

Deconstructing Where to Find Clients

Easily the biggest question that pops up when speaking to freelancers is about clients and where to find them. Figuring out the answer to this question can be what keeps work flowing to your inbox.

Whether you like it or not, clients are the lifeblood of a freelancer's career. Without clients, we kinda don't have any deadlines to meet, invoices to send or zoom meetings that could have easily been an email.

Now, that's not to say they are to be worshipped or we are slave-4-u kinda freelancers, but at some point we need to acknowledge we need them.

But here's the best part.

They need us too.

They don't have the creative skills to bring their thoughts to life, they can only ever dream about them existing.

They don't know why their canva doc looks unprofessional and ugly, but they know it looks unprofessional and ugly.

They don't know the difference between a serif and a sans serif, and to be honest, they don't need to for us to charge them.

What we need to do, first and foremost, is decide what sort of client we're wanting to work with and build an ideal client avatar that fully captures who we are trying to attract.

It's like when you see a red car or an ad for choc chip cookies, you now see them everywhere. By building out what we want to see in a client e.g. pays well, values design, wants to grow etc. we can stack the deck and hopefully the odds are in our favour.

I've said it before, I'll say it again. Solutions sell more than skills or services ever will.

When creating your ideal client avatar, ask yourself where they go to find solutions to their problems.

This can differ from client to client, industry to industry, and have wildly different aims. More visual solutions might be on Instagram or Pinterest, while a more strategic or academic solution may be found on LinkedIn.

If they're the type of person who asks others for solutions, Facebook and forums are where your client hides.

Each of these locations (and more) have a different kind of client hiding in the shadows, you just need to know the right way to lure them out.

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Instagram

*We all know Instagram has caught a lot of attention and *erm* frustration when it comes to posting and curating content. If your target audience is on Instagram, looking for someone like you, you need to meet them where they are.*

- Post the work you want to attract, and this works in the opposite too. Don't post work you don't want. Sounds simple, but it's important that we attract what we want, not what we don't.
- Create educational content that addresses the things clients can learn from you or common frustrations your client may have and how to solve them. An educational carousel can capture the attention of someone who wants to learn.
- As much as Instagram started as a visual platform for people to share photos of their dog or or their lunch (guilty), it's now much more of a visual educational tool. Your content should be tailored to your target audience, what they want to learn or know, and how can you facilitate that (and turn them into a client)

LinkedIn

If your business lies in the area of professional services, there's no better place to make connections than on LinkedIn. Think of it like Facebook but in business attire. Your presence on LinkedIn should be as such; professional and about business. You can celebrate wins, connect with other professionals, and build a profile. Just remember it's all about business here. This is not the place to complain about the poor service you received at a local cafe.

- Research keywords that are relevant to your niche and target market, and connect with them. Look for key decision makers at the places you are interested in working with, not just anyone. Marketing, Art Directors, key people who hire people like you.
- In your connection email, don't go generic. Take 5 minutes and research a little more about why you are connecting with them and why it matters to them. They're professional and busy, so make it worth their time.
- Write articles or share your expertise on your feed to build authority. If you don't have that experience yet, share and comment on articles that speak to your audience and place yourself in the curation of knowledge seat. Just remember, no article is worse than a poorly written one.

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Facebook Groups

When it comes to Facebook groups, the quality of the group is really important to consider.

When I say that, some groups have more DIYers, others are for specific niches. You want to join groups where you think your clients might be asking questions.

- Engage within the rules of that particular group. Each group will often have their own set of rules and what's cool vs not cool. Behave, be kind, or you'll be kicked out. Even if you're not, other potential clients will see your comments and make a snap decision about you.
- Research keywords that your ideal client might be using to find answers to their problems. When you first join any group, pull out your three keywords that most accurately describe what you do and who you do it for. Search to see if they have come up.
- Give more than you receive, and this goes for posting and answering posts. You also need to carefully consider if it's worth commenting on posts that already have 20+ responses. If it sounds like a job you really want, make sure you find a way to have your comment stand out amongst the others.

