

C R E A
T I V E
L I V E



BECOME A
SUCCESSFUL
FREELANCER

ABOUT US

**CREATIVELIVE EMPOWERS
CREATORS WITH INSPIRING
EDUCATION TAUGHT BY
WORLD EXPERTS.**

CreativeLive helps creators of all skill levels learn powerful new skills, form community, and enrich their lives through visionary online education. Join us and take online classes from the world's top experts in photography, business, design, craft, audio and more.

[**EXPLORE OUR CATALOG**](#)



CONTENTS

- 1. 10 THINGS EVERY CREATIVE PERSON MUST LEARN**
- 2. 11 THINGS NO ONE TELLS YOU ABOUT FREELANCING**
- 3. VIDEO: HOW TO MAKE YOUR MORNINGS MORE PRODUCTIVE**
- 4. HOW TO ATTRACT THE RIGHT CLIENTS FOR YOUR BUSINESS**
- 5. VIDEO: CREATE THE WORK YOU WANT TO GET PAID TO CREATE**
- 6. WHY FREELANCERS NEVER CHARGE ENOUGH FOR THEIR WORK**
- 8. HOW TO CHARGE WHAT YOU'RE WORTH**
- 9. INFOGRAPHIC: HOW TO CALCULATE YOUR FREELANCE HOURLY RATE**
- 10. A PARTING THANK YOU GIFT**

10 THINGS EVERY CREATIVE
PERSON MUST LEARN





Here is a list of 10 things I've learned the hard way that every photographer, designer, creative-hell, every creative person-should know.

1. Experts aren't the answer.

The blogs, the teachers, the mentors, the seminars aren't the answer. They're not there to tell you exactly what you need to know. If they're good, then they are there to give you some ideas, some guidelines, or some rules to learn and subsequently break. This isn't about the expert, it's about you. In creative pursuits especially...what's going on inside you is where the answers can be found. Hear what experts say, but don't always listen to them.

2. Clients cannot tell you what they need.

Clients hire you because they have a problem. They need a great visual representation of something, a solution. They think they know the best way to photograph something, but they don't really. That's why they hire you. Take their suggestions to heart, because they definitely know their brand, product, their vision-perhaps even shoot a few versions of the images they THINK they want to see first-but then go

nuts with own vision. Add value. Show them something they didn't expect. Don't be a monkey with a finger. Remember why you got hired...that YOU are the badass image maker. If you are good enough to get selected for the job, you should be good enough to drive the photographic vision.

3. Don't aim for 'better', aim for 'different'.

It's funny how related "better" and "different" are. If you aim for 'better' that usually means you're walking in the footsteps of someone else. There will often be someone better than you, someone making those footsteps you're following... But if you target being different-thinking in new ways, creating new things-then you are blazing your own trail. And in blazing your own trail, making your own footprints, you are far more likely to find yourself being 'better' without even trying. Better becomes easy because it's really just different. You can't stand out from the crowd by just being better. You have to be different.

4. Big challenges create the best work.

If you get assignments that are pushing your vision, your skills, then awesome. Kudos to you, keep getting those assignments. If you're not getting those assignments, then you need to be self-assigning that challenging work. Give yourself tough deadlines and tougher creative challenges. You do your best work where there is a challenge that is clearly present and 10 feet taller than you think you can handle.

5. Aesthetic sensibilities actually matter.

Go figure on this one... I'm constantly surprised as how much this is overlooked. Read this and believe it: You must develop a keen understanding of design, color,



light, and composition. To just say “I know a picture when I like it” isn’t going to get you anywhere. You need to know –for your own sake as well as the sake of your clients who will ask you- WHY a photo is a great photo. WHY is this one better than that one. If you don’t have any visual vocabulary, opinion, or aesthetic sensibility you won’t be able to explain these things. You won’t get the job. Or if you do get the job, you won’t be able to explain why your photos are worth getting hired again by the same client for the next campaign, story, or video. Trust me on this. Develop a sense of visual taste.

6. Simple is good.

Almost every photo that is bad has too much information. Outside of technical basics, the number one reason that most photos fail is because there is no clear subject. Often this is the case with design, film, fashion, you name it. Remove clutter, remove distraction. Tell one story, and tell it well.

7. Make mistakes, learn quickly.

Simply put, you need to be able to learn from your mistakes. Avoiding failure is not the goal. The goal is recovering from mistakes quickly. That goes for every element of your photography–creative, business, vision...you name it. If you’re not willing to make mistakes, you’ll be paralyzed with inaction. That is the devil. Get out there and do stuff. If it works, do more of it. If it doesn’t work, change it. Quickly.

