# SKILLS360

## HOW TO GET STARTED

# Laying the
# Foundation for your
# Freelancing Journey

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If you're reading this, chances are you've already crossed that exciting threshold—earning your first $1,000 on Upwork. You've made your way through the beginner's hustle, learned how to set up a compelling profile, crafted winning proposals, and landed your first few clients. You're no longer the newbie trying to figure out the basics of bidding and securing work. But now, the real question arises: How do you take it to the next level?

This guide is the natural continuation of everything you've already built. In the previous guide, we laid the groundwork: how to start freelancing in Pakistan, overcome your fears, and land your first clients on Upwork. if you haven't read it yet, we strongly encourage you to go back and download the first guide—it's your foundation for everything that comes next.

Now that you've conquered the basics, it's time to level up. In this advanced guide, we're going deeper into the strategies that will elevate your freelancing career. You've already secured a solid footing, but now we're refining those techniques, expanding your skill set, and exploring advanced tactics that will bring in higher-paying clients and better projects. From moving clients off Upwork to mastering bid boosting, this guide will take you through the processes and strategies that top freelancers use to stay ahead.

Freelancing is no longer just about doing tasks; it's about running a business, making smarter decisions, building client relationships, and positioning yourself as an industry expert. This guide will give you the tools you need to make that leap. Ready to scale your freelancing career? Let's dive in.

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# HOW TO GET STARTED

# Laying the Foundation for your Freelancing Journey

In the early stages, it's easy to get caught up in the excitement of earning, but remember, this is a marathon, not a sprint. The foundation you build today will support all your future successes. So, what's the first step in building that solid foundation? It all starts with mindset.

Freelancing isn't just about doing work for clients—it's about becoming a business owner, a strategist, and a marketer all rolled into one. You need to embrace the entrepreneurial mindset, where every job you take, every proposal you send, and every client interaction is a step toward growing your freelancing empire. Think about what you want to achieve—how much you want to earn, what kinds of clients you want to work with, and how you want your day-to-day work life to look. Set clear, actionable goals, and create a plan to get there.

At times, your daily plans might get lost in the air of clients you're working with. The key to growth on Upwork lies in understanding that not every project you get invited to is worth working for and not every project you've bid on is going to make you a million dollars. The best way to go about working on Upwork is to make the most of the clients you have and the project you take. You can achieve this if you set your base rates and the kind of projects you'd like to work on. The intricacies of clients become challenging after you've earned your first $1000 and the key to find your space. How do you do that? We'll explain this in the next heading.

## Having a hard time figuring out this guide?

Read our previous guide and pick up on the basic of freelancing.

**View Previous Guide**
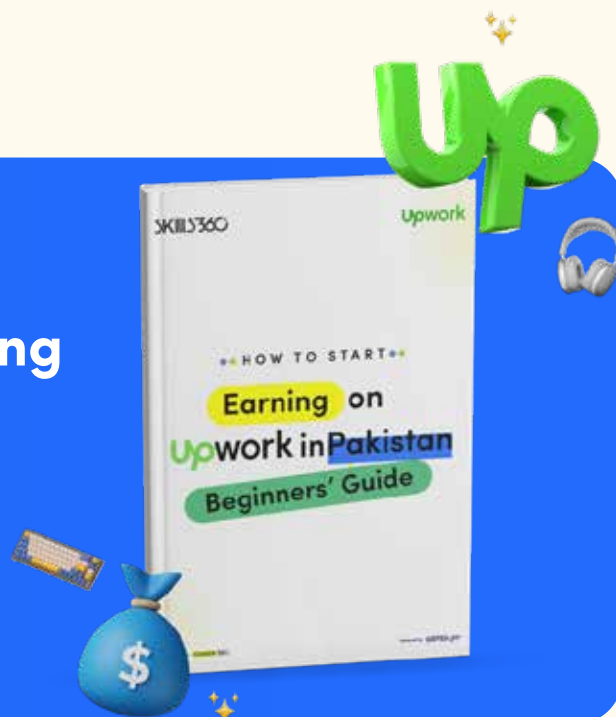
KNOW YOUR WORTH

# The Key to Valuing Your Work

# Determining the minimum amount  you'll work for

Setting your base rates is one of the most empowering steps in your freelancing journey. It's about knowing your worth and understanding that you're in control of what you charge. Early on, it's tempting to accept any job that comes your way, especially when you're eager to build your profile and earn money. But here's the truth: not every project is worth your time. And as hard as it may sound, you need to learn to say no to clients who don't respect your rates.

The first step is figuring out your minimum rate—the least amount you'll work for. This will be your baseline, and it's crucial for defining what types of projects to bid on. If you bid too low, you risk undervaluing your skills, exhausting yourself on low-paying projects, and struggling to grow. On the flip side, setting a rate that's too high for your current skill level can result in losing out on potential work. So, how do you strike the balance?

Start by researching industry rates for your services. Look at what other freelancers in your niche are charging. You can check Upwork profiles, read industry blogs, and join freelancing forums to get an idea of standard rates. Don't just look at the highest-paid freelancers, either—consider those in your experience range. What are they charging for similar work? This will give you a clearer picture of what's reasonable.

Once you've found a range that fits your skills and experience, set your minimum wage. This is the floor beneath which you won't go, no matter how tempting the project may seem. For example, if you're a graphic designer and you discover that the average rate is $25 per hour for someone with your experience, you should set this as your minimum. Anything below that should be considered only if you're gaining experience or building your port-folio. However, Western clients are familiar with currency differences and they tend to find the best freelancers at the most affordable rates. Considering your expense and motivation, you'll need to pitch your minimum rate below the US standards. While some clients might pay fairly to Pakistani's others tend to avoid. By grooming your Upwork profile with reviews and earnings, you can secure the same wages as in the US.

As hard as it may sound, learn to say no. Saying no isn't just about rejecting clients—it's about asserting your worth. When you take an assertive stance, you create the space to negotiate freely and set the right terms for your work. Sometimes, standing firm on your rates will force clients to reconsider their budget, and you might find that they're willing to pay what you're asking for. By holding your ground, you build confidence and strengthen your brand as a freelancer who knows what they're worth.

## Key Takeaways

⭐ **Set a minimum rate** to ensure you're never underpaid for your skills—it's your freelancing foundation.

⭐ **Research industry standards** by checking what freelancers in your niche and experience level are charging.

⭐ **Balance is key** don't underprice yourself or overestimate your value early on; grow steadily.

⭐ **Adjust for location-based expectations** start competitively if you're outside high-paying regions, but aim to match global rates as your profile grows.

⭐ **Say no with confidence** rejecting low-paying clients reinforces your worth and attracts serious buyers.

# HOW TO IDENTIFY

# Problematic

# Clients Early

# Identifying red flags and understanding  who to steer clear of

As you continue to grow as a freelancer, one of the most valuable lessons you'll learn is that **not every job is worth taking,** and not every client is worth working with. While it might feel tempting to accept every project that comes your way, saying **"yes"** to the wrong clients can drain your time, energy, and resources, ultimately stunting your growth.

So how do you identify the clients who aren't the right fit? It's all about spotting the red flags early on. A **red flag** doesn't always mean the project is a scam, but it could mean that the client's expectations, communication style, or payment habits could lead to frustration down the line.

# Here are some of the most common  red flags to look out for:

## ⭐ Unclear or Unrealistic Expectations

Clients who can't clearly define the project scope or are constantly changing their requirements can lead to endless revisions and scope creep. If a client is vague about what they want or expects you to read their mind, **this could indicate a lack of direction** or an unwillingness to communicate effectively. It's always better to **nail down the project specifics** before you agree to work.

## ⭐ Excessive Haggling Over Price

While it's normal for clients to inquire about pricing, if a client continuously pushes to lower your rate, it's a sign that they don't value your skills or expertise. If they insist on working with you but at a price that's far below industry standards, this is a **huge red flag**. You've already set your base rate, and it's essential to **stick to it**. Don't be afraid to say no and walk away from clients who expect high-quality work at a fraction of your worth.

## ⭐ No Verified Payment Method or Poor Payment History

One of the most significant advantages of freelancing platforms like Upwork is the **secure payment system.** But there are clients who have not verified their payment method or have a history of low job success scores. If the client hasn't confirmed their payment details or has multiple complaints about payment delays, this is a major **red flag**. Be sure to **check client reviews** and ensure their payment methods are verified before moving forward.

