4 Tips for Freelancer Survival

Despite the competition, you can still stand out in the global market.

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The beauty of freelancing is that you go global as soon as you put your services online. Unless you specifically declared that you're a freelance writer for New York-based startups or a personal trainer for Toronto-based moms, then your clients can come from all over the world. In fact, PayPal's 2018 U.S. Freelancer Insights Reports revealed that 58 percent of stateside. freelancers have international clients.

As fascinating as that may sound, it also means that you're amidst stiff competition. So how do you survive that? How do you stand out from the crowd when you're either just starting out or want to expand your reach as an internationally known and respected freelancer? Whatever your end goal is, these tips will help you not only survive, but thrive.

1. Niche down.

Put yourself in your client's shoes for a second. Say you want to hire a copywriter to compose your sales page. Would you go for someone who markets themselves as versatile enough to tackle sales copy, ad copy and product reviews, or would you hire a candidate who focuses on sales copy alone? You'd opt for the latter, because you know that person is an expert in your specific area of need.

Niching down your services and expertise drastically reduces the number of freelancers you have to compete against and makes marketing yourself that much easier. There's a reason folks say that "the riches are in the niches."

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2. Invest in customer retention.

Studies have shown that you can increase your profits by up to 95 percent just by increasing customer retention 5 percent. So don't ever treat your client like a one-off. They can wind up hiring you again or giving you a good referral. Keeping in touch with satisfied customers gives you an edge. Though as effective as customer retention is, don't let yourself be pestered into working for someone you didn't have a positive experience with.

When following up with a desirable former client, short and sweet emails like this would do the trick: "Hi! I came across this interesting statistic that I thought it would be of value to you. Here's a link to the study. If you'd need any help, I'll be glad to be of service."

3. Stick to the language you're comfortable with.

As a freelancer, I've had the privilege of working with clients from Hong Kong, Israel, Pakista and India, to name a few nations. As an English speaker, I'd prefer to deal with English-speaking clients only, but going global means being willing to embrace differences. The good news is that I don't have to learn all the languages in the world. As global content-delivery firm Bureau Works advises, "You don't have to localize content in all of these languages in order to be successful. Instead, identify your target demographic and determine which language they're speaking. Plenty of census

data exists to show which languages are spoken by particular segments of each of the world’s major markets. Use it to your advantage.”

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4. Promote yourself.

Just because you keep in contact with your former clients doesn’t mean that you shouldn’t expand your base. No matter how well-known a freelancer you are, you must never stop promoting to your target audience. That can come in so many different forms. For instance, you can search for companies in your niche and cold email them, or simply be active on social media and build a brand around your service. It can take several exposures before a customer decides to buy from you, so whichever method you choose, apply it consistently to get the best results.

And there you have it – my tips for helping you survive and thrive in the global market as a freelancer. Just remember to focus on your niche, offer value and stay consistent. Which step will you start with first?

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