8. “Value” is different from “price.”

Don’t compete on price alone. That is certain death in any creative field. Focus on delivering value and price yourself accordingly. If you deliver great value with



your images — better than expected, and better than your competition— and you can illustrate that through any means, then you should be more expensive. And remember that value comes in many forms.

9. A-Gamers work with A-Gamers.

If you are good at what you do, then you work—or seek to work—with other people who kick ass too. If you suck, then you put yourself around sucky people to feel better about yourself. If you want to be the best, seek to be around awesome people—be it other artists, assistants, producers, clients, partners, whatever. Shoot high. Shoot for better than yourself.

10. Real artists create.

Do you just sit around and think of stuff you could create, photograph, build, ship, or design, but never output anything? Then you're a poser. Take a new approach and make stuff. Maybe what comes out of your studio isn't perfect, but there should always be stuff leaving the door and hitting the web, the page, the billboard, the gallery, or the street. If you are for real, you'll be pumping out work on the regular.

There you go. Now don't just read this list, KNOW this list.

11 THINGS NO ONE TELLS YOU ABOUT FREELANCING





Here is what I knew about working as a full-time freelance writer before I actually did it: Yoga pants and working from my bed. I have a feeling this is the idea [that most people have about freelancing](#) — that it’s all slippers, lazy mornings over giant mugs of coffee, and dreamily, blissfully rejecting cubicle life.

But the thing about working for yourself, whether it be as a writer like me, or as a photographer, crafter, consultant, or whatever else your field might be, is that most of us do it alone, which means there isn’t that much talk about what the life — and the work — is really about. What the struggles are and, yes, what the non-9-to-5 rewards are. How the finances work, and how the taxes work. How to stay sane when you potentially don’t speak to anyone for eight hours straight. Here are just a few of the things I learned during the years I was freelancing:

- 1. It’s a slow burn:** When you first quit your full-time job to do your own thing, you’ll probably have one or two clients that help you make the list. Sara Horowitz, [founder of the Freelancers Union](#), calls these your “blue chip” clients — the ones you base your financial portfolio on.

You need these clients. However, expanding beyond those clients can be tough and take time. Know that when you see really successful peers with long lists of previous clients that making those connections has probably taken months or years. Expect the first few months of freelancing to be, well, pretty lean.

2. You will need seed money: Once you do start assembling a client list, freelancing is a death by a thousand paper-cuts/tiny checks. In a [recent piece on PTSOTL](#), Luke O'Neil documented his many clients, and how much each of them pays — which, to people who work on a freelance basis, wasn't that surprising, but may be a little startling if you're just starting out. Working for yourself often feels like a game of gathering, wherein you're constantly trying to cobble together the money for rent and resources out of small amounts of money...or, often, no money.

There will be slow months, and there will be months where you face surprise expenses. For that, you're going to need to draw on your savings and credit cards. This is a fact of self-employed life, and you need to be prepared.

3. Calendars and lists are crucial: Seriously, have a calendar. Have three. Have them organized within an inch of their lives. Hold yourselves to them. Because missing one client deadline is possibly excusable, but if you get a reputation for delivering late/incorrect/otherwise unacceptable work, it'll be hard to shake. Your calendar serves as a proxy for your brain, where you can dump not only deadlines, but also important information, like who to email and what kind of file



they prefer. Apps like [Google Calendar](#), [Wunderlist](#), and [Sunrise](#) are your friend.

4. Boldness is a valuable commodity: Self-marketing is hard work, and can include anything from tweeting out your most recent work to actively approaching the people you want to work with and directly asking if they have anything for you. Timidity is the difference between successful self-employed people and people who sit at home in their jammies “working.”

5. There are resources: No freelancer is an island, even if they feel like they are. Resources like the aforementioned [Freelancers Union](#) and your local Chamber of Commerce are there to offer you support and community. When you’ve got questions, they’ve got answers.

6. Coworking is an option: Coworking spaces — where you can rent a small amount of space, or work in a large communal area, with access to the internet, phones, printers, and other business necessities -- are cropping up across the country, and many creatives find them helpful to both stay focused, and to bounce ideas off others. They can serve as a stand-in for traditional office perks, like community and social interaction.

