INTERNATIONAL FREELANCERS ACADEMY

Training that transforms your solo business

# How to Land Projects Faster  Ed Gandia

**Ed Gandia:** Hello, everyone, Ed Gandia here with International Freelancers Academy and I have a question for you. What do you do when a potential client calls you about a project opportunity? Do you know what questions to ask? Do you know what order to ask them in? Do you know what next steps you're going to suggest based on the information you gather from a prospect? In other words, do you have a sales process in place even if it's simple?

All right, so I'll admit it. Developing a sales process is not the most exciting activity in the world. But somewhere during my 11 years in sales, I came to the realization that even a mediocre process beats no process at all. In fact, I found that following a well-defined process cannot only help you improve your sales effectiveness as a freelance professional, but it can also help you stay relaxed. It can help you boost your confidence and even save you a great deal of time and effort. Now the specific sales process or set of questions you use should obviously depend on your specific profession. They should also be dependent on the type of work you do and the kind of clients you go after. But at a minimum, it should follow some simple guidelines and that's what we're going to talk about here today.

Number one: You should be able to take control. This set of questions should enable you to take control of the situation. As a service provider, you need to take charge of that initial conversation with a prospect. You're the expert. You know what questions you must have answered. If you let the prospect take complete control of that call, you probably won't be able to gather all the information you need, or you might find yourself sharing ideas and references and too many work samples prematurely.

Number two: Determine the problem to be solved. Find out what problem they're trying to solve, especially if the scope of work is unclear. Sometimes a simple question such as "what do you need help with?" is often a good conversation starter. Walk away from that first conversation with something tangible. Make that one of your goals.

Number three: Learn more about the prospective client. Ask a few questions to help you determine what type of prospects you're dealing with here. One of the first questions I always ask is, "How did you find about me?" And I ask that because someone who came to me via a client referral or via word of mouth is a very different prospect from someone who found me through, let's say, a search in Google.

Number four: Learn more about the work they're looking to do, that they need help with. You need to learn more about the project that this prospect needs help with. You don't need to know every single detail, not yet at least, not in this initial phone call. You just need enough to help you put a proposal together. The more detailed questions should be saved for a future conversation once you have the work. And this is a mistake a lot of people make is they ask all the questions in this initial phone call when all you have here is an inquiry. You don't have a client yet. So reserve the detailed project questions until you have the project, and only ask what you need to put together a comprehensive proposal at this point.

Number five: Check for budget. I'm a big proponent of bringing up the issue of fees and money early on. The reason is that the time to find out that this is not a good prospect for you from a budget perspective is now during this initial phone call and not after you spent one or two or three hours putting a proposal together. Now I'm not suggesting you should quote an exact fee at this point. But providing the prospect with a ballpark figure will often do the trick. It will help you and them determine if this is a fee range that they are comfortable with and they could possibly work with you.

Number six: Avoid jumping through hoops. Now at the same time, you should try to limit the amount of work and information you provide until you know you have a qualified prospect--until you know you have a potential fit and strong commitment and that you're their top choice or at least you're on their short list if they have one. In other words, referrals, detailed samples, concepts, and that type of detailed information should all wait until you're closer to striking a deal. They should rarely be part of that first initial conversation with a prospect.

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Finally number seven: Ask for the work. Never be afraid to ask for the work. I call prospects just a few hours after emailing my proposal, and I flat out ask if we can get started. And if you're in a situation where a committee will be making the decision, just ask, "When will that decision be made?" And when that day comes, call to ask for the work. Whatever you do, don't wing this process. Develop something that works for you. Put it down on paper.

In fact, here's your assignment for this episode. Take some time over the next few days to put together a list of questions based on these guidelines. Of course, adapt them to the type of work you do and the types of clients you work with. And refine them until you end up with a few simple questions that will give you the information you need to: number one, determine if this is a prospect you can help; number two, help you make that determination faster; and number three, put together a proposal that will increase your chances of landing the work. So I hope this helps. This has been Ed Gandia. I hope you have an awesome day.