



INTERNATIONAL FREELANCERS ACADEMY

Training that transforms your solo business

11 Turnaround Strategies That Can Revitalize Your Solo Business Right NOW

INTRODUCTION:

Welcome, everyone. You know if you're a freelancer and you're going through tough times right now--maybe just business is a little slow----there are basically two different paths you can take: one is you can try to make some improvements in key areas of your business such as your marketing, work habits, pricing, that sort of thing. And that can certainly have a positive impact. But there are times when doing these things is the equivalent of making decorative improvements to a house with a cracked foundation. In those cases, all the painting, all the tile work, landscaping, all the remodeling in the world will only take you so far. At some point you have to address your foundation problem. And that's what this class is all about.

I'm going to be sharing with you eleven different strategies for completely reworking all or just part of your business in order to boost your income, create greater diversity in terms of where your income comes from, and to just have more fun and flexibility in your business and in your personal life. Now I should tell you that the material from this class came from more than two dozen interviews that I recently conducted with freelancers and solo-preneurs both in North America and in Europe. And as I interviewed people who are doing well and I asked them how they were staying busy with profitable work, I started noticing a pattern. I realized that many of these professionals were taking a more creative approach to their businesses. They were either promoting themselves very differently, offering a different set of services that were more in line with the economic reality we're seeing right now, some were going after different markets, or just revamping their businesses altogether and creating an entirely different model.



Now before we begin, because of the nature of the topic, I should tell you that this class is going to be a little different from what we've done in the past. So rather than providing you with step-by-step instructions and steps and systems that you can follow to the tee, you're going to be learning mostly by example. So here's what I'm going to do: I'm going to explain a strategy and then provide you with high-level tips on what it takes to make it work. But then I'm going to spend most of the time on that strategy talking about how actual freelancers out there have implemented it. Now I think this approach by teaching by example in this case, is going to help everyone better because even though some of you may be able to duplicate one or more of these examples exactly as I present them, most of these will instead serve as, I think, idea generators for you, sources of inspiration. They could become more starting points for creating strategies that are more personalized to your business and will work better in your particular set of circumstances. So I urge you to keep an open mind, don't brush off an example because you think that the profession I'm talking about is not yours or doesn't have anything to do with what you do for a living. Maybe that particular example doesn't, but chances are that the underlying strategy, the philosophy behind it, the core lesson behind it can be applied to your specific business in some way.

STRATEGY 1: TURN A HOBBY INTO A BUSINESS

Okay. So with that out of the way, let's get to it. Let's start with strategy number one, which is--turn a hobby into a business. So what is this about? Well, this is about taking a hobby or a passion outside of your core business and seeing if you can monetize that knowledge somehow. You can either go full-steam ahead and turn that hobby into a full-time business, or you can keep it as a sideline and just play it by ear as the business grows and develops. So let me give you a couple of example of two freelancers that I interviewed that did this very well. One is Jill Farris—and all these URLs and information are in the handout by the way so you can always go back later and check out their websites if you'd like.

But Jill had spent two decades in the design and publishing industry as a freelance graphic designer. For years she was happy, she was successful, she was doing really well, and she made a name for herself designing direct response advertising for magazine circulation. But as many of you know as the publishing industry began its decline a few years ago, she found herself competing with low-cost overseas freelancers, the growing popularity of do-it-yourself templates, and, of course, online media. So instead of fighting against the current, she decided to evolve with the times. And one day an idea hit her. Over the years, she had worked to balance life between being a mother and a



solo business owner. And she had always found time to cook healthy meals for her kids. Not only that but she also made it a point to teach her kids how to cook for themselves.

So she decided to blend her business savvy with her passion for the culinary arts to create “Cooking for Bachelors” TV, now the premier online cooking show for the everyday single. So after the launch of two successful seasons, Jill tells me that she finds herself the happiest that she has been for years. She’s doing well financially and, more importantly, she’s been able to immerse herself in something that has sprouted great faith in her abilities and also created an abundance of both personal and professional growth.

So Jill’s revenue model is based on product placements in her cooking videos. She seeks companies that have good lifestyle and food-related products to actually use on the show. She can even create an entire episode based on one ingredient or one cooking gadget. And she can even offer partial sponsorships for mixed-use videos. And this is for companies that want to get their name out there--this is a great way for them to market their products because it gives them quality presence on the web. So they can imbed the videos on their site. And Jill can also virally market the videos by placing them on more than 40 sites that carry the show in addition to her own website. She particularly favors small local emerging food industries. And because she lives in Brooklyn, New York, there are a ton of those. So finding these companies as potential sponsors is not a problem.

Another great example is Andy Hayes. Andy spent 10 years as a consultant for a large software company. And he started on the programming side but then worked his way into areas such as page design, usability, process re-design and project management. He loved what he did, but then his company got acquired and he moved on to another company. Well, finally after a few years of moving from one employer to the next, a year ago he decided to strike out on his own. But rather than doing software consulting, which was what he knew best, he decided to turn a passion of his—which is travel—into a business. And because of his background in web technology software and because he traveled so much in his job as a software consultant, he felt that there might be a way to transfer his skills into a different market.

Andy had been experimenting with travel blogging for some time and had been studying how other similar blogs were monetizing the sites. And he just felt that many of the monetization schemes that he was seeing out there in existing travel sites were just being poorly implemented. So he came up with some great ideas that would work better; he just didn’t have the time back then to do anything about them. So when he quit his job a year ago, he turned his attention to converting his blog into a fully-fledged online travel magazine, and he began to implement the online monetization strategies that he had



conceived a few years earlier. And it's namely all about commissions and advertising revenue streams. I've been to his site. It's got some great ideas in there. It's very creative what he's done.

He's also launched a tourism marketing side business because he saw a big need in the travel market that was not being served. So that's the other website that I've put in there. Specifically, he saw a need for helping small businesses in travel that wanted to make the most of online technology but just didn't have the knowledge or the expertise to do it themselves. And they didn't have the big budgets that the existing service providers were charging for this sort of work. So he began to offer a number of online marketing services to these smaller companies, specifically search engine optimization, website usability, and social media marketing as well as coaching and consulting in those areas.

And after one year in business, Andy's not quite earning what he used to earn as a software consultant, but he says his income continues to grow and, more importantly, he tells me that he's far happier, much more fulfilled than he was in the past. In fact, he told me that finally, he's finally been able to turn a passion of his into a business that hasn't just improved his quality of life; he says it has given him quality of life, something he didn't have before.

What does it take to make this work?

All right. So let's talk about what it takes to turn a side passion, a side hobby into a viable full-time or part-time business.

First thing is: you have to find a well-defined market. So you got to make sure that there are other players out there addressing that market already. That might sound counter-intuitive because you think, "Well, gosh nobody's really addressing that market. That's great." Well, probably not, it probably means that there's not a market for what you want to do out there. So, make sure that there are other providers addressing the market. It proves that it's viable.