## ⭐ Clients Who Demand Too Much for Too Little

We've all encountered the client who asks for an **unrealistic turnaround time** or **extra work** without offering additional pay. They might want the world for the smallest budget, and their demands don't align with what they're willing to pay. This is a **classic case of exploitation**, and it's crucial that you **set boundaries.** As hard as it may be, learn to walk away from clients who want more than they're willing to pay for. However, a hard no is never received well from the other side. The best way to go about is to state your rates and share your expertise. If the client still persists, excuse yourself from the conversation by stating your reasons clearly.

## ⭐ Lack of Professionalism or Rude Communication

Professionalism should be a baseline, not an exception. If a client is rude, disrespectful, or overly demanding from the start, it's a **red flag**. Freelancing is about building positive, mutually beneficial relationships, and you don't have to tolerate unprofessional behavior. **Trust your instincts**—if a client's tone feels off, or if they seem to disregard your boundaries, it's okay to say no.

## ⭐ Clients Who Don't Respect Your Time

Time is money, and clients who constantly reschedule meetings, miss deadlines, or expect you to drop everything for them at the last minute are simply not worth it. **Respect for your time** is non-negotiable. If a client continually ignores your work schedule or demands last-minute changes, they are likely to create unnecessary stress. **Set clear expectations upfront** and make sure they respect your time and commitments.

## So, how do you deal with these  types of clients?

**The most important thing is to trust your gut.** If something feels off, it probably is. You're building your reputation as a freelancer, and working with the wrong clients can have long-term consequences on your career. As hard as it may be to pass on a project or say **no** to a potential income source, saying no to the wrong clients will ultimately give you more space to **say yes to the right ones.**

Remember, freelancing is not just about getting paid—it's about working with clients who align with your values, respect your time, and value your expertise. **Choose your clients wisely,** and as you grow, you'll attract the right kind of work that helps you elevate your freelancing career to the next level.

## Key Takeaways

⭐ **Trust Your Gut:** The warning signs are often subtle at first, but experienced freelancers learn to listen to their intuition. If something feels off about a client, it probably is. Don't ignore the red flags in the beginning stages, as they often lead to much bigger problems later.

⭐ **Set the Tone Early:** From the initial interaction, establish your boundaries—time, payment terms, and scope of work. A client who doesn't respect these from the get-go will only push them further as the project progresses. Be firm but polite.

⭐ **Don't Fear Saying No:** Saying no to a client might feel like turning down money, but it's one of the most powerful tools you have. A client who doesn't value your work or time is a distraction, not an opportunity. Saying no frees you up to work with the right clients who appreciate your expertise.

⭐ **Red Flags Aren't Always Obvious:** While payment issues are a clear sign, watch for more subtle cues like unorganized communication or constant scope changes. These might not be immediate deal-breakers, but they signal potential long-term frustrations. Act accordingly.

⭐ **Know Your Worth:** When clients try to push down your rates or ask for more than what you've agreed to, don't cave. Your skillset has value, and the right clients will respect that. Under-pricing yourself just to land a job can hurt you long-term, both financially and mentally.

# HOW TO BUILD

## Your Portfolio

# Creating a standout portfolio that attracts **high-quality clients**

Your portfolio is more than just a collection of work samples; it's **your freelance business card**, your **showcase of skills**, and your **proof** that you're the expert clients are looking for. If you want to stand out on Upwork and attract high-paying clients, your portfolio needs to go beyond generic work samples—it needs to speak directly to your ideal clients, demonstrating not just what you can do, but **how well you do it**. Whether you're a designer, content writer, SEO expert, or sales pro, your portfolio is the **key** to positioning yourself as a top-tier freelancer.

Let's break it down based on your profession and the best ways to showcase your skills:

## For Designers: Create a Strong Behance Portfolio

As a **designer,** your portfolio is the first place potential clients will look to gauge your creativity, skills, and style. **Behance** is one of the best platforms for designers to showcase their work—whether it's logos, website designs, or branding. The key is to ensure your **Behance profile is visually engaging** and reflects your best work. Include detailed project descriptions, process images, and **before-and-after** comparisons to show the transformation your designs bring.

Don't just post your final product—clients want to see **how you think** and **how you approach problems**. Show your **design process**, from brainstorming and sketches to the final polished product. This helps clients see your creativity in action and understand the value you bring.

## For Content Writers: Use Google Drive Links

For **content writers**, your portfolio might not always be the most visually striking, but it's still powerful. One of the easiest ways to create a **digital portfolio** is by using **Google Drive links**. You can compile your best articles, blog posts, whitepapers, or case studies into one **shared folder** that potential clients can access.

Make sure your **Google Drive folder is well-organized**—consider categorizing your work based on niche or content type (e.g., blog posts, website copy, email campaigns). Include a **short introduction for each document** that explains the target audience, the objectives of the project, and any measurable results (like engagement metrics, SEO improvements, or conversions). This will show that you not only write well but also understand how to meet your client's business goals.

## For SEO and PPC Specialists: Focus on Results and Analytics

As an **SEO or PPC specialist**, your work is all about results. When building your portfolio, **data is your best friend**. Show **before-and-after metrics**, such as organic traffic increases, keyword ranking improvements, or the success of a paid ad campaign. For SEO, include detailed **case studies** showcasing your strategy and implementation—such as how you improved a website's ranking or optimized its structure for better search engine results. For PPC, include screenshots of **ad campaigns, click-through rates (CTR)**, and **return on ad spend (ROAS)** that highlight your ability to drive **qualified traffic** and **convert leads**. Potential clients want to see proof that you can produce results that matter—**actual numbers speak louder than words**.

## Did you know?

SEO specialists on Upwork can earn between **$25 and $43 per hour**, depending on their experience level. PPC specialists typically charge between **$15 and $40 per hour**, with a median rate of **$25 per hour**. However, top-tier professionals with extensive experience and proven results can command higher rates, sometimes exceeding $100 per hour.

## For Sales Experts

### Showcase Your Earnings

As a **sales expert**, one of the most compelling ways to showcase your value is by demonstrating the **dollars earned** for your clients. This can be done by providing **case studies** that highlight your sales strategy, the industries you've worked in, and the amount of revenue you've generated. Include **sales targets** you've achieved, **conversion rates**, and any bonuses or incentives you've earned as a result of your sales performance.

For example, if you helped a client reach **$50,000 in sales within a quarter**, mention it. If you've generated **X amount of revenue from cold leads**, explain how you did it. Clients are **investing in results**, so **show them the direct impact** of your work.

## For Developers and Technical Experts

### Highlight Problem-Solving Projects

If you're a **web developer, app developer, or technical specialist**, your portfolio should focus on the p**roblem-solving aspects of your projects**. It's not just about showing a list of websites or apps you've built; it's about demonstrating how you solved complex problems for clients. Create **case studies** for each project, explaining the **technical challenges** you faced, the tools and technologies you used, and the results of your efforts. Include any **code samples** or **GitHub repositories** that can demonstrate your proficiency.

Also, don't forget to include client **testimonials** that speak to your technical ability and communication skills. Clients want to know that you can not only get the job done but also work well with them to meet their specific needs.

## For Virtual Assistants, Customer Support, and **Admin Roles**

### Focus on Efficiency and Organization

For **virtual assistants, customer support**, and **admin roles**, your portfolio should highlight your organizational skills and your ability to handle a wide range of tasks efficiently. You can create a **Google Drive link** with samples of reports, schedules, email templates, or client correspondence. Include **metrics** like the number of hours saved for a client, successful project completions, or improvements in workflow management. Clients in these fields often need to know that you can manage multiple tasks while staying **organized and efficient**.

### Did you know?

As of May 2025, there are over **4,400 open jobs** on Upwork in the **Virtual Assistant** category, **1,700 in Customer Support**, and more than **5,400 in Administrative Support**. These roles encompass a wide range of tasks, including data entry, scheduling, customer communication, and project coordination. With the increasing demand for remote administrative assistance, these positions offer flexible opportunities for freelancers worldwide

## For Social Media Managers and **Marketers**

### Show Engagement Metrics and Campaign Results

As a **social media manager** or **marketer**, your portfolio should focus **on engagement metrics, content strategy,** and **campaign results.** Include **case studies** of social media campaigns you've managed, showing the increase in followers, engagement rates, or even sales conversions. If you've worked with **influencers** or **created viral campaigns,** be sure to showcase these examples with measurable outcomes.

