

# Sell Your Freelance Web Services to Businesses That Don't Have a Web Site

By Rachel Goldstein

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Rachel Goldstein  
allfreelance@comcast.net

Allfreelancework.com <http://www.allfreelancework.com/>

Article submitted by <http://www.Allfreelancework.com>

As you are probably already aware - there are many more freelancers out on the net than there are employers. Consequently, freelancers often find that they are bidding for a job along with hundreds of other web professionals. For this reason alone, some freelancers are finding that they have to bid so low that they cannot make a reasonable living. Why not take your business into your own hands? After reading this article you will have a sure fire way of attracting clients to you, so read on.

How many small businesses are in your area? The average county has thousands of small business. However, only a third of all small businesses have a web site, and only a third of these sites can carry out a sales transaction. What these businesses don't realize is that they can probably profit from a web site. They are in great need of a talented web professional such as yourself to not only bring them to the water but also to show them how good it tastes to drink. In other words, let these entrepreneurs see that there are more profits to be made.

First you need to prospect local businesses to find out which ones are potential customers. What kinds of businesses are most likely to need a web site? Selecting the best freelance opportunities is a matter of intuition, but I have found from previous experience that the following types of businesses are excellent prospective clients:

- Restaurants
- Theaters
- Night Clubs
- Grocery Stores
- Travel Agencies
- Law Firms
- Religious Organizations
- Real Estate Agencies
- Insurance / Loan Officers
- Universities and Educational Facilities
- Local governments / County web sites
- Customized Item Stores
- Many others

It is important to focus your energy on where there is likely to be a need for your services. Uncovering a business opportunity often times requires broadening the range of your skills and services. Since you are targeting all sorts of different businesses you will often need to learn about different industries in order to be useful. You might find that you want to focus on one industry, for example, only targeting restaurants. You could create online menus, downloadable coupons, reservations, take out orders, and any other innovative ideas to draw in the prospect's interest. In fact, imagination and creativity are your keys to success. The number one focus of a successful entrepreneur is PROFIT. Your goal is to find out how you can raise the prospective client's profit line ... this takes creativity.

Excellent tools for researching local businesses are :

1. Yellow Pages
2. Chamber of Commerce
3. Better Business Bureau
4. Department of Small Business Development
5. Trade Associations
6. Search Engines
7. Purchased Lists

What information do I need to find out about each prospective client before contacting them? Slow down, you have some work to do first. At the minimum, you will need to get the phone number, company's name, and address. From this information, you can hopefully gain access to verifiable details about this business. From this information, you should do research on the Internet. You will need to find out if the business in question has a web site. Use every resource available to access this information. If you can't find a web site then you found yourself a lead.

What happens if the company does have a web site? Well, if the business in question does have a web site then you have two choices ... either move on or further evaluate the site. If you choose the latter, this is what you should look for:

1. Is the web site visually appealing?
2. Are the site's resources being used effectively?
3. Are there means for a sales transaction?
4. Does the site have a domain name?
5. Is site listed in search engines?
6. Were meta tags used effectively?
7. Does the site load quickly?
8. Is there essential contact information available?
9. Are there broken links or missing images?
10. Do you see a sales strategy that they are missing?

If any of the above situations occur, you should consider contacting the company to setup a consultation. Remember to always use tact. Never come right out and criticize anyone's site, in most cases if the site is awful, the owner himself tried to build it. All you need to do is show the business owner that he is losing out on extra earnings. There are nice words that you can find to express this instead of derogatory statements.

You should keep all of this gathered information in a database, Rolodex, or on index cards. (I recommend writing down the information on large index cards. When you find a prospective client, take their card with you and write down personal information on the back of this card. This way, the

next time you visit the client, you can ask him how his sick aunt is feeling.)

Before contacting your newly found lead, you will need to get your thoughts together. Answer the following questions of yourself:

1. How can a new or redesigned site increase the owner's profits?
2. How much money would I need to charge?
3. Are there similar sites on the net that you could show an example of. You should show the owner how company XYZ profited from similar steps.
4. What design and graphic choices would you choose?
5. Are there add-ons that aren't necessary, but effective?
6. (If redesign) What changes would need to be made to better the site?

