A BOOK BY JUAN CRUZ MARTINEZ

FREELANCING
101 FOR DEVELOPERS

INCLUDES PRO TIPS

THE PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR YOUR FREELANCING
BUSINESS TO GET OFF THE GROUND AND INTO SCALE

</> LIVE CODE STREAM

Freelancing 101 for Devs

Launch and grow a sustainable career as a freelancer.

Juan Cruz Martinez

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For my family, none of this would have happened without you.

Special thanks to Tyler for all the work he has done with me in the past year. His contributions were the key building blocks for the freelance community and this book.

Shoutout to all the freelancers, mentors, and clients who have shared this journey with me. You've taught me a lot.

Contents

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01 | The Freelancer Mindset

There are millions and millions of companies worldwide, and millions of new businesses are launching daily. You can live comfortably with five to ten clients as a freelance developer. See where I'm going? The odds are in your favor.

Fortunately for you, many people, mostly employees, live with the scarcity mindset. They think their only option is to be employed, as freelancing would lead to an "unpredictable income", topped with their top concern: "difficulty finding opportunities".

But the trend is changing, and every year more people worldwide see freelancing as an opportunity to gain freedom, not only from the nine-to-five grind but also from the "job market" itself.

With the inflow of freelancers and the fear of scarcity, many charge less for projects or services than they are worth and spend more time working on those projects rather than building their businesses.

Long are days of competing by lowering the price. In the freelancer mindset, you start by creating value for your clients. Increase the value, and charge accordingly. Work smarter, not harder!

Of course, you can't expect to be living the life of your dreams right from the start. Being a successful freelancer means putting the work in and persistently taking action.

Although there will certainly be obstacles and difficulties ahead, the most valuable asset in your journey is a healthy mindset. However, you choose to develop that - whether it's with books, content from experts, physical activity, spiritual practice or meditation - let this

mentality serve as a guiding light for you on your freelancing voyage.

If I could do it, you can do it too! You should be excited about entering this new journey, and don't forget to enter it with a surplus mindset.

Everyone's freelance journey will be different. Mine is not what you think. I'm not a full-time freelancer because I love my job. But I have a successful business that I run as a part-time freelancer.

It hasn't always been good, though. As I started over a decade ago, I made many mistakes. I took on projects that ended in disaster, but me, writing this book probably wouldn't have been possible without those experiences.

That's why it's important to keep learning and applying new strategies. Things change fast, but the principles stay the same. Focus on your goal and keep going! Be persistent in your efforts, and never give up.

If I could make it, I'm sure you can too! I'm sure you'll have success as a freelancer if you apply yourself with patience and dedication.

Good luck!

02 | Choosing Your Niche

The worst way to start your freelancing journey is to attempt to do everything for everyone. Many freelancers would initially take this approach because they think they can't afford not to take every job. However, the reality is: you can't afford to focus your efforts.

Initially, your goal should be to specialize in a specific area and develop a strong portfolio with exceptional work. This is the best way to attract new clients who will appreciate your deep understanding of their needs.

If you are focused on a specific field, you can also begin to build your personal brand. A strong brand will help you stand out from the crowd of freelancers and show potential customers that you are an expert in your area.

> Your ultimate goal is to generate value for your customers and solve their problems.

We'll start with a summary of three key steps to bootstrap a successful freelancing career:

1. Choose Your Niche Wisely
2. Focused Lead Generation
3. Spreading the Word

Choose Your Niche Wisely

Choosing a niche is an important step in any freelancing journey. It is essential to focus your efforts and develop a strong portfolio that will attract new clients.

When you specialize in one particular area, you can become an expert and build your personal brand to stand out from the competition. By narrowing down your focus to one field of expertise, you can demonstrate to potential customers that you are well-versed in their needs and have the skills necessary to help them succeed.

For example, if you are a software developer, the wrong approach would be to target "any web development job". It's too broad, too much competition, and you probably don't have the skills to cover 100% of the job market. In this scenario, marketing efforts would be too broad and expensive (either in terms of money or time).

A better approach is to get specific, like: "front-end web development jobs requiring JavaScript and React".

In this case, you have narrowed down your niche, and now you can focus your efforts and build a fantastic, well-focused portfolio to wow your potential customers.

You can apply this to any industry. Get specific, and go where the competition isn't, or your skills shine.