Make your portfolio visually appealing by including **social media post designs, infographics,** or **screenshots** of successful campaigns. Social proof, such as **client testimonials** or **case study success stories**, will also help potential clients see your effectiveness in driving results.

## For Translators and Language **Specialists**

### Provide Sample Translations and Proof of Accuracy

If you're a **translator** or **language specialist**, your portfolio should focus on demonstrating the **accuracy** and **quality** of your work. Include **before-and-after translations** to showcase your skill in capturing nuances in language, and provide **examples of specialized translations** (e.g., legal, medical, technical). You can also include **client testimonials** highlighting your **timeliness** and **attention to detail**.

## So What should **Your Portfolio Look Like?**

Your portfolio should be more than just a collection of past projects—it should be a powerful tool that demonstrates your expertise, the results you bring to the table, and your ability to solve client problems. Whether you're using Behance, Google Drive, or a personal website, ensure your portfolio is tailored to your niche, includes case studies and results, and is presented in a clean, professional format. The more strategic you are about showcasing your skills, the more likely you are to attract high-quality clients who are willing to pay top dollar for your services.

## Key **Takeaways**

⭐ **Tailor Your Portfolio to Your Niche:** Whether you're a designer, writer, SEO specialist, or developer, your portfolio should reflect the unique demands of your field. It's not just about showcasing work—it's about presenting the skills and results that matter most to your target clients.

⭐ **Focus on Results, Not Just Work Samples:** High-quality clients want to see measurable success. For example, SEO specialists should show traffic increases, while sales experts should highlight revenue generated. Quantifiable results help clients understand the tangible value you can bring.

⭐ **Incorporate Your Process:** Don't just show the end product—show your thought process, the challenges you faced, and how you solved them. This is particularly valuable for technical roles and designers, as clients want to understand how you approach problems and create solutions.

⭐ **Use Case Studies & Testimonials:** Provide context for your work by including detailed case studies that outline your role, the problem solved, and the outcome. Client testimonials are equally important as they offer social proof of your expertise and professionalism.

⭐ **Ensure Easy Navigation and Professionalism:** Whether you use Behance, Google Drive, or a personal website, make sure your portfolio is easy to navigate and visually appealing. A clean, professional design with clear sections will help potential clients quickly assess your skills and experience.

# IS UPWORK

## Account Boost

## Worth It?

## Analyzing whether boosting your account is a  smart investment

Upwork's account boosting feature can seem tempting, especially when you're trying to increase your visibility and land more jobs. But **is it truly worth the investment?** Is boosting your profile a game-changer, or is it just another tool to spend your hard-earned money on without tangible results? Let's break it down and explore **whether boosting is a smart move for your freelancing business.**

## What is Account Boosting on  Upwork?

Before diving into whether it's worth it, let's define what **account boosting** actually is. Upwork offers freelancers the ability to **boost their profile visibility** by paying for "Connects" (the virtual tokens used to submit proposals). When you boost, your profile is shown **at the top** of search results and appears more prominently in the eyes of potential clients. This means **increased visibility** and a higher chance of getting noticed by clients who might otherwise scroll past your profile.

At face value, this sounds great, especially if you're struggling to get noticed. But before you start splurging on boosting, there are a few **insider insights** to consider that many don't discuss publicly

## The Reality:  Boosting Doesn't Always Guarantee Success

One of the most common misconceptions about Upwork account boosting is that **it will automatically result in more jobs.** The truth is that boosting your profile simply makes it more likely that **potential clients will see you,** but **it doesn't guarantee they'll hire you.** Visibility is only the first step in the process—what truly matters is **how well you position yourself when clients land on your profile.**

If your profile doesn't speak directly to the client's needs, or if your proposal lacks the personal touch and specific value that clients are looking for, then boosting will only get you noticed for a brief moment. **It's a tool, not a magic fix.**

## Why It May Be Worth It

Boosting can be a smart investment in certain scenarios, but **only if you use it strategically.** Here are some scenarios where boosting may give you a significant advantage:

### ⭐ You're New and Need Visibility

If you're just starting out on Upwork or in a competitive niche, boosting can help you **get noticed** quickly. As a beginner, your profile doesn't have the reviews or track record to stand out naturally. In this case, paying for visibility **might just be the push** you need to attract those first few clients, which are often the hardest to get.

## ⭐ You're Competing in a Crowded Market

 If you're working in a niche with tons of competition (e.g., graphic design, web development), your profile can get lost in the shuffle. In this case, boosting can help you **cut through the noise** and get in front of clients who might be browsing dozens of similar profiles.

## ⭐ When You've Got a High-Conversion Profile

If your profile is **optimized,** has **strong client reviews,** and features **great work samples,** boosting can be effective because you're more likely to convert that visibility into a hire. But **boosting doesn't replace good client rapport** or a well-crafted profile, so don't rely on it solely. **Boosting works best when you've already laid the groundwork.**

## ⭐ For High-Value Projects

If you're bidding on high-ticket projects (think: $2,000+), a small investment in boosting your account could yield a **huge return.** In high-stakes bidding, the competition is fierce, and **visibility is crucial.** When clients are looking for top-tier freelancers, boosting your profile can help you get the attention of clients who might be ready to make a decision quickly

# Why It Might Not Be Worth It

While boosting can work for some freelancers, it's not always the best choice for everyone. Here are some situations where you might want to **skip the boost** and invest your time or money elsewhere:

## ⭐ You're Not Ready to Handle More Work

If you're still perfecting your skills or your profile, you might not be ready for a flood of new clients. Boosting will get you noticed, but if you don't have a solid plan for handling new projects or managing multiple clients, you could risk **burning out** or even **missing opportunities.**

## ⭐ Your Profile Isn't Optimized

Upwork's algorithm looks at your **profile quality**—not just your visibility. If you've got an incomplete profile, lack compelling samples, or have no reviews, boosting won't solve those fundamental issues. You need a **strong profile foundation** before you consider investing in boosts. Otherwise, you'll be paying for visibility with **no conversions**.

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## ⭐ You're Only Doing It to Compete with Others

Just because everyone else is boosting doesn't mean you should. If you find yourself boosting simply because others are doing it, then you might be **throwing money away.** You should only boost when you have **specific, measurable goals**—like attracting high-ticket clients in a competitive space. If you're simply boosting out of desperation, it's a bad strategy.

## ⭐ The Costs Add Up

It's easy to get caught up in boosting regularly, but if you're not tracking your ROI (Return on Investment), it can become a **costly habit.** Especially if you're using boosting as a knee-jerk reaction to lack of work, instead of a strategic tool. Over time, this **adds up** without guaranteeing results. Be careful not to make boosting a crutch.

## Insider Tip: Use Boosting Sparingly

⭐ **The secret to success with Upwork boosting is using it strategically**—not relying on it all the time. For example, if you're applying for a **high-value project,** boosting your profile can increase your chances of landing the gig. But it's not a sustainable long-term solution if you want consistent work. Instead of boosting regularly, consider using it **during peak times,** such as when you need to make a strong impression on a specific client or niche. **Test and track the impact** of each boost, and only use it when it makes sense to your freelancing strategy.

## Should You Boost or Not Boost?

So, is boosting worth it? The answer depends on your goals, your profile, and your strategy. If used **strategically and sparingly,** it can give you the edge you need to land the right clients at the right time. But don't make the mistake of thinking it's a cure-all. Your success still depends on **the quality of your profile, your proposals,** and **your ability to close deals.** Use boosting as one part of your overall strategy, but **never rely on it as your sole method of attracting clients.**

## Key Takeaways

⭐ **Boosting Doesn't Guarantee Jobs:** Boosting increases your visibility, but it doesn't guarantee you'll get hired. Your profile must be optimized and your proposals compelling to convert that visibility into actual clients.

⭐ **Best for Newbies or Competitive Niches:** If you're just starting on Upwork or working in a competitive field, boosting can be a great way to get noticed quickly and attract your first few clients.

