

CHAPTER

TAKE CONTROL  
OF YOUR FUTURE

05

IPSE.US

# BE YOUR OWN BOSS

## The Online Survival Guide

**ipse**<sup>™</sup><sub>u.s.</sub>  
For one, for all

# On & In-Demand

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Whether you're a freelancer, gig worker, side-hustler or self-employed, many Independent Workers will utilize an online hiring platform to find their next gig. The basics of running your online business can be quite daunting – especially if you are not familiar with the process. Luckily, our online survival guide is here to help. This guide will help you learn about using online hiring platforms so you can gig and go independently.



## Getting Started

What service are you going to promote and how are you going to make it marketable? How much time can you commit to your business of one? Does gigging fit within your current schedule? What are your goals using freelance marketplaces? Are you willing to invest your money into marketing, education and outsourcing in order to grow your business?

You've got a skill and now you're ready to market it online. When you register on an online hiring platform you will need to set up a profile including an introductory bio and offer examples of previous work. You then can be found by clients. After you complete a project you are usually rated by your client, allowing you to build up valuable reviews. Utilizing these platforms is a great way to build up your portfolio, grow your client base and gain invaluable experience. But before you start taking on projects you will need to have a contract.

Have a contract. Your contract doesn't have to be long or complicated. But it should clarify payment terms, down payments, payment method, due date, late penalties or incentives, project scope (including what changes would constitute an increase in cost estimate) and provide answers to questions that might arise during the course of the project. Understand the terms and conditions of the online platform you've chosen so that you can frame your contract around their payment practices.



Your profile should be specific to you, your services and your abilities. Making a killer profile requires you to showcase your experience with an eye-catching image, punchy bio and stellar reviews. It's your storefront, so make it as personalized and professional as possible.

Your bio is your opportunity to pitch your skills and services, but it is also an opportunity to speak to potential clients about how you are the best person to solve their problem. Speak about how you provide solutions.

Add all your skills, because most likely it'll be that combination of skills that you possess that will impress a client.



## Understanding Your Clients

Find out as much about each client as possible, understand their context, identify what their challenges are and how you can help solve them. Your understanding of their needs will be valued and will allow you to better tailor your services to your clients' requirements. It is not always about telling them how good you are, but how you can resolve their challenges and focus on what they need.

On-demand employers typically want their jobs done fast and don't want to spend too much time discussing the details of the project. Are you able to understand their needs, turn the project around in a reasonable amount of time and be available if problems arise? If you can do these things, you're in good shape and ready to bring on some clients.





## Getting Work

Cold outreach isn't a fan favorite, but sometimes it is a necessary evil. Do not wait for work to come to you. Having the best profile isn't going to guarantee work. You must make time to research job postings and opportunities, network on social media and reach out to past clients.

Promotion. Marketing is critical to building a successful freelance business. Some Independent Workers use their social media platforms instead of a website – it's a free, quick and easy way to create an online portfolio. Sites like LinkedIn allow you to set up a custom URL so you can publish a personalized link to your profile. This enables you to both maintain contact with past clients while building your network. Another tip – work your referral network. Asking for recommendations from past colleagues or clients is a good reason to get in touch and keeps you on their radar.

Speak with your potential clients clearly and succinctly as you discuss possible work engagements. Each conversation doesn't have to feel like a job interview. Be professional, straightforward and honest about your skillset.

Figure out your pricing. Test out your pricing structures as early as possible. Setting a price will help you find out what kind of clientele to attract and to determine if hourly, project-based or another form of pricing works best for you.



## Keeping on Task

Get organized. How you establish a relationship with a client from the very beginning will set expectations for the entirety of the project. Reach out to clients so they don't have to reach out to you. Utilize a project management tool that integrates with a digital calendar to set reminders, keep on top of projects and stay on task.



## Delivery

Deliver on time. No excuses. Give yourself an ample amount of time for delivery, ensuring that everything is included in the order. Dot your "i's" and cross those "t's". This is where your professionalism truly shines.





## Getting Paid

More than 70% of freelancers have trouble getting paid at some point in their careers. Having a contract that clearly defines terms of payment and the scope of the work will notify your client that on-time payment is expected. Remember, nobody freelances for free.

Get paid upfront by requesting a deposit. This trains your client to pay you when the time comes, and helps your client familiarize themselves with your payment terms and invoicing system.

Don't wait to invoice. Since you've already defined payment terms (due upon receipt, net 30, net 60, etc.) in the signed contract, the next step is to invoice promptly. This timeliness will signal that the same expectations apply to your clients' payment turnaround.

Set up recurring invoices and automate reminders for clients.

Provide your clients with multiple payment options. Having various payment options have their upsides and downsides, but digital payments through sites like PayPal are securely processed, convenient and trusted by your clients. But a payment processing fee is taken. So, weigh your options before you commit to one or multiple payment options.



