

How to Start a SUCCESSFUL Freelance Career

*All the tips and advice you need to cut the
crap and start winning!*

By Elizabeth Huskey-Richey

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Dedication:

This book is dedicated first to my late grandmother Nada Elizabeth Dailey, who always believed in my future as a writer. Secondly, it is dedicated to all the parents who struggle with the desire to provide for and protect their babies but just can't find a realistic way to make that happen without putting their kids on the back burner.



Introduction & Who I am: My name is Elizabeth Huskey-Richey and I'm a realtor, entrepreneur, small business owner, freelancer, bookkeeper, and writer! I spent over 10 years being a single mom and had to work full time outside of the home and sometimes that wasn't even enough to make ends meet with the high cost of daycare and being "poor" but not "poor enough" for government help. I worked my tail off to get my Real Estate license and then spent 3 solid years working 70-80 hours a week to build up my brand and

reputation to end up with a solid real estate career I could work part-time and have a full-time wage. I took the skills I learned in being a small business owner to launch another career in Freelance work to supplement my commission sales income that was anything but regular!

Now I own 3 businesses, I've re-educated and re-branded myself numerous times, I've utilized social media and I've spent countless hours studying all the tips I'm going to share with you in this book! This book is a labor of love for me rooted in a strong craving to share with other moms...a way out! There is a WAY to work from home and make a decent living. This book is not promising, offering, or tricking you into thinking there is a way to "get rich overnight", nor do I guarantee that you'll make \$150,000 a year working from home 3 hours a day.

What I can promise you is that I will lay out all the tools, the road map, the hurdles to expect, ways to overcome those hurdles, etc. so that YOU can set yourself on the course to accomplishing your freelance dreams. Thank you for buying my book, I hope this helps you tremendously and I HOPE that it changes your life the way it has mine!

A Warning: If you are absolutely and totally brand new to being self-employed and/or a freelancer, I urge you to set your expectation bar in a happy place, not Lala Land. If we are starting out brand new, at the very bottom, set realistic goals for yourself. I will remind you of this often throughout this whole book. One of life's biggest joy killers is when WE set unrealistic expectations for ourselves or others! It is unfair to everybody involved. And we don't want to be that kind of tribe, we want to set goals we can meet by pushing ourselves, growing and stretching outside your comfort zone. Everybody has to start somewhere; the key is just...starting! This

book isn't about making millions of dollars. There are plenty of those books out there full of schemes, BS, jargon and other hoopla that you can't understand and only really speaks to a small niche of people. This is about REALISTIC tips for regular people. I will give you advice and techniques you can put into place now and with some time and gained experiences you can grow your business, grow your brand, grow that paycheck and hopefully...grow who are you as a person. As with anything in life...if you believe it and you reach for it, there is no limit to how successful you can be!

Super quickly, lets define success. Success, to me, is whatever YOU want it to be. We all have our own lives, our own problems, our own dreams, and they could be small, or they could be monumental!!! And if they're monumental...good for you! I want you to find success in whatever way you define and so if that means working 3 hours a day so that you can focus on paying off credit card debt while your kids are at school, but you still have "me time" and can handle the

rest of your life, then do it! If that means launching a brand and growing a business until you're to a point that you work from home, have a virtual assistant and still profit over \$200,000 a year, do it!! And maybe you're like I was, and you were just hoping for \$60,000 a year so that you can AFFORD to live but also save up a bit of a nest egg and afford a few family trips every year...awesome goal!! Do it! Success is whatever you want it to be and don't let anybody tell you that your dreams are impossible or aren't worth achieving because it is yours to dream and yours to own!

LEVEL 1! BUILDING YOUR FOUNDATION

***Because life is more fun in levels...*

CHAPTER 1:

WHAT ARE YOU GOOD AT? WHAT DO YOU SUCK AT?

"A winner is someone who recognizes his God-given talents, works his tail off to develop them into skills, and uses these skills to accomplish his goals." – Larry Bird

Let's be real folks, we all have flaws but we also all have things we are stellar at! So, this first chapter is about starting out on the right note. You have to decide where you are, what you have to offer and how you can profit from that. If you say "Well I've always JUST been a stay-at-home Mom"...bull...there are so many skills and traits required to do that...ummm, project manager, crisis handler, customer service, negotiations, bargaining! haha! You get my drift. Dive deep into what it is that you're really good at!

