



How to Improve Your Prospecting Efforts

Ed Gandia: Hi, everyone, Ed Gandia here with International Freelancers Academy. And today I want to talk with you about prospecting for clients and specifically about proactive, outbound prospecting, which is different from more passive marketing where prospects contact you because they've heard of you through someone else or because they happened to have come across your website, for example.

So when you net it all out, the two biggest variables that determine your chances of landing great clients are: number one, going to a prospect's congregate, so going to where prospects actually hang out where they're going to be there with actual projects and actual work; and number two, going to where you're known or leveraging your existing relationships. That's really it. I mean successful prospecting really boils down to your ability to spend more of your time where these variables are high.

So for instance, if you look at the vertical axis, one extreme example would be the online job boards and marketplaces. So these are online marketplaces where prospects actually have projects where they're going to look for solo professionals to help them complete these projects. And when you look at the horizontal axis, reaching out to friends, colleagues, and relatives is a proven way to find clients because the trust factor is so high. They know you so you skip that whole trust phase and the sales cycle and trying to lay a new client.





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If we look at the bottom of these two axes, you'll find that there are plenty of prospecting activities that are very low on both of these variables. So launching a website and hoping that people will find it and will hire you from that, or doing random advertising or pay-per-click advertising just because it sounded like a good idea—these things tend to be very low on both the fact that people know you or the fact that this is where prospects are actually hanging out.

Again, your goal is to spend as much time going to where these variables are high. But let's face it. Most of us don't spend our time way out here in this outer, outer edge. And there really aren't many things you can do that will allow you to stay in this small sliver of perfection all the time. But there's a general range that you should success just by working on prospecting tasks that yield great prospects, great clients even if they're not in a very outer arc or sliver we just talked about. So let's go through some of these.

So one of them we've talked about already, which is the online marketplaces: Elance, oDesk, et cetera. Direct mail. Cold calling. So because you're picking these lists, you're going out to people that you've hand-selected, you're actually going to prospects that hopefully have a high probability of needing your services. Social media is another great one if used correctly. Prospect-rich organizations and networking events.





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Also, kind of on the other side, because you're really well known here, existing clients and going deeper within those accounts to find more opportunities for projects. And of course we talked about friends, colleagues, and relatives and why that really increases your chances of landing clients when you're recommended.

But the idea here is not to figure out—okay, so I'm using these tactics and there are other that I haven't listed that are in this outer arc—but how can I optimize each strategy so that I can get even more out of these efforts? In other words, what can I do to move either to the right or further up so that I can at least try to be in that outer arc? So let's take some examples here.

So online job boards and marketplaces. So rather than going to a bunch of them and just randomly going for projects and chasing projects, why not pick just one of these marketplaces and focus on developing a track record and a following and some credibility there. And in that way, you dramatically increase your chances again moving to the right and being better known.

With direct mail, instead of just sending out one mailer, why not seed that list through valuable information that you send occasionally rather than just one letter. Or why not do multiple mailings throughout the year so you increase the repetition and it increases your chances of being known.





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The same thing with cold calling. I talked to a freelancer not long ago who said, “You know one thing I do sometimes and I speak to these associations, and then I cold call the members. So I’m known. I can say, hey, I was there at the November meeting. You might or might not remember me if you were there. And I spoke on this topic.” That’s a great way of getting known and then increase your chances of cold calling success.

Go into prospect-rich organizations. Okay. So how can you increase your chances of success there? Well, why not get involved in some of the committees and board of directors instead of just showing up for the networking events? With the existing clients, you can now move up by proactively asking clients for introductions to other people in the organizations. Or why not tell them about the other services you offer they may not be aware of.

With friends and colleagues, you can explain what you do in the way they understand it in layman’s terms. And by being clear about the types of organizations and people you’re looking for, you can increase the chances that they’ll be able to refer you to people who can use your services.

All right. So I have an assignment for you. Take a look at all the outbound prospecting activities that you engaged in right now and figure out where they fall on this graph. Are they somewhere in this outer periphery? Do any of them fall in the lower left of this





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graph? And if they do, try to eliminate or maybe even modify those activities so they're more effective and keeping in mind that the top two variables that impact effectiveness. And for activities in the upper periphery, again list some things you can do to either move up or right in this graph.

So I hope you enjoyed this episode. This has been Ed Gandia with International Freelancers Academy. I hope you have an awesome day.

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