

GUIDE TO GUERRILLA FREELANCING

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**I'd love if you passed this ebook along to
anyone who you feel may benefit from the
content in it.**

Building your freelance design business with only \$25.00

Many of us who are full time freelancers did so after saving 6 months living expenses (myself excluded – but that’s another story). We also spent a lot of time wondering where to begin, what we needed, what was the essential items for starting our freelance design business. This could also apply to writers, illustrators and other freelancers as well, but for this article I want to focus on the web design freelancers like myself.

Would you think it’s possible to start your freelance business for \$25.00 only? What would the excuses be for not jumping into the freelance business if starting was no longer such a large hurdle? Would knowing how to get started for only \$25.00 help you to feel more relaxed about getting your freelance business off the ground? When you’re guerrilla freelancing, it’s all about thinking outside the box and approaching things from a different angle, and that’s exactly what this article does; it approaches a seemingly **big** problem and turns it into one that costs the same as lunch and a coffee.

So how would you be able to start your freelance business for only \$25.00? Lets break things down into the essentials and see how it all adds up.

Your web design domain name – \$8.81

The most important (if you’re a web designer anyways – for artists and illustrators you could start without a website, though I highly recommend it) aspect of your web design business is your domain name. Head over to namecheap and you can register your domain name for a year with the coupon code “ILUVNC” and it will only cost \$8.81 for the first year.

**note: You can keep up to date with namecheap.com codes over at [RetailMeNot](#) because they switch every month*

Your web design hosting account – \$0.01

You read it right – one penny for the first month! Over at [hostgator](#) you can use the coupon code “JURY” or “404page” and get your first month of hosting for only one penny. I chose the \$9.95 per month package (the coupon is for \$9.94 off, so if you choose a larger package, it will be more than a penny). In my experience, the \$9.95 per month package will be more than enough for you to not only host your website, but also host your clients test sites (I have a sub folder for /clients/ and then each client gets their own folder so I can showcase their mock ups to them with that url).

Moleskine notebook – \$15.90

I am assuming most freelancers or those on the verge of freelancing have heard of a Moleskine notebook, but for those who haven't, it's by far the best notebook to keep notes/articles/etc. Head over to the [moleskine website](#) and check out what they have to offer. So what can you use the moleskines for? Here's just a few things I have in my moleskine notebook:

- Sketches of clients websites
- Notes and ideas for client websites and my own projects
- Marketing ideas
- Time logging for each individual project
- To-Do lists
- Money management

For only \$10.95 + a few bucks s&h, this little notebook can help you with a ton of things for your business. I'd recommend over time getting a few of them for separate tasks, but for now the one notebook will do you just fine.

A few hours time submitting to CSS Galleries – FREE

The traffic and SEO benefits that submitting (and being approved) for CSS galleries can give your website are tremendous. Not only do you gain these benefits, but [according to Leigh Taylor](#) (who is an [amazing designer](#) by the way) you can gain a lot of leads and jump start your business with CSS gallery features as well.

Submitting to the full list of CSS galleries out there can be a bit overwhelming – if you don't know where to look. However, websites like [The CSS Gallery List](#) brings them all together for you and also has the submit buttons right there next to each gallery name. Take a bit of time out of your day (1-2 hours) and submit to as many on the list as possible – from top to bottom. You'll definitely be surprised with the results.

Total money spent – \$24.72

Go ahead, add it up. And when you're done, save the last 28 cents and start a change collection – it's a great way to start saving money without even thinking about it. So for \$25.00 *you can* start your freelance web design business. Any other excuses now to not get started? I didn't think so.

8 things you should know when starting your freelance business

Starting a freelance business can be a rough, scary, fun, exciting, anxiety filled, awesome time in your life. You'll be bundling 20 different feelings together on a daily basis, from the regular "*wow, I love working from home*" feelings to the "*why can't this client just get hit by a bus*" feeling, so you better get used to it now.

However, there are a few more important things you should think about when starting your freelance business and that is what I'll be covering in today's article on Guerrilla Freelancing.

The feast or famine cycle is very, very real

A lot of 'marketing gurus' will tell a very different story, but I am here to tell you from first hand experience, the [feast or famine](#) cycle is a very real concept and you'll end up going through it as well. Planning properly for these situations will help keep your business and your sanity afloat during the trying times.

