thereafter, I have worked on other freelancing platforms; hiring and being hired.

The point here is that I do NOT insinuate that you will make the same amount I did without my skills or experience. However, I can tell you that IF you follow this tutorial to the letter (enjoying the benefits of my over 12 years' worth of experience as a writer) and are an

excellent writer, you have all it takes to get this kind of amount and much more.

1. Understanding the set up

Since I made the said amount (\$56k) on Upwork, everything I'll teach will be centered on that platform ([You can sign up here](#)). However, the principles can be applied on any other freelancing platform. You'll just have to make the necessary adjustments for any other freelancing platform you might choose to work on.

But for you to work well on any platform, you need to have a clear understanding of the interface. So I'll start by giving you an overview of the various areas/terms/matters you need to pay attention to at the beginning...

a. Upwork Connects

These are tokens that allow you to place bids on the platform. Upwork gives you 60 connects monthly for free. If you use those up and still want to place bids, then you'll have to buy more. But in my experience, you won't need more if you follow the simple strategies I share in this tutorial.

That said, some categories demand more of these tokens (connects) than others. But the categories that are of interest to us here (writing and translation) require just two connects per bid. So for the complimentary connects you get from Upwork, you can place 30 bids each month.

b. Upwork fees

Upwork takes a cut for every dime you make on its platform. The fees structure is pretty simple...

20% on the first \$500 you make from any particular client.

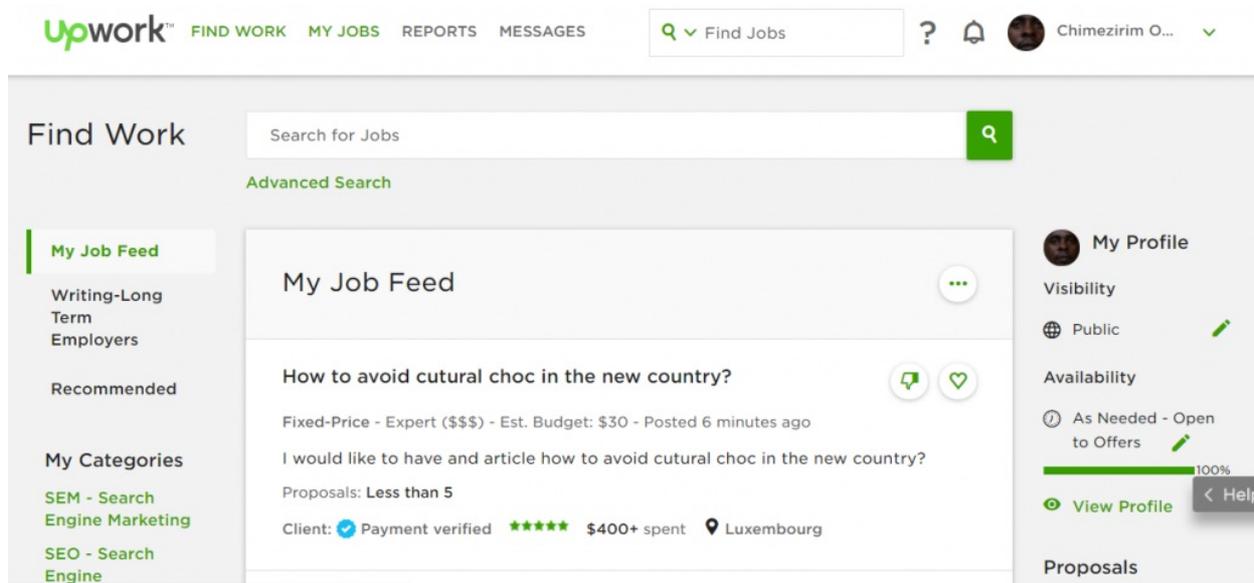
10% on the next \$9,500 (earnings after the first \$500 up to \$10k from a particular client).

5% on all earnings thereafter from a particular client.

Please, don't confuse this with your overall earnings. The rate is calculated based on your earnings from a single client.

C. The interface

The interface is pretty straightforward. Here's a screenshot of how my dashboard looks when I log in (You can play around with it to see where each navigation link takes you – I won't cover that in this tutorial)...



2. Starting out – How to set up for success

Now that you have a good idea of how everything works on Upwork, let's take a look at what you have to do to succeed on it...

a. Building your profile

Your profile tells prospective clients/employers what they need to know about you. Therefore, it could help or hinder you in your quest for good jobs. If you get it right then you'll make your search for great clients a lot easier. Here are things I did when I started along with those I would add now if I were starting afresh...

i. Your copy/sales copy

Every freelancer needs to spend quality time developing their profile copy. However, it's doubly more important if you are seeking to get hired as someone who writes for others. The logic is simple: If you can't even write great copy to sell yourself, how can you deliver for another person.

So you need great copy but what makes a great copy?

1. A great USP

First, it MUST answer the "what's in it for me?" question a potential client would ask when looking to hire a writer. And for you to answer that question right, you need to project your USP (Unique Selling Proposition)

Yes, every writer will write if given a writing project. Every good writer will deliver good writing if given a writing project.

You know what? There are many good writers on Upwork and any other freelancing platform out there. In fact, there's NO scarcity of great writers.

So what is it that sets you apart from others?

That's your unique selling proposition.

In my case, I promise that I'll deliver "Publish-ready" articles.

This is because my target client is the experienced Upwork employer who doesn't want to waste time on endless revisions.

The advantage I have is that I've also been at the other end of the process (I've hired freelancers on Elance) so I understand that you could actually spend more time correcting a badly written piece than it would have taken you to write the whole stuff from the beginning yourself.

Now, many new employers don't get this but experienced employers do and it catches their attention.

But you know what? It's NOT just about creating a USP that catches the attention of potential clients, it has to be something you can deliver.

You see, I've worked as an editor and have developed my editing/revision skills to very high standards. So apart from the fact that I write quite well (ahem!), I dare say I even edit better.

So I let potential clients know that when they hire me they can use my article right away with the assurance that it's been triple checked. And you know what? I ensure I deliver that ALWAYS!

So pick a great USP that makes you stand out. However, ensure it's something you can deliver!

Once you've developed a great USP, it's time to project it as you sell yourself.

2. Trumpet your achievements

If you have any outstanding writing achievements, trumpet them.

In my case, I let potential employers know that I have years of experience and have written over 2,000 articles on the internet's leading article directory. In fact, I am still in the top 70 even though I've NOT submitted a new article there since 2010 (I used to be 7th back in the day).

If you've been featured in a major publication or have written a bestselling book, you MUST let the world know about it. This NO time to be modest about your achievements.

3. Project confidence in yourself and your ability

No potential client/employer is interested in rehabilitating anyone. If you sound apologetic, you've killed your chances. For example, a Nigerian writer was once apologetic for who he was and said something like this...

"I know some of you might NOT want to deal with me because I am Nigerian and some bad eggs have given us a bad name."

So we are clear, that's NOT exactly what he said; I made this up but he sounded as apologetic as the above statement.

Now this is a killer. It shows lack of confidence. Anyone with, at least, half a brain knows that there are criminals everywhere and that there are exceptional talents everywhere. So anyone who won't do business with me because of my country of origin and NOT my character, ability on the job or expected value; isn't worth my attention in the first place.

The truth is: Most people (NOT all, mind you) who play this card generally do have something to hide. Man, if you are exceptional, diligent and honest you are ALWAYS confident you'll hold your own anywhere you go.

So don't project weakness or inadequacy. Many people who come to hire writers do so because they believe they aren't good enough and so want to outsource the task to someone who is.

So what does projecting weakness or ineptitude get you?

Well, it gets you pity and nothing more. Folks who want great jobs will look for those who project CONFIDENCE.

4. Now ensure your copy is great and free of errors

The least I'd expect from you as a writer looking for clients is to spend quality time revising, editing and proofreading your profile copy. For God's sake, don't be in a haste to get it up. It will be the first impression many potential clients have of you.

And what is that popular saying?

You don't get a second opportunity to make a great first impression.

If they see sloppy copy, they'll conclude you're sloppy and you know what? They'd be right.

If you can't give yourself excellent copy, why should anyone trust you to do any better on their projects?

ii. Your picture

Painfully, there are people who believe that their appearance doesn't matter. Well, have you heard the phrase...

"Don't judge a book by its cover?"

While it's encouraging you to look beyond appearances, it does buttress the fact that the first way we judge a book is by its cover.

I don't know about you; but I'll find it hard leaving large deposits of my money in a bank where the officers wear dread locks and have tattoos all over their arms and faces.

You want folks who are more conservative when you are dealing with your hard earned cash. So check every bank you've ever walked into and you'll see that they all maintain a dress code that reinforces that conservative persona (even though we know that a number

of them could be extroverts who might actually prefer dreadlocks and tattoos).

My point?

Your picture must project someone who can be trusted with work. Remember, some employers might be living in the opposite end of the globe. Make it easy for them to feel comfortable doing business with you.

Tell me the truth, who would you trust with your writing project?...

This guy....



Corporate guy — Credits: Spencer Selover – pexels.com

Or this guy...



tatoed man — Credits: Sayantan Kundu – pexels.com

Now that said; a picture of a heavily tattooed person might be an advantage if you want to specialize in writing for clients in the tattoo or related niche.

So ask yourself if your picture projects the right trust image for the ideal client you want to get. If it does, then it's all well and good.

iii. Should you specialize in a niche(s) or not? If so, which is best?

Does it help to specialize in a few niches or should you tell potential employers that you will write on just about anything?

For me and based on my experience, it pays to specialize in a niche or selection of niches. Here are my reasons...

1. You can demonstrate subject matter expertise more easily if you target a niche or a few niches. You'll understand this better when we come to the section on building your portfolio. But to make a case for now, who would you rather have write your article – A jack of all trades or someone who's an expert on the subject?