⭐ **Effective for High-Conversion Profiles:** If your profile is already well-optimized with strong reviews and impressive work samples, boosting can amplify your success by putting you in front of clients who are more likely to hire you

⭐ **Don't Rely on It Constantly:** Boosting should be used strategically, not as a regular habit. Overusing it without tracking the return on investment (ROI) can become costly without consistent results.

⭐ **Profile Optimization is Key:** Boosting works best when your profile is complete, professional, and tailored to your target clients. If your profile isn't strong, boosting will only make it more visible to clients who won't convert into hires.

# BID BOOSTING

## The Strategy

# How to make the most of bid boosting to stand out from the competition

If you've been on Upwork for a while, you've probably seen the option to **boost your bids** pop up when you submit proposals. While it's easy to assume that it's just another tool to increase visibility, bid boosting is actually a **powerful strategy** that, when used correctly, can give you a significant advantage in landing jobs—especially in highly competitive niches. The key, however, is knowing **how to make the most of bid boosting** and using it as a smart, strategic move rather than a blind attempt to get noticed.

Let's dive into the mechanics of bid boosting, the best practices for using it, and how to leverage it to **stand out from the competition.**

## Did you know?

One Reddit user mentioned seeing a total of **over 550 Connects** used to boost proposals on a single job post. That's a hit of $82.50 which roughly translated to 23,277 PKR based on May 2025 currency rates.

## What is Bid Boosting?

Bid boosting allows you to increase the visibility of your proposal by paying for a higher position in the job feed. This makes your proposal more visible to clients, especially if the competition is fierce. The idea behind bid boosting is that your proposal will **show up higher on the client's list, giving it more attention.**

While Upwork doesn't guarantee that you'll win the job with a boosted bid, it i**ncreases your chances** of getting noticed and opening up communication with the client. Essentially, you're buying your way to the top of the pile of proposals.

## When Should You Use Bid Boosting?

Bid boosting can be **highly effective** when used strategically. But it's important to recognize **when** it makes sense to invest in a boost. Here are a few situations where bid boosting can give you an edge:

### ⭐ For High-Value Projects

Bid boosting is often worth it when you're bidding on high-value projects. If you're going after jobs worth $2,000 or more, the extra visibility can be a **game-changer.** The stakes are higher with these types of projects, & getting in front of the client could mean a significant payday. When bidding on high-ticket projects, use bid boosting to ensure that your proposal gets noticed & gives you a competitive advantage.

## ⭐ For Highly Competitive Niches

If you're working in a **highly competitive** niche, such as **graphic design, web development,** or **writing,** the competition can be fierce, with dozens (if not hundreds) of proposals flooding in. In these cases, boosting your bid can help you **rise above the noise** and get in front of the client faster. It's particularly useful if you have a **strong profile** but aren't getting as much visibility as you'd like.

## ⭐ When You Have a Strong Proposal

Bid boosting should never be a substitute for a **poorly crafted proposal.** The success of your bid still depends heavily on the quality of your proposal, your relevant experience, and how well you match the client's needs. **Boosting works best when your proposal is solid and tailored** to the job. If you're confident that your proposal will stand out on its own, a boost can give it the extra push it needs to convert.

## How to Make the Most of  Bid Boosting?

To truly make the most of bid boosting, there are several best practices to follow:

## ⭐ Know When to Boost and When to Hold Back

Bid boosting is not something you should do for every proposal. Be strategic about it. For jobs that are a **great match** for your skills, have **good potential for long-term relationships,** or are in **high-demand industries,** boosting can help you get noticed. However, if the job is low-value or doesn't align with your skillset, it's better to skip the boost and **save your Connects** for more relevant jobs.

## ⭐ Use Bid Boosting with the Right Clients in MindT

It's essential to target your bid boosting efforts towards clients who **value quality** and are more likely to appreciate your expertise. Look for clients who have d**etailed job descriptions, clear expectations, and a reasonable budget.** If the client seems to be looking for high-quality work and not just the lowest price, bid boosting can be more effective. Avoid boosting on jobs where clients are clearly asking for **cheap labor**—they may not value the investment you're making in your proposal.

## ⭐ Understand the Cost-Effectiveness of Bid Boosting

One of the most important factors to consider when boosting your bid is the **cost-effectiveness.** Boosting costs a certain number of Connects, and depending on the competitiveness of the job, it may or may not be worth the investment. Consider how many **Connects** you're willing to spend in relation to the potential reward. For example, if a job has a $2,000 budget and you're investing 6 Connects to boost your proposal, that's a reasonable cost. But if the job only has a $100 budget and you're spending 6 Connects, it might not be worth the boost.

## ⭐ Test and Analyze Your Results

The best way to understand if bid boosting is working for you is to **test it.** Use it selectively, and keep track of the jobs you've boosted. Did the boost result in more responses? Were you invited for interviews or hired more often? Over time, you'll start to see a pattern and can decide if boosting is **giving you a good return on investment.** By consistently testing, you can refine your strategy and decide when boosting makes the most sense for your business.

## ⭐ Combine Bid Boosting with Smart Strategies

While bid boosting is a powerful tool, **it should be part of a larger strategy.** Don't rely on it exclusively. Combine it with a strong profile, personalized proposals, and **effective client communication.** If your profile is highly optimized and your proposals speak directly to the client's needs, a boosted bid will simply amplify your efforts.

## Bid Boosting and  Why?

Bid boosting can be an incredibly effective way to stand out in a crowded marketplace, especially if you use it strategically. The key is to **use bid boosting selectively,** not as a quick fix, but as a well-planned tool to increase your chances of landing high-value clients and competitive jobs. When done right, bid boosting doesn't just make your profile more visible—it helps you land **the right projects** and **boost your freelancing career** to the next level. Remember: Boosting your bid is **a strategy,** not a shortcut. Don't rely on it solely to win clients. Instead, pair it with a high-quality profile and compelling proposals, and you'll see your chances of success grow.

## Key Takeaways

⭐ **Strategic Use is Key:** Bid boosting can be highly effective, but it should be used strategically. Boost your bid when targeting high-value projects or highly competitive niches to increase your chances of standing out.

⭐ **It's Not a Substitute for a Strong Proposal:** Boosting will only work if your proposal is solid. Make sure your proposal is tailored, well-written, and relevant to the client's needs before using bid boosting as a tool to amplify its visibility.

⭐ **Know When to Hold Back:** Bid boosting isn't suitable for every proposal. Use it for jobs that match your skills well, have long-term potential, or belong to high-demand industries. Don't waste Connects on low-value or ill-suited jobs.

⭐ **Target Quality Clients:** Bid boosting is more effective when aimed at clients who value quality work and have clear job descriptions. Avoid boosting for clients who are only looking for cheap labor or vague projects.

⭐ **Track and Test Your Results:** To make bid boosting cost-effective, test it selectively and analyze your results. Track whether boosted proposals lead to more responses and job invitations, and refine your strategy based on the outcomes.

# HOW TO MASTER

# Client

# Communication

# Building trust, managing expectations, & maintaining professionalism

Client communication is often the **make or break** factor in freelancing. You could be the most skilled freelancer on the platform, but if you don't know how to communicate effectively with clients, your chances of success will drop dramatically. Freelancing isn't just about delivering great work; it's about building **strong relationships, managing expectations,** and **handling communication with professionalism.**

Mastering client communication means you have the power to not only win projects but also **retain clients, earn repeat business,** and get those **glowing testimonals** that make your profile shine. It's a key skill that will not only differentiate you from your competitors but also **empower you to manage your freelancing** career more efficiently. Let's break down the elements that go into mastering this skill.

## Did you know?

Effective client communication can significantly boost your freelancing career. Studies show that free-lancers who communicate well with clients are **45% more likely** to win repeat business and receive positive reviews. It's not just about delivering quality work—it's about building relationships, managing expectations, and maintaining professionalism throughout your interactions. Strong communication skills can set you apart from competitors and ensure long-term success.

## Building Trust Through Transparency and  Consistency

Trust is the foundation of any successful client relationship. **Clients need to know they can rely on you** to deliver on your promises, meet deadlines, and communicate openly when challenges arise. One of the biggest mistakes freelancers make is **over-promising** and then **under-delivering**. Instead, build trust by being **transparent** and **realistic** about what you can deliver.