For those who don't know what the freelancers feast or famine cycle is (and those of you who haven't clicked through the link above to read more about it), it's a cycle that freelancers inevitably go through where there are really high pace times with tons of clients and a great amount of cash flow, usually followed by a good solid month or more with little-to-no work whatsoever. You live on the high horse during the happy times and then get crushed.

But, by understanding that this will happen, you're able to plan better and keep better control of your money and spending.

You don't need venture capital to start your business

No matter what people tell you, or what you read, you do not need venture capital or back up funding to start your freelance business. For instance, if you read the previous article we wrote here on [starting your design business for \\$25.00](#) you'll see that start up cash is not a huge burden on your freelance start up success.

Getting your freelance business set up can be a quick and painless process if you know what you're doing – and by reading this article, I hope you're well on your way to knowing what steps you need to take.

You don't need a portfolio full of client work in order to land your first client

This doesn't mean that you need to jump into the crowd sourcing sites and design contests either.

Starting your freelance business doesn't require you to have multiple client projects under your belt. If you like a specific type of design, writing, illustrating or programming, spend a bit of time building things that play off your strengths and use these as your base portfolio. You won't be getting paid for them, but you also will have the creative freedom to make it your best work ever.

Put together 4-5 pieces and hit the streets running. There are numerous job boards out there that you can contact potential clients through once you get your portfolio together ([here](#), [here](#) and [here](#) are just a few - [get a mega list from freelance switch here](#)).

Invoicing and Accounting is easier than ever

In the past, these two things were a brain killer and would put a lot of fear in potential freelance workers. Today, there are a vast array of invoicing and accounting apps/websites out there that will help take

the pain out of keeping track of the books. I was one of the people who hated the idea of invoicing and keeping track of these things because, at the time, I was highly unorganized and very green to the idea of running my own business. I was amazed at how easy it actually can be.

For instance, if you were to sign up for an account at [Invoice Machine](#) to send your invoices (which is super easy by the way) and then check [out Outright](#) for your accounting (which is also super easy to use), you can be done with this step of your business in a matter of minutes – without any of the extra headaches.

On a side note, I would recommend looking for an accountant in your area to go over your books on a yearly/bi-yearly basis just to be on the safe side. You never know what extra savings they can get for you because, after all, this is what they're best at.

Your clients will (almost) never pay you quickly

With a lot of freelance businesses, there are net 15-30-60-90 payment plans set up, so you're semi-aware of the fact that the client will be paying during a certain time period. From the sounds of the payment plans above, you'd think that you can plan ahead for 15-30 days and know when you'll be getting cash after you've submitted your invoices, right? Wrong.

Clients will pay on their time. So, having a back up plan together for cash (remember the feast or famine cycle from above?) is a great idea. You should also make sure you've got things on record properly and that you're emailing reminders out a day or two before – and after – invoices are due. If you're not in the clients face, reminding them that they've got cash to send you that you're owed, they'll forget and move onto something else.

You're only worth as much as you charge – or allow yourself to charge

A classic mistake that freelancers will make happens right when they start out, or when cash is unusually low. Reducing rates is a big no-no, as well as allowing yourself to be talked down from your original rate you quoted. These are clients you'll want to avoid at all costs because they're just 'looking for something for nothing' and will (almost) never be of any good use to your business future.

Also remember that your rates will dictate what type of clients you attract. If you've got bottom end rates of \$10-15 dollars an hour, then you'll be attracting bottom end clients. If your work is worth more than that (and I would assume it is), you need to bump your rates up to a respectable number. Don't know what to charge? That's ok. Try a price on for size for a month or two and adjust it accordingly.

In the first year of my freelance design business, I jumped my rates up 3 times – almost tripling the original rate I was charging. As I jumped up, the quality of clients jumped up as well.

Not everyone with a computer can do it

A hard truth that people will try to avoid is that freelancing isn't built for everyone. Just because you have a computer, read the biggest [freelance advice](#) blogs out there and know what to do and not do, doesn't mean you're going to be able to cut it. Spending 1 hour a day working and 23 hours goofing off isn't going to get you anywhere. Downloading photoshop and reading sites like [Tutorial9](#) will not make you the worlds top designer.

Some people have it and some people don't. It takes discipline and dedication to build a freelance business. Keeping track of clients, payments, open jobs and potential leads can be a daunting task. Add

that with the work involved with each client, the countless emails you'll receive as well as keeping up with the industry you're in and you're looking at some solid work days. Can you handle it? I think you can, but you should make sure you can beforehand.