The answer is pretty clear.

Now while you think on that, can anyone be a subject matter expert on everything?

2. It will make your writing experience easier and more rewarding. With the way information grows these days, you might easily become a dinosaur if you don't keep refreshing your knowledge (staying on the cutting edge). And common sense suggests that you'll find it a lot easier to keep up and stay on the cutting edge in a few niches than doing it in a large number of niches.

Now that I've given a couple of reasons why I'll encourage you to settle for one of just a few niches, the next question is...

Which niche(s) should you focus on?

Well, here's what I'll advise...

1. Pick a niche(s) that you love reading/researching on If you are passionate about it, great. Writing for a living is tough enough as it is but it would be painfully difficult if you have to write on topics you have no interests whatsoever in. But if you are passionate or excited about a subject, writing on it will be a lot of fun.

2. Pick niches that are “difficult”.

What?

Yes, if you choose to write on relationship or parenting or one of those topics that everyone and their dog has an opinion on, you reduce your chances of landing clients. That is, unless you know that you've researched so much on those subjects that you can rightly consider yourself an authority.

Compare the niches I mentioned above with, say; big data, cryptocurrencies, virtualization, augmented reality, and one thing jumps at you...

The later sound more difficult.

Now if you know you had genuine hatred for anything technical, you may want to avoid these exact topics but the point I am making is that they are actually less saturated freelancer-wise. Most people will go for the easy hanging fruits like relationship so opting to write on these tougher niches gives you more space from the onset.

There's another thing about this: You'll generally be able to command higher rates writing a piece on big data than you would on parenting all other things being equal. In fact, you could easily earn 5 times more for such topics.

And while they sound difficult, they aren't actually that tough to write on if you are willing to do the research.

3. Pick a niche that has a high job post vs proposal ratio. That is, niches where the percentage of projects posted is high when compared to the number of proposals submitted per job post.

To do that, check Upwork's job feed. Go as far back as week and start going backwards. That way, you'll get a fair idea of niches that fit. For example, as at the time of writing this article, the cryptocurrency niche (bitcoin, blockchain, etc) has a relatively high number of projects but fewer writers with the expertise to deliver.

So what do you do if you find such a niche but don't know too much about it?

Simple!

First, run searches on Google and identify the top ten blogs/websites on the niche. Visit them all and make it a point to read through their major articles. Once you've got a grasp of the major areas of the niche, begin to drill down in more detailed researches.

If you can devote just one hour every day to reading these blogs, you'll know more than 99% of the world population within just 30 days. So while that wouldn't make you the world's leading expert on the niche, it will give you enough subject matter expertise to write top quality content in the niche.

And you know what? As you write on that niche or niches, the depth of your knowledge and expertise will only deepen.

4. Pick a niche that's future proof. If you decide to specialize on Foltran (the computer programming language then you may NOT see any jobs to write on. The simple reason being that it represents the past (Even though it's still in use in certain fields, it's ranked around 29th or so among programming languages). I don't think the world is going back to Foltran. In the programming world, it represents history.

If you are very knowledgeable in Foltran then widen your scope to programming languages in general and you'll become a great resource.

Important Note: You are NOT restricted to writing ONLY on topics within your chosen niche(s). This is the niche or niches where you focus your efforts in building up a portfolio. As you search for projects, you will find topics that you are the perfect fit for even though they are well outside your target niche(s).

In my own case, the first job I did on Upwork was an Igbo project. It just screamed my name. I had worked as a church interpreter in Enugu sometime between 1984 and 86 (I never said I am a teenager) and had everything the client needed. I just showed those in my proposal and she couldn't resist.

Now if this last point sounds a bit contradictory, don't worry; it will get clearer as we go through the next sections.

iv. Choosing your Upwork category effectively

What category should you choose?

Simple enough – If you want to get writing projects, choose writing as a category. But wait; that has many sub-categories. So which of the sub-categories should you choose?

My answer?

All of them.

The simple reason is that a number of potential clients might NOT place their projects in the exact writing category they should be in. Doing this covers you and ensures you get to see every writing project that is posted.

v. Taking tests/exams

There are a number of different tests that Upwork offers. They do serve the purpose of showing potential clients what you are capable of. Consider them to be the platform's way of "certifying" that you have a particular skill and skill set and the level of proficiency you've shown in those skills and skill sets.

As at the time of writing this article, Upwork had a total of about 303 tests covering a wide range of disciplines. But if you are looking for tests that are focused on English Language, there are 20 of them (this might change in the future). Here they are...

English Spelling Test (U.S. Version)

English Spelling Test (UK Version)

U.S. Word Usage Test

Technical Writing Skills Certification

Creative Writing Test – Non-fiction (U.S. Version)

UK English Grammar Test (For Writing Professionals)

U.S. English Chicago Style Editing Skills Test (For Writing Professionals)

U.S. English Punctuation and Mechanics Test

Resume Writing Skills Test

U.S. English Proofreading Skills Test (Chicago)

UK English Proofreading Skills Test (Oxford Guide to Style)

Creative Writing Test – Fiction (UK Version)

U.S. English Sentence Structure Test (For Writing Professionals)

U.S. English Proofreading Skills Test (AP Style)

Creative Writing Test – Non-fiction (UK Version)

Report Writing Test

U.S. English AP Style Editing Skills Test (For Writing Professionals)

Grant Writing Test

UK English Sentence Structure Test (For Writing Professionals)

UK English Oxford Style Editing Skills Test (For Writing Professionals)

However, I didn't take all of them. I just picked those that I felt would help me in my chosen niches. Here are the test I did and how I performed in them...

Tests				 Edit
NAME	SCORE (OUT OF 5)	TIME TO COMPLETE	DISPLAY ON PROFILE	
Content Writing Skills Test	3.75 Top 10%	20 mins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Online Article Writing and Blogging Test (U.S. Version)	3.90 Above Average	19 mins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
English Vocabulary Test (U.S. Version)	4.40 Top 30%	13 mins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
U.S. English Basic Skills Test	4.50 Top 10%	22 mins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
U.S. English Basic Skills Test	4.10 Top 30%	23 mins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

You can take more tests as you deem fit. They make it easier for you to win bids – Simple!

Now here's one thing you MUST NOT DO...

You know some folks believe in cutting corners and so they get other people to do tests for them. If you're such a person, don't try it on Upwork or any standard platform.

These platforms live or die on the quality of talents they offer their customers (clients who post jobs on them). Let's assume, for example, that you hired someone else to do the test on US English and colloquialism and had a perfect score of 5.

Now if a client hires you based on that score and funds the project (Upwork automatically puts in Escrow) and then you deliver a job that shows you don't have the skill set for which you had a perfect score of 5, a number of things might happen (all of them bad)...

Best case scenario: The client is very easy going; decides to pay you and cut you off without saying good or bad (Leaving no review whatsoever). This is about the best that can happen but then you'll lose this client PERMANENTLY. That's an opportunity lost.

Worse case scenario 1: The client decides to STILL pay but leaves a very bad review telling other potential clients to beware of you; that you don't have the skills you claim to have. Now NOT only would you have lost this particular client; others will shy away from hiring you.

Worse case scenario 2: The client decides NOT to pay and decided to take it for arbitration. Upwork's team checks through the work you submitted and decide you sent in trash. They make a full refund to the client and if your account isn't banned or suspended, you should know that it's been flagged.

Worst case scenario: The client decides NOT to pay and goes for arbitration. Upwork's team judges you to have manipulated the system and brought the platform to disrepute and decides to refund the client's money in full and ban your account instantly.

I know some fellows believe that they are so smart and can trick systems to their advantage. But if you know anything about the advances in artificial intelligence, big data and tracking; you'll understand that if certain acts are inimical to an online giant's success, it will put systems in place to deal with such acts.

So, study hard and prepare yourself for tests. If you score low; look for materials that teach the skills required in the test. Study hard and prepare better then take those tests again. Apart from the fact that you'll score higher, you would ALSO have improved your skills in those areas.

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b. Building your portfolio

If your profile copy is what gets potential clients to look your way and give you a chance, your portfolio is what gives them confidence to hire you. Every employer (online or offline) wants to know what you have already done within an industry or niche in order to decide what you are capable of.

Therefore, make sure your portfolio has the best of your work. Believe me; this is easier said than done. I must confess; my portfolio doesn't contain my best work for the simple reason that I signed non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) with clients who I ghost-wrote them for. This makes it impossible to include the jobs in your portfolio. And believe it or NOT, most of the best paying jobs are usually ghost-written.

To remedy that; you'll do well to give yourself the difficult task of creating content of similar quality for yourself and then placing them in your portfolio. I simply had to do that by creating some super-extensive tutorials (like this one) that showcased my ability to break down a process within one of my preferred niches (making money online).

That said; there are many ways to do this. Some are more effective than others and some do take a lot more work than others. However, if you are ready to do the hard work, you'll reap BIG rewards down the line.

Important note: You don't have to wait until you have written over 2,000 articles like I've done before you feel confident you have a portfolio. Once you've written up to five solid articles, you are good to go. Just make sure you keep adding to that portfolio as you move along. Anyone who reads five great articles should have seen enough to decide you are good or otherwise for a project.

Now back to what we were discussing, here are your options (ways to create a portfolio)...

i. Using other people's websites

You can develop outstanding pieces of content that make strong cases for you when you want to land a new client. But then you need to have them up on a website somewhere.

While building one is quite inexpensive and easy (if you use the right CMS as you'll see later), the little outlay might still be out of your reach for some reasons.

Believe me; I've been in spots in life when getting an extra \$30 or so to start a website was a bit difficult. So if you find yourself in such a spot, you have some options (Don't use them if you can afford to raise \$100; you'll be reducing your effectiveness). So here we go with options for creating a powerful portfolio...

ii. Article Directories

There are article directories like Ezinearticles.com. You can create an account and submit your article in the appropriate category. Their editors will go through your submission and approve or reject it. It's a pretty straightforward process. You can read up on Ezinearticle's submission guidelines here...