Even if it's easy for you to come up with a list of 4-5 skills that you rock at, I urge you to take a moment to do a DISC personality assessment! These are so insightful into how you work. Don't answer the questions with the mindset of pass or fail, look at it as an opportunity to see into your mind and soul...on paper...what your strongest personality traits are! This will be great for you!

Also, take a moment to have a heart-to-heart with a dear friend or family member and even your children (that can be so insightful as well as entertaining) and ask THEM what you are great at! Start that list!

What we're trying to do here is figure out not only what you can put on your resume (see Chapter 6) but also to figure out what your niche will be! It could be; Customer Service, Sales, Project Management, Virtual Assistant, Virtual Bookkeeper, Writer, Blogger, Video Editing, Photographer, Artist, Seamstress, Marketing, Social Media Manager, Business Manager, Content

Creator, YouTuber, Pinterest Genius, Rock Star Executive Assistant, Transaction Coordinator, Telemarketing, Data Entry, Key Coder, Virtual Organizer, Personal Assistant, Property Manager, Graphic Designer, Web Designer, Non-Profit Organizer, E-Commerce, Excel Spreadsheet Ninja, Voice Talent, Human Resources...you get my point!

These are ALL jobs you can do in the freelance world with little to no actual hands-on experience. The reason for this is because if you have a little bit of experience in one area and you enjoy that kind of work, you can study up on it online to hone in your skills (you can do so much with the interwebs these days) and then put on your resume and your online profile that you're a "beginner" level. No, you won't get hired for the big bucks, but you WILL get a start! And remember, it's all about starting.

And as you take on one client, you learn more, you adapt, you take on another client and your experience in this area grows and you can update your resume and profiles (with confidence) to show you're more experienced and THEN start bringing in more money and raise your expectations. There are OVER 30 JOBS in that list above!! That is at least 30 opportunities for you to launch your business, create your brand and have yourself a new career from home in no time at all! But remember it all requires work and a specific chain of events to get you on course to YOUR success.

Conversely, you need to be REAL with yourself about skills you're not so great at! We all suck at something! That is not meant to offend you. These are skills you will not want to mention and look for in job postings because if they require it, be honest with yourself and don't apply for something that requires you to use your weakness UNLESS it is something you want to focus on improving.

CHAPTER 2:

SOME OF THE BEST PAYING WORK FROM HOME GIGS:

"Find joy in everything you choose to do. Every job, relationship, home...it's your responsibility to love it, or change it." - Chuck Palahniuk

I'm not going to dive real deep into this topic because, on average, the pay per hour for any of the previously mentioned jobs is going to depend on the client, their location and your experience. If you're coming into this adventure with, say...5 years of sales experience (even if it was 10 years ago) you aren't a beginner and shouldn't market yourself as one. You have valuable experience you can utilize and offer a client.

So, you are going to make more than someone just starting out. And if you're JUST starting out...you may or may not start at the bottom. That will depend on how well

you do the remaining tips I outline in this book, your client and how well you sell yourself for the position through your resume, profile, social media platforms AND your job proposal!

But on average here is the range, nationwide, in the U.S. that you can expect to see for the top 5 paying freelance work from home jobs:

**These numbers are based off clients hiring online right now, at the time of this publication (January 2024) for a full-time position for a long-term project.*

Bookkeeper (Not Certified): \$12 to \$50 per hour.

Project Manager (most prefer you have at least 1 years' experience but not required): \$15 to 60 per hour.

Executive Assistant: \$12 to 40 per hour

Marketing: \$20 to 150 per hour

Social Media Manager: \$15 to 150 per hour

CHAPTER 3:

A GREAT WORKSPACE IS KEY!

"You can't build a great building on a weak foundation. You must have a solid foundation if you're going to have a strong superstructure." – Gordon B. Hinckley

Before you can start this great new adventure you first have to have a PLACE to work! Now that might seem obvious, but you would be surprised how many people I have counseled who didn't think it was important or didn't even own a computer....pro tip...you're also going to need a computer (refer to Chapter 4).

You need to set up your space so that it works for you and is a "happy place" for your new career. You want to bring as many happy, good vibes there as possible to set yourself on the course to success. This is

not just about sappy feelings, this is about...fundamentals and function also!