It is the greatest feeling in the entire world

Your freelance business will be fun. Working from home (or your own office) will be great and feel awesome. The freedom that comes with freelancing is amazing and something I would never trade for anything in this world. You're going to have a blast, and you'll be able to go as far as your mind can imagine.

Remembering the things above and keeping a level head about yourself, you'll be able to accomplish anything you set out to do, and do it on your own time. It's a fun ride – enjoy it to the fullest.

5 Dreaded buzz kill phrases every freelancer should avoid

If you've been freelancing for more than a week, I'm sure you've heard these phrases before. Maybe you've been good at spotting them out when someone emails you or maybe you're new to the freelance life and want to find out what phrases are going to be most common – and ones you should look out for. Whatever your situation, this article is sure to hit home for freelancers around the world.

Lets get to it.

This is an easy job and I can do this myself, but...

Really? You could really do this yourself, but you just so happen to want to give the pleasure of doing your work for you to someone else, for a much cheaper rate and, why? Because you don't have the time? Because you don't like doing these types of tasks? I know there are those of us out there who do outsource some work, but I can guarantee you that these words have never been said by someone with an actual skill set.

What they're really saying: I've never done anything like this before, but I need to make myself look smart because I think that by doing so, you'll be scared to give me your real prices and, well, I want to make this entire process as hard on you as I can – as long as it's great for me.

If you can hook me up this time, I'll send you all of my future work

I'm going to go out on a limb and say that this one is what freelancers as a whole see most often – the good old 'hook me up' phrase. You've got to be cautious of this type of client because they're never out for your best interests – they're only looking out for their own.

What they're really saying: Well, I don't have much money and I don't really know anybody, but I'm going to lie and tell you I have both because I want to get something for nothing. Are you dumb enough to fall for it? The lint in my pocket sure hopes you are.

This is the perfect project for your portfolio

Here's a good one. This is the one where the client seems to think he knows what's best for you and your portfolio. They just *know* that the work you'll do for them will be so fantastic that you'll want to feature it in your portfolio. This is wrong for a couple of reasons.

One, this is a red flag that they're the type of client who thinks they know what's best. Trust me, it only gets worst from here. This is also a red flag because they're going to be expecting the type of work you'll want to feature – killer work, but they'll rarely have the budget to go with it.

What they're really saying: Hey buddy, I know that you've got a good portfolio but I want you to bleed over your keyboard in order to make my work the best you've ever done. Oh, and did I mention that my budget is about half of what you're used to? It's ok though because the website will look really good in your portfolio.

It should only take an experienced person an hour

This is one of the things I see most often. I'm guessing there's an unwritten rule somewhere that states you must put this in your job listing or initial contact email in order to ensure that you're getting the best price possible.

What they're really saying: I don't really know anything about what I need done, but what I *do* know is that I want it done for really cheap, so I'm going to convince you that it's only a small project – even though you know better.

I don't have a large budget but I can help promote your site

This one is kind of a two-for-one when it comes to buzz kill phrases. They're usually said all at one time like this, but don't let them fool you if they're said alone (I don't have a large budget) and (I can help promote your site) are both individual phrases that should be avoided at all costs.

What they're really saying: I want to get my work done for really cheap and in order to get that done, I'll tell you that I *know people* and/or can *get you tons of exposure*.

15 draw backs to working as a full time freelancer

If you've been reading things online lately, you'll see a lot of "Freelancing is the greatest" or "Freelancers are getting rich". Something along those lines anyways. Freelance is the new buzzword for marketers to try and sell you stuff. With the recession here in the US, I find it only fitting to share some of the draw backs of full time freelancing. Yes, it can be a great gig, but I feel it's right to let potential freelancers know the opposite side of the fence as well.

Below is a list of 15 draw backs to working as a full time freelancer that were compiled by myself as well as some great people on twitter. Thank you to everyone on twitter who sent their replies in – and for those of you reading this now who have something to add to the list, feel free to drop a comment and let me know.