<http://ezinearticles.com/editorial-guidelines/>

Pros of using article directories like Ezinearticles.com

They are free, removing any startup cost for setting up your portfolio.

They have an approval system that ensures your article meets a minimum standard.

Cons of using article directories like Ezinearticles.com

You are basically building wealth for someone else. Gone are the days when it was a win-win proposition.

There's a lower perceived value in having your articles on article directories.

Some clients might be put off by the numerous ads that besiege them when they want to take a look at your work on such sites (Article directories rely heavily on ads to make money).

Your articles can be deleted without any notice (This has happened to me). I had over 200 articles deleted months after they were submitted and approved.

iii. Guest Posting

There are many sites in your chosen niche that accept guest posts. All you have to do is seek them out and write stellar content for them. If you do a great job (Write high quality content), you'll soon have your articles published on a number of sites.

So for your portfolio, all you have to do is link to the various sites. Sounds simple enough, however, I won't recommend this if you can raise up to \$100. But for now let's take a look at the pros and cons of guest posting for building your portfolio (Please, understand that the context is for building your portfolio).

Pros...

1. If you get published on high authority sites, it gives you high visibility and credibility. The quality of visibility I am talking about here is such that elevates you to "celebrity" status in your niche. Guest posting on A-list authority sites is well worth it if you can do the legwork involved.
2. Top sites have stringent guidelines. If you comply with them in order for your article to get accepted, you'll deliver top quality content that will definitely impress potential clients.
3. It helps you build relationships with influencers – this can open doors that can lead to many good things.

Cons...

1. There's no guarantee that you'll be accepted by high authority sites (those worth it) even if you have stellar content. Believe it or NOT; there's a blossoming industry of top coaches who make a lot of money offering products that promise to help you get published on those high authority sites.

So if a top site's chief editor/publisher has 1,000 guest post requests daily and 200 of them are all epic content, the ONLY way you can get noticed is by being connected through an influencer (and therein lies the problem).

Every influencer has his/her personal agenda which might NOT be helping you get your posts published. And with a number of them offering coaching programs that guarantee you'll be published on top websites, it will be difficult to get in without such connections.

To give you an idea of the kind of amount I am talking about here, I know a top influencer who charges \$10k per student to teach you how to write posts that will be accepted on authority sites.

For building a portfolio, publishing a guest post on a "me too" site wouldn't do you much good.

2. You'll be giving away your best set of content in exchange for a place on a high authority website. If you are to get published on 5 to 10 authority sites; that's 5 to 10 epic pieces. That is, if you eventually get them published.
3. You'll waste valuable time trying to get the attention of the hyper-busy publisher who gets thousands of request weekly.

The steps you have to take to get noticed by a publisher who has a high-traffic site aren't easy. First, because many great writers are fighting to get their attention; second, because they have very busy schedules and, third, because they've set a very high standard and in their quest to maintain it have to devote a great deal of resources in that direction.

So while you are trying to get one post published, another writer who has control over his online resource simply goes ahead to publish what he/she has already written.

4. Unless you have a good website of your own before you start guest posting, you won't be able to deploy a step-by-step strategy that makes it easier to reach top influencers. Furthermore, you will NOT be reaping the some of the BIGGEST benefits of guest posting: traffic, link juice and inferred site authority.

iv. Creating your own website(s)

If you are serious about making it as a freelance writer, the best way to go about your portfolio is having your own website. Apart from the fact that you own the resource and can take it in any direction you please, you also have the added benefits of being able to use the other options I mentioned above MORE to your advantage.

For example, if you have a website and decide to seek out guest posting opportunities, all the hard work will get you more benefits like increased authority for your own site, more website visitors (referred from the authority site), link juice and more.

You can also start with lower authority sites in your chosen niche to build up your credibility. This is a valid way to get connected to people who have the ears of higher authorities in your niche (leading to bigger opportunities). Here's what I mean...

There are A-list authority sites (The best and most credible sites for guest posting – These get millions of visits monthly).

There are B-list sites (hundreds of thousands in visits monthly)

There are C-list sites (tens of thousands in visits monthly)

There are D-list sites (thousands of visits monthly)

There are E-list sites (Solid content and growing audience — hundreds of visits monthly)

If you can get published on a few A-list authority sites, you are MADE as a freelancer but like I've hammered repeatedly, it might be easier for you to win the lottery than to achieve this unless you follow a proven path.

But at the other end of the spectrum, there are those I call E-list sites. While they have great content, they don't have much visibility (However, they are growing and will become much bigger – the signs are there). But here's what you should be aware of...

The publisher of that site probably has the ears of (or is a protégé) of some D-list site owners who have the ears of (or are protégés) of some C-list site owners who have the ears of (or are protégés) of some B-list owners who have the ears of (or are protégés) of some A-list influencers.

Got the idea?

Getting a guest posting gig on E-list sites is relatively easy if you have great content. But while you are at it, you will be getting link juice and traffic (albeit small) to your site. But having a number of great guest posts on E-list sites gives you a spring board to reach out to D-list sites. In fact, if you build a solid relationship with those E-list site owners, they'll connect you easily with D-list site owners they know.

And, you guessed right: Repeat the process with D-list site owners and they'll connect you with C-list owners and so on until you see yourself getting opportunities on A-list sites. Since this piece isn't about how to get guest posting opportunities, I'll stop here but I hope I've made the point.

Now the good thing about this strategy is that your life isn't put on hold while you are guest blogging. You are building out your own site and getting small freelancing gigs, among other things.

Having your own website gives you the opportunity to build other streams of income. One thing you'll learn as you enter the freelancing world is that there are times you might get so many orders that you'd have a hard time coping with them. And, if you're NOT well set up, you might have dry spells where it seems as if all your clients have decided to take a break from giving you jobs.

If you choose the wise route of building your portfolio into your own website (and do it right), you'll have a number of other streams of income that could be any of the following...

- Building and flipping websites
- Promoting products as an affiliate
- Offering PPC advertising through programs like Google AdSense
- Setting up an e-commerce store and selling stuff
- Selling ad space on your site
- Creating and selling ebooks or other digital products
- Generating leads for businesses and getting paid
- Publishing sponsored posts and articles
- Building an email list and promoting stuff to them
- Setting up RSS feed ads
- Creating a job board on your site and charging people who post their projects on it
- Offering consulting services
- Creating seminars/workshops/conferences around your website
- Creating a paid membership area
- Hosting paid webinars
- Offering your writing services through your site
- Setting up a paid directory on your site
- Asking for donations on your site

So how do you build a website right?

As you can see, having your own website is the best route. So how do you do it?

How do you go about building a website that's a great showpiece of your writing ability, subject matter expertise in your chosen niche and offers multiple streams of income?

First, you'll need just three things (actually four)...

1. A domain name and hosting from an excellent host(**I recommend this host**).
2. You'll need a system that guarantees you do everything right from the very beginning – I recommend this solution. It's the most affordable and most comprehensive out there. That's where I learned to build websites that rank high on Google and other search engines and you can't go wrong with them. Here it is...

Solo Build It! (Choose the WordPress version – It's more affordable and gives you more options)

3. You need a simple tutorial that will help you build a beautiful website in simple steps – Steps so simple even an eight-year old can do them. I created this tutorial for you...

<http://zimego.com/how-to-build-a-beautiful-website-in-simple-steps-even-an-eight-year-old-can-do-it/>

Next...

When you start building out your site, you can create a page you'll call your portfolio or you can simply use the entire site as your portfolio (that's what I did since I wrote every blessed word on every article on my site).

c. Getting your first client/job

You've gone through all the rigorous steps listed above simply because you want to get a writing job. While you don't have to wait until everything above is perfect (it NEVER will because as you grow you'll see places to improve), you have to ensure you've understood how to handle yourself best to get jobs/clients.

There are important things to consider in this regard. Here they are...

i. Writing solid proposals

Your proposal is the first thing a potential client sees (unless he invited you to submit a proposal). This is your first shot at making a good impression. Like they say...

“You don't get a second chance to make a good first impression.”

So how do you ensure that your proposal stands out and is irresistible to a potential client?

a. Pick your jobs wisely

When you are faced with hundreds of jobs to bid on and you can bid on a maximum of 30 every month for free, you need to pick jobs wisely (If you want to bid for more than 30 writing jobs, you'll need to buy more connects).

To make a wise choice in picking jobs you'll bid on, consider the following...

1. The niche/topic of the project and whether you have the skill set to deliver an excellent job.
2. The client's location or nativity preference if any. Many clients state clearly that they want ONLY people in certain regions, native speakers or people who write at the level of native speakers. Don't ignore these or you'll just be wasting your time.
3. The client's experience preference. Some clients welcome new freelancers while some insist that you shouldn't bother to apply unless you have met certain criteria. Ensure you qualify so you don't waste your connects.
4. Does the client have a verified payment method? If NOT, don't waste your time on such a job.
5. Look at the client's budget and required freelancer level. Some clients want freelancers with the lowest rates, some want a mix of quality and lower rates while some want the highest quality and are willing to pay extra for it.

This gives you insight into what type of client/project you are dealing with.

If you look at a project, the budget and the freelancer level a client is looking for, you should be able to decide if it's worth your time.

6. Check reviews from previous freelancers who have worked for this client. If they are generally negative, you may want to avoid working with such a client.

b. Read the job/project description well

While this seems pretty obvious, you won't believe how careless many writers are with it. No, when I say you should read the job description well, I mean you should take the time to truly understand what this potential client is looking for.

This is important for a number of reasons...

It helps you avoid wasting your time on projects that you aren't best suited for.

It helps you write a proposal that catches the potential client's attention and holds it.