However, co-working spaces can be cost-prohibitive; if the idea of paying a second rent is just too much for your current budget, consider reaching out to other friends or colleagues who you know work for home, and offer to have a co-working “date” at a coffee shop. Not only does this break up the bed-to-desk routine of

working from home, but working with friends can also provide valuable creative input.

7. Taxes!: And finances, generally. But mostly taxes. Oh, freelance taxes. Most freelancers are contractors, which means they don't pay taxes as they go, out of their paychecks, but rather quarterly or yearly. Saving money is extremely crucial — which is hard, when you feel like you're not making enough. Tax prep companies like [TurboTax](#) can help offer explicit information on this subject, which you should check out if you're considering making the switch, though even that can be confusing.

Balancing the books is a really challenging thing for those of us who aren't financial experts by profession. One of the things I wished I'd had when I was freelancing was someone to explain the financial and technical elements of my small business. Chiefly, I wished I'd known about the Money & Life classes that CreativeLive offers. Courses in QuickBooks, funding, and other resources can be really, really useful.

8. Don't forget your physical health: When you're not walking to work (or, really, walking beyond your own apartment), it can be easy to get stuck on a routine that neglects your physical health. Which is unfortunate, because most freelancers and self-employed people have way more flexible schedules than traditional workers — meaning they can hit the gym at unusual times. Take advantage of that 11am Power Yoga class at your gym, or take a jog around the neighborhood while the sidewalks are mostly empty. Even just a long walk can help keep you healthy, while also [boosting your creativity.](#)

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WORKING WITH
FRIENDS CAN ALSO
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CREATIVE INPUT

It's also a good idea to stock your house with healthy snacks and meals. The temptation to graze while working from home is strong, so set yourself up successful munching. Oh, and figure out your best healthcare option, whether it's under the ACA or on your significant other's plan. Just going un-covered is not a good idea.

9. People will want to “pick your brain” a lot: Almost everyone has fantasies about working for themselves, which means, once word gets out that you're doing it, contacts will come out of the woodwork to ask you about it. And while giving some advice is fine, if you start to get the inkling that the person you're talking with is trying to get valuable business strategies (or, often, leads and ideas) for free, let them know that your services are available... at a price.

10. Pets are both great and awful for productivity:

I have a dog. For a while, during my freelance life, I had two dogs. The regularity of their needs (walking, mostly) was great, because it ensured that I got dressed and left my house and walked around the block three times a day. However, there were also times when they were exceptionally distracting. You never realize how much your pets demand your attention until you're home all day and they suddenly think it's always cuddle-time. Just something to consider.

11. GET DRESSED: Seriously, get dressed. Even if you're not going anywhere. It's so tempting to live your life in softpants as a freelancer, but getting dressed helps to solidify that your work matters, that you matter. It's as much a mental exercise as a physical one. Your cat may not care if you're fully prepared to leave the house, but you will. Get dressed. -



VIDEO: HOW TO MAKE MORNINGS MORE PRODUCTIVE

In this video with productivity coach Laura Vanderkam, you'll learn how to get a productive start to your day, and you'll get tips on how to keep that burst going. [Watch it here](#)



Take it to the next level with this Class:



HOW TO ATTRACT THE RIGHT CLIENTS FOR YOUR BUSINESS





If you're a business owner, consultant, or freelancer, you've undoubtedly been through the struggle of trying to grow your business without breaking the bank. In fact, chances are, the desire to acquire more clients, sell higher value services, or ship more products will consistently be one of your business goals. It should be! Even if you already have an established offering that's proven itself to bring value to your customers, there's always the opportunity to take your business to the next level. You want to book yourself solid with not just clients that pay the bills, but clients who allow you to charge more and build your reputation as a leader in your industry. This is no easy feat. Pulling it off requires a very strategic, well thought-out approach to formulating your value proposition specifically for your ideal clients.

1. Identify Your Target Customers: It's important to understand why you need a clearly defined picture of your target customers in the first place. If you don't understand the exact kind of person who not only needs, but is willing to pay for your products or services, you're going to waste a lot of time trying to pitch yourself to the wrong people. You're not going to be everything to everyone, that's just not possible -

and you shouldn't want to be. Your goal should be to build a powerful reputation for your impactful services, within your niche.

In order to do this effectively, you need an intimate knowledge of the target customers you're going after. Learn their interests, what motivates them, if they're analytical or creative, and most importantly which goals you can help them achieve. For example, if you're targeting fast-growing technology startups for your PR services, they'll likely be evaluating you based on your industry knowledge, previous experience in their space, and contacts you have in relevant press outlets. Know your customers and address their needs head-on.