Number two is: try to create a different but clear twist to a broader market. So, the key here for success is uniqueness. But it must be unique in a relevant way. So being unique in a way that doesn't mean anything to your target market or just creates confusion is not going to work. And a muddled message definitely is going to create more confusion. That's what I tend to see out there is: people think they have a great idea, but they can't even explain it in one or two sentences. So if you can't even do that, it's going to be very difficult for your prospects to understand it.



The next point is to make sure the market has a pressing need or challenge for what you want to offer. So if your value is not immediately obvious, you have to connect it somehow to something that's pressing or important, such as, you know, some examples from Jill and Andy: finding missus right. So in the case of "Cooking for Bachelors:" finding missus right. I mean that is a big priority for a lot of single guys, right? So in the case of Andy: you know, small companies that don't have these budgets for online marketing, to do it well. They don't have the internal resources to make it happen. They don't have the time to be able to make it happen. That's clearly an important and pressing need.

Another point is to look for topics with high levels of emotion around the subject. So anything from increasing your income, parenting, fertility, politics, religion, love and relationships: highly charged topics tend to sell well, tend to really create a strong emotional connection with your prospect. Also find a market that's willing to pay for the information, or the products or services you want to provide, at least has money to spend on related products that you can advertise on your site. So, for example, a few years ago, I created a e-book that promoted wine values. So my idea was that "Hey, there's a lot of wines out there that sell for \$10 or less and deliver great quality year after year, and you can count on them." And I was getting calls from a lot of my friends saying, "I'm throwing a party. I need to buy two cases of wine, but I don't want to spend a lot. Yet I don't want to serve junk." So I got tired of fielding those calls and I just wrote an e-book for it. And I thought, "Hey, this could be marketable." And it's done okay, but what I realized eventually is that people who are looking for really cheap, inexpensive wines may not be willing to pay \$19 for my e-book. They would rather just get that information from the sales clerk at the store. So, you know, great example of something that people may not be willing to pay for.

Another point is: make sure you're passionate about the topic. You're going to face tough times—every business does—so you need passion to get you through these tough times. Otherwise, you're going to give up too early. Also, at the same time, don't let your passion blind you. So know when you're being blinded by your passion and when there's a real business opportunity to capitalize on.

Also Jill strongly recommended--and this makes perfect sense: have a savings cushion or other income stream to support that transition, support the funding of your business until it starts turning a profit. And on that same vein, set a budget and a timeline. So create a business plan, make sure to know when you need to stay the course, and make sure you know when it might be time to move on. Nothing wrong with moving on if it's just not working out, but know what your exit strategy is going to be.



STRATEGY 2: REINVENT YOURSELF

Okay. So let's move on to strategy number two, which is: reinvent yourself by taking a broader look at your skills. So what's this about?

Well, this is really about figuring out what your core skills truly are and then determining other ways to apply and market those skills. It mostly means providing other services that are a variation on your core skill and providing those services to the same or different markets in some cases. But it can sometimes entail providing the same services to a totally different market again. So let me give a couple of examples of people who have done this really well. Barbara Coates is one of them. And Barbara is a freelance marketing communications professional. After a 25-year career as an editor and camera operator in the film and TV industry, she redeployed her skills and talents as a communications consultant.

So basically what she did: she was finding the documentary work--which is her mainstay--was drying up in favor of video game and commercial production. Also she was finding the jobs in broadcast TV started disappearing about the same time that the internet really took off. So with her business on the decline, she took a hard look at her skill set and found that at the core, what she really was good at was telling stories. She was a storyteller. And that realization really encouraged her because she also knew that the essence of all communications is storytelling. So she decided to go back to college, get a certificate in marketing and communications. And it was at that time when she realized how many other writers were severely lacking in both solid writing skills and storytelling ability.

So when she re-launched her business, she made it a point to put her storytelling skills forward and then support them with the added bonus of being able to tell stories with pictures as well as words because of her background. So today she provides clients a whole host of communications services, everything from website content, media relations, public relations, marketing, communications plans, media training, social media consulting, you name it. But she tells me that her clients really appreciate the fact that not only does she know what makes a great story, but she also understands what stories the media are currently interested in. And by knowing both, she can jump in and pitch something that is virtually guaranteed to get noticed.

Another great example is Jennifer Campbell. And Jennifer was a writer and editor for a TV station for many years. And in 2008, she got laid off and she found herself wondering whether looking for yet another job in the corporate world was what she wanted to do, or maybe this was the time to go solo and



start doing work that was more meaningful and rewarding. So she decided to take the leap and start a business based on something she'd actually been doing on and off on the side since 2003. And that business, a hobby at the time, was to write life stories and personal history projects for friends and family. It was something she did occasionally and mostly for free.

But she began to realize that there could be a business opportunity there. So her background in interviewing, writing, editing, and book publishing really helped her in that regard. She realized that those skills were not only transferable, but would lend themselves very nicely to a personal memoirs business. Motivated and excited about the idea, she began a long process of extensive self-education on the topic, started studying the field of oral history, of personal history, of memoirs, family histories. And she began offering her services just to see what would happen.

Today, through her business which is called Heritage Memoirs, Jennifer interviews and guides people—and they're generally age 70 plus, she tells me—and she guides them through telling their life stories, recording their sessions, then transcribing, editing and re-writing, proofing, and producing a print-ready manuscript. Then if they want, she can also publish a limited edition book with photographs and in a choice of covers and styles. Not only is Jennifer doing a great deal of business—she's booked solid—but these projects she works on pay anywhere from \$5,000 to \$25,000 each. So, very lucrative. But she also still finds her work to be extremely satisfying. And she feels that the market is huge and growing. In fact, as the baby boomers continue to age, she thinks that more and more people are going to be wanting their family history saved for future generations.

As if that wasn't enough, Jennifer recently landed a book deal with Self-Counsel Press. And her upcoming book, which will be released in November of this year, is titled *Start and Run a Personal History Business*. She wanted to write a book because she pretty much had to learn her business by trial and error; there was no manual out there. And she figures she could pass along some of what she learned while also creating another income stream for her.

What does it take to make this work?

First of all: some serious soul searching and brain storming. The way I recommend people do this is: use a mind map. A mind map is a very simple brain storming tool. What you do is you take a blank sheet of paper. Write what you do today in the middle of that in a bubble, and then write offshoots from that bubble. Each offshoot indicates a core skill that you have that either you use in your business or in your personal life.



So let me give you a couple of examples.

For copywriters, for example, freelance copywriters: well, copywriters usually have to be good at research, at interviewing, writing, editing, selling, marketing. So all those are core skills that you could list on your mind map. Professional organizer, freelance organizer: many of them are very good at bookkeeping, online organization, email management, phone work, and a whole host of other skills. So you would list those.

Marketing consultants: I know a couple that are really good at a bunch of different things that they don't even realize that they're great at. So I have a friend who's a marketing consultant; she's great at connecting businesses with service providers or connecting people with each other. In fact, she created a side business where she connects consultants and freelancers with companies that have projects they need to staff.

And then one last point is: make the intention to find some answers. And then let that simmer, let that just kind of sit there because many times what will happen is the best ideas, the best answers to this problem will come to you when you least expect them and often in the strangest place.