## Tools of the Trade

It is essential to manage your personal finances as an Independent Worker. A good cash flow checklist ensures that your bills are being paid on time as you allocate money for both personal and business expenses. Keeping tabs on investments, net income and cash flow are just one item you need a tool for.

Here are some other tools of the trade that are essential for maintenance and growth:

1. Track your projects with a project management software that integrates with your calendar.
2. Invoice software: Send your clients invoices efficiently and electronically without the hassle of paper receipts and payment delays.
3. CRM or Customer Relationship Management software: Keep track of clients, projects and payments. CRM's also integrate with email marketing software so you can stay in touch with clients.
4. Social media post manager: plan your posts ahead of time to focus on other things
5. Online payment processing: Process payments from clients, take payments, request payments all electronically. Save some time by utilizing additional features like invoicing clients.





## Marketing Yourself

Developing your brand is an important first step in marketing and could mean the difference between you and your competition. It is important to grab the attention of potential clients and maintain it. Keep your brand consistent across all mediums.

Some Independent Workers use their social media platforms instead of a website – it's a free, quick and easy way of creating an online portfolio that is always up to date.

When selecting the right social media platforms for your business, it is better to choose a few that you can engage on frequently and keep up to date, rather than spreading yourself too thin. Make sure you keep each platform up to date and engage with those you are connected with to build relationships.

Expanding your reach via social channels is a great way for you to keep in touch with past clients and attract new ones, share your projects with followers and turn them into advocates for your brand. Social proof as a marketing tactics reinforces your credibility and value.

Make sure the respective platform compliments your business and targets your core audience.

Reinvest money into marketing based on your Return on Investment (ROI).



## Referrals and Reviews

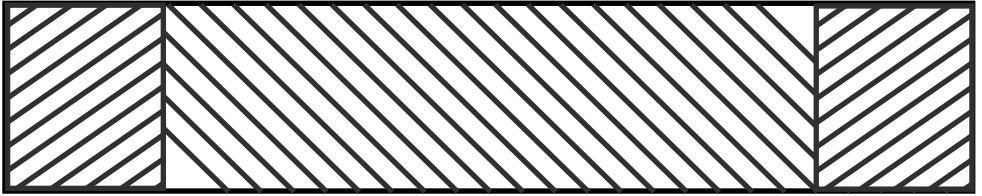
Set yourself apart by showcasing your proven track record with customer reviews. What people say, matters: 74% of customers trust online reviews as much as personal recommendations – this is a huge shift in thinking that has become more prominent year over year. This, of course, translates to dollars, as customers put their money where their trust it.

Stay in touch with past clients and colleagues by asking for recommendations. This simple touch gives you additional reviews and keeps you on their radar for future projects.

How to get reviews: Just ask. When to ask for reviews? Right away, after every job. Customers are more likely to give you feedback right away. The review will be more detailed, accurate, and exciting if you catch them while they are still thrilled by what you've done.

Negative reviews? Don't fret – just get more reviews – many businesses focus on how to remove one or two bad reviews, but the most effective way to combat a few negative words is to load up on the rave reviews.





## **iPSE x Moonlighting**

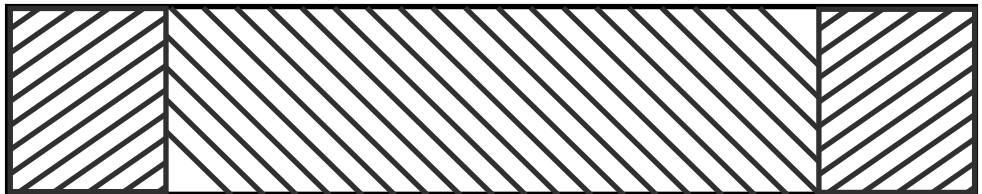
iPSE-U.S. and Moonlighting, have partnered together to empower America's Independent Workers.

Together Moonlighting, an on-demand marketplace, and iPSE-U.S., the Association of Independent Workers are committed to building a future where all people can choose their preferred workstyle, pursue their passions, and build a better future for themselves and their families without barriers, obstacles, or limitations.

Whether you're looking for contract, part-time, remote or gig work, iPSE-U.S. takes the hassle out of your side-hustle.

### **About Moonlighting**

Moonlighting is the first mobile, on-demand solution empowering people to earn extra money and get tasks done quickly. Moonlighting creates a virtual marketplace for freelancers and small businesses to hire or be hired directly from mobile devices.









# Don't forget we're here when you need us

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iPSE-U.S., the Association of Independent Workers, is America's only not-for-profit association dedicated to supporting, representing and protecting the independent workforce.

iPSE-U.S. offers tailored membership packages with portable benefits, which will enable you to embrace your chosen workstyle.

No matter your work discipline or workstyle, iPSE helps you get ahead in business. To find out more visit **[ipse.us](https://ipse.us)**.

 <p>Free guides, toolkits and templates.</p>	 <p>Exclusive networking and business events for Independent Workers.</p>	 <p>Access to training courses.</p>
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