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GUIDE • CAREERS

The Freelancer's Starter Handbook

From First Client to Sustainable Practice

WRITTEN BY

Your Name

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The Freelancer's Starter Handbook

From First Client to Sustainable Practice

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This book is for general information and education. It is not professional, financial, medical or legal advice; consult a qualified professional for decisions about your own situation.

Examples, names, organisations and figures in this book are illustrative and should not be read as statistics.

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How to Use This Book

Work through the chapters in order as you set up your freelance practice. Each chapter ends with an action to complete.

Tax and legal requirements depend on your situation; consult a professional.

Inside every chapter

- A short list of what you will learn
- Clear explanations with examples and tables
- “Try this” activities to apply ideas straight away
- Key takeaways and practice questions
- Worksheets to complete in the book

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01 Is Freelancing Right for You?

Freelancing offers freedom and variety but also uncertainty. Understanding both sides helps you decide.

In this chapter you will learn

- Benefits and challenges
- Skills that sell
- Starting part-time

Freedom and Responsibility

You choose clients and hours, but you also handle sales, accounts and irregular income.

Skills in Demand

Design, writing, development, video editing, marketing and tutoring are common freelance skills.

Start Part-Time

Many freelancers start alongside a job or studies to test demand.

Try this

Write a one-line description of the service you could offer.

Key Takeaways

- Freelancing trades security for flexibility.
- Identify a sellable skill.
- Start small.

Practice Questions

1. List your sellable skills.
2. What worries you about freelancing?
3. How many hours a week can you start with?

Worksheet 1: Is Freelancing Right for You?

Write your answers here, or print this page.

List your sellable skills.

What worries you about freelancing?

How many hours a week can you start with?

Action Plan: Is Freelancing Right for You?

Turn the ideas from this chapter into three concrete actions. Keep each one small enough to start this week.

#	Action I will take	First step	By when	Done
1	Freelancing trades security for flexibility.			☐
2	Identify a sellable skill.			☐
3	Start small.			☐
4				☐
5				☐
6				☐

Reflection

Looking back

What surprised me most in this chapter?

Where did I struggle, and what will I try differently?

Who can I share one idea from this chapter with?

02 Defining Your Service and Niche

Clear services are easier to sell than vague offers.

In this chapter you will learn

- Choosing a niche
- Packaging services
- Writing a value statement

Niche Down

Focus on a type of client or problem, such as “logo design for cafés”.

Packages

Offer two or three clear packages with defined deliverables.

Value Statement

Describe the result you deliver, not just the task.

Package	Includes	Delivery	Price (example)
Starter	1 concept, 2 revisions	5 days	₹5,000
Standard	3 concepts, 4 revisions	7 days	₹12,000
Premium	Full brand kit	14 days	₹25,000

Table 2: Example service packages

Try this

Turn your service into a simple three-tier package table.

Key Takeaways

- A niche makes marketing easier.
- Package your services.
- Sell results.

Practice Questions

4. Define your niche.
5. Draft three packages.
6. Write your value statement.

Worksheet 2: Defining Your Service and Niche

Write your answers here, or print this page.

Define your niche.

Draft three packages.

Write your value statement.

Action Plan: Defining Your Service and Niche

Turn the ideas from this chapter into three concrete actions. Keep each one small enough to start this week.

#	Action I will take	First step	By when	Done
1	A niche makes marketing easier.			☐
2	Package your services.			☐
3	Sell results.			☐

#	Action I will take	First step	By when	Done
4				☐
5				☐
6				☐

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03 Building a Portfolio

Clients hire based on proof. A portfolio shows what you can do.

In this chapter you will learn

- What to include
- Creating samples without clients
- Presenting your work

Quality Over Quantity

Show five to eight strong pieces relevant to your niche.

Self-Initiated Projects

Create sample projects for imaginary or non-profit clients.

Tell the Story

For each piece, explain the problem, your approach and the result.

Try this

Write a short case description for your best piece.

Key Takeaways

- Show your best, relevant work.
- Create samples if needed.
- Explain your process.

Practice Questions

7. List pieces for your portfolio.
8. Plan one self-initiated project.
9. Where will you host your portfolio?

Worksheet 3: Building a Portfolio

Write your answers here, or print this page.

List pieces for your portfolio.

Plan one self-initiated project.

Where will you host your portfolio?

Action Plan: Building a Portfolio

Turn the ideas from this chapter into three concrete actions. Keep each one small enough to start this week.

#	Action I will take	First step	By when	Done
1	Show your best, relevant work.			☐
2	Create samples if needed.			☐
3	Explain your process.			☐
4				☐
5				☐
6				☐

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04 Finding Clients

Clients come from networks, platforms and visibility.

In this chapter you will learn

- Using your network
- Freelance platforms
- Writing proposals

Your Network

Tell friends, former teachers and colleagues what you do.

Platforms

Freelance marketplaces help you start but charge fees; build direct clients over time.

Proposals

Personalise every proposal, show understanding of the client's need and suggest next steps.

Try this

Send your service description to three people today.

Key Takeaways

- Start with your network.
- Use platforms wisely.
- Personalise proposals.

Practice Questions

10. List ten people to tell about your service.
11. Draft a proposal template.
12. Which platform suits your niche?

Worksheet 4: Finding Clients

Write your answers here, or print this page.