When you start a project, be upfront about the timeline, your availability, and any potential obstacles. If a deadline is approaching and you're unsure whether you can meet it, don't wait until the last minute to mention it. **Proactive communication** shows professionalism and builds credibility. If something goes wrong during a project—whether it's a technical issue, a change in client direction, or a personal delay—**own it immediately** and present solutions.

Consistency also plays a big role in trust. Keep your communication timely and clear, and r**espond promptly** to emails, messages, and feedback. **Reliable communication** reassures clients that they're working with a professional who takes their business seriously.

## Managing Client Expectations from **the Start**

Setting clear expectations at the beginning of a project is one of the **most important aspects of client communi-cation.** Misunderstandings about deadlines, deliverables, and quality can quickly turn into major frustrations for both you and your client.

**Be specific** about what's included in the project scope and **what isn't.** For example, if a client asks for a logo design and then requests additional revisions beyond what was agreed upon, you want to **set clear boundaries** upfront: "I can provide three rounds of revisions as part of the original quote, but additional rounds will incur extra charges."

It's also essential to define how you and the client will communicate throughout the project. Will you communi-cate through Upwork messaging, email, or Slack? Will you send progress updates weekly, bi-weekly, or only at milestones? **Clear guidelines on communication** prevent frustration and misunderstandings later on.

Additionally, you must always manage **time expectations.** Don't rush into agreeing to deadlines that aren't realistic just to secure the job. Instead, assess the project requirements and be clear about how long it will take to complete, considering your other commitments. Saying "I need two days" when it will actually take five will only create a situation where **you risk delivering late** and disappointing the client.

## Maintaining Professionalism, **Even When It's Tough**

Professionalism is at the core of every successful freelance relationship. Whether you're dealing with a difficult client, a project delay, or a misunderstanding, maintaining a calm, respectful, and **solution-oriented approach** is crucial.

When challenges arise (and they will), **stay level-headed** and focus on finding solutions rather than assigning blame. If a client expresses frustration or disappointment, **acknowledge their feelings** and let them know you are working toward a resolution. Saying something like, "I understand your frustration and I'm committed to making sure we resolve this issue," shows empathy without undermining your professionalism.

When working with clients from different time zones or cultures, remember that professionalism extends beyond your words—it's also about being **respectful of their time,** being **clear and concise,** and **being responsive**. Even if clients aren't always as communicative as you'd like, never let frustration cloud your interactions. Treat every conversation as an opportunity to reinforce your credibility.

## Did you know?

In Western cultures, professionalism is highly valued, especially in conflict resolution. Studies have found that **80% of clients** prefer to work with freelancers who maintain calm and solution-focused communication, even in tough situations.

## Be an Active  Listener

Great communication is a two-way street. While it's essential to articulate your thoughts clearly and concisely, it's just as important to be a **great listener.** Clients want to feel heard, and listening actively to their needs and concerns will go a long way in building a strong relationship.

During your initial calls or messages, ask **open-ended questions** that allow the client to explain their needs in detail. For example, instead of asking, "Do you need this website by next week?", try asking, "What's the most important feature you want to prioritize for the website's launch?" This helps you understand their priorities better and gives you valuable insight into their expectations. Repeat back what they say to ensure clarity: "So, just to confirm, you're looking for a design that focuses on simplicity with a quick load time, correct?"

By showing that you're actively listening, you'll gain their trust and position yourself as a professional who is genuinely interested in their project's success.

## How to Handle Revisions and  Feedback Gracefully

Clients often want changes or revisions after receiving your initial work, and it's important to handle that feedback with **grace and professionalism.** A common pitfall for freelancers is to take feedback personally, but it's crucial to remember that revisions are a **natural part of the process** and part of your job is adapting to the client's needs.

Be open to feedback and approach it **positively.** When clients ask for changes, instead of defending your choices or getting defensive, ask clarifying questions to better understand what they're looking for. "I see you'd like the color palette adjusted. Could you specify which tones you're looking for?" This shows you're listening and willing to make improvements, and it helps ensure the revisions align with their vision.

At the same time, be clear about your boundaries when it comes to revisions. If the client is requesting more work than what was agreed upon in the contract, kindly remind them of the **scope of work** and offer to discuss additional fees for extra revisions.

## Don't Just Message – Communicate

Client communication is at the heart of freelancing success. It's more than just sending a message or replying to emails—it's about **building trust, managing expectations,** and maintaining **professionalism** at all times. Whether you're establishing clear boundaries, setting timelines, or handling feedback, effective communication helps ensure that you not only deliver exceptional work but also **build strong, long-term relationships** with clients.

Mastering client communication takes practice, but with the right approach, you'll be able to navigate any challenge and grow your freelancing business. Remember, a well-managed client relationship can lead to more referrals, better projects, and a stronger reputation on Upwork and beyond.

## Key Takeaways

⭐ **Trust is Built Through Transparency:** Be upfront about your availability, timelines, and any potential obstacles. Consistent, clear communication fosters trust and credibility with clients, setting a solid foundation for long-term relationships.

⭐ **Set Expectations Early:** Clearly define the scope of work, deadlines, and communication methods from the start. Setting boundaries, such as how many revisions are included, helps prevent misunderstandings and frustration later on.

⭐ **Professionalism is Non-Negotiable:** Maintaining a calm, solution-focused approach, especially during challenges, is crucial. Professionalism extends beyond your words—it includes being responsive, respecting client time, and showing empathy, even in tough situations.

⭐ **Active Listening is Essential:** Great communication is a two-way street. Ask open-ended questions, confirm details, and make sure the client feels heard. This builds trust and shows that you're genuinely interested in meeting their needs.

⭐ **Handle Revisions and Feedback Gracefully:** View revisions as an opportunity to improve, not as criticism. Respond positively to feedback, ask clarifying questions, and be clear about the scope of work. This helps maintain a professional and productive client relationship.

# HOW TO PRICE

# Your Services Like a Pro

# Advanced pricing strategies to ensure you're paid what you're worth

As a freelancer, one of the most important decisions you'll make is how to price your services. Pricing too low can result in undervaluing your work, burning out, and ultimately feeling unappreciated. Pricing too high, especially when you're just starting out, can make clients turn away. **Finding that sweet spot** where you're charging what you're worth while staying competitive is crucial to growing your freelancing business.

This chapter is about going beyond the basics of pricing and learning the **advanced strategies** that successful freelancers use to ensure they're paid what they're truly worth. Let's dive into how you can strategically price your services to **build a sustainable business** and **maintain your confidence as a professional.**

## Understand Your Value Before **You Set a Price**

Before you even think about numbers, take a step back and assess your value. **What skills and expertise do you bring to the table?** If you've been freelancing for a while, you've probably gained a deep understanding of what you're good at, what problems you solve, and how you create results for clients. Pricing starts with c**onfidence in your value.**

To determine your value, think about the following:

⭐ What is the **impact** of your work? Does it save clients time, increase revenue, improve their brand presence, or provide a measurable result?

⭐ How much experience do you have? While being a beginner doesn't mean you need to price yourself at rock-bottom rates, your pricing should reflect your **experience level.**

⭐ What **niche** do you specialize in? Niche freelancers often charge more because they bring specialized expertise to the table. If you're an expert in a specific area, **don't be afraid to price yourself accordingly.**

Understanding these factors will give you the foundation you need to set **premium pricing** that reflects your worth and positions you as a specialist rather than a generalist.

## Did you know?

A study by **Upwork** found that **specialized freelancers** tend to charge higher rates than generalists. In fact, **freelancers with niche expertise** can earn up to **50% more** than their generalist counterparts. For example, **freelancers specializing in SEO**, graphic design for specific industries, or even financial consulting tend to have higher earning potential compared to those who offer broader services without a specific focus.

## Determine Your Ideal Hourly or **Project Rate**

Freelancers often get stuck deciding between **hourly** or **project-based pricing.** Both have their pros and cons, and your decision may depend on the type of work you do.