Privacy

If you can set up a space where you have privacy, like a spare bedroom or a home office with a door, super! If you don't have that luxury, that's okay, too! You can work with a corner in your bedroom! I recommend you not set up your new workspace in the corner of a living room, in the game room (if it ever gets used) or at your kitchen table. Pick a place where if your work does run 10 minutes or an hour later than planned and kids come home, or partner walks in, their noises and commotion will not be heard on your unexpected conference call you're on! This not only helps you to function and focus better but also makes you more professional, upping your freelance game.

Minimal Approach

I really encourage you to have this new workspace be pretty minimal. The more things you have piled on your desk the more distracting it is. It's great to have your computer, a phone, a drink, some pens or pencils, a handy notebook, some post-it notes and a calendar. Now depending on your job, you probably won't need much more than that. You might end up getting some books or binders to organize notes into and those are fine but just stack them neatly on the corner of your desk out of the way.

A cluttered workspace breeds a cluttered mind, which just makes your job harder than it has to be. As for note taking, I highly recommend going virtual with this these days unless you just really love to physically write things down. I'm a big fan of Google Sheets and Asana for note taking, tasks and reminders, but more on that later.

Color Psychology

You cannot forget color psychology and the effect all the colors around you have on your mood! It has long been proven that colors can change your mood drastically; they can zap you of your energy or they can amp you up! Color impacts your productivity, mood, creativity, and efficiency!

Blue represents trust & logic and is a great color to use in areas that require focus.

Yellow represents creativity, friendliness, optimism, and confidence and is a great color to stimulate positivity and happiness.

Green represents harmony and nature and is a great color to bring balance and harmony to a space.

There are many other colors that represent other moods or vibes, but these are the moods you are most often going to want to go for in a workspace. Don't take my word

for it, do a little research online and see what color or color combos you want to go for in your new work "oasis"/happy place! Now you don't have to repaint a whole room or put a lot of money into this.

You can simply hang a yellow painting on the wall, have your kids do a bright green finger-painting portrait to tack up behind your computer, get some blue desk accessories OR...you can paint the whole room. Do as little or as much as you can afford, keeping in mind you do have to put money into a few other things to get your business launched and paint might be less important on the list in the grand scheme of things. Make that decision based off of what works for you, to get you to YOUR success!

CHAPTER 4:

TOOLS YOU NEED TO MAKE FREELANCE LIFE ROCK!

"You can have all the tools in the world but if you don't genuinely believe in yourself, it's useless." – Ken Jeong

The TOOLS that I'm going to go over below are some of the most crucial to a GREAT work from home environment and therefore, YOUR success! Some of these may seem small to you, they may seem insignificant, but I urge you to at least give them a try and see how it helps, encourages, and motivates you on a daily basis!

Your Chair

A good desk chair is so crucial! Keep in mind you may be working for 6-8 hours straight, depending on how often you plan to do

breaks or time blocking (more on that in Chapter 14). It is all too easy to end up with lower back problems, leg cramps, numb butt and countless other desk/work related "injuries" simply due to a poor chair. You don't have to go out and spend a lot of money on this but if you already have a basic chair handy then you can spiff it up by putting pillows (literally any kind) under your butt and behind your back. I will say this, a wooden chair you will despise within an hour and a chair that relaxes back into a "relaxed" position will kill your back by not giving you any stability. I've also used those exercise ball chairs for over 6 months before and that was cool once you get used to it.

Internet

Internet access is a given but here's the thing, you can't get away with a Wi-Fi hot spot. You have to have a home Wi-Fi and some clients will even require you to have internet hard-wired into your computer or require a certain speed. Keep that in mind

in the future when you're reviewing job postings. If you have great internet service currently, it is reliable and a fast speed, that is worth putting on your online profile as an asset, because that matters to potential clients.

Computer

You need a computer. Yes, I'm sorry but...these are online jobs. And you might be surprised at the amount of people who function without one and use their smart phones for everything, but you can't get away with that for a work at home career. At the very basic level you're going to need a laptop and you can pick up a cheap version at a big box retailer for less than \$300 and that will be surprisingly enough. If you have something nicer, like a great processor or an impressive video card on a Mac and you're applying to Video Editing or Graphic Design jobs, those are assets worth mentioning on your profile!