So make it an intention. Do some brain storming. And just let it sit; the ideas will come to you.

STRATEGY 3: POSITION YOURSELF AS THE EXPERT

All right. Strategy number three: position yourself as the expert in your field. So what's this about? Well, this is really about becoming a recognized authority in your field or in your industry and doing so by marketing your knowledge and your skills in a way that really position you as the leading expert in your business—the go-to professional in a way. And then using this position, this status to develop a competitive advantage. Let me give you a couple of examples. Jeremy Schultz: Jeremy is a graphic designer who specializes in design and illustration for print and web.

And what happened is a few years ago, he realized that marketing yourself as a conventional designer just wasn't working very well anymore. For one: professional equipment drops in price every year. It's easier to learn and more powerful than ever before, which means that anyone with a computer can pick up some clip art and put together an ad. The world is also getting more connected, which means that clients can hire designers from other countries,



usually for a fraction of what designers would command in North America. So essentially, there's always someone cheaper or good enough for a client, and it's just harder for designers to stand out. And I think that's the case in a lot of freelance professions today.

So Jeremy thought hard about what additional value he could bring to the table because the usual marketing points--the creativity, the price--they just weren't working anymore. And as he thought about his, he realized that he had a unique relationship with Adobe, which is the company that produces the software many designers use every day. So Jeremy is a beta tester for Adobe. And what that means is he's part of a team of users who test new software for Adobe and provides them with feedback. Not only that, but Jeremy is also the only Adobe software reviewer in the state of Iowa. The main advantage of being a beta tester is that he gets to use their new software months in advance. And because of that, he has connections and friendships with many of the staff at Adobe.

So as a result, he's leveraged this advantage in three ways. The first is: he can sell and train, sell training and consulting for new products in advance of the competition. Number two is using new tools to improve his work and expand his offerings. And number three: the ability to market himself as the top Adobe expert in Iowa, which means something for local clients. One example of this was: back in April when Adobe announced the release of Creative Suite 5 or CS5 for short, Jeremy began marketing to CS5 consulting packages for companies that were looking to upgrade. His reasoning is that companies considering that upgrade could benefit from his input as a creative professional who knows that product better than anyone else in the area.

Another example is a recent lead Jeremy received from a long-time client who knew his skills and professionalism from the past, but now saw him as also "the Adobe guy." And when he heard that term "the Adobe guy," he knew he had found a niche he could leverage and a way to position himself as an expert in a very credible way. So Jeremy is clear about one thing: his expert status with Adobe will not attract every client. There are plenty of them out there who think price is the only real factor when buying design services. But that's okay. Positioning yourself as the expert in a particular field or niche doesn't mean you're looking to land every opportunity that comes your way. But what it does is: it clearly differentiates you from most, and it helps attract those types of clients that see this as a critical factor in the hiring decision. And that's what you want. You want clients that get it. And in Jeremy's case, most prospective clients who value Adobe and technology skills over price, don't think twice about hiring him versus taking the work overseas or even to a local competitor who doesn't have his Adobe expertise.



Another example is actually me: Ed Gandia. So I launched my copywriting business as a part-time venture in the fall of 2003. And I thought that simply by hanging my shingle, putting up a website, and sending out a few direct mail pieces, I'd land work right away. Well, I was marketing myself as a great writer who'd be available for somebody's next project or when their internal staff was booked solid and needed help. And I spent about five months mailing hundreds of letters to prospects with that kind of message. And I got zero response. So I thought I was either a horrible marketer or maybe there just wasn't much of a market out there for what I was doing. But I didn't want to give up so I hired a coach to help me see that what I was doing was not working.

And there was a better way of doing this and turning things around. And she helped me realize that I had a great background and some unique experience that I wasn't bringing to the surface in my website and my marketing materials. For one: I had spent 12 years in corporate sales, launching, growing sales territories for companies that had very limited marketing budgets. So as a sales guy trying to make sales quotas, I did what I had to do. And that partially meant writing my own sales materials, my own sales letters, my own marketing pieces if the limited marketing department I had couldn't do it. Through that process I turned to direct mail to generate leads, turned to sales letters that I wrote myself, and I created this step-by-step strategy to, that eventually got me to the top of my sales team. And I actually helped get my software product, the software product I was selling to grow about 500% in five years, eventually becoming a serious profit and cash generator for my employer.

So going back to now copywriting--rather than continue to market myself as a generalist copywriter, I began to position myself as a lead generating expert in the software industry. I had a proven track record, of course. And in my last job, I had developed a step-by-step system for generating quality leads and closing software sales faster. So I wrote about that, and I made it the focus of all my messages and campaigns. So the software guy, the software writer, and then my sales background: those two messages. And what happened is my business turned around completely. Within six months, I had more work than I could handle. And granted I was doing it on a part-time basis, so it didn't take long for me to get booked solid. But after a little over two years, I had enough business to quit my day job and become a full-time freelancer.

And the interesting thing about the strategy is that once you position yourself as an expert and you do it credibly, the work starts coming in, which adds even more credibility to your claims. And then you begin to create somewhat of a self-fulfilling prophecy. I mean the way I saw it, I wasn't any different a few weeks before changing my message; I was the same guy, same skills. But just



by positioning myself differently, people were suddenly interested and they wanted to hire me.

What does it take to make this work?

Well, first you have to decide how you're going to position yourself. And make sure that it's viable, meaning will prospects get it? Will they care? Is it clear enough for them to understand? You need to strike a good balance between too narrow a message versus just too wide a message. So run it by current clients and colleagues first. Make sure it resonates. Make sure it's going to make you stand out but it's not so narrow that you're going to severely limit your market.

Next: get your message out there. So write articles, blogs. Write a book if you can. Create information products. Seek publicity. Do anything you can to get your name out there. I knew I had succeeded in that when I had a colleague of mine saying, "Man, I'm seeing your name everywhere." So I knew I was on to something. Change your website and your marketing materials to communicate this new message, this new positioning. And I want to leave you with one good resource in this area because this is a big topic that deserves more in-depth discussion. Bob Bly wrote a book a few years ago called *Become a Recognized Authority in Your Field-- in 60 Days or Less*. And I believe that's in your handout, but let me repeat it just in case: *Become a Recognized Authority in Your Field - in 60 Days or Less*, and the writer, the author is Bob Bly.

STRATEGY 4: EMPLOY SMARTER MARKETING TACTICS

All right. Strategy number four: employ smarter marketing tactics. What's this about? Well, this is really about exploring and experimenting with different marketing tactics to attract more and better prospects more easily. So if the traditional methods you've been using no longer seem to get you the results they once were giving you, then this is about trying something different, maybe something more daring and experimental than you have before. We could easily spend a whole day on this strategy alone, but let me just give you a couple of examples of freelancers who have done this, what they did, and then what it takes to make this work.

