

HOW TO CREATE CREDIBILITY AS A FREELANCER

70 Tips from a Collection of Experts



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INTRODUCTION

Whether you are a freelancer or ever considered hiring a freelancer, whether you have been in your own business for awhile or are just starting, there is always more to learn in dealing with all that makes it tick. The possibilities are endless for what you can create.

This booklet brings you practical and immediately usable insights in bite-size pieces from fourteen freelance experts, each sharing tips from their area of expertise. These well-tested tools and techniques are sure to get you thinking about what works best for you, now.

Test an idea at a time. See how it suits you. Contact the authors in this booklet. They remain successful by contributing to your success. Plus they are really terrific and interesting people, people you'll want to know and have in your life.

Interview these authors in your publication if you are a journalist. Multiple sources and bulleted content are all in one place right here for your article, radio or television interview, blog, or website. Ask for a price quote if you are shopping for what they provide. Purchase printed copies of this booklet as a customized promotional tool for marketing your own business or talk with us about licensing the downloadable version for other promotional applications. Like freelancing, the possibilities are truly endless.

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THE ORGANIZED, SUCCESSFUL FREELANCER

- 1 Eliminate procrastination.** It is a form of clutter. Make a commitment to work on your business each day. Make it part of your daily routine. Manage your time to remain productive.
- 2 Organize your information.** Take a notebook and pen and write all your thoughts down that pertain to the product or service you are creating. Let the information flow without critiquing your thoughts. It will amaze you how quickly the ideas form.
- 3 Develop your ideas into an outline.** Take 4-5 of the main ideas and make them into the basis of your product or service. Use the remainder of the content to support the main topics. Use online search tools to find reports and books with information you can use for your topic.
- 4 Interview people who are experts on your topic.** They can share their first-hand experience which makes for a more interesting and compelling product or service. Use audio and video to share the information and keep people coming back for more.
- 5 Produce consistent quality.** Your audience will recognize quality content and it will give you a business instead of just a single product or service. Interesting and reliable content keeps your customers coming back again and again.

Cynthia Charleen Alexander helps people organize their lives so there is room for abundance to come in. She helps people design a plan and put it into action to achieve success. Online interviews and personal coaching are keys to her success.

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BLOGGING FOR EXPERT STATUS

- 1 Start a blog.** Find a subject or subjects that you care about and which you deeply feel others also care about. Your passion about a subject will show in your writing.
- 2 Build readership.** Write daily, every other day, or weekly blog entries. Keep to a stringent schedule; your audiences need to know they can depend upon you.
- 3 Be resilient.** Stay focused and upbeat even when your readership is minimal early on. Your patience will pay off if you have an interesting subject and are persistent.
- 4 Be personal.** Include anecdotes on your life that relate to your subject. Keep your personality and voice in the blog.
- 5 Be a guest blogger.** Offer to post something on someone else's blog after you've developed readership and a brand for yourself. Suggest a relevant idea for the guest post that fits well with the other blog.

Blogging gives you legitimacy.

Blogging has been a tremendous and gratifying experience for Rico Austin and other freelance authors, as it can be for you. <http://blog.mybadtequila.com> "My Bad Tequila" is a brand originating from the novel of the same title that Rico Austin has written. Rico began writing professionally at age 13. He has written numerous articles for magazines, newspapers, and journals while earning awards for his creative writing. For complete information, go to: <http://www.mybadtequila.com>

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CLIENTS' PERCEPTION AFFECTS CREDIBILITY

- 1 Listen well.** Before you can establish credibility through your marketing copy, you must listen. To quote Stephen Covey, "Seek first to understand, then to be understood." Listen carefully with the intent to help others achieve their goals and you will achieve yours by default.
- 2 Correspond well.** Speak and write with authenticity and be yourself; everyone else is already taken. People are looking for you, hoping you are the solution to their problem. Keep in touch. Pick up the phone and talk to them. Be their problem solver.
- 3 Maintain your character.** How people perceive you is their reality. Be honest and realistic. Take responsibility. Strive to under promise and over deliver. Give without regard for what you may gain. Demonstrate passion for what you do.
- 4 Develop competence.** Make sure your copy speaks to your target markets' needs and that it is grammatically correct. You only get one chance to make a good first impression.
- 5 Present congruency.** Make sure your graphic design is compatible with your client base and corresponds with your content. This provides a clear message.

Beverly Bergman supports and empowers professional coaches by providing copywriting, editing, and marketing consultation services that turn copy into gold through her brand, Copywriting For Coaches™. A twenty-year marketing veteran and now CEO of BB Marketing Solutions, Beverly also speaks and writes about marketing. Visit <http://CopywritingForCoaches.com> for her E-book: "Squeeze Page Juice: How to Create High Converting Opt-in Pages that Will Fill Your Pipeline!" Beverly is the Founder and President of the International Association of Female Copywriters (IAFC).

