

# Learn To Negotiate And Get Paid More

By Angela Booth

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Summary: Here's how to increase your income without working harder: negotiate better deals for yourself.

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Like to double your earnings without working harder? Learn to negotiate.

Everything is negotiable, and you should make it a rule to negotiate on every job. Often all you need to do to get a better

deal is to ask. Unfortunately, few freelancers ask. In fact, many of them don't even realize that asking for more pay is possible.

The good news about your negotiating skills is that no matter what they're like now, they'll improve the more you use them. Deliberately set out to find areas in which you can negotiate better deals for yourself, just so that you get the practice.

= Be willing to walk away

This is the heart of negotiation. If you're not willing to walk away from the deal, you have no leverage. So before you get into a negotiation, work out your minimum acceptable payment rate.

Let's walk through a typical scenario, and see how a typical freelancer handles a typical situation.

You're a freelance copywriter and you've been talking to a company about creating a quarterly print newsletter for them. You've sub-contracted out the photography, graphic design, and printing. You've estimated the number of hours writing the copy and coordinating the project will take, and you're quoting a lower hourly rate than you'd usually ask for. You're undercharging, because work's been slow and you want this job.

You shaved your hourly rate, because the total quote seemed like a large sum you were sure the client wouldn't go for.

Why did you assume this? If you'd stopped and thought about it, you might have realized that you have no evidence for this assumption.

In this kind of situation, you have no leverage. You're not thinking clearly. The low hourly rate you quoted the client is a figure you should have kept to yourself, it's your minimum acceptable rate, and it's the line drawn in the sand that you WON'T cross. Never reveal your lowest possible rate.

You should have quoted a higher-than-normal hourly rate, and left yourself room to negotiate. You may even have been surprised --- the client may have accepted the rate you quoted without blinking an eye.

So in any negotiation, you need to know:

\* What would I like to receive?

\* What's the minimum I will accept?

Once you know what these two numbers are, you have leverage. You can enter the negotiation with confidence. Remember that the basis of all negotiation is your willingness to walk away.

Paradoxically, the more willing you are to walk away, the less you'll need to take this option. The first time this happens to you it will seem like a revelation, but it's the way things work.

= Know what others are charging

Your clients will comparison-shop, and you should know what others are charging for the work you do.

If, as in our scenario above, you're a copywriter, you'd get on the phone and call several local copywriters and ask what they're charging. No need to pretend to be a client, simply ask.

If you're too shy to do this, no problems. Go online and enter your line of work into Google.com. Many freelancers publish their rates online.

This does NOT mean you have to match rates which are lower. People have all kinds of reasons for setting their rates. If you have skill and experience you can happily charge a higher rate. You'll also be able to point out to anyone who asks, exactly why your rates are higher.

= Increase your rates

If you haven't raised your rates in a year, it's time to increase them. Work out what you'd like to receive, and simply start charging the new amount.

Put a small sticker on your invoices to say: "New rates from June 30, \$X per hour".

Getting more pay boils down to being willing to ask. So don't forget to ask --- you will be amazed at how easily your clients agree. (Think about it --- if they're happy with you, they want to keep you happy.)

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