So, one of them is a lady by the name of Deborah Corn. Deborah is a freelance product manager and production manager. And a couple years ago, she created a LinkedIn group called Print Production Professionals. And you can look that up in LinkedIn, which has grown now to more than 10,800 members. It's probably more than 11,000 by now. The last time I checked was a couple of



weeks ago. And because of the popularity of the group and Deborah's active involvement in that group, her name and information come up right away when people are searching for a freelance production manager in LinkedIn, which happens quite frequently. For her it has led to a ton of new clients and projects, including one big long-term client. And this is now her main source of leads and her main source of clients--this LinkedIn group she's created.

By way of example, Deborah told me the other day she's currently helping an insurance company with revamping and optimizing their site. And she just wrapped up some work for an audio speaker repair company. And both of these clients came directly from LinkedIn. She also has some print projects in the works for Hilton Worldwide via someone she used to work with who saw her on LinkedIn and saw that she was now freelancing. Essentially Deborah has found a way to attract clients by being a connector, by bringing together people in the industry rather than by overtly promoting herself for her services. And that's kind of a unique way of doing things. I don't see a lot of freelancers marketing that way. For her it's given her great visibility and creditability, and has also led to profitable partnerships that she would have never been able to secure otherwise.

Another example is a photographer by the name of Pascal Depuhl. And Pascal is a freelance photographer based out of Miami who worked in corporate America in a catalog company as a full-time photographer and studio manager. But after seven years there, he got laid off and he struggled after that. He decided to become a freelancer, spent some time trying to market himself. And he says that "just things weren't working out." Well, things have turned around completely for him. Today his business is thriving and he photographs for start-up companies, local businesses, and even multi-national companies such as Mars, Inc.; Tyco; Goodyear; L'Oreal, Harper's Bazaar, and many others, much of which he's landed as a result of his social media and search engine optimization efforts. I'm going to say SEO for short, SEO: search engine optimization, same thing.

All right so he's a great example of someone who's using that combination of social media and SEO in a very simple, yet very deliberate way.

There are four main ways in which he's doing it.

1. **The first one is he's connecting with existing friends and colleagues.** So through Facebook, LinkedIn, and other social networks, he's been able to connect with and eventually get work from colleagues that he's had previously touched base with or that he'd lost touch with--I should say--which goes to show that it pays to reconnect with old friends and colleagues beyond personal reasons.



2. **Number two is he's using social networks to stay in front of people that hire him or can potentially hire him.** So he blogs about his work and his thoughts on technology as it relates to photography on his blog. And this has attracted traffic to his site that has resulted in both clients and in the sale of photography that's featured on his blog. Posting on his blog, Facebook, twitter, and other sites help establish him as an expert in his field both in the eyes of prospects and also from a search engine perspective because good incoming links from other sites can indicate to Google and the other search engines that you're a relevant website.
3. **The third way he uses social media is to validate the worth of his company.** So let's say a client finds him via a Google search. They will look at all the listings that appear in a specific search for his name, the reviews, posts and comments on LinkedIn, Google places, Yelp, and other credible sites tend to show up near the top of search engine listings. And they help show prospects that this is a serious and valid business, not a fly-by-night operation. At the same time, all of these sites help drive links to his site, his own website, which in turn boosts his search engine ranking. So this is all about going out and posting in different places, making sure that his name appears in relevant sites and well known sites because they link to his site, which raises his visibility and his search engine rankings.
4. **And finally number four, from a purely internal SEO perspective, Pascal has spent a lot of time and attention insuring that strategic keywords are positioned and meta-tagged correctly** throughout his site. So he recognizes that keywords alone aren't a silver bullet, but he takes great care to insure that he's continually uploading good quality content to his site, to his blog, which is something that both search engines and visitors like to see.

Now photography is a very competitive business, and it's been hit real hard in this economy so I asked Pascal how he sets himself apart from competitors. And there are many ways he does this, but he pointed out that one of his secret weapons is to respond to leads and prospects in a timely manner.

It might seem insignificant but he tells me that especially when people find you via Google searches, it's important to strike while the iron's hot. So while they're thinking about you and their need, it's important to get back to them right away. So his contact form on his site sends information directly to his contact management system--and he uses Salesforce.com by the way--and Salesforce.com then notifies him immediately and provides him the contact



information for the lead. That way he can get back to the prospect immediately. He tells me that this type of immediacy in follow-up along with attention to detail and his branding, his communications and social media have all been key to a client's decision to hire him over the next guy or gal.

What does it take to make this work?

All right. So what does this strategy take, using more creative approaches to marketing?

Well, first it's taking a hard look at how you've been attracting prospects to your business. Many of us get stuck trying the same things over and over again. Maybe they worked a few years ago. We kind of continued down that path and haven't realized that little by little they have gone down in effectiveness. So what's been working? What's not been working? How much time and money does each of these efforts require? How effective is each of these methods you're using or have been using based on the time and money required? Look at what others are doing. So look beyond your profession. I'll tell you that some of the best marketing and sales ideas I've gotten for my business have come outside of freelancing, outside of writing. I got an idea for example from an alarm guy, someone who's installing an alarm in my house. He went through a process that gave me some great ideas for my own business. I got another great idea, marketing idea from a tree trimming business in my local area who's passing out fliers in mail boxes. So look outside of your industry, sometimes the best ideas come from out there.

Also are you developing only, are you depending only on one or two tactics? So are you not diversified enough? Should you try a couple of more things so you have more diversified portfolio of marketing tactics and strategies? Are you trying to do too much? So I have definitely have come across freelancers who are just trying to do six, seven, eight things all at once. It's too much. They end up not doing a good job in any of them. There's just not enough time. **Commit to trying two or three new approaches over the next six months.** That would be probably my strongest recommendation. What can you do, what can you add to your marketing mix over the next six months--at least trying it--that could have an impact, that could have a positive impact? Some of these could be a little off beat. That's okay but keep in mind that the trick is to focus on promoting smarter not necessarily harder.



STRATEGY 5: TEACH YOUR SKILLS

All right. Strategy number five: teach your skills. What's this about? It's about teaching others your craft. Teaching others business building aspects of your profession, it doesn't have to be necessarily your craft. Or it could also be teaching others one or more of your core skills.

So in our earlier example, remember that it's not just what you do for a living it's everything that it takes to get there, so interviewing, writing, how to use a new piece of design software. So you could teach some of those basic skills or core skills. And there are two markets that you could go after. You could go after newbies who want to learn the basics or you could go after seasoned pros who want to learn new tricks and approaches. Teaching can be a stand-alone practice or it could be part of a strategy to diversify your income or your professional contacts and opportunities and even elevate your expert status in your industry.

Let me give you a couple of examples. One is Jennifer, Jennifer Sander. And after leaving the publishing world a few years ago, Jennifer made a great living as a freelancer for several years, but then her business dried up. And she couldn't sell any book ideas any more, it was getting harder, she couldn't get any freelance editing jobs, she couldn't sell magazine article. So instead she decided to teach what she knew and create a place where other people could be what she already was, which was someone who wrote for a living. She sent out an email to about 25 friends and soon enough had sold all the spots in her first women's weekend writing retreat in Lake Tahoe. She now holds the retreat about 12 times a year and even teaches at the University California, The Davis Extension Arts and Humanities Creative Writing Program. These activities not only supplement her income, but they have also led to a great many opportunities that she wouldn't have come across otherwise.