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PROFITABLE FREELANCING

- 1 Position yourself as an expert in your field by specializing in a particular writing or editing type or genre.** Focusing on a niche helps broaden and deepen your knowledge, skills, and contact network. It makes it easy for readers or clients to remember you.
- 2 Create multiple income streams including passive sources like royalties, e-book sales, or AdSense income.** Multiple income streams cushion economic swings and let you maintain a writing life, even during economic downturns.
- 3 Build a strong network of relevant contacts by joining and strategically participating in at least two professional associations.** A general, business-oriented group helps build your business. A craft-oriented group helps hone your craft.
- 4 Learn to market your work comfortably, authentically, and inexpensively.** Promotion is necessary to connect with readers and clients. Join a professional association's Facebook page (NAIWE's is at [facebook.com/NAIWENews](https://www.facebook.com/NAIWENews)) and create a profile at [www.Linkedin.com](https://www.linkedin.com)
- 5 Create a strategic online presence.** The Internet is the new Yellow Pages. Be there and in a place where people search for writers and editors. Post a professional profile. Add a blog to share articles and news about publications and events, and to connect with readers. See a sample writer's site at <http://janicecampbell.naiwe.com>.

Janice Campbell is a writer, speaker, and Director of the National Association of Independent Writers and Editors, the success-oriented professional association for writers and editors. She teaches the one-day Ultimate Book Workshop, and as the Lucky Freelancer Coach, provides concrete, step-by-step guidance for writers and editors who want to live the freelance life— profitably.

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GROWING A FOCUSED BUSINESS

- 1 Choose a particular focus when starting your writing business.** Specialize by serving a specific market or by offering a specific service so that all your marketing materials speak directly to the ideal type of client you want to attract.
- 2 Create a web site that answers all potential questions and encourages ideal clients to contact you.** Provide as much detail about your services as possible except price. That may discourage prospective clients from contacting you because of “sticker shock” or may prompt a decision based solely on price rather than value.
- 3 Establish immediate expertise by writing a compelling lead generation report that you can give to prospects.** Within it, position yourself as an expert by describing your background, giving useful information, and introducing your services.
- 4 Publish an e-zine to keep in touch with prospective and past clients.** This not only allows you to stay in front of leads at little or no cost, it also establishes expertise over time.
- 5 Find ways to add value to your services.** Offer a little more than just clean copy if you want your clients to see you as a credible expert instead of a commodity.

Melinda Copp is executive editor of The Writer’s Sherpa, a company that helps self-employed professionals write and publish to establish expertise, attract ideal clients, and make more money. She regularly attracts high-paying clients with her written marketing materials, and loves helping other freelance writers do the same thing. Get a copy of her special report, “Write to Grow Richer; The 7 Secrets of Writing to Sell Your Services,” visit <http://www.writerssherpaprograms.com>.

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FIND TIME AND ENERGY EVERY DAY

- 1 Find time to be compassionate with yourself.** When you're working solo as a freelancer or a solopreneur, you need to be your own friend, coach, and mentor. Honor your personal rhythms, learn from your mistakes, and open to the new beginnings that each moment holds.
- 2 Allow yourself the space to give your goals their due.** For busy solopreneurs, finding time means keeping your eye on the prize and having the courage and discipline to say no to one thing so you can say yes to another.
- 3 Appreciate the gifts in your life.** Feeling gratitude expands your heart. Communicating your appreciation is a wonderful way to share the positive energy and strengthen your connections.
- 4 Sharpen your focus and optimize your productivity with time boundaries.** Multiple, competing priorities distract and overwhelm. Buy yourself a timer, then choose a task to begin with. Use your timer to create a boundary and help you stay focused and on track.
- 5 Create a working environment that brings out your best energies.** Pay attention to how you work best, and give yourself the gift of a workspace that enhances your focus, encourages balance, and provides you with strong boundaries.

Paula Eder, The Time Finder Expert, is the creator of the Heart-Based Time Management System. Known for her integrity, compassion, and ability to solve problems, Paula mentors her freelance clients to address their time management challenges by integrating their values with boundary-setting skills. Sign up to receive your free Personal Time Template, weekly Finding Time Tips and monthly, award-winning Finding Time E-zine at <http://findingtime.net/>.