Office Supplies

Even though the job is going to be online you need to stock up on some physical materials; notebooks, pens, pencils, post-it notes, binders, etc. What you need will depend on what job you're going into. But with pretty much any job you're going to need a notebook and pens for jotting down notes on the fly if you don't have time to type them in online somewhere. You can easily go and pick up these supplies at a local "dollar store" to save you some money on your start-up costs.

Printer

Depending on what business you're going into you MAY need a printer/scanner. A lot of businesses function paperless nowadays and that is how I recommend you run your business, but YOUR line of work might require you to print and save physical copies of important contracts as a backup so keep this in mind for your start-up costs or materials needed based on your goals.

eFax & CamScanner App

Some places might require you to have a fax line (as archaic as this sounds) BUT if you can get away with an electronic fax system where you buy an online subscription, you are given a phone number for people to fax to and then it'll shoot you an email with the document so that you can remain paperless. I highly recommend this method as it is, again, paperless and generally less than \$10/month. To send out faxes (or emails) of physical documents you have on hand you can download a free app called CamScanner and this lets you utilize your cell phone camera to take a picture of a physical document and then it converts it from a jpeg (picture) file to a pdf (document) file that you can then email or text anywhere. This again, keeps you as paperless as possible!

Paper & Cloud Storage

If you have to go the paper route, then you'll want to have a filing cabinet. That doesn't mean you have to go buy one because you could also set up a basket system on a shelf or a far side of your desk! You could utilize a drawer in your dresser even! Hit up that "dollar store" and get you 2 or 3 bins that are big enough for sheets of paper or folders and you're good to go! If you don't have to utilize a physical system, then you can use great online programs like Dropbox or Google Drive! These are awesome for adding notes, documents, to do lists, spreadsheets, etc. that you can not only store and organize but then also you can share with a client, partner or teammate and allow them to edit it in real time. It still remains saved in one central location that you can ALSO create folders for, for different clients or different projects. It is a real genius life saver!

Scent/mood Booster

Okay don't make fun of the happy mojo stuff but...it makes life grand! I highly recommend you put a candle or essential oil diffuser on your desk! You're going to come to moments in the day where work is "blah", or your kid farted next to your workspace (or partner or roommate for that matter) or...maybe you didn't Febreeze your room that day. Light that candle and in a few minutes your mood will be perked right up! #workfromhomeproblems Haha!

Special/Inspirational Keepsake

You should include at least one special memento on your desk/workspace. This could be a photo of your family, a ceramic someone special gave you, a figurine, a handmade mug from a 4-year-old, etc. Some item that when you catch it out of the

corner of your eye you think "Aww" and get the warm fuzzies! This will help those dull drum moments tremendously!

Encouragement

You should pick a quote, any quote, something that encourages you, fills you with joy and determination and put that on your desk. You can write it on a post-it notes and stick it on your computer, print out some lovely print from online, hand write something cute and hang it on the wall, frame something super spiffy or whatever. This could be a favorite quote, a love note from your lover, a "You're the best" thing for your kid or...hey...maybe even a quote from this book! There's an idea! You just want something that encourages you to be the best you can be, to push past those crappy days, to focus and work hard and carry out your dream!

An Inspiration Board

This is a single place where you "tack" your life goals and aspirations to. It is the original and physical Pinterest. Whether that is getting married, having a child, traveling more, buying a home, buying that dream Audi or whatever...you put a picture of the thing(s) or milestones you want to attain or accomplish in the next year, all together in one place. It's fun to get creative with it and cut pictures out of magazines, write in fun words like; adventure, happiness, financial independence, 800 FICO score, new puppy, etc. Then add some frilly stuff to it like colors, paint, happy faces, your family, etc. This doesn't have to be an all work inspired board but a total life inspired board. This has been proven to subconsciously help keep us focused on our goals without ever really putting any effort into it other than creating it and hanging it where you'll SEE it every day. You can do a big poster board and make it wild and fun (that is always my method) or you can do a piece of construction paper and make it small and

intimate, as long as your most important things are on there.

