

# How Freelancers Can Succeed – Ande Schurr

The 3 minute read for newer freelancers (and old dogs who like new tricks!) | Nov 2009

## How to build a secure freelancing career so that it feels more reliable than a full time job

In the middle of the so called recession earlier this year, I bought a house, a new car and new sound gear. While many full-time employed people were anxiously holding onto their money, I, and many other freelancers, was enjoying bountiful times. Did we just get lucky or is there some solid business sense behind this? I argue the latter.

Hi! Thanks for reading another one of these ramblings. I will keep it brief and to the point.



We freelancers have all weighed up the two options: full-time work at XYZ Company, or work for ourselves as freelancers enjoying day-by-day, or longer, contractual work. We chose the latter and here we are today for better or worse. I argue that it is actually a more stable, dependable and financially beneficial option to be a

freelancer. Emphasising this point may be particularly important in dispelling fears for those newer candidates to our film and TV industry; *this is the perfect place to be in order to realise your financial and other personal goals.* You will succeed far faster than you would ordinarily do in the normal full-time work force. So, what decisions must a freelancer make in order to build a secure career?

### 1. MONEY. Decide how much you will earn annually and on average each month.

**Effect:** regulates and stabilises your business; causes you to measure your earnings over the year rather than getting disappointed at monthly results.

In XYZ Company an employee has a salary imposed on them. Right from the start this tells them their worth. And chances are, even if they profess to give all their heart to what they do, they will give an equal return in effort to what they are paid. This limited exchange is a thing of the past for a freelancer. Decide how much you will earn this year. Be realistic. If you are a beginner, decide to match the average NZ wage in your second year in business for example. Then each year increase in a realistic proportion. Factor into account your daily rate and how much time you are willing to

work. My earnings, according to Statistics NZ, are within the top 1% of income earners in NZ and I know there are others in various crew positions earning twice as much as me. Doesn't that tell you something about the potentiality of what a freelancer can earn compared with the average wage?!

### 2. LOYALTY. Decide who your main clients are and never lose them through sincere appreciation.

**Effect:** builds strong dependable relationships; reinforces that you are surrounded by work.

Job by job, my clients help me achieve my financial goals and this causes me to greatly appreciate them. Keep a list of your main clients in front of you at your desk to remind you that you are surrounded by good people with plenty of work

### 3. WEEDING. Keep on top of new jobs, emails and to do lists – just like weeding your garden.

**Effect:** keeps you energised; tunes your attention to what is next rather than what has past; keeps you always watchful of contacts you have forgotten about, jobs you forgot to follow up etc.

Having just bought a house, for the first time in my life I have come to realise the bloody nuisance of weeds!! You remove them all and it looks marvellous. Then a few weeks go by and they are as big and as frequent as before if not more so! It got me thinking about the things I need to run my sound business properly. They are usually very small to start out with: plan an early pre-prod meeting, thank a client, remind another client I am still alive, get new cables made etc. Failing to 'pull out these small weeds' has the effect of adding fertiliser to them and before I know it they are urgent tasks that should have been done yesterday.

I hope I have done even a small justice to this very important idea of the freelancer position being just as stable and reliable as a full-time employee of a company. If not more so.

Best wishes,  
Ande