It makes it easier to write a proposal that has a higher chance of winning the bidding wars.

It makes it possible for you to include things that some clients demand. Example: To show that you've read this project description well, start your cover letter with the phrase "I am thorough." (It could be anything but some clients demand it).

It puts you in a position to know which of your skill sets should be projected and those that shouldn't even be mentioned.

Now because I'd like you to learn with a practical example, I'll show you the job description of the first job I won on Upwork (This will help you understand better when I start explaining other components later)...

Igbo Writer Wanted | 500 Word Essay on Igbo Language

Academic Writing & Research

Posted 1 year ago



Fixed Price

Delivery by April 11, 2016



\$5

Budget

\$\$\$

Expert Level

I am willing to pay higher rates for the most experienced freelancers

Details

Needs to hire 20 Freelancers

IF YOUR SKILLS DO NOT MATCH THIS JOB REQUIREMENTS, BUT YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO DOES, PLEASE REFER THEM TO THIS POSTING.

I have 20 essays that need of writing about Igbo language. Each essay is 500 words.

One person can do them all, but if you know someone who can also help, please let them know about this opportunity.

PLEASE BE READY TO PROOFREAD YOUR WORK AND DO RESEARCH, BECAUSE IF I AM NOT HAPPY WITH YOUR WORK I WILL NOT PAY YOU UNTIL THE WORK IS SATISFACTORY!!!! SO DO NOT APPLY UNLESS YOU ARE READY TO REVISE AND PERFECT YOUR WORK.

I'm looking for a quality ghostwriter that can write essays about the Igbo language, it's history, how to understand it and translate it.

For this job, you must be a fluent Igbo speaker as well as a fluent English speaker. You must also have good research skills.

The work you produce for me must be 100% original work of quality.

I am paying \$1 per 100 words and I am asking for a 500 word essay (which is about one page).

This book should be well-researched and educational. It should be written with native ENGLISH speakers in mind to teach them about the Igbo language and how to speak it.

You must have good grammar and spelling as well.

I am looking to build an on-going relationship with someone that research and write relevant content about the Igbo language.

A person who can do this job well will most likely be receiving more jobs from me long term.

Please apply here with your proposed rates in your application, as well as a sample of your writing for me to review.

Project Type: Ongoing project

You will be asked to answer the following questions when submitting a proposal:

1. What is your experience with the Igbo language?
2. Translate the following phrase into Igbo: "I think he is the one who is wearing the black clothes with a red star on it, but I am not sure."

c. Now write a solid proposal – Here's how...

For this, I'll simply do a tear down of the winning proposal I wrote for the job description above. Now here's the proposal (Cover Letter) I sent in (the tear down follows shortly)...

Cover Letter

Nd'ewo, Udochi! I believe I am the perfect candidate for this task. I was an interpreter in my Church at Enugu at the tender age of 13 and I was an A student in English Language. Furthermore, I understand the problems of faulty transliteration and stuff like that. I can help you prepare excellent content. I have added a short translation I did last year to demonstrate my suitability.

Yes, I am interested in handling this project. You can check out my profile to further confirm my suitability for your task.

That said; I think \$1 per 100 words is too poor for the quality you demand. For example, the Igbo language throws up its unique challenges in the rendering of certain letters of the alphabet. As you know, the Igbo language has variations of the alphabets: u, o, i and n. To capture those, I will need to use special sites and tools. That is just one example.

I believe \$2 per 100 words would be a good starting point. Don't forget: You usually get what you pay for. I intend to do my best to get it right the first time -- I believe that would save your executive time and afford you the space to do other useful things with the time saved.

Sample...

English....

Dear Father!

We lift up our country to you. We thank you for another year in independence. We ask for wisdom for our president, the vice president and leaders in the country.

We pray that peace will reign in this country, from the North to the South and from the East to the West. We ask you to keep us as one, We ask that you lead us to the Nigeria of our dream; one where prosperity and justice prevails.

Nigeria, we call you blessed today. We believe we receive this in Jesus name.

Igbo (Please, note that certain igbo alphabets aren't available on the conventional keyboard. Since you're an Igbo lady, you should account for those while reading)...

Nna anyi Nke bi n'eligwe!

Anyi n'eche obodo anyi n'iru gi. Anyi n'ekele gi n'ih i mmeme ncheta oge anyi nwere onwe anyi nke afo a. Anyi n'ario k'inye ndi n'achi anyi amamihe site n'onye isi anyi, onye n'eso ya, na ndi nile no n'ochichi.

Anyi n'ario K'udo chia achia n'akuku obodo anyi n'ile. Site n'ugwu rue na ndida; site n'owuwa anyanwu rue n'odida ya. Anyi n'ario ki ime k'any di n'otu. Anyi n'ario k'inye anyi Nigeria dika obi anyi n'acho. Ebe uba zuruoke; ebe ikpe ezi omume n'achi.

Nigeria, anyi n'akpo gi obodo agoziri agozi n'ubochi ta. Anyi kwe nyere n'anyi anata wo nka n'aha Jisos. Amen. [less](#)

To appreciate what I did in this proposal, we'll need to do a tear down of both the job description and the cover letter (proposal) – I'll do them side by side.

For this part, I'll highlight every part that is from the project details in yellow, **parts from my proposal will be in bold red italics** while my comments on them will be regular text. So starting from the topic...

Igbo Writer Wanted | 500 Word Essay on Igbo Language

I already knew I was well qualified for the job. Then the next thing to check for was if it was something I'd like to do.

Yes, it was because I was a right fit and hadn't got any job at that time (This was the first job I landed on Upwork. I had worked on Elance in 2006 but didn't move my account over to Upwork when they were bought over).

The budget was just \$5. So in spite of the low budget, it was a good starting point. At least, I was going to deliver and get an excellent review (I ended up earning \$155 for the project – you'll see why as we go on).

The client chose this option (You'll see it at the right hand corner of the project description above)...

“\$\$\$

Expert Level

I am willing to pay higher rates for the most experienced freelancers”

This client needed top quality work and was willing to pay for it — That was great for me.

This client wanted to hire 20 freelancers — This was also another good sign because it meant that there were many available slots.

Then look at this...

“IF YOUR SKILLS DO NOT MATCH THIS JOB REQUIREMENTS, BUT YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO DOES, PLEASE REFER THEM TO THIS POSTING.”

She was a bit desperate and showed it. This gave me the clue that I could bid higher than she declared she was willing to pay. It was clear that getting writers who had all the necessary skills wasn't easy.

Next look at this...

“One person can do them all, but if you know someone who can also help, please let them know about this opportunity.”

With this, I knew that all I had to do was demonstrate subject matter expertise and she'd have no option but to give me the entire project (That was indeed what ended up happening – She gave me all the topics left).

Next, look at this...

“PLEASE BE READY TO PROOFREAD YOUR WORK AND DO RESEARCH, BECAUSE IF I AM NOT HAPPY WITH YOUR WORK I WILL NOT PAY YOU UNTIL THE WORK IS SATISFACTORY!!!! SO DO NOT APPLY UNLESS YOU ARE READY TO REVISE AND PERFECT YOUR WORK.”

This client wanted work that was ready-to-publish. She wasn't going to take anything less. That was great for me because it gave me an added advantage as I am very good at editing and proofreading my work.

You'll notice that I haven't got into the cover letter (proposal) writing proper. This is STILL sizing up the client and ensuring we are suitable for each other.

Now let's get into the parts that tell us what she wants done...

“I'm looking for a quality ghostwriter that can write essays about the Igbo language, it's history, how to understand it and translate it.

For this job, you must be a fluent Igbo speaker as well as a fluent English speaker. You must also have good research skills.

The work you produce for me must be 100% original work of quality.”

We can see what she wants. So here's how I showed I could deliver in my proposal...

“Nd’ewo, Udochi! I believe I am the perfect candidate for this task. I was an interpreter in my Church at Enugu at the tender age of 13 and I was an A student in English Language. Furthermore, I understand the problems of faulty transliteration and stuff like that. I can help you prepare excellent content. I have added a short translation I did last year to demonstrate my suitability.”

Instead of having my salutation in English, I started in Igbo Language...

“Nd’ewo, Udochi!

It's simple – I know. But then it's the simple things that do make a BIG difference.

Next, I told her that I was suitable for the job...

I believe I am the perfect candidate for this task.

Then I gave her reasons to back up that position. That takes up the rest of the paragraph but pay close attention to the last sentence of that paragraph...

I have added a short translation I did last year to demonstrate my suitability.

This was a master stroke. I wasn't just going to give her reasons, I was going to demonstrate or SHOW her — I did later in the cover letter when I translated a short passage from English Language to Igbo Language.

But why didn't I do it immediately but just let her know it was in there somewhere later in the cover letter?

Simple – I wanted to cover the business side of things quickly. I knew anybody who

understood both the English and Igbo languages would know for sure that I had subject matter expertise with what I had done.

But since I wasn't doing this for the love of work (I needed the pay), I had to make my demands clear quickly enough while she was STILL excited...

Her proposed rate wouldn't get her the quality writer she wanted. She had to pay more.

However, note that I didn't just ask for a higher rate; I did so with cogent reasons. If you give people good reasons, they'll find it difficult to argue with you. Take a hard look at the following and see how I made my points (I've underlined all the excellent reasons for a higher rate. Note also that while asking for a higher rate I was further establishing my knowledge of the subject matter)...

***“That said; I think \$1 per 100 words is too poor for the quality you demand. For example, the Igbo language throws up its unique challenges in the rendering of certain letters of the alphabet. As you know, the Igbo language has variations of the alphabets: u, o, i and n. To capture those, I will need to use special sites and tools. That is just one example.*”**

I believe \$2 per 100 words would be a good starting point. Don't forget: You usually get what you pay for. I intend to do my best to get it right the first time — I believe that would save your executive time and afford you the space to do other useful things with the time saved.”