There are not many people that enjoy cold calling, so I assume that you might be a little worried about this. Believe me, I hate cold calling as much as you. With the use of a script, and a lot of practice, cold calling will seem much less intimidating.

Now you should have all the information that you need about the client laid out in front of you. Take a look at all of this information and make sure that you can remember it clearly. From this information you should be able to create a script to use when you call the business owner. I will outline a sample script that you can in turn use to your advantage. Take a look at the following example:

A: Hello, Can I please speak with owner's name?

B: This is he. How can I help you?

A: Is this an okay time for you to speak?

B: Sure, I have nothing going on right now. Who is this? (If he says that he is too busy to talk right now then you should ask what time is an okay time to talk with him).

A: Hello, My name is your name from your company's name.

B: How can I help you today?

A: Well first of all thank you for being so kind to speak with me. I am familiar with your company and I have heard many good things about it, for instance share an example. Well, anyway, I was interested so I looked to see if you had a web site and I couldn't find one. Do you have a web site running?

B: No, we don't need one. I can't really see how it would do us any good since we are a local company. If someone wants something from us they just walk on over.

A: Well, Mr. or Mrs. owner's name, I spent some time thinking about your business before I called and I came up with a few ideas that would raise your profit line. For example, a similar site to yours, name a domain, started a web site how long ago and developed your idea into their site. Within how much time, they increased their profits by this much.

B: I don't know, it sounds expensive to me.

A: I am the most reasonably priced web designer around, I could design the entire site for only dollar amount. And if you still aren't sure that you just want to jump in, I will give you two free hours

of consultation in which I will bring you a mockup design of what I visualize for your site. We can then talk it over. You won't have any commitment to continue, I just want to show you that you can have a profitable online presence. Is 10 o'clock Monday morning a good time to meet ... I want to share with you all of the ideas for your site that I have typed out for you?

B: 11 o'clock is better.

A: Great, I am excited to meet you.

B: I am looking forward to hearing your ideas.

A: Thanks. I will see you Monday at 11:00.

You should always create a positive, but assertive, tone and try not to sound like a telemarketer. The difference between you and a telemarketer is that you have educated yourself about the prospective client. You are way above this level so try to make a good impression. You will need to be ready for a negative response and rude replies. Not every call goes this well. Try to figure out ahead of time what kind of objections you might receive. Always respond with a polite business response. Never curse or say rude things back. Negative responses aren't always a bad sign. If the potential client says " I don't need a web designer now, I need brochures not banners." Maybe your expertise includes print design too, go in for the kill and get the gig. Maybe you want to educate the potential client on the need of a web site to promote his or her business. If you think ahead and know your responses beforehand, you will do great.

Good Job! You have just landed your first consultation. Now you will need to prepare yourself for this important meeting. You will need to take on the role of an expert in your field. You need to make sure that you understand that you ARE an expert. Otherwise, if you don't have self confidence, the prospective client won't trust you either. Look and feel confident because you can and you WILL build a great web site for this client ... you WILL knock his socks off.

Use all of the ideas that you had mapped out earlier and create a mockup a sample web site in Photoshop. This is how you should create a professional mockup:

1. Take a screen shot of your browser.
2. Bring this image into Photoshop and save file.
3. Layout all design elements into layers for home page of site first.
4. Go to your local service bureau to print out 2 copies of each design, one for you and one for the prospective client.
5. Go to a business supply store, like Staples, and buy black board, a portfolio case big enough to hold several black boards, Utility knife, Exacto knife, spray adhesive, labels, and a straight ruler.
5. Use an Exacto knife and straight ruler to cut off excess paper.
6. Measure width and length of the printout.
7. Cut black board to be about 4 inches taller and wider than the printout is.
6. Spray the back of the printout lightly with spray adhesive. After spraying the back of the printout, put one corner down about 2 inches from the top and 2 inches from the left of the black board. Then pull printout taut from the bottom right as you slowly press down the paper from the upper left. This will keep bubbling from happening. There should now be 2 inches of blackboard framing each side of the printout.
7. Place a label on the back of black board with copyright information, your logo, and a place for client to sign off.