INDUSTRY PAIN POINTS   **YOUR SKILLS**   **YOUR SKILLS**
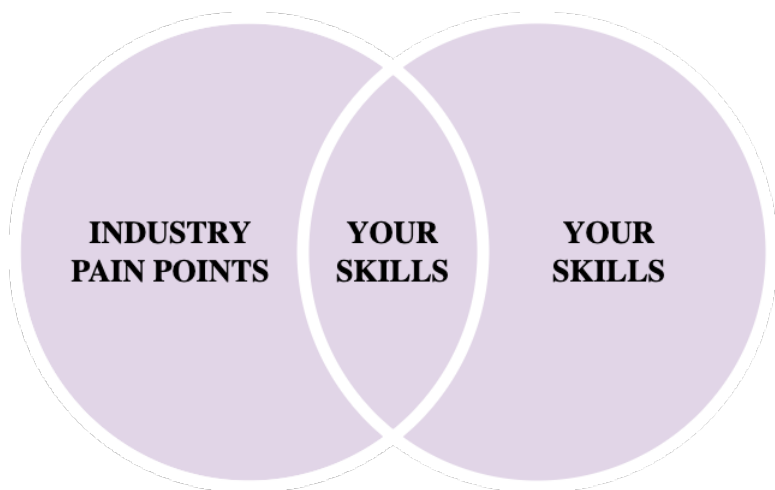
Focused Lead Generation

Once you have chosen your niche, you know who your target customers are and how to reach them, so it is time to plan your lead generation.

We'll talk a lot more about lead generation in chapter six but take, for example, your portfolio. Your portfolio is the tool potential customers will use to imagine what the result of the collaboration with you will look like. Without it, it's pretty hard for them to believe you can get the job done according to their needs.

In choosing your niche, you understand your customer needs, and you can build a portfolio tailored to that target group to maximize your chances of landing those customers.

Spreading the Word

If you have chosen your niche wisely, you have a fantastic portfolio, and you are delivering solid work, a word about your work will move quickly.

Even though it's rare for customers to start new conversation threads on the internet about their freelancers, it's very common to see customers' references and testimonials on websites and platforms such as Upwork and LinkedIn. You can use those references and testimonials to spread the word on social media and other places on the internet.

However, you shouldn't forget that not all transactions happen online. Many successful developers target local areas in small towns, building, for example, websites for local business. In those cases, word-to-mouth among business owners fast-tracks your customer aquisition.

As a freelancer, your goal is to arrive at the greatly desired "word of mouth" stage of lead generation as soon as possible–choosing a niche is your first step to that end.

Take Action

- Find out what you're really good at doing or what you would love to do for a living.
- Research if your skills are profitable.
- If necessary, take online courses, classes, or read books and practice to boost your skills.
- Practice daily

03 | Building Your Toolbox

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Partners and allies

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Project-based pricing

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Value-based pricing

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Pricing Your Services Is Always a Risk-Reward Balance

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What Do These Pricing Models Look Like in the Real World?

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Warning: Not all leads are created equal

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Method #5: A Business Website

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Method #7: Cold outreach

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Personalized cold email example

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Focus on building relationships with your potential clients.

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Be personable and personal

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Listen and ask questions

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Focus on results, not processes

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Make your business accessible to potential clients.

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Think about the client's perspective

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Use language that is accessible

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Provide examples of your work

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Maintain a long-term mindset with potential clients.

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Selling is a long-term game

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Handle objections with grace

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Third, keep practicing

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Talking about Money

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Treat it like it's no big deal

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Attach rates to value

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Establish a ceiling

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Tie rate increases to renewals or additional services

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Never apologize for your rates

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Get it in writing

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It Doesn't Always Work

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Maintaining the Relationship

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The Types of Clients You'll Get

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The client mountain

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1. The "budget-obsessed" client

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2. The "expert" client

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3. The "overwhelmed" client

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4. The "visionary" client

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5. The "indecisive" client

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6. The "micromanager" client

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7. The "partner" client

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How to Avoid Landing Difficult Clients

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The interview process

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2. Create realistic expectations

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3. Establish the scope of the project

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4. Charge a fair price

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5: Start with a preliminary project

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Option 2: Redirect the client

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Option 3: re-negotiate

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Option 4: Stick to the scope of the project

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Option 5: Take a break

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Option 6: Fire them

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Effective ≠ productive

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Principle #2: Use your calendar (the right way).

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Principle #3: Embrace the list

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Principle #4: Limit your interruptions

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Principle #5: Give yourself more time than you think you need

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14 | Bonus: My Top Websites for Finding Freelance Work

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