Now after dealing with that important issue, I went back to what she could be missing if she doesn't hire me. Yes, I didn't say that in the cover letter (proposal) I implied it by showing her an interpretation I did for a passage. In other words, see me doing what I told you I can.

If she truly needed the quality I offered, she would get back to me (and she did).

But with all that said; the exact way I did prove to this client that I was the right person for the job isn't as important as ensuring you write a proposal (cover letter) that addresses all that's important to a client and shows you are the right person for a job.

ii. How much should you bid?

This is an interesting question and you'll do well to pay close attention to what I have to say here...

You can charge anything you feel comfortable with but that will guarantee you ONLY one thing...

No jobs!

There's a big difference between what you think you are worth as a writer and what the market is willing to pay you at any point in time. Understand this and you'll make a big success of your freelancing work.

You see, there are writers out there who can comfortably charge \$5,000 for an article of 2,000 words. And even at that, most of such writers don't even accept writing gigs anymore.

At the other end of the spectrum, there are writers who get paid as little as \$5 or even less for 2,000 words.

So why the huge disparity?

There are a number of things that come to play here...

1. Your ability as a writer to deliver top quality jobs – The higher the quality of jobs you can deliver, the higher the rate you can command.

2. How much proof you have of your excellence as a writer – That's what your portfolio, profile and tests are supposed to help you achieve. The better the perception you create of yourself as an excellent writer, the higher the rates you can command.

3. How new you are on a platform – The rate you can command on your first job on a new platform will be much lower than what you'll command on a platform where you've built credibility. For example, the very first job I took on Upwork was a test assignment that paid me \$5. The client saw what I did and liked it and then paid me a total of \$155 for 14 topics (around 500 words per piece).

Months later, she wanted me to do something in that order again and I asked her to pay \$1,000 – That's about five times what she paid initially. She refused but I didn't care because I actually had more jobs than time then.

If I were to handle that same task today (as at the time of this writing), I won't even consider it for less than \$2,000.

When you're relatively new your rates might have to be low enough for potential clients to be willing to take a risk on you. Yes, that's what it is – A risk. You need to be aware of the fact that for every person who claims to be a great writer, there are perhaps five who turn out bad.

4. The platform's average rates – This isn't written on most freelancing platforms. But that said; there seems to be an unwritten average that clients on a given platform are willing to pay for writing gigs. Please, note that this doesn't mean that you can't get much higher or lower rates, it's just a median that clients are generally comfortable with on that platform.

For Upwork, for example, the average rate for a 1,000-word article is around \$10 (That works out to be 1 cent per word). However, I have clients who are paying me multiple times that amount for the same word count. I have at least one client who pays as high as \$10 per 100 words on Upwork. If you've followed this article from the beginning to this point, the reason should be obvious.

That said; what we consider high end pay on Upwork is low entry pay on some other platforms or if you are willing to use other higher skill techniques (those are beyond the scope of this article, though).

5. The difficulty level of a project— There are 1,000-word articles that I wouldn't touch for less than \$500 per piece. The reason is simple: Their difficult level is high and demand extensive research, sometimes special tools and more if you are to deliver to the client's specifications.

6. Time-demand of a project— Closely related to the last point is the time you estimate a given project will take. For example, the Igbo project (while it was something I was comfortable with) demanded a lot of time.

For example, for me to get certain Igbo words right, I had to create some letters of the Igbo alphabet that aren't on your standard keyboard. Then after creating those special alphabets, I then had to place them as images between normal letters.

Now if you add tone marking (uda-ume in Igbo; ami in Yoruba), you'll see that I could spend hours presenting a short paragraph right.

7. The volume of work a client offers — A client who has five 1,000-word articles shouldn't get the same rate as another who has 100 such articles (all other things being equal). The simple reason is this: The time it takes to prepare a proposal is saved when you deal with high volume projects. The time you also spend understanding what a client wants is also reduced.

And don't forget that what you are actually charging clients for is your time. Therefore, anything that saves you time should attract lower rates.

8. Your visibility/authority in the niche—Writers who charge \$5,000 per 2,000-word articles are generally authorities in their chosen niches who also have high visibility. Most times, people who hire them want to use their name and connections.

So it's like getting a high quality article, powerful endorsement and oodles of traffic all in one package.

That's why I encourage you to build your own website for your portfolio because you'll command much higher rates if/when you build a strong following in your chosen niche.

9. How good you are at marketing yourself— We all have different skill levels when it comes to marketing ourselves on any platform. If, for example, you have mastered the nuances of copywriting to a high degree, you will be able to command a much higher rate out of the door. This will be down to your persuasion skills.

That is, the better you are at making a case for yourself in your cover letter, profile and portfolio; the higher the rates you can command.

10. How desperate you are to get a job— Desperation is bad for business. However, if you need to start doing something right away to keep body and soul together, then you'd have NO other option than to take what's available even if it's NOT anywhere near what you're worth.

I remember writing 50 top quality articles for about 10,000 naira (that's less than \$30) when things were so tight and I had to put food on the table. Since I can write pretty fast, I took the offer and delivered the 50 articles in 3 days – Desperate times called for desperate measures. I couldn't watch my kids go hungry.

11. How many jobs/clients you already have – This is closely related to the last point. If you have enough jobs to take care of your monthly expenses (with some leftover to put into your savings), you can afford to do shakara (that's our local parlance for being in a position to magnify your importance) and charge higher rates.

With these points, you can now tell when it makes sense to take “below-your-level” rates, when to go higher and when to charge premium rates.

iii. How to bid more efficiently and get clients faster

One of the things that will strike you once you get into platforms like Upwork is the amount of time the bidding process can actually take. Believe it or NOT; it's hard work and if you aren't prepared to do it efficiently, you probably will lose motivation soon enough. So here are tips to help you bid more efficiently and get more clients faster...

1. Bid on fresh projects

Anything that's older than 24 hours isn't fresh. Don't waste your time bidding on such projects. There's ONLY one exception to this rule, though: If you notice that a project is a great fit for you and it still has less than 5 proposals after 24 hours.

2. Check a client's hire rate before applying

For some reasons (best known to them), there are clients who post many projects over time but hire a few hands. That is, those projects go without any hired hand. Upwork keeps track of this and publishes them as the hire rate (Here's how it looks — I've outlined it in red)...

<p>ie to 100 recipes that require proofread and editing to a high standard.</p> <p>food writing experience would be ideal.</p> <p>RE THE FIXED PRICE AND QUOTE YOUR RATE PER 1000 WORDS.</p> <p>One-time project</p> <p>ed to answer the following questions when submitting a proposal:</p> <p>stice that we've asked your quote for 1000 words?</p> <p>ve experience with editing recipes/food related content?</p>	<p>Required Connects to submit a proposal: 2 </p> <p>Available Connects: 60</p> <hr/> <p>About the Client </p> <p>★★★★★ (4.87) 76 reviews</p> <p>New Zealand Auckland 09:46 PM</p> <div style="border: 2px solid red; padding: 5px;"> <p>168 Jobs Posted 59% Hire Rate, 3 Open Jobs</p> <p>\$10k+ Total Spent 123 Hires, 7 Active</p> </div> <p>\$6.13/hr Avg Hourly Rate Paid 1,372 Hours</p> <p>Member Since Nov 9, 2015</p>
<p>Qualifications</p> <p>Score: At least 90% </p>	<p>Activity on this Job</p> <p>Proposals: 5 to 10 </p> <p>Interviewing: 0</p> <p>Invites Sent: 0</p>

Now to save yourself from wasting valuable time bidding on jobs where no one will be hired, avoid clients that have hire rates that are lower than 50 percent. Clients that have hire rates of 75% or more are excellent. They are committed to hiring a freelancer.

3. Partner with more established freelancers if you are connected to any

Established freelancers get invites for projects that they don't even know about. In a number of cases, they won't be interested in them for a number of reasons.

If you are an excellent writer and are diligent, nothing stops such a freelancer from applying for the job him/herself and then handing it over to you. It's a win-win situation because the established freelancer takes an agreed percentage and you get the break you need.

This established freelancer will give you the much needed review after you've done the job. And because he/she is experienced and has a name to protect, he/she will ensure that your job measures up to the client's requirements.

For this to work, you need to be someone who has a long term mentality and have respect for other people's time.

Why did I say this?

Many established freelancers might take 50 percent or more of the project fee because editing/revising articles is sometimes more time-consuming than doing it from scratch.

An established freelancer generally has more work than time and wouldn't take kindly to any newbie who wastes his/her time by NOT making efforts to stick to instructions. In addition to taking 50 percent or less of the project fee, you will also pay about 20% of your earnings as Upwork fees (if it's \$500 or less) or 10% for earnings above \$500

but less than \$10k.

But whatever sacrifices you make will be worth it. Here's why...

I had a writer you earned close to \$25,000 in 2017 working with me. If he had wanted to build an Upwork profile, he would have sacrificed about \$1,700 in total Upwork fees but then he'd have built credibility because he would have got countless five-star reviews from me (with his earnings to back it up).

Few things affect clients' decision to hire a freelancer like reviews. If other employers think you're good; you must be good.

Ask yourself this question...

If you get to a new town, where would you rather eat...

A restaurant that has a large number of people coming out of it with smiles on their faces...

OR

A restaurant that doesn't have any patronage?

The answer is simple: You'll go where most people are flocking to – It's basic human nature and the internet hasn't changed that.

4. Have a set project search time

Have a set time when you go through all projects posted in your category in the last 24 hours. This is a simple process but ensures you do NOT miss great opportunities that emerge every 24 hours.

In fact, you can do one better; have set times (6 or 8 hours apart) where you do this and you'll always be early enough with your proposals.