2. Build Your Authority and Create Trust: How do you describe your business online? Before you can be widely acknowledged as an expert or an authority in your space, you'll need people to [trust and respect you](#). One of the most effective ways to build your reputation is by getting your customers to speak for you. It's much better to let your customers sing your praises, than to toot your own horn about your incredible results and innovative services.

Ask your best clients for a review that you can publish on your website, social media channels, and use in your prospective client materials. If you've done a great job for them, they'll be more than happy to take a few minutes and write you a glowing review. You'll want to carefully choose who you ask for reviews - make sure they're from organizations or people that you would like to have more clients like. If you want more BMW dealerships as your dream clients, then you probably won't want to ask your friend's dog-grooming service

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ONE OF THE MOST
EFFECTIVE WAYS TO BUILD
YOUR REPUTATION IS BY
GETTING YOUR CUSTOMERS
TO SPEAK FOR YOU

to give you a review. Don't be afraid to use your positive results and testimonials in your reach-out strategy. If you've already helped one business in a specific industry accomplish their goals, chances are you're very well-equipped to help another similar business - show them that!

3. Give Away Free Resources that Instill Confidence:

In today's business landscape, so much information is available for free in the world if you know how to find it. That's why it's more important than ever to [build a meaningful relationship](#) with your prospective clients. Provide value before they even ask for anything, and they will be that much closer to signing a contract by time you reach out.

Offer a free download of something that'll be of value to your ideal client's business, give free consultations to those who fit that ideal profile, or create a free online course that addresses some of the issues basic you've found your clients struggling with. If you can show your potential clients that you can clearly solve their challenges (or give them the tools and empower them to solve their own issues), you'll be a shoe-in for the first person they call once they're ready.

4. Develop Your Red Velvet Rope Policy: What values do the people have, with whom you do your best work? Come to terms with the reality that you don't just want clients who have huge budgets and deep pockets. Sure, you need all of your clients to be able to afford your fees, but sometimes those clients with the most money will also have the highest demands that drain the effectiveness of your business, they may

not pay on time, or they may have a misaligned value system that doesn't match with your priorities.

Find your clients at the intersection of those who can afford your services at a price point that helps you effectively grow your business, and yet also allows you to [produce your most effective results](#). If your client has all the money in the world, but never pays on time, that doesn't empower you to be confident in creating the best possible work for them.

5. Don't Be Afraid to Say No: Once you've developed your [Red Velvet Rope Policy](#), you'll have a very clear picture of the clients that you need for your business. As long as those expectations are realistic, then don't bog your business down by accepting clients who aren't going to help you perform at your best.

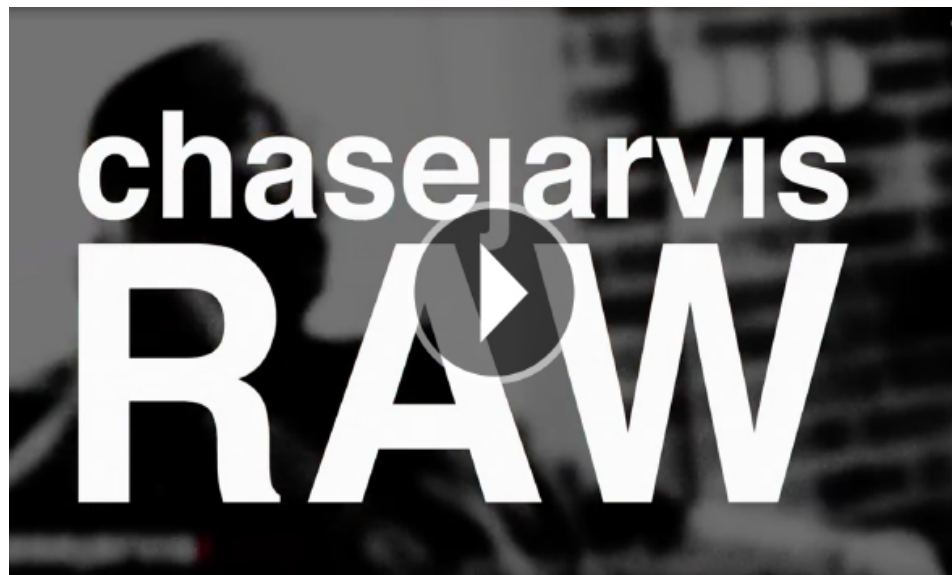
When you work with your ideal clients, you'll produce your best work. Join me in my online class and learn how to [Book Yourself Solid](#) with only the clients that'll grow your business the right way.