Another great example is Brandon Smith, and Brandon is an independent consultant in the areas of business growth, leadership development, and organizational identity. Aside from his consulting business, he also teaches in the full-time MBA program, the evening MBA program and the executive education at the Goizueta Business School at Emory University. And as if that wasn't enough, he teaches select courses at Georgia State University. So this has become a secondary income stream for him, but it's also a great credibility builder for his consulting business. Brandon's recent teaching include courses in leadership communications, advance management communications, professional communications, and strategic corporate cultural management. How this all came about for him is he started his consulting practice about five years ago. He was referred to Georgia State University to teach a course on business communications to MBA students. So he had kept good relationships at



Emory after he graduated from that school. And one of the professors there who knew him referred him to Georgia State. He taught that one class at Georgia State and then received strong teaching evaluations. Well, they asked him to come back and continue to teach. And it wasn't long before Emory then came back to him because they took notice of how well he was doing there and asked him to teach an elective just one semester, one class. That went so well that it turned into more teaching, and today he teaches nearly all the business communications courses at Emory University.

What does it take to make this work?

The first thing I would urge you to do is write down a list of all the skills you have that others would like to learn. And think big, think broadly--look at Brandon. I mean, he was a corporate consultant. And he dug deep, he thought about what the core skills and experience he had: things he could teach, things that were transferable.

Second, what angle or twist could you give that information to make it more attractive? So people don't want to know writing, they may want to learn a specific type of writing or a specific way to approach your writing, for example. What markets would be interested in learning that information? So think outside of your regular circles. Again look at Jennifer and look at Brandon, they both went outside of the traditional markets that most people go after.

Also do you want to handle it all? So I mean plan it around the whole thing or would you rather teach for an established institution that can handle most of the back-end work for you: so a college, school, adult education center, a community, city or county. So think about that; there's pros and cons to each.

Also keep in mind that teaching is not for everyone. It'll require certain skills, certain interests, and certainly a particular temperament to make it work. Brandon tells me though that for him one of the big benefits of teaching is that when the economy turned south and he looked to reinvent himself, he was able to further expand his teaching, which then gave him some income, the income and flexibility he needed to work on yet new and exciting projects. So it helped fund some of the things that he wanted to do because he was able to ramp up and to pick up more classes.



STRATEGY 6: ADD DIVERSITY TO YOUR CLIENTS AND PROJECTS

All right. Strategy number six: add diversity to your clients and projects. What's this about? Well, this is all about going within your core skills and practice, and diversify the number and types of clients you go after and the types of projects you pursue. It's not about diversifying your income streams; it's really about having a more diversified client and project base. That way not all your clients are say, software companies, and not all your projects are say, setting up word press blogs.

So a couple of examples, actually I have one example for this strategy, which is Mary Mihaly. And Mary is a travel writer and author of the book *The 250 Questions Every Self-Employed Person Should Ask*. And before the economy tanked, she was a fairly successful travel writer. But then after 9/11, people stopped spending money on travel. And when people don't travel, there's no work for travel writers. So Mary had no income for months after 9/11.

And this experience made her realize that she needed to diversify her income. So she changed her business around, and today she focuses mainly on health writing, specifically books and some smaller assignments. Plus she goes after interesting non-profit and corporate work when she can. She's also got a passion that she's turned into a side income stream. So she's actually a certified feng shui practitioner, and she's practicing that on the side in a separate website and everything. Essentially she's changed her business so that she has a couple of steadier and diversified markets with multiple clients in each. That gives her the flexibility and diversity she needs to then also work on the more erratic travel writing projects, which is her real passion when it comes to writing.

Mary is definitely a believer that the number one rule of freelancing successfully is to not put all your eggs in one basket. She recommends that freelancers continually groom plans B and C, keeping them alive as best you can. If you do that she says you can continue to work with what you love just not as your soul source of income. Now she does admit that it's not easy to consistently nurture plans B and C when she's busy working. But then again there's been several times she's come to the end of a big job and realized that she had nothing lined up, and that's a mistake we've all made. It's pretty scary. So her advice is to make marketing and developing your business a priority. For some people that means devoting one or two hours a day to some marketing effort or finding new work. Or you could set aside half a day a week or even every other week. So whatever works for you. The important thing is to schedule it the way you schedule appointments, and then make sure you stop working for awhile and then focus on that.



What does it take to make this work?

As I said before, **don't put all your eggs in one basket**. Look where your business is coming from today. How diversified is it both in terms of the types of clients and the types of projects you're working on? Also what other markets are hiring freelancers in your field? What are the types of projects clients are hiring for? Talk to your peers, think outside the box. What are other colleagues doing? Also what do you want to do more of? Think about passions you have that you may want to work on but aren't viable because the business is not there. What other income streams could you develop? What other types of projects or markets could you write for that could help you fund some of these side projects that maybe come and go too frequently? How can you use certain markets or skills to essentially bankroll your work in another market you truly enjoy or one that you can't live off of entirely?

And then finally **you need to decide if the two or three markets or types of projects you're going after are way too different, determine if you're going to need a separate website**. And in many cases you will. Different messaging and marketing, completely unrelated businesses they might require you to have different websites.

So a great example here is one of my colleagues, Pam Foster is a search engine optimization copywriter for the business to business market. And I think I put her URL there in the handout pamfostercopywriting.com. So she has that site, but then she also has a separate practice for the pet market. So she writes for pet food manufacturers, manufactures of toy products and so forth. And she's got a separate site because they're two very different businesses, two very different markets. It's still writing but two very different industries. So that's petcopywriter.com.

Mary Mihaly did the same thing with her side practice or her feng shui practice. She built a separate website for that. So in many cases you're going to need to do that. That's perfectly fine; it does make sense in many cases.



STRATEGY 7: CARVE OUT A NICHE

All right. Strategy number seven: carve out a niche. What's this about? Well, it's about positioning, yourself as the go-to freelancer in a particular industry with a particular skill or type of project.

So this is the opposite of the previous strategy where we talked about more diversity. A couple of examples:

Nelson Ruiz, Nelson is a freelance IT tech support, meaning IT services professional. And he had a company called Westco DNS where he provided IT services to small companies, especially small mortgage companies. And this was all during the real-estate boom. So when the market bottomed out and the mortgage industry, his business took a beating. He had a couple of health care provider clients and because health care was growing as many other industries were downsizing he decided to approach other health care providers under his traditional company name, which again was Westco DNS. But what he found was that no one was giving him the time of day.

So he decided to stop working under that name and renamed his business Health IT Networks. He tells me that everything changed after that. He was finally able to gain traction to land clients. In fact, since solely providing IT services to the health care community, his business has taken off. He tells me that for health care providers and this is actually true in most industries, it's very important to work with someone who understands their business, their industry, their market. It allows them to spend less time talking about what they need and what really matters to them. And then that way they can focus more time on their real business. And that's why they tend to have a little more trust in someone like Nelson than they would in someone who's not working in their industry every day.