CHAPTER 5:

THINGS TO DO TO LAUNCH YOUR ACTUAL BUSINESS

"The biggest adventure you can take is to live the life of your dreams." – Oprah Winfrey

Now we're ready to move into not only being professional but being legit also! Let's go over all the fun professional things you need to set up yourself as a new, branded professional freelancer.

Professional Email

You will want a basic, general email account that is something like yourname@gmail.com or use any email hub that you prefer but you just don't want to use any existing personal one you have if it's something like mikeysgirl@yahoo.com or lovinlife@aol.com because you want to, again, be professional. You are creating a

brand for yourself here. You could also do something like Sarah's Consulting and setup an email called SarahsConsulting@gmail.com if you would rather go with a business name for your email rather than your legal name. But having a new PLACE to store all your current and future business endeavors away from your personal email where you get random bills, junk mail, chain letters, etc. will help keep you and your new business much more organized.

Dedicated Phone Number

If you don't want to use your personal phone number for business, what I recommend is to get a Google Voice number. They are free through Google, you sign up, pick your number, make sure you have the Google Voice App downloaded on your phone and you're good to go. You can put that number on your resume and online profiles and then when someone dials that number it rings through to your cell phone via the app.

What is awesome about this app is that you can go into the settings and set time limits where calls will not ring after 6pm, they'll go straight to voicemail. And you can also call forward incoming calls to ring to another line if you don't answer it on your cell within a certain amount of time. Or as your business grows, if you hire an assistant, you can go in and have it ring through to another number and switch it back and forth for scheduled days and times. This makes integrating your business into a team a lot easier in the future!

Invoicing

You might not need business cards (you probably won't) but you do need a method for people to be able to pay you. If you work through some of the big online freelance websites they handle your time logs, invoicing, and payments so you just have to tell them where to send the money every week. But if you end up doing your own

freelancing, you'll need a hub to invoice clients and have them easily pay you. For this I recommend PayPal because the account is free, you can make a custom invoice that has your info/photo/logo at the top of it (so it looks professional) and then you fill out the invoice, pop in their email address and it sends them a professional invoice for their records. Records are very important for business owners and freelancers and remember now you'll be both.

Once the client gets the invoice they can either pay online by a credit card or they can use funds in their PayPal account. Another thing I love about this option is that funds are available immediately. From there you have a couple of options; you can transfer/wire funds from PayPal to your bank account OR for business purposes you can order a free PayPal Mastercard and funds are on it right away. Note there is always a transfer fee or percentage, so PayPal is not 100% free. If you go the PayPal route and you stick to using your PayPal

only for business then at the end of the year you can go in and pull a report of all income received through PayPal and it will help with your taxes, rather than trying to filter through your personal checking account statements.

You can also use Quickbooks Online (highly recommend) for this exact same thing and their app is much more detailed but...it isn't free. Quickbooks Online will cost you around \$30/month but it is worth it for you to check them both out and see which invoicing method you prefer. There are also some "free invoicing" software programs out now (2024) which I haven't used so as always do your research. Remember the benefit to Quickbooks Online though is that it offers so much more that you will need once your business begins to grow.

Business or different bank account

Right away you want to keep business income and expenses away from personal expenses. As a bookkeeper myself I feel this is a crucial step many people overlook. Even if you don't have an LLC formed yet, just open a different bank account, it doesn't have to be in the name of the business. As long as you can set up 1 bank account that houses all your income and all business expenses, then just transfer money to your personal account to "pay yourself" at first. By keeping the business stuff in it's own place you will save yourself SO MUCH stress come tax time!

Time Tracking

Where will you track your time? Why do you track your time? Okay so if you use an online service or platform to find work/clients like UpWork then they will do that for you, including sending your invoices. But if you get lucky enough to score clients outside of those platforms

(which turns into more money because those platforms take a portion of your pay to pay for their services, although the membership itself is free so it only costs you if you USE it) you not only need to send them invoices but also time cards.

This is also crucial if you have more than 1 client or project at once, which you probably will. There are two online, free programs I like for time tracking, and they're both super easy to use. One is Clockify and the other is Toggl; both let you setup a free account, hop in and get to tracking. There is also Hubstaff and Quickbooks Time. You can set up client names, project names, etc. to stay more organized. But say you start with 1 client you can open it up on your browser, click "track time" and a timer starts. You can write in what task you're doing but say you do Customer Service calls so that is considered the same task all day.