CREATE THE WORK YOU WANT TO GET PAID TO CREATE

CreativeLive co-founder and CEO Chase Jarvis answers your questions about creativity, being a pro photographer, and his favorite animal.

[Watch it here](#)



WHY FREELANCERS NEVER CHARGE ENOUGH FOR THEIR WORK





In the world of business, it's pretty easy to find out how much your peers get paid; [GlassDoor](#), [Indeed](#), and other websites make it easy to estimate what's a fair salary, based on the competition and the market. But for freelancers and small business owners, it's a little trickier. Short of actually calling around to ask after the rates of others offering similar services (which actually is [not a terrible tactic](#)), how do you know how to set rates for your business?

First, it's important to note that there's a big difference between "rates that keep you afloat" and "rates that make you real money." Photographer Sue Bryce refers to the former as the "survival rate." This is the amount of money that's required to keep the lights on, but it doesn't actually help you get ahead. So why do so many freelancers and other independent workers charge settle for offering their services at a cut rate?

The main reason creative entrepreneurs end up charging too little "is because they confuse fees or services with their personal value/worth," says Ilise Benun, founder of [Marketing-Mentor.com](#).

“The two have nothing to do with each other. If you can see that, the value of your services has more to do with what the client will get out of what you have to do for them, then you can charge more. Its not about YOU. Its about the value to them.”

Figuring out how much to charge means divorcing your self worth from the services you offer -- you're not asking people to buy you, you're telling them how much your time, energy, and talent are worth, and then letting them make the decision. Additionally, says Ilise, conversations about price make most people uncomfortable. They just don't like to talk about it, so often, they don't. They pick rates that they think people will pay, and hope that that will make the negotiation process easier.

“People think broaching the topic of money will make the client run away.” But, she says, that's actually not true. In fact, talking about money -- and [charging what your work is actually worth](#) -- will make client negotiation and relationships better.

“You find better prospects and clients. It is that simple. You find people who can pay what you need to earn... then you ask them for it.”

Another reason that many people charge too little: They forget that they are the expert in the room, and that they command the situation. Remember that your client is looking to you to lead the conversation, not the other way around. They are coming to you for the service -- a service they want -- and it's your job to let them know that they are in good hands and that you are worth whatever it is you're asking them to pay.

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PEOPLE THINK
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“The quality of the work really has little to do with the price you are paid. Clients have a hard time telling what is great and what is not. It’s how you present it. That’s why you see people who aren’t ‘great,’ make a lot at what they do,” she says.

In the end, it’s much more about confidence and about understanding [what you offer](#).

HOW TO CHARGE WHAT
YOU'RE WORTH





Ok, first thing first...if you've already made the move OR are even CONSIDERING turning your passion for photography (or video, or design, or writing or whatever) into a business, do your future self a solid and start following Ramit Sethi, right NOW. Visit his [website](#). Read his [blog](#). Sign up wherever it tells you to sign up. Because Ramit will teach you more about the business side of this industry than you thought you needed to know. His style direct, you'll get tough love, but he's great at helping us creatives (eg he has helped me more with my business chops than anyone else) get to where we need to be. He's been on [#cjLIVE](#) before and [he's also shared some thoughts on raising rates](#).

But today he's back by popular demand to share a simple one-two approach to setting your prices and upping your earning potential. Pencils ready? Okay, take it away Ramit.

Thanks,

Chase Jarvis



Ramit Sethi

I recently asked a photographer how she came up with her pricing. She said, “Well... I researched my competition and found that they had similar services, so I charged what they were charging.”

Does that sound familiar? Or worse, do you know people who charge less to “undercut” the competition or “get more business?”

Here’s the problem with using “me-too” pricing: You’re signaling to your [potential clients](#) that you’re the same as everyone else. Why would they choose you when they can always find someone else charging \$10 less?

How can some photographers charge 5x, 10x, even 100x what others do? Are they 100x more talented? Do they have 100x more experience? 100x better equipment?

No! The reason they can charge more is simple: Of course they’re good, but good isn’t enough. They’ve learned to position their services as a premium product. Today, I’ll show you how you can, too.