⭐ **Hourly Rates** are best suited for work that is **variable or difficult to estimate.** If the scope of the project isn't fully defined or if the work involves back-and-forth revisions or client feedback, an hourly rate gives you the flexibility to adjust based on the time spent.
 To set your hourly rate, take a look at industry standards and your own experience. Research other free-lancers in your niche and location to find out what the going rate is. Use tools like **PayScale** or **Glassdoor** to get a general idea of what freelancers with similar skills are charging.

⭐ **Project Rates** are ideal for more clearly defined work where you can estimate the total time commitment. They allow you to set a price based on the **value** you provide to the client rather than just the hours spent working. Project-based pricing gives you the opportunity to **earn more than an hourly rate** for efficient work, allowing you to factor in your experience, skills, and the outcome of the project.

Whichever method you choose, make sure your rates reflect the **value you bring to the client.** For example, a website redesign that will increase a client's sales should be priced **according to the results you will deliver,** not just the time it takes you to design it.

## Implement Tiered Pricing for **Implement Tiered Pricing for**

Tiered pricing is a **strategic way** to offer multiple options based on the client's budget and project scope. Offering **three pricing tiers** (e.g., basic, standard, and premium) allows clients to choose an option that suits their needs and budget, while also giving you flexibility in how you structure your pricing.

⭐ **Basic tier:** This is your most affordable option, offering essential services for clients on a budget. For example, a basic website design without custom features or complex functionality.

⭐ **Standard tier:** This is your middle option, with a **good balance** of value and services. It could include more customization, features, or a faster turnaround.

⭐ **Premium tier:** This is your top-tier service with all the bells and whistles. It's for clients who **want top-notch** quality and are willing to pay for it. Think of it as a **high-touch, comprehensive** service with full attention to detail.

Tiered pricing works because it allows clients to feel like they're **choosing a package that fits their needs** and **budget,** while you're still able to capture higher-value projects that align with your skills and experience.

## Did you know?

Implementing tiered pricing can significantly boost your revenue. For instance, a case study by Videofruit demonstrated that by introducing three pricing packages—basic, standard, and premium—they increased their revenue by $102,224 in just one launch. This success was attributed to offering clients multiple options, allowing them to choose a package that best fit their needs and budgets, thereby enhancing sales and customer satisfaction.

## Factor in Your Overheads and Profit Margins

When setting your pricing, it's crucial to consider the **overhead costs** of running your freelance business. This includes things like:

⭐ Software subscriptions (e.g., design tools, project management tools)

⭐ Taxes and fees (don't forget to account for self-employment taxes)

⭐ Marketing and advertising costs

⭐ Office supplies and equipment

⭐ Time spent on non-billable tasks (e.g., meetings, admin work)

To ensure you're making a profit, don't just base your pricing on how much time you spend working; you need to **factor in your costs and desired profit margin.** If you want to make $60,000 a year and work 30 hours per week, calculate your hourly rate based on your desired income **plus** any overhead costs. This way, you're ensuring that your pricing covers both your business expenses and the **income you want to take home.**

## Be Confident and Don't Undercharge

The hardest part of pricing is **knowing when to say no** to low-paying jobs. **Undercharging** is a trap many freelancers fall into, especially when starting. You might be tempted to accept lower rates to get your foot in the door or to land a job. But this can hurt you in the long run, and it's important to build **confidence in your pricing.**
If a potential client tries to haggle or asks for a discount, **don't be afraid to stand firm.** Explain the **value you offer** and why your rates are fair. If the client isn't willing to meet your price, it's better to move on than to accept a deal that undercuts your worth.

**Pricing confidently** sets the tone for your entire business. Clients respect **freelancers who know their value** and are willing to stand by their prices.

## Know Your Worth

Pricing your services like a pro requires a combination of **self-awareness, market knowledge, and confidence.** By understanding your value, factoring in overhead, offering tiered pricing, and knowing when to stand firm, you'll ensure you're charging what you're truly worth. Don't sell yourself short—freelancing is a business, and your pricing should reflect that. When you price strategically, you position yourself as an expert who is confident in the quality and impact of your work, setting the stage for long-term success and **higher-value projects.**

## Key Takeaways

⭐ **Understand Your Value:** Before setting your price, assess the impact of your work, your experience, and your niche expertise. Freelancers specializing in a niche can charge up to 50% more than generalists due to the specialized value they bring to clients.

⭐ **Choose the Right Pricing Method:** Decide between hourly or project-based pricing based on the type of work. Hourly rates are best for variable tasks, while project rates are ideal for clearly defined work where you can price based on results and value rather than just time spent.

⭐ **Implement Tiered Pricing:** Offering basic, standard, and premium pricing options allows clients to choose what fits their budget while giving you flexibility. This strategy also helps boost revenue by catering to a wider range of client needs, as demonstrated by a case study where Videofruit increased revenue by over $100K using tiered pricing.

⭐ **Factor in Overheads:** When setting your pricing, consider all overhead costs such as software, taxes, marketing, and non-billable hours. Ensure your rates cover both your business expenses and desired profit margins to achieve sustainable income.

⭐ **Be Confident in Your Rates:** Don't undercharge to land jobs, as this can hurt your long-term success. Stand firm on your rates, explaining the value you provide. Confidence in your pricing reflects your professionalism and ensures that clients respect your worth.

# HOW TO MAINTAIN

# Client Relationships for Retention

## Turning first-time clients into  long-term business partners

One of the best ways to ensure the growth of your freelancing business is by building **strong, lasting relationships** with your clients. But securing your first job is just the beginning. **The real success lies in turning those one-time clients into repeat customers,** building **long-term partnerships** that bring you consistent work, referrals, and job security.

In this chapter, we'll dive into the key strategies for maintaining strong client relationships that will not only help you retain your clients but also create long-term business partnerships that make freelancing a sustainable career. Let's break down how you can keep your clients happy and engaged so that they keep coming back to you for future work.

### Did you know?

Studies show that retaining an existing client is 5 to 25 times cheaper than acquiring a new one. Freelancers who focus on building long-term relationships with clients experience higher profitability and a steadier stream of work. By nurturing these relationships through consistent communication, delivering high-quality work, and exceeding expectations, freelancers can turn one-time clients into repeat business partners who offer ongoing projects and referrals.

## Exceed Expectations and  Deliver Consistently

The first and most effective way to retain clients is by **exceeding their expectations.** When you go above and beyond, it shows your commitment to quality and your dedication to their success. Whether it's delivering a project ahead of schedule, offering extra value, or just going the extra mile to ensure they're happy with the final outcome—clients remember when you put in that little extra effort.

Consistency is key here. Make sure that **every project, no matter how small,** is completed with the same level of **attention to detail** and **professionalism.** Once clients see that they can consistently rely on you for quality work, they're more likely to hire you again and recommend you to others. **Exceeding expectations** and being consistent **builds trust** and lays the foundation for long-term business relationships.

## Be Proactive and  Stay Engaged

One mistake many freelancers make is becoming too passive once the project is completed. They simply **move on to the next job** without staying engaged with the client. **Being proactive** can be a game-changer when it comes to client retention.

Stay in touch with clients even when you're not actively working on a project. **Check in periodically** to see how they're doing and if they need help with anything. If you see something that could improve their business, whether it's a new service you offer or a suggestion based on trends in their industry, **reach out and offer your help.** Clients appreciate a freelancer **who cares about their business** and stays involved even after the project is over.

This proactive approach shows your commitment and lets your clients know that you're **invested in their success**—not just in completing a one-off job. It also increases the chances of **more opportunities** coming your way in the future.

## Open and Honest Communication

Clear communication is at the heart of every successful working relationship. Regular updates, transparent discussions about challenges, and **honest feedback** are all vital to maintaining trust with your clients. From the start, set clear expectations about deadlines, project scope, and costs. If something comes up and a deadline is at risk, don't wait until the last minute to notify the client—**be proactive** in addressing it. Always communicate any changes or delays, and provide **solutions** or alternatives.

Also, ask for feedback after each project and show that you **value their opinions.** If a client isn't completely satisfied, work with them to make things right. Clients appreciate a freelancer who's willing to **accept constructive criticism** and improve. This **transparency** and **honesty** fosters trust and strengthens your client relationships over time.

## Offer Additional Value Beyond the Project Scope

One of the easiest ways to turn a **one-time client into a repeat client** is by offering value that goes beyond the initial project scope. After the project is completed, think about how you can add **extra value** to their business, even if it's just a small gesture.