List ten people to tell about your service.

Draft a proposal template.

Which platform suits your niche?

Action Plan: Finding Clients

Turn the ideas from this chapter into three concrete actions. Keep each one small enough to start this week.

#	Action I will take	First step	By when	Done
1	Start with your network.			☐
2	Use platforms wisely.			☐
3	Personalise proposals.			☐
4				☐
5				☐
6				☐

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05 Pricing and Contracts

Pricing well and agreeing terms in writing protects you and your clients.

In this chapter you will learn

- Pricing methods
- What to include in a contract
- Handling scope changes

Price for Value

Consider time, expertise and value to the client. Avoid underpricing to win work.

Simple Contracts

Agree scope, timeline, payment terms, revisions and ownership in writing.

- Scope and deliverables
- Timeline and milestones
- Payment terms and advance
- Revisions and extra charges

Scope Changes

Quote extra work separately before starting it.

Try this

Draft a one-page agreement template for your service.

Key Takeaways

- Do not underprice.
- Always agree terms in writing.
- Quote changes separately.

Practice Questions

13. Calculate your minimum hourly rate.
14. List contract clauses you need.

15. How will you handle extra requests?

Worksheet 5: Pricing and Contracts

Write your answers here, or print this page.

Calculate your minimum hourly rate.

List contract clauses you need.

How will you handle extra requests?

Action Plan: Pricing and Contracts

Turn the ideas from this chapter into three concrete actions. Keep each one small enough to start this week.

#	Action I will take	First step	By when	Done
1	Do not underprice.			☐
2	Always agree terms in writing.			☐
3	Quote changes separately.			☐
4				☐
5				☐

#	Action I will take	First step	By when	Done
6				☐

Reflection

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06 Money, Taxes and Invoices

Freelancers must manage irregular income and their own taxes.

In this chapter you will learn

- Invoicing professionally
- Separating business money
- Basic tax awareness

Invoices

Use a clear invoice with your details, client details, items, amounts and payment terms.

Separate Accounts

Keep a separate bank account for freelance income and set aside a share for taxes.

Taxes

Freelance income is taxable; registration requirements depend on turnover. Consult a professional.

Try this

Create your invoice template using the Morphiq invoice design.

Key Takeaways

- Invoice professionally.
- Separate business money.
- Plan for taxes.

Practice Questions

16. What will your invoice include?
17. What share will you set aside for taxes?
18. Who can advise you on tax?

Worksheet 6: Money, Taxes and Invoices

Write your answers here, or print this page.

What will your invoice include?

What share will you set aside for taxes?

Who can advise you on tax?

Action Plan: Money, Taxes and Invoices

Turn the ideas from this chapter into three concrete actions. Keep each one small enough to start this week.

#	Action I will take	First step	By when	Done
1	Invoice professionally.			☐
2	Separate business money.			☐
3	Plan for taxes.			☐
4				☐
5				☐
6				☐

Reflection

Looking back

What surprised me most in this chapter?

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Who can I share one idea from this chapter with?

07 Growing a Sustainable Practice

Long-term success comes from repeat clients, referrals and continuous learning.

In this chapter you will learn

- Keeping clients happy
- Asking for referrals
- Avoiding burnout

Delight Clients

Communicate clearly, meet deadlines and deliver a little extra.

Referrals and Testimonials

Ask happy clients for referrals and genuine testimonials.

Protect Your Time

Set working hours and take breaks; burnout harms quality.

Try this

Set up a simple client tracker with project dates and follow-up reminders.

Key Takeaways

- Keep clients happy.
- Ask for referrals.
- Protect your energy.

Practice Questions

19. How will you follow up after a project?
20. Draft a referral request message.
21. What are your working hours?

Worksheet 7: Growing a Sustainable Practice

Write your answers here, or print this page.

How will you follow up after a project?

Draft a referral request message.

What are your working hours?

Action Plan: Growing a Sustainable Practice

Turn the ideas from this chapter into three concrete actions. Keep each one small enough to start this week.

#	Action I will take	First step	By when	Done
1	Keep clients happy.			☐
2	Ask for referrals.			☐
3	Protect your energy.			☐
4				☐
5				☐
6				☐

Reflection

Looking back

What surprised me most in this chapter?

Where did I struggle, and what will I try differently?

Who can I share one idea from this chapter with?

08 Client Tracker

Track leads, projects and payments.

Client Tracker — Page 1

Client	Project	Status	Invoice	Paid on

Client Tracker — Page 2

Client	Project	Status	Invoice	Paid on

Client Tracker — Page 3

Client	Project	Status	Invoice	Paid on

Client Tracker — Page 4

Client	Project	Status	Invoice	Paid on

Client Tracker — Page 5

Client	Project	Status	Invoice	Paid on

Client Tracker — Page 6

Client	Project	Status	Invoice	Paid on

09 Glossary and Resources

Glossary

Term	Meaning
Niche	A focused market or client type
Retainer	An ongoing monthly arrangement
Scope creep	Extra work beyond what was agreed
Invoice	A bill for completed work

Further Reading and Resources

- Freelance platform help pages
- Morphiq invoice and proposal templates
- Professional communities in your field

About the Author

Describe your freelance journey and the services you offer.

Your notes

Use this space to write the three ideas from this book you will act on first, and the date you will start.