Another interesting fact Nelson shared with me is that since specializing in health care about 75% of his business comes through word of mouth, mainly existing health care clients who refer him to other health care practices. That's a hidden benefit of specializing in a specific industry or in a specific type of work it's the fact that word of mouth tends to become your main source of clients over time surely much faster and consistently then when you're a generalist. And today clients that come via referrals tend to be his best clients.

Another great example is Gordon Graham, Gordon is a very experienced writer in the technology arena and but rather than offering all types of writing services a few years ago he decided to start focusing mainly on one type of



project, which is whitepapers. He not only enjoyed that type of work but he also saw a strong demand for these pieces and in very few other writers are specializing in them. The ones who were really weren't creating compelling pieces. So he saw a big need for better writing in that area. So in 2005 he launched a site called thatwhitepaperguy.com and he's been booked solid since then often running a two to three month backlog. He tells me that whitepaper has now become 75% of his income; maybe it was about 25% in 2005 when he first started. So he still does other things but he only does them if he feels like it. He told me that recently he's been writing case studies success stories for Google and he said it's just kind of hard to turn Google down, great company to have in your portfolio. So he will do it but he doesn't go to market as a overall generalist who can write anything. He goes to market as a solid well known seasoned whitepaper writer and in fact he says that the backlog is so big that he's had to hire some of the components of putting a whitepaper together such as research and some of the initial writing to other writers that way he can take on the work and get it out a little faster than normal.

What does it take to make this work?

Well first is asking yourself is there an industry you're doing some work for, have worked for in the past that is growing or stable? Is there a particular type of work that's in demand yet has few competent freelancers who are focusing on that type of work?

Now be careful how narrow you go. You risk severely limiting your market if you go too narrow. So consider going maybe a little deeper than you are today but stay at a level where there's still a relatively large market available to you. Look at your background. Look at your experience, your track record. How can you bring value to an industry or a type of project based on that experience? How can you communicate that experience and that background credibly and in a way that will be relevant to that audience?

Also build a website and create marketing communications that clearly state what you're about, something that really clearly states what types of companies you work for and what makes you different.



STRATEGY 8: START A SIDE BUSINESS

All right, strategy number eight, start a side business. What's this about? Well this is about creating one or more secondary incomes streams.

It can be out of a hobby, a passion, a specialized knowledge or experience. It diversifies your income streams, adds more stability to your business, to your income, helps you develop different skills and can sometimes involve into your mainline of work.

Now you got to be careful about one thing, most people underestimate the work involved and overestimate how quickly a sideline will turn profitable. Let me give you a couple of examples of freelancers who have made this work for them.

One is Jennifer Wright and Jennifer worked full time on staff at Rodale Books as a project editor. In that capacity she hired and managed freelancers which was great because it gave her a good opportunity to learn what it takes to be a successful freelancer. In 2004 she left that job at Rodale to start her own solo business. Well then last year she started her own publishing company, which is called Mimosa Publishing with her friend and business partner Rally McAlister, who's a medical doctor. Together they created mommymdguide.com and the mommy MD guide book series and this first book in their series is titled "The Mommy MD's Guide to Pregnancy and Birth." And it was just released I believe this month. And it includes more than 900 tips of 60 doctors who are also mothers use themselves for their own families.

Jennifer got the idea for the side business is she interviewed doctors for many of her freelance assignments. And here's what she told me and I'm going to quote from her email it says, "I've interviewed hundreds of doctors over the last few years. Every now and again it would come up in conversation and in passing well when my kids were small I used to do this or that to take care of X. That always peaked my interest because I figured if a doctor who is also a mother used the tip no doubt it worked. And if it worked for her it probably would work for me too. In early 2009 I had the idea that rather than this information be in just tiny parts of books it should be the focus of a book series. So I joined forces with Rally McAlister who's a family physician and we decided to call our book series "The doctors we interview and the doctors we interview: The Mommy MD Guides." Jennifer and Rally have plans for a ton more titles in that series over the next few years. It's quickly turning into a full time venture for her but that's fine because it's something she's passionate about and truly enjoys working on.



Another great example is a friend of mine by the name of Tom Nessen; Tom is a software consultant in the warehouse management systems software industry. What I love about his story is the diversity that's he's created in his professional life. So his consulting work is still his main source of income but he's created three sidelines in very different industries that are growing and providing him with a secondary income stream and a little bit more diversity. So the first is real-estate venture. A few years ago he partnered with a friend to buy homes in growing urban areas of Atlanta. He and his partner would basically buy a home that needed work. They would fix them up and then flip them for a profit or in some cases rent them out. And they did very well until of course the real-estate market tanked. However Tom tells me that the business is coming back and he's now focused on buying bank owned properties at a deep discount. They're working on some deals right now and he sees a huge potential over the next couple of years. So that's side business number one.

Side business number two is a business Tom has created called Boomboompercussion.com and this is where he sells both new and used musical instruments online. He didn't particularly have a passion for musical instruments but he's always been intrigued with the way goods are sourced, distributed, and sold and because his mainline of work takes him to warehouses all over the country sometimes he sees opportunities and no one else seems to be addressing. And the musical instrument business is one example of that. He realized that many of these instruments manufactures and distributors weren't really taking advantage of these new online channels. So he saw E-bay, Amazon.com and other online channels as huge opportunities to connect buyers and sellers. So he partnered with a professional touring musician who already had existing dealer relationships with some established manufactures and they jointly created Boomboompercussion.com and the beauty of this business is they hold no inventory. So, all products are drop-shipped directly to the customer by the manufacture or seller. Tom and his partner strictly broker the deal and they collect profits in the process.

Side business number three, is one that Tom created recently is a younger sideline. It's called musicgearfinder.com so based on the success and lessons learned from Boom Boom Percussion Tom wanted to create a business that was even more hands off but yet capitalized on even bigger opportunities in the music industry. He knew that musical instrument retail stores have been struggling for years and he saw an opportunity to use the internet to connect local buyers and sellers. So much different from his other business, which involves an online transaction and the buyer and the seller can be in different parts of the country. So he created musicgearfinder.com, which is essentially a lead generation website for the stores. So when a customer is looking for something specific and types that into Google music gear finder often appears



near the top of the search results and then shows the customer where they can find that instrument locally. The idea for this business came from the site autotrader.com, which does something very similar but with cars and it connects local buyers and sellers in a very efficient way. So the way Tom and his partner make money with this site is the affiliate revenue, ad revenue and then by up-selling retailers to getting premium listings.

What does it take to make this work?

Well the first is to ask yourself some really tough questions and being honest with the answers. **So is there a market for this?**

Second, **how could I be different?** What would you offer from that's different from everybody else who's offering the same thing? Do I know the business already or do I at least know someone who knows it well and I can partner with? You don't want to reinvent the wheel. You want to start with something that you already know well, all the nuances that will increase your chances of success.

Also **don't assume that your level of passion will automatically translate into equally handsome profits.** We talked about that a little earlier. So you got to have some passion around the topic or the opportunity but don't let that blind you.

Finally figure on putting in twice or more of the estimated effort and waiting twice as long than anticipated to turn a profit. And that's why most people quit early.

Actually I have a couple more points.

