



THE PATH TO FREELANCE SUCCESS: THE SECRET IS KNOWING WHERE TO LOOK

Would you like to break out of a regular job and start freelancing? Perhaps you've got the skills, but are not quite sure where to start looking for work, or how to deal with the business side of freelance work? Freelance marketplace websites specialise in bringing together clients looking to outsource projects and skilled professional contractors looking for freelance jobs. If you have web design or development, graphic design, programming, writing or translation skills then you will find opportunities waiting for you, if you know where to look.

There are many benefits to freelancing - you have a high degree of independence, choosing when and where to work, and even for whom to work, once you are established. You aren't tied to a fixed schedule and you are directly paid the full rate for your work, not just a portion of it like an employee is. There is plenty of work out there, but you have to learn how to find it and build your contacts. This is where freelancing sites such as Project4Hire.com can help, especially when you are just starting out. These sites offer a wide range of projects to bid on and give you the chance to learn about the freelance marketplace.

Once you start as a freelancer, you need to think of more than just keeping your skills sharp. You are a business now, and have to build relationships with clients and sell yourself. This can seem daunting at first but is made easier by freelance marketplace websites that bring together outsourced projects with freelance contractors. These sites all include feedback and rating systems for both clients and contractors, meaning that as your experience builds, your record of quality work will be visible to all the other members of the site, giving you more credibility. You will also find that as you gain more experience and contacts, people might approach you directly for work. In the end you might even have to turn away work - alternatively you can start sub-contracting it out yourself through the freelancing sites, giving you the best of both worlds.

Your success is all down to you - if you are professional and polite, and always deliver good quality work on time, people will come back to you as there is a strong demand for good quality freelancers. When setting your rates, don't be solely concerned with being the cheapest. Instead look at the budget of the project you are bidding on, then look at what you need to earn for it to be worth your time. Work out a rate that meets both the client's budget and your needs, then use it as a part of a high quality bid. The lowest bids are often rejected in favour of the bids that offer the most professional package. Small businesses looking to outsource some work will often pay a little more to someone who will offer a more professional service. Your aim, as a freelancer, should be to be that someone.

As with any business undertaking, there are a few potential risks, but with care and planning you should manage to avoid these most of the time. The most obvious risk is completing a freelance job for a client who then will not pay. Project4Hire.com, like most freelance marketplace sites, offers an escrow payment system to protect both clients and contractors from these problems. It works by taking full payment for the project from the client at the outset of the project, and then passing it to the contractor upon successful completion. Other challenges you can have to deal with are changing requirements from your client and poor communications, but again freelancing sites help here with feedback systems and message boards, ensuring a record is available of the original details of your bid and the project, so as long as you deliver what you bid, you should get paid.

Don't let the challenges and risk put you off - freelancing is a very rewarding way to earn a living and make the most of your marketable skills, and with freelance marketplace sites to help, it isn't as difficult as it used to be.

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