You should also organize your thoughts by creating an organizational chart. This way you can show the client what rough ideas you have for their business web site. Take a blank piece of paper and

place your pen in the center of the page. Write down a word or two that matches the subject of your previous notes. Branch out with lines to related topics. Make sure that all navigational routes have been mapped out. After you have completed this process, I suggest taking it into Freehand or Illustrator and clean up the organizational chart. You should also place this on blackboard the way you did above. Once you have completed this step and typed out any further notes, you are ready for your presentation.

It is true what they say about first impressions, they do last. "You Never Get A Second Chance To Make A First Impression." I am sure you have heard that old saying. Follow some or most of these rules and you should be fine. Here are some rules that you should always follow when dealing with a client or a potential client:

1. Always address client formally (Mr., Mrs., Dr.) until client says you can do otherwise
2. Keep all materials that belong with this project together. I find that it has worked best to keep all materials in a huge envelope (And I mean huge). There are envelopes that are big enough to hold a few binders in them, try to find those.
3. You MUST rehearse first. If you mess up a presentation you are screwed. Why would a client want to hire a freelancer who can't even explain in a clear manner how he/she is going to make him money? Rehearse! Rehearse! Rehearse! Use images to help you through the presentation. It is much easier to talk while the client isn't staring directly at you.
4. When speaking to a client, try to weed out the "ums". This is hard to do, and even I do it all of the time. "Ums" are used to say something while you are thinking of something else to say. Your client might think that you are not a clear thinker. Even if this is not true, the client might think this.
5. To separate you as a freelancer from other freelancers, send a "thank-you" note through regular mail. This is a good way to set yourself apart from the rest. All you need to do is send a short note thanking the client for either considering or accepting you for the job (depending on whether you have already been promised the job or not).
6. Don't answer the phone if you aren't ready to talk. It is better to have a good, intelligent conversation with a client when it is less convenient for him than to have an awful conversation with him when it is convenient for him. Also, get a second phone line if you have kids, you don't want to sound like a stay at home mom or dad when you are talking to a client.
7. Dress for the occasion. Brush your hair. Wear a suit or corporate casual if told to do so. Never wear jeans; you won't be taken seriously in jeans.
8. Be on time. Never be late. If you are late on the first meeting, how late are you going to be on the clients' project? This is what will go through the client's mind.
9. Bring all presentation materials that you need, including paper, pen, projector and slides (if needed), portfolio, and what ever else you feel that you will need.
10. Look at other individuals directly in the eye and state your name clearly and the purpose of your visit. Shake hands firmly. A limp hand shows that you are not confident. Show these clients that you have what it takes to take on their project.
11. Don't sit until a chair is offered to you. It is a definite no no to sit before the client does.
- 12 . Pass out business cards at the end of your presentation

If you follow the above rules, I am sure that you will leave behind a good impression, but will you make the sale? Being a good sales person doesn't depend on talent, although this obviously helps. What you need most is confidence, and portraying that confidence will rub off on the potential client. Follow these important points and you will most likely generate your first order:

1. Never stop selling. Get used to rejection and understand that you will eventually make a sale. You should try to find an average that you can attain. One out of five people that you talk to will order.
2. Don't lie about your skills or abilities if you want repeat business. If you are good, other local businesses will be knocking down your door in no time.
3. Open up with an attention-getting statement. Try to walk in the business owner's shoes, what would be important to him. Find this answer and start off by bringing this to his attention.
4. Portray benefits of building a web site with complete confidence and excitement. Try to be overwhelmed with excitement.
5. Be ready for objections. Think of any objection that the business owner could possibly come up with and brainstorm for answers before they are asked. This should be done in practice.
6. Close the deal by asking when you should get started working on the web site, this week or next? In other words, don't give the business owner a yes or no question, give the customer a choice between two positive alternatives.

Now that you know how to attract local clients, you should have no problems creating a successful freelance business. When working within your community, word spreads like fire. In fact, once you have a few dependable clients, you should have no problem finding new clients. Good luck.

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