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COOPERATIVE MARKETING

- 1 Share a business expo table or booth with someone who understands your business.** Peers will explain things differently, helping you find other ways to view and present your business. Prospective customers will gain multiple perspectives, including why they should trust you.
- 2 Share direct mail costs and deliver more value to your customers.** Consider formats with multiple uses, from a postcard that promotes 2 complimentary businesses to a new home owner package introducing a plumber, electrician, handyman, cleaning service and lawn care.
- 3 Collaborate on writing a newsletter.** Each business contributes 3 to 4 articles a year, but collectively they create a monthly newsletter with high value content. Business owners save time and/or money while offering clients a richer reading experience.
- 4 Partner with the media to create multi-business advertising.** A full page ad with 10 home oriented businesses or women owned businesses will attract more attention, while costing individual businesses less money. Everyone can leverage the ad at shows, customer leave behinds, etc.
- 5 Share professional stories online that recognize others who contribute to the success of your business.** You'll provide customers with more insight into you, your business and the services you deliver and your peers can comment to strengthen the story.

Tina is turning her passion into leadership through the Association of Women Home Owners. With information and resources, she is helping women develop the knowledge and skills to transform their homes. At the same time, she provides marketing training and tools to home professionals who are committed to supporting women home owners.

Tina Gleisner, Founder and CEO

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CREATE CREDIBILITY WITH YOUR PERSONAL BRAND

- 1 Dress as a successful author with several best selling books.** Do this whether it is your first public reading or talk or your hundredth.
- 2 Book the best professional photographer you can afford for a publicity photo.** Take at least 2 or 3 different shots with different wardrobe changes. This gives you options for promotion material such as website photos, newsletter photos, and speaking engagements.
- 3 Think about your wardrobe choices.** Clothing color and style send a visual message to your readers. Wearing your eye color is a good choice for connecting with people. Choose comfortable clothing and represent who you are and who you want to be.
- 4 Realize that grooming matters, especially for your headshot.** A little makeup and a fresh haircut create a polished image. Hire a makeup artist/ hair stylist for your shoot. It's worth the investment.
- 5 Complete the package with a polished personal style.** Look for images that inspire you. Find a personal stylist to help identify what works for you.

Tamara Gold is CEO of Tamara Gold Enterprises, Inc. She is best known for her expertise as a Professional Makeup Artist and Stylist working in Hollywood for over 20 Years. "Step Into Your Power and Live in Your Brilliance" is her motto. Tamara believes when you embrace your authenticity and focus on your talents, rather than your flaws, you become a magnet for change and are capable of creating an extraordinary life for yourself and for others. TGE offers products and personal branding packages for individuals and groups.

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BUILD YOUR VISIBILITY ONLINE

- 1 Start a blog for your business and post to it regularly.** This is the most advantageous activity you can do to let people know who you are and what you do. Think of your blog as your home on the internet, and invite people to visit.
- 2 Write articles and submit them to the online directories.** Article marketing will bring you targeted prospects who will be interested in finding out more about you.
- 3 Maintain a presence on Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn.** These social media sites are here to stay, and spending just twenty minutes a day interacting with others is a valuable use of your time.
- 4 Hold teleseminars to interview other experts in your field and be interviewed.** Once people can hear your voice they connect with you. A teleseminar is the next best thing to meeting someone in person.
- 5 Participate in forums.** These are great places to meet clients and the people you serve in your business. Leave comments and include your contact information in your signature line.

Connie Ragen Green works with entrepreneurs who want to start an online business. She will show you how to use article marketing, blogging, and teleseminars to build a massive online presence, as well as how to leverage social media sites to connect with more prospects. Connie also teaches online technology, taking you step by step through the process of building your own online empire. Contact Connie to find out more about her mentor programs and coaching so you can have the competitive edge in your business.

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CREATING A BUSINESS WEB SITE THAT ATTRACTS CLIENTS

- 1 Start with a professionally designed Web site.** If site and graphic design aren't your strong suit, hire someone to build it for you. You can get an excellent site built for well under \$1000, including a topnotch logo.
- 2 Create a brand or slogan about your service.** What makes you different than other writers out there? Are you fun, or fast, or particularly skilled in a certain area? Your site needs to showcase what makes you special.
- 3 Offer something for free on your site so that you can capture email address of potential clients.** The freebie can come in the form of a report, an e-course, or a newsletter.
- 4 Explain exactly how you work with clients.** Many people have never hired or worked with a writer before. Tell them up front how you approach projects.
- 5 Create service packages that people can purchase with the click of a button.** For example, you can provide an article bundle or autoresponder series for a set price. This helps potential clients know how much to budget for services.

Since 2000, Mary Anne Hahn has provided guidance, inspiration, and resources to writers worldwide, first through her e-zine and blog, WriteSuccess, and more recently as founder and president of the International Association of Professional Ghost Writers (IAPGW). To tap into her ideas and energy, sign up for her blog feed at <http://writingsuccess.com> , her free newsletter for ghost writers at <http://iapgw.org> , and/or follow her on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/writingsuccess>.