- ✓ Freelancing doesn't give you any dependable income. You could make a thousand dollars today and none for the next month. (submitted by [@RS_Designs](#) and [@AliciaMae](#))
- ✓ Less time with family because you are busy doing 10 different jobs (accounting, designing, sales, ect)
- ✓ Spending more time finding work than actually doing the work. (submitted by [@kevincrafts](#))
- ✓ You lose the ability to bounce ideas off your co-workers because, well, you're (9 times out of 10) working alone in your home office.
- ✓ The distraction level in your house can be tremendous (family, television, sleeping in, ect)

- ✓ People don't take you as seriously as someone with a 9-5 job (yes, they're close minded, but it does happen – a lot)
- ✓ You have to be your own taskmaster, even if you “just don't feel like it” – and if you don't, you fall behind work and a whole mess of trouble starts
- ✓ Health insurance is not a given – and obtaining it can be a struggle. (I'd suggest [checking out this article](#) for info. on it)
- ✓ If you get sick – you're screwed. There's no one there to take over your job while you're out with the flu.
- ✓ There are a lot of freelancers out there right now so u had better have work lined up first and great connections that yield referrals. (submitted by [@rachelakay](#))
- ✓ Marketing yourself against the “big guns” in your industry can be extremely hard as you will generally not have the same budgets as they do
- ✓ I'm not paid for all of the hours I work. It takes a lot more of my time and energy to be a freelancer than to work for “the man.” (submitted by [@RS_Designs](#))
- ✓ Doing everything on your own will generally make your stress levels a lot higher than a normal 9-5
- ✓ Sitting in your computer chair for multiple hours at a time working, prospecting and note keeping will put massive strain on your back
- ✓ big drawback: admin tasks (invoicing, time tracking, emails, etc). too easy to put off but real pain in ass to catch up on. (submitted by [@freelancerant](#))

For those of you who would like to contribute to questions I may be asking my readers to answer with, feel free to [follow me on twitter](#) and keep an eye out – I've got a follow up to this article I will need your input on as well

15 benefits to working as a full time freelancer

I only felt that it would be right to share the negative side of it before telling you how great it actually is. I love freelancing and I wouldn't change my life for anything. Yes, I can take the negatives from freelancing and outweigh them with the good – and I do, on a regular basis. Things will get rough, but life is rough – work through it.

So below are 15 great benefits to freelancing. Feel free to drop a comment and let me know any other benefits you don't see on the list – or the ones on the list you do agree with.

- ✓ **No boss breathing down your neck** – You're the boss – you make the rules, which generally leave you more relaxed and happy.
- ✓ **Spend more time with family** – During the summer, I can pack up and go to the water park at a moments notice. I love spending time with my family and with the freelance lifestyle, it's easier than ever before.
- ✓ **Job security** – If you lose your job, its (9 times out of 10) because you slacked off too much and/or did something stupid. The harder you work, the more you'll benefit.
- ✓ **Creating your own hours** – If you want to work late into the evening, or you enjoy getting up early in the morning, you can set your own hours, build your own schedule and fit work around your personal life – instead of the other way around.
- ✓ **You learn more about personal finances** - Being a freelancer

will help you learn how to manage money and also keep up with your financial paperwork which is always a plus.

- ✓ **No daily commute (and traffic jams)** – Roll out of bed, put your slippers on and head to the computer. It's that simple
- ✓ **Complete control over your rates** – If you want to charge more, do it. If you feel you're making too little money per hour, change your hourly rate. No more begging for a raise.
- ✓ **You can do the work you love** – Are you passionate about drawing, but you're stuck in accounting? Leave that all behind with a full time freelance career.
- ✓ **Wake up whenever you want** – This is a great plus for me as well as a lot of early risers or late risers. There's no need for a buzzer to wake you up at 6am to get to work by 7am anymore. (thanks to [StephenTiano](#) for the [twitter response](#))
- ✓ **Unforeseen emergencies are easier to deal with** – As stated above in number 2, any time something pops up, you're able to leave and don't have to worry about taking a sick day, lose pay or jeopardize your position with your boss.
- ✓ **Mobile workstations make work fun** – Like the picture for this post, you can work anywhere there's internet connection (and if you're a writer, you don't even need that – just a pen and pad).
- ✓ **No need to spend 4-8 years in college** – I haven't even graduated high school, yet I know more about web design and development than most people I know who spent years in college classes. Plus, I got started early and didn't have to wait to graduate before I started working & learning the business.
- ✓ **The ability to keep (or cut) clients** – When working from a big office for a big corporation, you take the clients they give you.

When working for yourself as a freelancer, you can cut any unruly clients or keep the ones you love and nurture those relationships.