5. Be ready to do trial jobs for less than you'd do an actual project

There are times that a potential client might have doubts. These doubts are caused because certain folks do play tricks like hiring others to create their profiles and using other people's work as portfolio.

To prove to a potential employer that you're above all that nonsense, offer to do a trial job for a lower rate than the normal fee you'll charge. This is to reduce the risk an employer is exposed to by hiring you. If he/she is impressed by your profile and really wants you to do the job, offering to do a trial job tips them over to hire you.

If taking a lower rate for a trial job works great, how about doing a trial job for free?

This is a NO-NO!

The reasons are simple...

1. You'll expose yourself to wolves who want to take advantage of you.

2. You belittle yourself as it has a hint of desperation.

3. It's against the platform's terms – You can't do a job for free (How would they get their cut if you do?)

iv. Should you use a “canned proposal” or proposal template?

Ordinarily, this should have come under tips to help you work more efficiently but because of the amount of words I suspect will be expended on it, I've decided to give it its own space...

So to the question...

Should you use a proposal template?

The answer is: It depends on the types of jobs you apply for and how you intend to use a template.

If you want to use a template where you ONLY change the rate and a few things like delivery time and such; don't use a template.

The simple reason would be that you wouldn't be doing justice to the “questions” or issues a potential client raises in his/her job description. In case you've already forgotten the importance of a client's project details, go back to this section...

Writing solid proposals

All that said; I use templates in a way that improves my efficiency and helps me deliver better proposals to each client.

My templates are formed based on writing niches I repeatedly bid on, phrases and sections I have to re-use constantly and proof elements (like links to my work samples) that are basically the same for proposals within the same niche.

For example...

I've earned most of my Upwork revenue from writing product reviews so I've developed a number of templates that make it easier for me to turn out high quality proposals that are on point in much shorter time. To buttress this, I'll show you two different clients who posted product review jobs and how my template helped me deliver excellent proposals for each of them faster while answering their individual questions...

Client One...

Research a Product and Write a Helpful Overview

Article & Blog Writing

Posted Jan 27, 2018 - [View Job Posting](#)

 Fixed Price

 \$50.00
Budget

 \$\$\$ Expert Level
I am willing to pay higher rates for the most experienced freelancers

Details

I have a website which helps people decide which products to buy by doing the research for them. I have a disclaimer telling people that I've not owned the products, but I do what they would do and go ahead and read reviews, watch videos and contact suppliers for more information.

I am looking for multiple people to help me write more content for my website. I am not looking at any specific word count. Most articles cross the 1000 word mark, but I am looking for quality and not numbers in a review article. I study the product category very well find out exactly what people are looking for and then begin writing on individual products because this way I can give the best pros and cons and other sorts of comparisons. I will show you samples if I like your proposal.

Let me know your rate and whether you would work at a price per piece or if you're looking for a price for every certain number of words. I would for instance ask you for reviews on juicers.

I could pay you for your time and notes on juicers in general. Find out the types of juicers, what people look for in each case and so on. This would go on and become a helpful buying guide. The guide you create must be better than anything else out there (it's not hard, trust me). It is very important that you have all the necessary knowledge before you begin writing individual reviews.

I'm looking forward to a long term relationship with the right people. I set a price because I had to set one up.

Requirements:

Be able to write in the first person or third person depending on the need

Perfect grammar, I don't want to have to edit too much.

Good research skills and willing to spend up to 4 hours on a single article considering the research etc (so quote your price accordingly).

Include a writing sample of something you've researched online and written about, a product review would be best but anything would do. [less](#)

Skills Required:

[Content Writing](#)

[Article Writing](#)

Client Two...

Looking for experienced writers for product reviews & buying guide

Creative Writing

Posted 18 days ago

Fixed Price

\$30
Budget

Expert Level
I am willing to pay higher rates for the most experienced freelancers

Details

Needs to hire 5 Freelancers

We are a web tech company, now we are looking for experienced writers for product reviews and buying guide. We have series of articles about product reviews to be written, and if worth it, we would like to pay with a high rate.

Our requirement: experienced product reviews writers with original, creative, attractive and logical writing skills. Please attach your previous work in this field.

If my team like your work, we would like to set up an ongoing cooperation with you.

Looking forward to your joining.

Project Type: Ongoing project

You will be asked to answer the following questions when submitting a proposal:

1. What past project or job have you had that is most like this one and why?
2. Would you mind to take changes if I am not satisfied with the work?

If you take a good look at the two job descriptions above you'll observe that the two different clients want basically the same thing. In the product reviews niche, most clients end up wanting similar things delivered in their various specific formats. Therefore, in a situation like this, it makes sense to use a template that contains the basics all of them need and then adapt each to suit the particulars of each job description.

Now look at the proposals I sent for the two different projects and observe that I didn't have to change much for either project...

I basically used the same proposal for both clients since they wanted about the same thing. I only made a few changes...

For Client 2, I added these because his project description demanded them (answers to questions in italics)...

"What past project or job have you had that is most like this one and why?"

The reviews I did for the client who paid me over \$60k — However, I can't include them here because I signed an NDA with them. We can remedy that by having a trial article.

Would you mind to take changes if I am not satisfied with the work?"

No, I am here to please you. If you want any changes, I'll effect them without any fuss."

And removed this...

“To facilitate the process, let me do one product review to your specs at a trial price (which you’ll choose). This will help you determine the quality I deliver. The taste of the pudding is in the eating.”

So use your good judgment to determine when a number of clients want basically the same thing and then you can use a template as is, slightly modified or highly modified.

In my own case, I have and use all variations as I deem appropriate. But that said; there are times when I have to write a brand new proposal from ground up. Let the project demands determine what you do and you’ll be fine.

Important note: The example I’ve shared here might actually be more appropriately called a canned proposal instead of a template. The simple reason is that the changes made are so minor to call it a template.

v. How to protect yourself from cheats and clients who don’t deserve you

In an ideal world, everyone tries to treat everyone fairly. But painfully, we don’t live in such a world and wherever you find money making opportunities, there are always cheats who try to do what they do best – Cheat others.

There are clients who try to steal writers’ work and use them without paying them or try to look for ways to defraud them of their deserved earnings. At other times, there are people who aren’t cheats but don’t deserve you and will cost you on the long run.

I’ll share a story from my days on Elance to help you understand the later (a case of someone who isn’t a cheat but cost me – He didn’t really deserve me)...

Back in 2006, I got a client who looked to hire a writer who also had skills with a special content management system. The standard rate he got for the job from webmasters was \$80 per page. I was good in the CMS (content management system) and decided to do it for \$8 per page (since he wanted to do a thousand pages or so).

We started work but then you need great content to build great content sites that rank high in Google. And back in the day (2006), it was much easier to rank in Google if you followed a few simple steps (I built a site that was making about \$1,000 per day thereafter so I knew what I was talking about).

So I told this client that I could help him rank for hundreds of keywords (This was going to bring hundreds of thousands of visitors to his site). He was excited and released close to \$8,000 over the course of two weeks. We had a great relationship but I was naïve to NOT have had everything written out clearly on the platform’s systems (and ensured this client understood his own obligations).

You see, every good contract MUST have deliverables, your obligations and the client’s obligations (among other things). We were both clear on the deliverables. I was clear on my obligations but the client didn’t fully understand his...

The job needed top quality content and I offered to write each piece for \$12. Therefore, for 1,000 pieces (which was what I had demanded from the client in order to deliver) the cost would have been an extra \$12,000.

The client refused to give me that part of the contract and gave it to a cheap writer who charged less than \$1,000 for the 1,000 pieces. As you well know, if you pay peanuts; you get monkeys.

This writer (whom he hired) turned in trash articles and I couldn't meet up with the hundreds of thousands of visitors monthly because the articles were so bad. In my naivety, I decided to start rewriting those articles on my own because I wanted to overdeliver. That was a BIG mistake. I should have terminated the contract the moment the articles delivered were substandard – That's what I'd do now without blinking an eye.

I sent this client messages about the poor quality of the articles he provided but he NEVER addressed the issue. At a point, I told him he needed to pay me for the extra services I was rendering for weeks (reworking those articles) after the initial payment (which tasks were completed before the release of payments). He got angry.

From being my friend (we got so chummy that I thought we were at a point where contracts weren't necessary) he turned around to call me a scammer.

What was my mistake?

I didn't terminate the contract the moment he shirked from his contract obligations (the delivery of top quality articles) and I didn't spell everything out in my contract terms (in fact we both didn't think we needed one after the \$8k milestones) or send him those messages I referred to earlier on Elance's messaging platform.

My ONLY savior?

Elance's system made it impossible for a freelancer to defraud an employer if such an employer paid ONLY after each milestone was completed. In my case, payments were ONLY made AFTER the client certified to Elance that I had completed each milestone. Therefore, he had NO case.

Elance saved me. However, what Elance couldn't do was stop this client from leaving a horrible review on me...

He wrote unprintable things about me. Elance gave me space too for a rebuttal which I presented – Both were there for all to see. But if you are a freelancer who got a terrible review, few employers would want to give you any chance.

I was upright and held my head high but I was naïve. I worked long hours without pay for this client but I ended up having a horrible review.

Was this client a cheat?

NO! He was just ignorant and I hadn't done the smart thing to end the contract the moment he stopped meeting with his own obligations.

So the takeaway for you?

Once you need a client to provide XYZ for you to deliver your contract terms and he fails, send him a message using the platform's messaging system. If he doesn't comply, quickly terminate the contract NO matter how lucrative it is.

If I had done that early enough (and NOT waited for 3 months or so), I would have spared myself the pains.

But come to think of it, the client did deliver about five or so articles that met the standards I demanded (out of the 1,000 I needed) and you know what? Three of those articles had delivered over 100,000 views the last time I checked. So imagine what would have happened if he had fulfilled his obligation and allowed me to develop 1,000 top quality articles.