Pinterest

If yours is a highly visual service, give Pinterest a go. Think of Pinterest like a visual search engine. Keep in mind that you need to create a platform that your pins can link to so the potential client can connect with you, otherwise you're just creating beautiful art that won't convert to money down the road.

- Create boards of your own work and portfolio pieces. These will then link back to your website or portfolio pieces so the person can connect with you.
- Start building inspiration boards for the work you want. This is an added bonus for when clients come to you wanting a particular kind of piece. You've got prepackaged inspo, ready to go.
- Join boards and contribute to them. The way Pinterest works and grows is through these sort of collaborative approaches. The more you share, the more you grow.
- Pinterest also has a really low investment required for massive reach. In the year since I have been on pinterest, I've never spent more than \$5 a day and my engagement has reached 100k views at its peak. My posts have generally been linking to my blogs, but sometimes my products or podcast eps.

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Emails

If you have existing clients, you can use these relationships to cultivate more work. This could be from that existing client, or someone that they recommend.

- Send an email 1–3 months after you complete a project, checking in on how it went, if they were happy, and if they would provide a testimonial or pass your details on to someone else. People generally like helping people, so when they recommend you, they're helping two at the same time.
- Depending on the service or product you offer, you might want to consider building an email list. This doesn't mean you have to email them every week, but it might be a good way for you to feature work or clients, promote your new services, or offer benefits that build your reputation and keep you top of mind when they need you next.
- Remember, there's nothing wrong with reaching out to simply check in. If anything, it's preferred! You don't always have to be selling to be serving. I've had clients who I've called for a chat suddenly remember that thing they've put on the back burner, and hey presto, I have a new job.

Preferred supplier lists & referrals

Partnering with a local printer, advertising agency, or other supplier is a fantastic way to plant seeds of future work. There will be times that clients come to them and ask them for recommendations, and you want to be top of mind when they ask.

- Ask the suppliers that you work with if they have a preferred supplier list you can join. It's going to be in their best interest to have you on the list, because the work you create will likely be produced by them.
- Check in with your local council groups or organisations and see if they have a "support local" directory. These sort of lists show you are interested in community values and this will speak to new clients.
- If you know a fellow freelancer with similar flavours to you, reach out and offer whitelabelling or a kick-back fee for the work they either have as overflow or don't want to do. This provides opportunities for them to make money too!

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Networking events

I know, talking to people, leaving the house, having to put pants on, it can be a nightmare. The fact of the matter is that nothing can compare to an in-person connection. It can be scary and intimidating, but remember the majority of people in that room feel the same way.

- Research local networking events in your area. Try to prioritise the ones where you're meeting new people who aren't in the exact same industry as you e.g. designers only going to designer meet ups. This can be a breeding ground for people who are looking for someone to complain to.
- Consider exploring whether your local council or chamber of commerce has something you can attend. More often than not, these people are in the same boat as you, seeking connections and looking how to improve their business.
- Don't be scared to share ideas and chat about what you do, you're there to share. Who knows, something you say might remind whoever you're talking to about something they could hire you for.
- When you talk to someone, use your elevator speech you crafted and rehearsed. It will give a great, polished first impression. Then you can ask them what they do.
- When networking, you're almost playing a game of memory. You're uncovering small pieces of information of theirs, seeing if they can match with yours, and keep playing until either they all match or you run out of matches.
- Before you leave the conversation, find a way to exchange info. Whether that be a business card, a follow on socials, or a phone number exchange, you want to keep that lead warm and the conversation going as soon as possible after the event.
- Ask more questions than you answer. Be more inquisitive than self-promoting. This will help conversation flow as people love to talk about themselves. When you ask more questions, you validate them further, you listen to them deeper, and you might uncover a hidden way you can work together.

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Just remember there are some places that the less valuable clients hang out.