Step 1: Think like your client

Start by asking yourself, “What are my client’s top 3 problems? What are their concerns when hiring a photographer?” [The equipment you use probably isn’t in their top 100 problems.](#)

Clients care about themselves and their problems. By taking the time to make your proposal client-focused, you’re already ahead of 90% of your competition.

[In an 90-minute interview I did with Chase](#), we cover tons of examples on how to use this idea. [See the 24:00 minute mark](#) where I share exactly how to “read their mind” using a simple technique you can do in the next 5 minutes. Once you’re in your client’s head and can address their burning needs, price becomes a mere triviality.

THIS is how some creative people can charge 2x, 5x, even 20x what others charge. Yes, they’ve honed their skills, but being good isn’t enough. They know how to focus on their clients, not just their equipment.

Step 2: Use these words to say “no” to low-value clients One key is [learning how to be confident in your own value](#). Part of getting paid more is believing you’re actually worth more and saying NO to low-paying jobs. Sometimes, we feel grateful for ANY job, especially when we love what we do. This leads to accepting less than you know you’re worth.

The truth is, you’ll get more clients and better clients who respect and value what you do if you’re confident and stick to your rates. Check out this tested word-for-word script to see what I mean:

CLIENT: “What’s your hourly rate?”

YOU: “I’ve actually changed my business so I only do weekly engagements now. This helps me deliver more in-depth results (for example, helping a recent client do ____). The rate for that is \$X per week, and that includes A, B, and C.”

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ONCE YOU’RE IN YOUR
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CLIENT: “Can’t we just get you for a few hours?”

YOU: “Unfortunately not. I’d love to help but I focus on high-value projects, and those typically take a minimum of a week to understand and execute. The good news is I’ve never had a client who wasn’t happy with the results, even if they originally wanted me for just a few hours. And based on everything you’ve told me, we definitely have more than enough work to keep ourselves busy during that timeframe. The potential upside of Project X is very large.”

CLIENT: “OK, fine. Um... could you do \$Y per week instead?”

YOU: “I typically don’t discount my rates except in special cases. If \$Y is your budget, I’d be willing to do it only if we were to remove either B or C from the project scope. Which would you prefer?”

CLIENT: “Never mind, we can do \$X.”

YOU: “Great! I’ll follow up with you soon with next steps.”

Do you see what happened there? Many of us fear we’ll scare away clients by charging premium prices. In fact, low prices are a bigger red flag in your clients’ mind. Sticking to your higher rate communicates that you’re more valuable than the competition, so the client will lean toward hiring you.

You can even add value to your current clients while raising your rates. The key is to create a win-win



situation for you and the client.

Check out this video on how to raise your rates and thrill the client, including a word-for-word script you can use when telling your client about the new rate. You'll learn:

1:00 — The 3 things you must tell your clients about a rate change

2:07 — How to get clients excited about the upcoming changes (even if it includes a rate increase)

2:30 — A simple way to ensure your clients love you, even if you have to part ways



So how did a graphic designer convince me to pay more? Instead of focusing on design-specific concerns like typography and alignment, he nailed my primary concerns as a client. [Click here to find out exactly what those were in an interview I did on pricing here.](#)

INFOGRAPHIC: HOW TO
CALCULATE YOUR FREELANCE
HOURLY RATE

FREELANCE

START WITH YOUR TARGET ANNUAL INCOME

KEEP
75K
PER YEAR!



\$ 75

2. CALCULATE



Here's a hard question: What is your time really worth?

When you're a freelancer, it can be really hard to tell. As a full-time employee, your salary also takes into consideration business costs [like health care, licensing, taxes](#), and other [business essentials](#) -- but when you work for yourself, you've got to cover all of that and more.

This is a serious consideration if you're thinking of [quitting your job](#) in pursuit of leading a more fulfilling, self-employed career. Join Michelle Ward's free [Ditch Your Day Job Class](#) on June 11-12 and learn how to develop your game plan for hitting the ground running with your own business.

How do you find out how much is enough to really grow your business? What's your thriving rate?

We've created a handy graphic to help you figure it out.

[\(Click to View Full Image\).](#)

A PARTING THANK YOU GIFT

Take 30% Off These Top CreativeLive Classes

Code: FREELANCER



What the Most Successful People Do Before Breakfast

with Laura Vanderkam



Ditch Your Day Job

with Michelle Ward



Becoming A Successful Freelancer

with Arianna Orland



Book Yourself Solid & Get More Clients

with Michael Port



Command the Fees You Deserve

with Ilise Benun

C	R	E	A
T	I	V	E
L	I	V	E