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BE A REAL BUSINESS

- 1 Treat your business as a business.** Talk and act like a professional. Get a business name and form a company. Promote your skills and talents with confidence.
- 2 Create a large body of quality work.** Provide samples to prospective clients online or send them printed copies of your clips. Online article directories provide visibility and can bring you new clients.
- 3 Communicate well with your clients.** Ask them questions. Make sure you both agree on the assignment. Discuss any problems before they reach the crisis stage. Answer their emails and return their phone calls promptly.
- 4 Give your clients a positive experience.** Make them feel special. Be enthusiastic about their projects. Do your best work. Meet your deadlines. Reliability builds credibility
- 5 Ask satisfied clients for referrals and testimonials.** Positive recommendations by your customers are your best advertising.

Lynn Jordan empowers writers to use technology to write and promote better, faster, and easier. She combines a life-long love of writing with the experience of working in and teaching information technology to help you advance your writing career. Get free tips, articles, videos, and downloads at her website, www.AuthorsToolsBlog.com.

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CONNECTING WITH PEOPLE

- 1 Specialize.** Become the expert on a few areas you have passion for. Go deep instead of wide on these topics and you will quickly become known for that specialty.
- 2 Build relationships.** Use your specialization as a way to become more connected in your overall industry. When you become known for something specific, people remember you more easily.
- 3 Publish a book.** Nothing is more powerful for building credibility than being the author of a book on a certain topic. With today's technology, you can have a gorgeous book that amplifies your credibility for less than \$4 per book.
- 4 Invest in a well designed website.** Show the world you are worth investing in by taking the first step and investing in yourself with a gorgeous website that showcases your amazing talent.
- 5 Become an expert or ongoing resource for your industry's associations.** Grow your credibility at hyperspeed by positioning yourself as the resource your industry associations go to when they need specialized information for their many members.

National Association of Women Writers is Where Women Unite to Write.

The National Association of Women Writers (NAWW) was founded in 2001. With over 3000 members worldwide, we help connect and educate our members through books, CDs, tele-events, physical chapter events, and much more. Our weekly newsletter goes out to over 12,000 women writers, editors, and publishers.

Sheri McConnell

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BUILD CREDIBILITY FROM THE INSIDE OUT

- 1 Find your focus.** What is it that you do, and will commit to being the best at? As a freelance business owner, you will need a variety of skills; what will you and clients consider your core competency to be?
- 2 Hone your skills.** Sharpen your existing skills and constantly be learning new, relevant ones. Remember your business skills as you work on your technical skills. Seek out training or coaching if needed.
- 3 Market continuously.** Keep your eyes and mind open for new marketing opportunities. Notice the myriad of marketing messages coming your way. Consider which ones may work for your business. Remember that you're in business to help people solve problems. Marketing yourself lets you help more people.
- 4 Be an open communicator.** Although you may have a fantastic idea, it won't help anyone nor make you money until you communicate effectively. Become an active listener and speak publicly. Join a local Toastmasters Club for practice.
- 5 Be a thought leader.** Use the skills you've built to market to prospective clients by writing articles in newspapers or journals, speaking at meetings or conferences, and getting active in social media marketing. Become known in your community.

A professional in the IT field for more than twenty years, Paul has experience working in solutions resellers as well as corporate environments. PJR Computing is focused on Virtual CIO and IT services for small and midsize businesses.

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POSITION YOURSELF AS AN EXPERT

- 1 Be professional.** Build a reputation for doing excellent work. Always deliver what you promise, on time. Exceed clients' expectations. Distinguish yourself by quality, not price. Soon you'll become known as one of the best in the business.
- 2 Focus on the problems you solve and the value you provide.** Prospects want to know WIIFM: "What's in it for me?" Sell benefits, not features. People don't want to know what you do; they want to know what you can do for them.
- 3 Leverage powerful testimonials.** Rave reviews from satisfied clients provide compelling third-party validation and boost your credibility. Use them on your website, in your e-mail signature, in promotional literature, on your business card, and in conversations with prospects.
- 4 Network at live events.** Conferences provide unparalleled opportunities to meet potential clients, find joint venture partners, connect with industry leaders, increase your visibility, and build strategic relationships with complementary service providers who can refer business to you (and vice versa).
- 5 Build a platform as an expert by teaching what you know.** Write special reports, e-books, and books; teach teleseminars and webinars; create home study courses; offer one-on-one and group coaching; speak at workshops and conferences.

Mary Jo Tate is an international editor, author, and book coach. Through her award-winning Tell Me Your Book system, she helps entrepreneurs, speakers, and other experts grow their businesses by authoring a book... whether or not they can write. She also trains freelance editors through her home study course at www.EditingBusiness.com.

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