Marketplaces like Etsy or RedBubble

These platforms are tailored to those who are selling products and (occasionally) services. Just be aware that these platforms are very oversaturated with clutter and can make it really hard to stand out.

Similarly, these platforms are often taking a pretty substantial commission for hosting you on their site. That's their business model and something that you need to consider when working out the prices on the products you want to list.

If you insist on using these platforms, understand their purpose and use them more like a marketing tool. If you have 5 products, list 2 and have the full set on your website. Those two that you list on these platforms can then drive traffic to your website, and then you don't have to pay fees. It's a win/win.

There are absolutely some diamonds out there on these platforms, but you are more likely to feel you've undercharged or been shortchanged on these platforms. They serve a purpose, but aren't a quality long-term solution.

Platforms like Fiverr or UpWork

While these platforms may seem like a great idea, (a massive marketplace full of potential clients and endless opportunity), there are some key truths to consider here.

The clients that use these platforms are looking for a deal, offer, or to save money. When the clients scour and hunt around these platforms, it doesn't matter how good you are, there will always be comparison of cost.

In my experience, most people who search for freelancers here don't really understand what they need or have the budget to pay for it. You'll find a lot of clueless business owners just trying to get something for as little as possible. Is this really what your ideal client looks like? Didn't think so.

Being a massive marketplace, it means you are going to have to make a lot of noise to stand out, to be noticed or even considered. This is effort that costs you time and potentially money if you could be getting higher paying clients elsewhere.

Things you can do now to get clients later

Send 3 emails to previous clients to check in on how things are going and see how you can help

Google your website & approach like a customer to see where your clients may be getting lost

Highlight your clients key problems & answer as social posts or blogs

Research Facebook groups that would have your target market, using keyword research

Pick your BEST 3-5 clients & send a small gift to say thank you

Research a new skill that you could turn into a service to match with a problem your clients have

Search Facebook groups for questions you can answer and link to examples of success

Get clear on your client journey & map the flow from first interaction to final payment

Connect with other creatives for whitelabelling opportunities you can build

Connect with vendors & build out your service offering with complimentary services

Have a friend navigate your website & watch them to see where there are gaps to fix

Now serving, fresh baked clients



*Clients aren't hard to find,
you just need to know
where to look... and now
you do!*

*Every repeat client is a first time
client at some point, so it's time
to head out there and land them.*

I hope this guide has helped you consider where your next client is coming from and how to get where they hang out so they can sample your creative wares.

And if you have trouble with the recipe or it feels like you've accidentally swapped your sugar for salt, always know you can ask for help, reach out, and I'll be more than happy to help you take your creative business to a whole other fine dining level.

*Piece out,
your Pricing Queen, Jaz*

WANNA WORK WITH JAZ?

CLICK HERE TO LEAVE A REVIEW

Wanna learn how to find those hungry clients?

I've got just the dish!

Ok, freelance friend, I've got a question for you...

When was the last time you worked on your business to make sure your next client was always patiently waiting to be served?

Easily the most common thing freelancers struggle with is knowing where that next juicy client is coming from. It's like they're all at this super secret "cool table" and we can't find them in the sea of potentials out there.

Finding Hungry Clients is the dish every freelancer needs to help them define, locate, attract and lock-in clients that are going to help them actually grow.

We've all been in the situation where the clients we land just aren't cutting the mustard, and the ones we crave are nowhere to be found.

Well, my freelance friend, I've built a 6-figure profit creative business that lives and breathes on a steady flow of freelance clients, all hungry to pay me.

And I refuse to keep it a secret!

I've served this masterclass multiple times and every single time, I have clients have aha moments that change the way they approach their client collection strategies.

If there is ONE masterclass you dine on, make it this one.



Finding Hungry Clients

The masterclass for hungry creatives that crave a bottomless feast of hungry clients. Learn how to define, locate, attract, and lock-in the right clients (so you never go hungry again).

GRAB YOUR TICKET HERE