Then you would write in "customer service", click "track time" and you're off to the races.

At the end of the day or end of your "shift" you just stop the timer and it logs your time for that chunk and then updates your dashboard to show you your total in hours and minutes for the day and week. At the end of the work week you go to your dashboard and both sites have the option to convert or share the report and you'll click to convert it to a pdf format. This will pop up a download box, you name the file (again, something professional and organized, your client will see this, and you'll also want to save it for your taxes) so go with something like "ElizabethRichey.timecard.090223" and the date would be your "week ending" date, typically a Friday. For the clients who require this you would attach the timecard to your invoice when you send that over.

Note, not all clients will need this. For clients I am not closely tracking time but rather tasks, I will make a note as I'm working what time I started and what all I'm doing. When I'm done I pop into my Quickbooks, open up that customer's next

invoice and I add today's date on a new line item and then add the tasks completed and total time and save it. That is how I "track" what I'm working on for clients that I do something just a few times a week for. I will just continue to add time/tasks to each client's invoice as I do them and whether they're invoiced weekly, bi-weekly or monthly, I just go in when it's time and review their invoice and then send it.

Your LLC

This may be the most complicated task you do and the details on HOW you do it will depend on your state as each has varying filing requirements. You can do this all online yourself nowadays, you do not need to hire a lawyer and you can even file for an EIN online if you choose to go that route. But do know that you can have an LLC and not have a business EIN, you can use your

personal social security number for your LLC and tax filing purposes, but if you add a partner or employees you will need to have an EIN to pay them under for both yours and their taxes. When picking your name for your LLC don't make it too crazy.

You want it short, specific, professional and not trendy at all. If you're freelance career is something in the creative arts then go ahead and jazz it up a bit if you feel that is fitting but if you're a Virtual Assistant, it just isn't necessary and can come off as weird. I'm going to ballpark the figure here, so you have a basic number but on average it'll cost you \$50-150 to get your LLC. If you already have a computer, this might be your most expensive cost. Note for the frugal; this can be put off a bit. You do not have to have it right away, but you want to make sure you have it by say...October that way you have had it a couple of months before the end of the year when the tax year ends. But if you are reading this and starting your business in February, try to get your LLC by April or so, don't put it off too long or you'll

regret the lack of organization for your business.

Branding Pro Tip

Keep your branding in mind always! You are starting a whole new business and it can be whatever you want it to be, but you WANT it to be something people want and need and an image that will make them respect your skills. So, if you're an Executive Assistant you want a semi-decent, semi-pro head shot done...in fact for almost any career you want to do this because a selfie for your profile picture and social media platforms won't cut it (other than your personal Facebook, that's totally fine, don't even give clients your personal Facebook and save yourself some sanity).

If your targeted client audience is men in their 30s-50s use dark, bold colors like black, navy blue, burgundy, hunter green, etc. while sticking with basic fonts, nothing

frilly, but nothing boring like "courier" either.

If your audience is women in their 30s-50s you can get away with brighter and more fun colors, as well as fun fonts. But NEVER use a cursive font. Don't choose any font on any branding that is too difficult to read when it is about the size of a dollar bill on your computer screen. If you glance at it from a few feet away and can't make out that it says, "Sarah's Consulting", don't use that font. When coming up with colors for your logo or header on your professional social media platforms research your color psychology again and think about the feeling you want to invoke with potential clients.

Do you want them to feel motivated and optimistic? Do you want to evoke the feeling of power and stamina? Or do you want to put out there that you're creative and fun? This is person-specific, and you need to go

with what you feel would be best for you,
your new brand and YOUR success.

Thank you for reading a sampling of my book! If you've loved it so far and would like to finish the remaining 11 chapters, you can find my book on Amazon in the link below, available in Kindle format, paperback and soon Audible!

https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0CVLFZ6ZY?ref=pe_93986420_775043100

STAY CONNECTED

Snap the QR Code below to check out my landing page that lists all my links to everywhere I am online! I'd love to connect with you on my Facebook page! There we can network and share wins and tips!



"Keep your dreams alive. Understand to achieve anything requires faith and belief in yourself, vision, hard work, determination, and dedication. Remember all things are possible for those who believe." – Gail Devers