- ✓ **No one is to blame for your stolen red stapler** – Anyone who's seen Office Space will know that a stolen red stapler can be a big problem. No one is around to steal yours though if you're a freelancer – except your kids or your cat/dog
- ✓ **Working in your underwear is not a crime** – It's no secret that working from home can give you a ton of added benefits – the biggest (in some peoples eyes) being that you don't have to wear pants – even if you're doing video chats or conversing on the phone.

10 Guerrilla Marketing Tactics For Freelance Designers

Guerrilla Marketing is a huge part of being a Guerrilla Freelancer.

Guerrilla Marketing is also a great way for creative people to show just how creative they can be. Sure, you can buy ad space online or newspaper/magazine advertisements, but lets be honest with each other, these things are seriously old school when it comes to marketing. So how do we go about creating guerrilla marketing campaigns for ourselves that will not only gain attention but also help generate sales and future business for our freelance businesses?

The answer to this might be a bit more simple than you think. You may not have the big budgets to run 1,000 television commercials at the 6-8pm slots on channel 2, 4, or 7, but I bet you've got the creative mind to come up with a simple solution to generating more buzz for your company. And if all else fails, read the 10 guerrilla marketing tactics below and try to branch out off of them and generate your own list as well. The ideas are infinite as long as you apply your creativity to them.

- ✓ **Offer free hosting for every 1st time client meeting** – The main goal is to get time with the prospect and sell them your services right? A 2-3 minute conversation might not get them to buy, but a 30-60 minute meeting with them could definitely persuade them into hiring you. So offer every prospective client free hosting (3 months, 6 months, your choice) just for having the meeting.
- ✓ **Give something else away for free** – Do you create [custom wordpress designs](#)? Why not create a free theme and give it

away? The publicity from it, the link backs and the traffic are sure to land you some new leads/sales. The same can be true for texture packs, brush sets, free fonts, ect.

- ✓ **Cover your car in vinyl** – You’ve got the design skills right? You’re a designer after all, so why not create the design for a kick ass vinyl piece to cover the back half, side or entire car! It’s inexpensive and will be advertisement for you wherever you go.
- ✓ **Business Cards in Library Books** – Find the beginner xhtml/css or web design for dummies books and put your business cards inside them in every library you can get to. This way, anyone looking for them books to do their own website will instantly be met with a way to get out of reading the book and trying to do it themselves.
- ✓ **T-Shirts for the homeless** – Take your design skills and create a design for some t-shirts, get them printed and then go pass them out to the homeless. If you’re able to do 100 or so t-shirts you could probably even get media coverage for doing it.
- ✓ **Stickers EVERYWHERE** – Bands and record companies use stickers a lot – and for good reason. They’re relatively cheap, easy to place and can be everywhere you want them to be. Pass some out to your friends/family and have them put them up as well. Have family in a different state? Send them some in the mail and have them place the stickers around town.
- ✓ **Customer of the Month vouchers** – Design some nice coupons you can print out (use a business card printer as they’re perfect size for people to carry around) and allow them to use it for a discount or pass them out to others so their friends/family can get the discount.
- ✓ **Display your toolbox** – Taking a tool box (a real one for hammers, screw drivers, ect) and placing it open in an area your

target market will frequently come with different tools of your trade (ie: business cards so they can contact you, pencils & paper, computer mouse, ect). This will work especially well if a toolbox is something not found normally where you have it (ie: coffee shop). Inside the top of the toolbox thats open and facing the people coming up to it, you can have a note similar to “The tools of my trade – Custom Web Designs”.

- ✓ **Show off your package** – No, not that package. For those of us who design packaging for clients (ie: boxes for products, ect), why not create a mock up box and get a bunch of them printed up and place them inside different grocery stores or places where your target market will frequently visit.
- ✓ **Free web consulting** – Allow potential customers to have 30-60 minutes of your time for free. Absolutely free, no questions asked. Do not push your services on them at all. Leave them with a business card and notes from the conversation and be on your way. This selfless giving will leave an impression on the potential client and will also showcase your knowledge of the web and what you COULD be doing for them – if they were to hire you. They’ll most likely feel so happy with the conversation that they almost feel obligated to hire you for their web design as a way to pay you back for your time you gave them.

THANK YOU FOR READING

**I APPRECIATE YOU TAKING THE
TIME TO READ THIS GUIDE.**

**IT'S BUILT WITH A FEW OF THE
MOST IMPORTANT ARTICLES FROM
THE GUERRILLA FREELANCING
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