One is don't just look outside your main line of work. So in the case of Tom he obviously went way outside of his profession, of what he knew really well. But look within as well. So what knowledge, strategies, systems could you turn into workshops or physical products or manuals? Look at what you know your current business today. Tom actually gave me some good advice. He said you know pay attention, there are opportunities everywhere. He said there are problems everywhere that need to be solved and when you find one, ask yourself, how could you help others solve that problem?

He also said to trust your instincts and your nudges because most people don't and what happens and we've all been there is we see an opportunity and don't take action on it and then a few years later we see that business manifest it somewhere, somebody took action on it and is probably doing very well with the idea.



STRATEGY 9: GO TO HUNGRIER MARKETS

All right strategy number nine, go to hungrier markets. So this is about taking your skills to other markets that are willing to pay more for them. And this is one strategy that I'm amazed more people don't consider yet has one of the highest chances of success in many cases than everything I've talked about already.

I'll give you a couple of examples.

Pat Baird and Pat is a registered dietician who has worked on her own for 23 years. And I read her story in a recent article in Forbes magazine. What happened is that rather than struggling in the traditional markets that most of her nutritionist colleagues work in she instead earns a nice living working for major health care and pharmaceutical companies or their PR agencies. And she does that doing consulting work, writing whitepapers and web articles, making speeches, producing TV segments and serving on advisory boards. She also teaches nutrition at an adjunct to two colleges and she's thriving. Why, because she's working in markets that are willing to pay higher fees for her knowledge and skills. So in that respect she's a great example of someone who might otherwise be struggling if she were serving the traditional markets everyone else in her field is going after.

Another example is Becky Blanton and Becky is a writer, photographer, and journalist who left journalism in 2008. She said for a lot of reasons but primarily because of the low pay. And she started freelancing through Elance. And it was through Elance that she eventually landed a client who introduced her to some social networks where she became active and through which she learned how to turn her journalism skills and the ghostwriting and markets that she hadn't even considered before. So the end result is that she's now booked solid and is having more fun than she's ever had. Most of her work is now ghostwriting as well as writing for a number of niche businesses, nonprofits, and industry associations. And through this journey she's done some really remarkable things including winning a copywriting contest which got her an all expense paid trip to the Ted Global 2009 conference, paid for by Daniel Pink the bestselling author of "Drive and A Whole New Mind." She even got to speak at the Ted Global conference on the topic of the year she spent homeless living out of her van for a full year. She's published three books through the US concealed carry association and she's currently working on her own book about her personal and professional turnaround. The name of the book is "Stay Hungry" and it's about people who have turned their lives around and what they did to get out of difficult situations. I find her story just truly remarkable so if you can, if you get a chance go to her site and check her out. She basically lives in a van, works out of an office she rents and travels and writes all year



long. She's doing what she loves to do while making a better living at it. She said she now grosses \$3-5,000 a month as apposed to the \$1,800 a month she was earning as a journalist and she's doing this in markets and with projects she would have never considered before.

What does it take to make this work?

Well here is another strategy where you have to look at your skills more broadly. What else can you do? What other industries and markets would need those skills?

Also going to markets or industries that already get it, meaning you don't have to sell the value of what you do. They're already hiring pros in your field and in many cases paying a lot more than other markets are paying for your own skills.

Also understanding where the budgets are moving to. Where are clients spending money? I'm consistently amazed at freelancers who work in businesses that are dying every year yet when it comes to looking for work they remain in that market. Where is the money going to? People are still spending money, more than likely in what you do, probably in different types of projects and different industries.

And finally, it's about repositioning yourself and your message so it resonates with a new audience. So in many cases, as in the case of Becky and Pat, if you're going after very different markets you're going to have to rewrite your messages, reposition yourself so that in a way it resonates with these new audiences.

STRATEGY 10: TAKE A UNIQUE APPROACH TO A VERY TRADITIONAL PROFESSIONAL

All right so moving right along. Strategy number ten, take a unique approach to a very traditional professional. What's this about?

This is about looking at different ways to practice a profession, either by offering a different type of service, developing a unique specialty, maybe packaging your services differently, or approaching the work in a unique way.

A couple of examples, one is Mark Zaifman and Mark started out of college practicing as a tax accountant and disliked that immensely. Finally in 2003 he



started his own gig as a holistic financial planner and absolutely loves what he does. Now holistic financial planning concept came about as a result of reading the book "Your Money or Your Life", which focuses on your relationship with money as opposed to money being purely a means to an end. And this book was a huge bestseller, sold over a million copies so Mark knew there was a market for holistic financial planning out there. And his hunch was confirmed when he began doing his research and part of that involved looking into how other financial planners were going after clients and he found that the lunch and learns and the wine and cheese receptions that all these planners were putting together were extremely boring, there's no discussion about the emotional aspects of money let alone the spirituality of money. He knew he could do better and he was convinced that a segment of the market would respond to a better way of marketing and practicing financial planning.

Now the thing with the financial planning industry is that it's very competitive so finding a niche to him was going to be the only way to compete with an established firm. And as a former tax accountant Mark felt that his financial background combined with his comfort level in terms of discussing money in a more holistic way would be a really strong differentiator and a benefit to his clients. And he was right. So today Mark works from his home. He does most of his work virtually. He works with clients from around the country and Canada and when needed he has some office space in downtown to meet with his clients.

The first aspect of Mark's story that I really want to emphasize here is that he's practicing his profession in a very unique way. So he's doing it in a way that enables him to be authentic and true to his values and he's doing it in a way that attracts a different client kind of clientele.

Second most of his competitors are chasing high net worth clients almost exclusively where as Mark works on almost entirely with middle to upper middle income clients.

Third most of Mark's competitors are commission based and tend to focus on selling product and that's a major turn off in holistic market area as you can imagine because authenticity and integrity are really highly valued for people who look at money that way. And he found that as a former tax accountant he's able to offer expert tax planning guidance along with the financial planning, which is something many clients value.

So by helping clients take a much more holistic approach to their finances and providing them with a much more personalized advice and attention he's been able to provide the level of service his competitors can only afford to give clients with really high net worth. But he's doing it in a way that's meaningful



to him, where he delivers value, where he's happy and he's providing a service to clients who have much more modest net worth. So he having more fun, he's carved out a great niche all by taking a very different approach to a profession filled with copycats.

Another great example is someone I met recently by the name of Tracy Ellis. Tracy is a freelance attorney who works with small businesses and even solo professionals across the U.S. Now if there was ever an industry stuck in tradition it's the practice of law. Tracy spent years as corporate attorney with companies like Home Depot, and other large companies and she was very unhappy, she couldn't figure out why. Eventually she just decided to go out on her own. She was very happy for the first eighteen, twenty-four months, as a solo attorney. But then began to feel miserable again and couldn't figure out what was wrong.

Then one day it hit her. She had essentially duplicated everything she had done before, and turned it into a solo practice. The only difference is now she was doing it on her own. So she decided to completely re-work her practice. Everything from her message, look and feel of her site, the fee structure, if you look at her site by the way, which is traceyellis.com, you'll quickly notice it does not look like an attorney's website. She went to a virtual practice, so she has no office. And many parts of her business are fully automated. She started packaging her services too into flat fee offerings. So depending on what you needed, she now has flat fee pricing. It's basing all her pricing on projects instead of by the hour.

