

Common Problems Faced By New Freelancers: Tips & Solutions

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By Paul Dunstone

We all react to new situations and scenarios differently, based on our backgrounds, ability to adapt, and numerous other factors that make up who we are. The transition from full-time work to freelancing is one of those times in a professional's life. We feel like we've been thrown in the deep-end of the swimming pool, without a gameplan to get out of the pool from the other end.



This question is one many freelance newbies and to be honest seasoned professionals ask of themselves during their careers. Before simply diving into freelancing, you need to **determine what to expect from yourself as a freelancer** should you decided to make the switch.

Recommended Reading: [9 Things You Should Know About Freelancing Full-Time](#)

To help out, below are some common scenarios you might find yourself in as a freelance professional, and **how you can remedy that situation** or feeling if it's a negative one, or thrive upon it in times of affluence.

Working Timezones

“My clients are always in completely different timezones, how do I manage this?”

As is the nature of the freelancing game, there are plenty of opportunities to connect with employers from all corners of the globe. This of course means that you'll get fantastic experiences, dealing with new clients and a whole range of culture sets different to that of your own.



However it also means that to do so, you're going to have to deal with clients across [various timezones](#) completely estranged from your own. The way most freelancers handle this is with **common sense planning**.

Read Also: [10 Best Time Zone Converters For Desktop & Mobile Users](#)

A Compromise

There's no point getting up at 3 a.m. to [discuss a project](#) with a client, you and the client must discuss the project at a time which falls somewhere accessible by both of you. If it's 8 a.m. your time, and 5 p.m. the client's time, then this is still a workable time frame. A **mutual compromise on timezone management** is the best way to get things done in this scenario.

However if this all just seems too hard for you, focusing your marketing efforts on a handful of timezones that fall around yours can also work. By **servicing a distinct array of countries which form the majority of your client base**, this is not only more comfortable for you, but helpful due to the familiarity your clients are likely to have with your portfolio of previous work.

I recommend this option if you feel **you need to get your feet wet, or want to build a strong semi-local client base**.

Different Currencies

"I'm constantly dealing with multiple currencies and I find it challenging."

As you're going to be dealing with multiple locales, you might expect that you may have to deal with multiple currencies, right? Not necessarily. In the freelancing world, the **U.S dollar is widely accepted as a transaction constant** for many clients, and is something you can utilize to your advantage depending on which location you're based.



However keep a close eye on currency rates, because there's significant financial instability across many nations at the moment, and you need to look at what the USD actually converts to in your local currency. Sometimes **you may see a variance of up to 10%, which on larger projects can really hurt** your bottom line.

Read Also: [8 Contract Clauses You Should Never Freelance Without](#)

Make It Clear

To counter this, I've seen contracts that take a couple of different approaches. Firstly you simply define that you only deal in your local currency, and **provide a local representation of what the value of the project will be in both the clients local currency and in USD.**

Secondly, I've seen conditional contracts being sent in that will offer a **choice of currency** based on the closest value to a given USD amount, or local amount. These options are both becoming more common as we see more instances of [payment](#) uncertainty amongst freelancers.

Financial Management 101

"I've got a large incoming cash flow (at the moment). Let's go spend it."

Freelancing, like small businesses, operates in waves of ups and downs. Sometimes it rains dollars, other times you will be lucky to get a drop. But in the event that you are cashed up, don't head straight to the shops and buy that fancy watch or piece of jewelry... at least not initially.



Most seasoned freelancers will advise that it's a good idea (see: rule) **to keep some backup cash in an account to manage the drier periods**. The first chance you get to do this, you should take it up. Even if it's only a few thousand dollars, this can really last you for a long time when nothing else is coming in. And to be perfectly honest, almost all freelancers experience this at some time, no matter how long they have been in the business.

Read Also: [17 Essential Tools To Better Manage Your Freelance Business](#)

Watch The Cash Flow

By ensuring you keep a watchful eye on your incoming cash flow, and don't get tempted to spend your windfalls each time they come in, you're going to be much better off. That's not to say you should never spend them, but I recommend only doing so a few times a year so that you're sure you **have that backup in place to protect your well-being**.

The unfortunate reality of fancy watches or jewelry is that they look great, feel great, and should be something you strive to reward yourself with (if that's your vice), but they don't buy groceries. So play it sensible, try to put it in income-generating investments (including yourself), and you'll be OK.

Manning the Counter

"I love being my own boss, but it can be tiring."

Being your own boss is for many freelancers one of the most compelling reasons they make the switch to freelancing. However it can be tiring, **it can take you away from your specialization (which is in many cases why your pursued freelancing in the first place)**, and it will force you to make tough decisions for your business.

If you're a person who is detail oriented, this is a great thing. However it can also be a major downside if you **don't use that strength to your advantage**. For example, if you're someone who places a great deal of pride in

delivering the client a top-notch result, that's fantastic. However if you're a person who can't deliver this without running yourself into the ground and achieving it without making a profit, then this is problematic.

Jack/Jill of All Trades

As a freelancer, you need to be able to deliver top-notch work, manage financials, marketing and client interaction, and you need to do this efficiently. The best way to become a [great freelance boss](#) is to take a good hard look at your strengths, your business, and what you can achieve in the available time you have.

Read Also: [7 Ways Freelancing Is Similar To A Corporate Job](#)

Because you've most likely got commitments with friends, family, you have to be realistic that freelancing isn't necessarily a job for one person. **Connect with your professional network**, outsource a bookkeeper, subcontract freelancers so you can bid on larger projects, hire a freelancer with marketing skills on a semi-regular basis, and free up your time to focus on delivering great client work.

It may take some time to get the balance right, but by doing so, you'll **avoid burnout**, and deliver better service for your clients.

I've lost my work-life balance

It's very commonplace that freelancers will isolate themselves, work too hard and forget to keep a balance in their lives. If this is you, don't worry, you just have to be **actively aware you're doing this**, and **take a couple of simple steps to fix the issue**.

For example, if you [work from home](#), have a change of scenery by working in a [coworking space](#), public library, or even a suitable coffee shop to change things up. If you're most likely going to be mobile, work somewhere near a friend's workplace so you can meet them for lunch.

Go for a run in the mornings before work, cook yourself a really fantastic lunch at home, or walk down the road to the local coffee shop to break up your day.

Make Real-World Connections For Business

As a freelancer you have to be actively aware that **you need to start reaching out**. Although there are tremendous [opportunities online](#) for freelancers, you need to balance that with real-world interactions.

By taking the time to [balance your freelancing life](#), you're also **much more likely to meet new clients** (especially in places like coworking spaces), develop a whole new subset of friends, and really expand your horizons. **Most freelancers don't realize the fantastic opportunity they've been given** via their flexibility, so take the chance to really work it!

Conclusion

Freelancing is a great way to **follow your passion and earn a living**, but there are major differences between freelancing full-time and working for private enterprises. The great news is that many have walked in your footsteps before, and there is a great deal of information out there on how to become a successful freelancer – plus what you can do to get the most out of yourself.

By recognizing the common areas that **freelancers tend to find challenging**, and developing solutions that help you overcome these obstacles, you're going to really help yourself dive into the pool (of sharks) as a freelance professional and come out ahead.

Editor's note: This post is written by **Paul Dunstone** for [Hongkiat.com](#). Paul is the founder of [JobStock.com](#), a

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