For example, if you're a web designer, you could follow up a month after a website launch with a few tips on improving its SEO or user experience. If you're a writer, you might send a **follow-up email** with a suggestion for a blog post or marketing campaign idea based on the client's goals. These **small acts of added value** show that you're invested in their long-term success and not just looking to finish the current project and move on. Offering **extra value,** whether it's through proactive suggestions, free advice, or **additional services,** is a great way to **cement your relationship** with clients and make them more likely to return.

## Create a Client Retention Plan

Client retention doesn't just happen on its own—it requires strategy. Start by developing a **client retention plan** that includes specific steps for maintaining relationships. This could include:

⭐ **Scheduled check-ins:** Reach out to clients at regular intervals, even when you're not working on a project.

⭐ **Exclusive offers:** Create loyalty programs or offer discounted rates for repeat clients.

⭐ **Personalized services:** Make each client feel like they are your top priority by tailoring your services to their specific needs.

A well-thought-out client retention strategy ensures that you don't just wait for work to come your way—it ensures that **clients continue to come back** because they value your services and the relationship you've built.

## Handle Issues Quickly and **Professionally**

In every freelancing career, there will be moments when things don't go as planned. Whether it's a missed deadline, a miscommunication, or a client who's unhappy with the work, **how you handle problems** is what will ultimately determine whether the client returns.

When issues arise, stay calm, take **responsibility** for the situation, and **resolve it professionally.** If the problem was your fault, be honest about it and offer solutions to fix it. If the issue is out of your control, explain the situation clearly and work with the client to find an acceptable solution. **How you handle difficult situations** will leave a lasting impression and could turn a potentially **bad experience** into an opportunity for growth.

## More Than Doing Business

Turning first-time clients into long-term business partners is all about **nurturing the relationship.** By consistently delivering exceptional work, being proactive in communication, offering value beyond the project scope, and handling issues with professionalism, you can create **strong bonds** that keep clients coming back for more. Retention is not about locking clients in—**it's about earning their trust** and continuing to deliver quality that **keeps them loyal.**

Mastering client retention can be the difference between a freelancer who constantly chases new projects and one who builds a steady stream of repeat clients. **Long-term relationships** don't just mean more work—it means a **stronger reputation,** consistent income, and a fulfilling freelancing career.

## Key Takeaways

⭐ **Exceed Expectations and Be Consistent:** Delivering work that goes above and beyond client expectations, while maintaining consistency in quality, is key to retaining clients. Clients will come back when they know they can rely on you for high-quality results.

⭐ **Be Proactive and Stay Engaged:** Don't let the relationship end once the project is completed. Check in with clients periodically, offer suggestions, and remain engaged with their business. This proactive approach shows that you're invested in their long-term success.

⭐ **Clear and Honest Communication:** Transparent communication about timelines, challenges, and feedback helps build trust. Always keep clients updated on the progress and address any issues promptly and professionally to maintain a strong working relationship.

⭐ **Offer Additional Value:** Go beyond the project scope by offering extra value such as advice, follow-ups, or additional services. These small gestures will reinforce your commitment to the client's success and encourage repeat business.

⭐ **Create a Client Retention Plan:** Develop a strategy for maintaining client relationships, which could include regular check-ins, exclusive offers, or personalized services. A structured retention plan ensures ongoing business and strengthens client loyalty over time.

# HOW TO MOVE CLIENTS

# Upwork to
# WhatsApp (Black-Hat)

# Streamlining communication with clients for better business relations

Before we dive into this topic, it's important to make it **crystal clear** that this is a **blackhat technique—**and **Upwork does not recommend** or support this practice. **Upwork's terms of service** prohibit freelancers from bypassing the platform for direct communication or payments before a contract is completed or after it's established. The platform is designed to protect both clients and freelancers, ensuring **security, dispute resolution,** and **payment protection** through its system. Moving clients off Upwork before the right time or without adhering to these guidelines could result in **account suspension,** loss of earnings, or even a permanent ban.

That said, some freelancers have found ways to **streamline communication** by shifting from Upwork's messaging system to **external platforms** like **WhatsApp** once they've built a solid relationship with the client. This is **not recommended** by Upwork and should be considered **risky** and **potentially against the platform's rules.** In this chapter, we'll explain the **risks** involved, how it's done (often behind the scenes), and why it's essential to be cautious if you consider this path.

## Why Do Some Freelancers Move Clients Off   Upwork?

The primary **motivation** behind moving clients off Upwork is to **simplify communication.** With platforms like WhatsApp, messages are immediate, and there's less delay compared to Upwork's often slower response times. WhatsApp offers a **more personal touch,** allowing for **quick check-ins, instant feedback,** and **easy updates** without navigating through Upwork's interface. For many, the **speed of communication** can significantly enhance the **business relationship,** especially in **fast-paced industries.**

Additionally, using external platforms provides **more flexibility,** as clients are not restricted to Upwork's formalities. Freelancers can also **skip fees** for communication within Upwork or engage with clients more **freely and directly** without restrictions on message volume or tone.

However, as tempting as it may seem to move clients off Upwork, **it comes with serious risks. Upwork has strict guidelines** that prohibit this kind of behavior to **protect both freelancers and clients.** Violating these terms could lead to losing access to Upwork's job listings, payment protection, and the platform's **secure environment.**

## How Moving Clients Off   Upwork (Blackhat) Works

For freelancers who choose to take the risk, the process typically involves:

⭐ **Building Trust First**

Before suggesting a shift to WhatsApp, the freelancer must have **established trust** with the client through **several successful interactions.** This means building a **reliable relationship,** demonstrating your skills and professionalism, and getting the client comfortable with your work.

⭐ **Offering Efficiency and Convenience**

The most common approach is to offer WhatsApp as a **faster and more convenient** communication channel. You may suggest that WhatsApp offers **instant messaging,** which allows for quicker updates, more flexibility in working hours, and an overall smoother workflow.

⭐ **Transitioning Once the Client Is Comfortable**

Typically, clients don't mind shifting to WhatsApp if they've already developed a **strong rapport** with the freelancer. Freelancers usually wait until after the **first few successful projects** or **successful ongoing contracts** before even considering a transition.

⭐ **Explaining the Benefits of Direct Communication**

Once trust is established, you might mention that **WhatsApp communication** offers more **efficient project updates, quicker feedback loops,** and **less formality,** all of which are **more convenient** for both sides. This can help the client feel that the switch is in their **best interest.**

## Risks of Moving Clients Off  Upwork?

While the thought of **direct, instant communication** through WhatsApp may seem appealing, it's important to **understand the risks:**

⭐ **Violation of Upwork's Terms of Service:** Moving communication off Upwork can lead **to account suspension** or termination if Upwork discovers you are bypassing their system.

⭐ **Loss of Payment Protection:** One of the biggest benefits of using Upwork is the **payment protection system,** which ensures that freelancers are paid for their work. By moving communication to a platform like WhatsApp, you **lose the ability to use Upwork's secure payment system,** increasing the risk of getting scammed or not getting paid for your work.

⭐ **Dispute Resolution Complications:** Upwork offers a formal dispute resolution process if issues arise during a project. If you're communicating off the platform, **there is no protection** if a dispute arises—meaning you are fully reliant on the client's honesty.

⭐ **Lack of Documentation:** Upwork tracks your communication and project progress through its platform. When you move to a third-party app like WhatsApp, you lose the ability to **easily reference project messages** and **discussions.** If there's any issue, you might not have access to the history and context that can help resolve it.

## Upwork's Perspective and the Importance of  Following Rules

While the idea of using WhatsApp or other external communication tools may seem like a way to **streamline your business,** it's important to remember that **Upwork's rules are in place** for your protection. By bypassing the platform, you risk losing access to **payment protection, dispute resolution,** and **client safety** features that make Upwork such a valuable platform for freelancers.

If you're looking to build a sustainable and secure freelancing career, it's crucial to understand and **adhere to Upwork's terms.** Not only will this keep your account safe, but it will also build **client trust** and give you the **security** you need to grow your business long-term.