She tells me that that's been huge for her because not only is she happier with this model it's also helping her clients out. She found that many of her clients weren't calling her because they were afraid that the clock was ticking, or that it would cost too much, or that they would have no idea what something would cost. Well now by being very transparent about what she offers, how much things cost, and all the different options, and different packages she sells. People call, they're willing to pay for that, and they know what they're getting into upfront. There's not going to be a big surprise invoice at the end. And by going virtual and automating many aspects of her business, she was able to reduce her fees while keeping her income levels the same.

What does it take to make this work?

Well here again, you have to look at your skills more broadly.

You have to understand where the budgets and attention are moving to, and you have to reach out to the market so you can better understand what customer's true pain points are. So what are they really trying to accomplish?



How can you help them? What is everyone else doing and how is that a turnoff potentially? What can you do differently to satisfy maybe a niche or a segment of that market?

Look at how competitors are providing these services. What are they missing? Is there a disconnect between the way that they're doing things and the way an important segment of the market wants to buy these services? And what don't you like about the way your industry practices the profession? How would you change it?

Finally be willing to go with the flow and see where it takes you, which leads me to the last strategy, which is to follow the flow, strategy eleven.

STRATEGY 11: FOLLOW THE FLOW

This is all about following your instinct and realizing that you can't plan every aspect of your life.

And yes you can set goals, and you should and you should strategize, and you should plan but ultimately it's really how you react to unforeseen circumstances that determines your overall success.

A great example of this Chelle Horowitz. Chelle is a freelance writer, a publicist and an author. He has redeployed his skill a number of times. Many of which he did based on a hunch, and not based on a pre-defined plan. So when he went out on his own many years ago; he started by launching a sideline typing service of all things.

The idea was to do that until his freelance magazine and newspaper writing career took off. Well that writing career never did take off but his typing business grew in more several times. First from typing, to resume writing, and then into publicity and marketing copywriting and then into big picture strategic marketing planning and even now book shepherding and lately a fusion of his interest in marketing and environmental activism. As part of his effort he is now getting ready to start a trade organization of green marketers and over the years there have also even been some side shoots, such as a brief foray into computer consulting in the 80's, and more recently he's even dabbled in establishing a green audit service.

The point Chelle made to me is that it's important to keep an open mind and explore opportunities that seem interesting and show potential. So to evaluate opportunities he pays close attention to the potential benefit of the opportunity and then weighs that against the commitment required in terms of



time and money. He tends to focus on the opportunities that don't take a lot of time, effort, or money to get off the ground, yet have a big potential payoff.

And another great example of someone who's done this and just kind of followed the flow is Michelle Gamble Risley, Michelle is a freelance writer who parlayed her skills into what is becoming successful publishing company in July of last year. So her traditional writing markets were drying up, right about the time she self-published her first book, which is titled "Second Bloom", and that book has actually won several awards since publication. But as a result of that success and then her personal professional relationships she began to get requests from other writers to publish their own books. She even got requests from some aspiring authors who needed both, they needed someone to ghost write the book, and to publish it. She realized she had a hungry market out there, she took a few of these projects just to see what would happen, and things began to take off for her.

In just a little over a year she's now a full time publisher, she just released her fifteenth title, she has a top seller on Amazon right now, and has released two more of her own books. She no longer free-lances because she tells me that the publishing company has taken a life of its own. I just love this story because it's a great example of someone who didn't necessarily plan to have her business evolve into something very different, she just simply followed her instinct and took action. She started seeing results; she followed that path with greater and greater faith.

What does it take to make this work?

It still takes planning and goal setting. Don't be fooled by the fact that you kind of go with the flow and you just make it up as you go.

Sure there's a component to that but you still have to plan, you still have to strategize. It also requires a little bit of letting go, trust and faith. You have to let go occasionally.

Joe Vitale, an author and motivational speaker, and coach, has this term that I love called inspired action. Take inspired action, so when you feel that nudge, that intuition, to act, to follow a certain path, trust that you should take it, that you should take the path. In many cases there's a reason for it and it's going to lead you somewhere that you're going to be glad you took that path. In many cases it doesn't hurt to try, just keep in mind you can always stop.

So let me give you an example. A couple years ago, actually more than that maybe four years ago, I had a client of mine that was fairly steady; they were one of my bigger clients. But then someone in there that I had done some work



for contacted me about helping him with some other type of work. It required an expertise that I didn't have. They were very willing to have me sub that out to someone, and just have me project manage the thing. It was complimentary to the main type of work that I was offering to them.

I almost said no, because it just didn't seem to fit. I didn't know if I wanted to get in the hassle of project managing this but I went ahead and thought it over and the next day I called them and said let's do it, I think I know someone I could use to sub that work to. We got started; I'm glad that I said yes to it because eventually this turned into a seventy thousand dollar profit center for me over the following two years. So had I said no, I would have missed out on that income and it was a lot of fun, and it was work that was very steady. I essentially had a long-term contract to do this with the client. So every month I got a check I knew I could count on.

And then finally, **get over the fear of failure**. So again some of these things aren't going to turn into anything. Some of them are going to fizzle. But you need to get over that. Sometimes you have to fail a few times, to find that golden nugget. That's just the way it is. So get over that fear, it's going to happen, look at it as a way to getting to the really good stuff.

ALL RIGHT. SO LET'S RECAP.

The first strategy that we discussed was turn a hobby into a business. This is typically a side passion.

Reinvent yourself by taking a broader look at your skills was strategy number two.

Strategy number three position yourself as the expert in your field. The go-to person.

Strategy number four, employ smarter marketing tactics. Look at what you're doing today. What could you do differently? What are others doing?

Strategy number five, teach your skills. It could be your main skill, your main source of business. It could be a core skill that you might have that somebody would be interested in paying you for in some way.

Strategy number six, add diversity to your clients and projects.

Strategy number seven, carve out a niche.

Strategy number eight, start a side business.



Strategy number nine go to hungrier markets, markets that are willing to pay you more for what you already do.

Strategy number ten, take a unique approach to a very traditional profession.

Strategy number eleven, follow the flow.

So my advice to you would be to take some time to study this information further. Go back to this handout, review your notes a couple of times over the next few days, listen to the replay of this class if you're a bit unclear on anything or if you just want to revisit any of these strategies in more detail.

And then as I mentioned earlier, just let the information simmer.

So what tends to happen is that the best ideas will come to you when you least expect them. But they were sparked by the information you heard today. So it's as if the equivalent of taking a steak and letting it sit over night marinating, these ideas sometimes need time. These new concepts need time.

Finally try to get into the habit of thinking of solutions to an ailing or struggling business, rather than dwelling on the problems because doing so opens your mind to new possibilities and it also helps you attract opportunities and solutions rather than more misfortunes. So try to focus on solutions rather than everything that's wrong about your business or your current situation.