We would have been talking of over 30 million views (to be conservative).

Therefore, for your own good and your client's, walk away once he/she refuses to meet up with his/her own contract obligations. But before then, don't settle for a gentleman's agreement – Make sure it's written clearly in your contract terms unless the client pays you to handle his obligation (and even that should be written out clearly). At the least, send him a message via the platform's messaging system stating the contract terms and let him reply, indicating expressly that he understands the contract details. You could send him something as simple as this...

"Hello Mr. Donald!

Pursuant to our discussion on XYZ project, I am expected to deliver...

- 1. 1,000 web pages using ABC content management system.*
- 2. Deliver at least 3,000,000 site visitors to your site (clientsdomain.com) over the course of 6 months.*

However, you, Mr. Donald (the client), are required to...

- 1. Provide 1,000 top quality articles – Top quality articles as determined by me, Chimezirim Odimba.*

OR

- 2. Pay me the sum of \$12,000 for the provision of those 1,000 articles.*

Thanks.

Chimezirim Odimba"

A clear message as simple as this is good enough as a contract and protects you if the client "forgets" his obligations. Make sure you don't take any further action on the contract UNLESS he/she accepts those terms (or whatever is mutually acceptable) in his/her reply.

Now here are types of clients you should avoid...

1. Clients who insist on paying you outside of Upwork or your chosen platform and insist on paying you AFTER you've delivered the job. First, it's against Upwork non-circumvention agreement (which you agreed to when you signed even if you didn't read through the entire document. Here's the link: <https://support.upwork.com/hc/en-us/articles/211068168-What-is-Upwork-s-Opt-Out-Fee->). Second, unless such a client uses an escrow service, you are setting yourself up to be defrauded.

Now if you've worked with a client for over 2 years, you can go ahead and decide to work outside the platform. Then it would be both within the terms of your Upwork agreement and common sense. You should be able to tell a client's level of integrity after working with him/her for over two years.

2. Clients who have horrible reviews – One bad review out of 30 job posts isn't what I am referring to here (there are bad freelancers as well as bad clients). All that said; when you see a high percentage of bad reviews for a single client; run, don't walk.

3. Clients who generally give freelancers poor reviews – If you see a client who consistently rates most of his providers low then you've likely seen a client from hell. Run away from their offer. There are people who simply have wrong expectations from freelancers and nothing you do will please them.

4. Clients who have a knack for pricing writers lower than the default– In my experience, people who value your skills seem to pay close to the default average in the market place. For example, it's pretty standard for employers on Upwork to offer \$1 per hundred words.

So, run when you see clients who'd want to pay that amount for, say, 500 words. One would think that such folks would accept jobs that are \$1 quality. No, most of them are unrealistic fellows who believe they can eat their cakes and have them.

5. Clients who abandon freelancers – There are clients who will refuse to approve your work when you submit it. Of course, by the way Upwork is set up, the system will release your payment to you if the client doesn't take action in 14 days.

Some bad clients just let the 14 days run. That can be painful for a freelancer. Therefore, check reviews and if you see up to two complaints about NOT responding to the freelancer on a project, avoid working with such a client.

3. After you've got a number of jobs (Consolidating)

You've worked hard. You've landed a number of clients. Now you want to consolidate and make this more like a business. What should you do? This section will give you the right pointers...

a. Leveraging your current results

The most difficult client to get is the first one. So you have made sacrifices and have gone on to get a number of jobs completed. It's now time to leverage those results (This assumes that you over-delivered in those projects and had satisfied clients). Here's how to

do that...

i. Ask for reviews

Many clients don't bother with writing reviews. But do understand that they are like raw capital on any freelancing platform. If you've worked hard to ensure your clients are happy, milk it by asking them to leave a review. Excellent reviews will make it easier for potential clients to feel confident dealing with you.

On the flip side, if a client wasn't pleased with your work do everything to avoid getting a negative review – If the amount isn't too much, give a refund (In part or in full). However, making refunds should be when, in clear conscience, you didn't meet up to important details of your deliverables.

For example, my team delayed a project and so we delivered excellent work but way later than the agreed deadline (In fact, the client graciously extended the deadline and we still didn't meet it).

To show I didn't have an entitlement mentality, I gave her a refund of about 20% of the project cost – That was the least I could do.

This might NOT pay off immediately but in a world where everyone seems to ignore the fundamental basics of integrity; it differentiates you in a positive way and that's a good thing.

ii. Ask satisfied clients to be your references

How do you think a potential client will feel if one of your past clients puts in kind words about the quality of your work and character? It gives you an edge. Although I didn't ask (I've never asked any client may be because I have my way of letting people be), one of my clients (who's paid me over \$60k over the course of 13 months) offered to be my reference when we ended the project.

I've milked it since then in my proposals as much as possible. Here's an excerpt of how I've used it to great effect in my proposals (pay attention to the underlined part)...

"...I know it might come off as a bit arrogant but, please, pause for a moment and take a look at my profile..."

You'll see this...

"Staff Writer – Product Review Website (Nov 2016 – Jan 2018)"

I earned over \$64k from one client who has a top product review site. However, because I signed an NDA with them, I can't reveal details of the work I did for the company.

However, because they were so pleased with my delivery, the chief content strategist (who paid us and oversaw the project) offered to be my reference if any potential client needs it"

iii. Show off your results with other clients

In marketing, you've got to blow your own trumpet or you won't even be noticed. That's what I'm asking you to do here. In the excerpt above, you'll notice that I mentioned how I'd earned over 64k from one client. Why is this important?

It establishes a number of facts...

1. I deliver top quality work – Why else would anyone pay so much and retain me as a writer for that length of time?

2. I can be counted on with a serious project– Believe it or NOT; freelancers do disappear after they've delivered a number of articles. Some just vanish if the projects gets tough. So experienced employers understand that having someone who stays for long is an asset, especially if they have a big project and need some form of stability.

3. I have a lot to protect– The more you earn on a platform like Upwork, the more you'll avoid things that could tarnish your image. I am a top rated provider on this platform and have a job success score of over 90 percent (It was 100% but dropped when I made the refund – Upwork doesn't like that because he reduces their cut).

Instead of ruining that reputation, I'll move mountains to ensure a job is done excellently (sometimes even if it ends up NOT being as profitable).

Employers prefer dealing with service providers who have something to lose too if a project goes wrong.

4. I have a lot of experience– Many times employers don't know how to structure systems to get what they want. In such situations, it helps to have an experienced hand who's done it for many other companies. This ensures there will be fewer trials and errors on their projects and smoother operations.

iv. Ask happy clients for referrals

Fact is, we run in circles. Some people may have small tight circles; others may have large wide circles but we all do have connections in life. Therefore, use it to your advantage when you've over-delivered to a client and he/she is happy.

What would it cost you? Just a little bit of humility in admitting you need another person's help and being ready to get a YES or NO. That's all!

Ask and you shall receive – Most people who might have connections might NOT bother unless you ask.

v. Offer clients bulk discounts/package deals

Everyone loves deals and that includes employers who hire freelancers. Let them know that if they order X number of jobs (word count, articles or whatever works for you) within Y period they'll get Z discount.

You can offer a package where every order of 10,000 words gets a thousand words on the house. It's up to you – Use your creativity.

That said; be careful how and to whom you make this kind of offer. You should have studied your client(s) to ensure that this wouldn't lead to abuse. You want to increase cash flow with this NOT dry it up.

b. Getting more clients vs. Higher paying clients

Which should you aim for – more clients or higher paying clients?

Neither — Go for more higher paying clients!

Remember, this is when you are consolidating. You have a number of clients with you and are sure your bills are covered. Now you should raise the bar to what you really believe you are worth as a writer. And, if you have done the things I advised in the earlier sections on creating a portfolio with your website this shouldn't be difficult.

You have proof of quality so anyone who's serious about getting a top quality writer knows you are what you claim otherwise you won't have the earnings and reviews on your profile. Don't sell yourself short now. You've worked hard to get here. Be a bit bolder than you were at first. You now need to cherry-pick the very best of clients available.

c. Long term jobs vs short term jobs — Pros/cons and which is better for you

Should you go for long term jobs or short term ones?

Please, note that this is in the assumption that long term jobs are higher volume jobs executed over an extended period of time while short term ones are low volume jobs.

When you were starting, you just needed jobs to get some cash flow and reviews in. Now that you're consolidating, you simply shouldn't pick every kind of job out there whether long term or short term. But so you know, there are pros/cons to either...

1. Long term jobs help you earn more even if the pay per word/piece is the same with a short term job. This is in the assumption that you have a much higher volume of work from the client (over time) with a long term job. This advantage vanishes if the long term job has the same total volume with a short term job.

The simple reason is this...

Upwork takes a cut of 20% on your first \$500 and lower from a particular client. It drops to 10% from \$501 to \$10,000 and 5% thereafter.

So if you earn \$20,000 from 40 different clients over the course of a year, you'll "lose" 15% more (that's \$3,000 – ouch!) than someone who earned that amount from one client.

So it's better to have long term jobs as they are generally higher volume job.

2. Long term jobs reduce the number of clients you have (since you have limited time). That isn't a good thing if you are looking for stability. A freelancer who has 40 different clients will have a higher level of stability in his/her cash flow than one who earns the same

amount from one client.

All it takes for him to start struggling is for that one client to decide he/she no longer needs any jobs done for some time. With 40 clients, you are left with 39 if one wants a break or is done with you.

3. Long term jobs help you develop systems around a client's need and systems help make you more efficient. Short term jobs, on the other hand, make it difficult for you to build systems. You just jump into each project and deliver. However, when you have to repeat similar things daily, you are compelled to create more efficient ways to completing tasks.

4. Short term jobs eat up more of your time. For you to deliver to a client's specifications, you need to know what they are. And believe it or NOT, the best clients usually have detailed briefs. Studying and understanding those take quite some time. If it's a long term project, you'll study this once and then get to work for the long term.