# Know the Risks Beforehand

While moving clients off Upwork to WhatsApp may seem like an efficient way to improve communication, it's a **risky move** that can have serious consequences for both you and your clients. It's vital to be aware of **Upwork's rules** and consider the potential **downsides** before engaging in any practice that violates those terms.

Instead of bypassing Upwork, focus on **optimizing your communication on the platform.** Use Upwork's **messaging system** to keep your conversations organized and **professional,** and **build your reputation** through the official channels. If a client genuinely prefers to move to a different communication platform later in the relationship, **discuss the benefits and risks openly** while maintaining transparency.

## Key Takeaways

⭐ **Upwork's Strict Terms of Service:** Moving client communication off Upwork to external platforms like WhatsApp is against Upwork's terms of service. Violating these rules **can lead to account suspension, loss of payment protection,** and **dispute resolution rights.**

⭐ **Building Trust Before Moving Communication:** Freelancers may be tempted to move communication to WhatsApp for efficiency, but it's crucial to **build trust with the client first** through multiple successful interactions before suggesting the shift.

⭐ **Risks of Loss of Protection:** By moving conversations off-platform, freelancers lose Upwork's **payment protection system** and **dispute resolution** support, which can expose them to **non-payment risks** and **difficulties if disputes arise.**

⭐ **Loss of Documentation:** Upwork tracks communications and project progress, which is invaluable in case of issues. Moving to WhatsApp can **eliminate access to communication history,** which could be essential for resolving future conflicts.

⭐ **Opt for Upwork's Messaging System:** Instead of bypassing Upwork's messaging system, it's safer to optimize communication on the platform. Building your reputation and maintaining transparency within Upwork's rules ensures **long-term client relationships** and **business security.**

SCALE YOUR BUSINESS

## Hire Bidders

# Focus on what you do best – hire someone for the workload

As your freelancing business grows, you'll inevitably face the challenge of managing more work than you can handle on your own. You might reach a point where you're struggling to keep up with client proposals, or perhaps you're ready to scale and take on more projects—but can't do it all yourself. That's when **hiring bidders** becomes an essential part of your strategy. By delegating the task of **bidding on jobs** to someone else, you free up your time to focus on the core work that **only you can do**—delivering high-quality projects and maintaining relationships with your clients.

Let's dive into how to hire the right bidders for your freelancing business and optimize your operations.

## Did you know?

According to a study by **Freelancer's Union,** 41% of freelancers say they experience burnout due to overwhelming workloads. Hiring additional support, such as bidders to handle proposals, can reduce stress and increase productivity by allowing freelancers to focus on their areas of expertise, leading to more successful business scaling.

## Where to Hire **Bidders?**

Finding the right person to help you with bidding is key. You want someone who understands the market, can spot good opportunities, and knows how to craft proposals that get noticed. Here are a few **strategies** to hire reliable bidders:

⭐ **Facebook Upwork Groups**

There are numerous **Upwork-focused groups** on Facebook, where freelancers from all over the world gather to discuss strategies, share tips, and sometimes even advertise services. These groups can be a great place to find **experienced bidders** who are already familiar with how Upwork's system works. Make sure to join **active groups** with members who have a proven track record and a willingness to contribute.

⭐ **LinkedIn Posts**

LinkedIn is a professional network where you can find **freelancers** and **virtual assistants** who specialize in bidding and sales. Posting an ad on LinkedIn specifically looking for a **bidder** can help you tap into a **larger pool of talent,** as many freelancers actively look for new job opportunities. Look for **candidates** with strong experience in the niche you need and **verify their work experience** by checking their profile and recommendations.

⭐ **Stay in Touch with the Freelancer Market**

Freelancing is a dynamic market. It's essential to **stay connected** with it by networking, attending online events, and engaging in discussions with fellow freelancers. This will give you an insight into the talent pool and help you connect with **skilled bidders** who are actively looking for work.

## Did you know?

According to a report by **Harvard Business Review,** 85% of hiring decisions are based on the candidate's ability to demonstrate niche expertise and relevant experience. In freelancing, ensuring that a bidder has specific industry knowledge and a portfolio that reflects their competence can increase the likelihood of securing successful, high-quality projects by 70%.

## How to Evaluate Bidders?

Once you've found potential candidates, the next step is to **evaluate them** carefully. You need to make sure that the person you hire is capable of delivering quality work and is trustworthy in representing your business. Here's what to look for:

⭐ **Ask for Their Portfolio**

A strong portfolio is essential, but don't put too much trust in it right away. Portfolios can be fabricated, so while it's important to see what kind of work they've done before, don't take everything at face value. Ask them about the **specific projects** they've worked on and the **results** they achieved. Try to get them to explain their process so you can gauge whether they understand the intricacies of bidding.

⭐ **Check Their Upwork Profile**

One of the best ways to evaluate a bidder is to look at their **Upwork profile.** A strong Upwork profile is a **good indicator** that the freelancer knows how to navigate the platform and has an understanding of client expectations. If the bidder doesn't have an Upwork profile or hasn't worked on Upwork before, ask them how they've gained experience. If they've been working for a company, ask for the **company name** and verify it. **Niche expertise** matters here—make sure they are **well-versed in Upwork's system** and can bid competitively.

⭐ **Niche Expertise**

Ensure that the bidder you hire has experience relevant to the **projects you're bidding on.** For example, a **graphic designer** might not be the best fit for bidding on **content writing** projects, and vice versa. The bidder should have a deep **understanding of the niche** they're bidding on. Ask them about their **previous work** and the **type of projects** they've handled. A generic bidder might not have the expertise needed to understand the **specific needs of your clients,** which could result in poor-quality bids.

⭐ **Hire on a Trial Period**

Instead of hiring a bidder full-time right away, it's wise to offer a **trial period** of **15 days.** During this trial period, set **clear expectations and targets.** For example, the bidder should aim to land **at least 3 clients** more than what you've been getting in your inbox. This helps assess their effectiveness and ensures that they can deliver the results you expect. The trial will give you a chance to evaluate their work and determine whether they're a good fit for the long term.

## What Salary to Offer?

Compensation is crucial in attracting the right talent, but it's also important to structure it in a way that motivates performance. Here's a breakdown of the **salary structure** you can offer your bidders:

⭐ **Beginner-Level Bidders**

For those just starting out or with limited experience, offer **a salary of 15,000 PKR** with a **10%–20% commission** on the projects they land. This ensures they're motivated to bring in clients and rewarded for their effort. The commission gives them a financial incentive to **work harder** and get more projects.

⭐ **Experienced Bidders**

As you hire more experienced bidders and your business grows, you can increase the **fixed salary** while cutting back the commission. Once a bidder hits a salary range of **50,000 PKR,** you can shift to a **10% fixed commission,** cutting down on the **variable nature of the pay.** This ensures **stability** for both the freelancer and your business while still providing incentives to perform well.

⭐ **Salary and Commission Breakdown**

Here's a simple **salary and commission structure** based on targets:

- **100% target:** Full salary + the agreed-upon commission
- **70% target:** Full salary, **no commission**
- **30% target:** Half salary, **no commission**

This structure encourages your bidders to stay motivated and focus on **hitting their targets.** If they fall short of the agreed target, it impacts their commission, ensuring they remain **driven and productive.**

## Key Takeaways

⭐ **Delegate to Scale:** Hire bidders to handle the workload of client proposals, freeing up your time to focus on high-quality project delivery.

⭐ **Evaluate Expertise:** Ensure bidders have relevant niche experience and a proven track record on platforms like Upwork.

⭐ **Trial Periods Work:** Start with a 15-day trial to assess the bidder's effectiveness and compatibility with your business needs.

⭐ **Compensation Structure:** Offer a combination of fixed salary and commission to motivate bidders while ensuring stability as your business grows.

⭐ **Strategic Growth:** Focus on logical scaling by hiring skilled bidders, setting clear targets, and providing performance incentives to drive success.

## Scale Logically not Emotionally

Hiring bidders is a **strategic decision** that allows you to **scale your freelancing business** without burning out. By hiring the right person and offering a well-structured compensation plan, you can free up your time to focus on what you do best—delivering excellent work to your clients. Evaluate bidders carefully, set clear targets, and offer incentives that encourage top performance. With the right approach, hiring bidders can be a game-changing move that leads to long-term success and growth.