5. It's more difficult to have a support team or manage a group of writers if you have short term jobs. If you want to grow your freelancing and turn it into a business, it helps to have long term projects. They make it easier for you to delegate certain aspects to other writers. You can delegate particular aspects to particular writers. With short term jobs, it's simply more difficult.

4. Reducing your workload while increasing your hour rate/Overall earnings

Any job that involves trading your time for money puts a cap on your earning capacity no matter how much you charge per project, and freelancing isn't any different. So how can you maximize your hour rate? How can you do even better and stop earning per hour? That's what we'll discuss here.

a. Using other people's time (Building an agency)

A freelancer trades his/her time for money – Period. And considering that everyone has 24 hours daily, there's a low ceiling on what you can earn if you keep trading your personal time for money. Furthermore, it becomes difficult to have a life if you are chained to your laptop 10 to 12 hours every day.

So let's get you into a different mindset...

Move away from owning a job (trading your time for money) to owning a business.

To build a writing business, you need to have systems in place. To make the process easier for you, just try to model the standard magazine setup...

You can have researchers, apprentice writers, junior writers, staff writers, editors, supervising editors, team leaders and then you at the top as the managing editor.

This is precisely what I did sometime that enabled me work few hours per week while increasing my earnings per hour. I exceeded my set \$70 per hour by setting up this kind of structure.

Yes, you'll have to give up a large chunk of your earnings but then, you'll free yourself up to do other useful things and build multiple streams of income.

Here's my thinking: It's much better to own 1% of a billion dollar business than to have 100% of a hundred thousand dollar business that sucks the life out of you.

Where/How to find the right people

So you agree with me that for you to have a life while increasing your earnings, you need to hire people and form an agency or publishing house. So how do you find the right people?

There are a number of options open to you...

1. Discuss with excellent writers in your space

None of us leaves online. We have friends, families, neighbors, acquaintances, etc. If any of those are excellent writers, you can discuss your intentions with them and see if they are interested.

My team for 2017 included two of my siblings; my in-law, his fiancé, his friends, church members and a few erstwhile total strangers. So you can build an excellent team from people within your current space.

But be careful if you are going this route: It won't work out fine if you are NOT a firm person and if you have people with an entitlement mentality in your circle. Behold, I've forewarned you!

Here's a test to give you an idea...

1. Can you penalize your sibling for late delivery without starting a problem that will be referred to your parents? If you can then your sibling can work for you.
2. Can you fire your sibling if they deliver substandard work without starting the 3^d World War? If you can then your sibling can work with you.
3. Do you have the heart to penalize your close acquaintances when they fall short or are you too concerned about being a nice person? If want to be Mr. Nice Guy, don't hire your siblings or anyone in your circle.

2. Place an advert on platforms like Facebook

That's what I did after my initial hires (when I needed to expand beyond my immediate circle). I described what I wanted, included a link to a training video and asked interested persons to complete a writing assignment following the method shown in the training video.

It helped that I had a policy of paying everyone who successfully completed the test assignment whether I hired them or NOT. Word got out fast and people started applying. This lasted for over a year after I stopped the ads and, if I hadn't clearly told later applicants

that positions were filled up, I would have had a snowball effect.

3. Search on Upwork

The challenge with hiring people through places like Facebook is that you might be dealing with a lot of people who haven't really been exposed to writing for a living. That could be a problem because many don't generally have the right attitude to freelancing.

However, if you get writers who are already on a platform like Upwork your work is drastically reduced. This set of writers appreciate the hard work involved in getting a gig and the value you are bringing to the table by offering them consistent work.

All you have to do is run searches on freelancers that meet your criteria and then send them invites to a project you've posted. That project will have clear details of what you are offering and what your expectations are.

Done right, you'll get more writers than you'll ever need.

b. Setting up the structure

The structure you set up will be dependent on the type of work you have positioned your business for, the volume/price ratio and how much work you plan to do as a person.

But since I am showing you what I did, let's stick with the structure that worked for me (I tasked myself mainly with quality control – my writers handled the rest)...

First, I started hiring writers, obviously. Most of them started with trial assignments. The few who didn't were people who I already knew and was sure of their writing ability.

So based on trial assignments, I either hired or paid them off as unsuitable. Take note of the fact that I paid them off when they are unsuitable.

Paying them off for the trial assignment helped me in a way I didn't anticipate...

People who participated started telling others and I just observed that the quality of applicants went up. So I was able to hire the number of writers I needed.

Please, note that these steps did NOT necessarily happen sequential; some happened concurrently...

So apart from those writers whom I already knew, my new hires ALWAYS started as apprentice writers. When they performed well consistently, I moved them up to junior writer level. However, there was one exception...

I had one exceptional writer who was so good that everyone (including the client's team) was wowed. So I let her skip the junior writer level and promoted her to staff writer level straight from the apprentice level.

To help you appreciate the difference in the levels, if an apprentice writer earned \$27.7 per piece, a junior writer earned \$33.3 while a staff writer earned \$41.6.

In addition to the massively superior pay staff writers got, they also had the option of starting their own team (this raised their earning potential to much higher levels since, in some cases, I let them get as much as 50% of whatever their entire team brought in).

Now why would I do something like that?

The higher the level, the less I had to do on a writer's job.

While I had to edit an apprentice writer's job and send feedbacks and revision notes, I was less tolerant with a junior writer. So I naturally did fewer edits on their work.

However, for staff writers, I only checked to ensure compliance. These writers had so understood our standards and earned my trust that I could literally submit their jobs without editing.

Now what about the team leaders?

Well, first, before you could become a team leader you had to be a staff writer. So the task of every team leader is to bring every team member's work to staff writer level. This meant that he handled trainings, revisions, edits and first round quality control before sending to me.

That helped me deliver top quality articles fast while increasing my hour rate and drastically reducing my hour rate. I think it got to a time where I was doing over \$100 per hour with this structure.

Now here are a few things that I learned while creating my structure (so you can take note of them and use them to your advantage)...

1. Some excellent writers couldn't lead. They were just great at doing their writing job but weren't good at managing others. Those who made great team leaders were generally those who had strong entrepreneurial traits.

2. Now what makes excellent team leaders (an entrepreneurial spirit) means that they are result-oriented and love challenges. Putting them on a flat rate is counterproductive. They work best when they can literally determine how much they can earn in a month.

So give them performance incentives and rates based on delivery. Salaries NEVER work well for this type of folks (That's my experience).

3. You MUST keep a tight leash and monitor performance ALWAYS. If people know you always do quality control on their work, they'll always stay on their toes.

4. Never have the same rate for all your writers. Let them know that you pay higher for writers who deliver high quality content consistently. That will keep them working hard to improve their work.

5. Don't be too emotional with your workers. Be fair but firm. If any of them drops his quality, send a warning. If he doesn't improve, demote him to the lower level (with a lower rate per word). If he doesn't heed your warning. Fire him but make sure you don't owe him a dime.

6. Always have back up writers whom you can quickly move into any of your teams. Stuff happens with freelancers but you shouldn't allow their personal excuses to translate to you giving your clients excuses. Make sure you have contingency plans with respect to your writers.

Yes, this might mean maintaining a level of redundancy with your workers (which will cost you a bit more).

By redundancy, I mean if your work load can be handled effectively by 4 top quality writers, it would be in your best interest to reduce their individual workloads and pay a bit higher than you know will attract that quality of writers. Then instead of 4 writers, hire six and give them fewer tasks than they'd handle normally.

So when one or two are unavailable, you can easily increase the workload of the remaining four (with commensurate increase in pay) without burning them out.

c. Getting non-freelance revenue

This should be your ultimate target. To put it bluntly: You shouldn't be a freelancer for more than 3 years if you set up correctly.

But didn't I tell you earlier in this article that I started freelancing in 2006?

Yes, I did!

I "freelanced" then for less than a year and built residual income streams. In fact, at one point I had a website that was doing about \$1k a day residually (It had the number spot on Google for cheap auto insurance). However, because I didn't take certain precautions to shock-proof those income streams, I lost everything and had to start afresh.

If I lived in a country where banks give loans to internet startups, I wouldn't have had to freelance again. So I got back into freelancing in 2016 (ten years later) after earning full time income online for 10 years in order to rebuild my life.

And with my experience, I am NOW building correctly. So rightly, I wouldn't be freelancing in 2020 for any reason. Heck, I doubt I'll do this beyond 2018.

Why shouldn't I if it's so lucrative?

I'm glad you asked. Here's why...

The people who pay us \$20, \$100, \$500 and more per article MUST either be big fools throwing away money or they are doing something with those articles; something that earns them much more than the fees they pay us.

And, yes... they do!

One well written article can earn you \$1 million dollars over the course of a year if you promote it in a certain way (Note that the amount there isn't a typo).

Did you remember when I said I had a site that used to earn me up to \$1k daily at a point?

Now imagine that I didn't screw a few things up and actually built it in such a way that it kept generating close to that amount till today. That would have been millions of dollars over the course of a few years.

Now even though it didn't last, I earned over \$100k from the articles on that site.

In fact, when it was ranking high for cheap auto insurance and other interesting keywords, I got offers from companies who wanted to buy it off me. Believe me; that's what you should be aiming for and that would be right up your alley as a writer.

The wheel of the web revolves around you, dear writer. You can become a millionaire in a few years all with nothing else but your writing skills.

That's the much I will say on this for now: I won't get into the fine details here because this article is already running over 15,000 words and I don't want to overwhelm you.

So if you are already on my email list, you'll eventually get trainings that show you how to build wealth residually with your writing skill. For now, go out and start building a great freelancing business and stick with it because it's just the beginning of better times ahead.

If you haven't, [sign up here to learn more and build a profitable business as a writer.](#)