MONEY CALLS

The Art Of Conversing With Prospects

LEARN SURE-FIRE STRATEGIES THAT HAVE HELPED ME CLOSE $5000+ DEALS AND GET PAID WHILE ON CALL.

SHREYA PATTAR

Cover page designed by Shreya Pattar

Disclaimer:
All real-life incidents & conversations mentioned in this ebook are for instructional & learning purposes only.

Preface

Speaking to prospects over the call is one of my favourite things to do as a freelancer. The opportunity to meet new people and showcase my skills and creativity, while also experiencing the thrill of uncertainty and the element of surprise... It is a challenging part of freelancing that I cherish the most.

Every piece of the system I have put together and every lesson that I have shared in this ebook comes from months and years of trial and error; adoption of strategies shared by experts; personal practise and hard work; constant refining of the processes; and immense, immense patience.

This ebook, along with being a system for conducting prospect conversations, is also a journal of my personal experiences as a freelancer. In these 80-odd pages, I have included the essence of countless real-life experiences, with the aim to prepare you for the real-life conversations.

Read it, learn it, apply it, practise it, own it...
And it will bring you the results you are seeking.

Do you hear that?
Money Calls.

It’s almost always better to learn from
peers who are 2 years ahead of you
rather than mentors who are 20 years ahead of you.

Life evolves and most insights get outdated.

~ James Clear

Index

Every moment is a fresh beginning.

~ T.S. Eliot

1.
The Beginning

September 2018.

My first post on LinkedIn went viral.

1.5 million+ views in 3 days.

The then-CEO and present Executive Chairman of LinkedIn, Jeff Weiner too commented on the post.

And a Qatar-based CEO reached out to me over LinkedIn Messages.

He was looking for a content writer to write and design a brochure for his company.

Luckily, I had interned with a PR agency earlier and had experience in this area.

What I did not have was experience in talking to prospects on a call.[1]

During the internship, I was able to overhear and experience what a call with a prospect looked like... but it was always from a distance. I was a spectator, not a player. I'd never been on a call myself, and it was absolutely nerve-racking to think about speaking directly with the CEO of a company.

I said to myself,

"Look, you are taking this call to understand what the CEO needs, and to explain to him how you can create the content he needs. Either it works out, or it doesn't. Either way, just take things as they come. Go with the flow."

---

[1] "Prospect" refers to a prospective client. This is someone who could benefit from your services and has the potential to hire you / become your client.

In this ebook, I will freely interchange the phrase "talking to prospects on a call" with the common usage "prospect call."

That’s what I did.
I went with the flow.

Going with flow is better when you have everything to gain and nothing to lose.

I spoke to the prospect, understood his requirements, answered his queries, asked for some clarifications, and once the call was over, I emailed him my proposal.

Naturally, negotiations followed.

And eventually, we closed the deal.

While nerve-racking at the time, it was a fantastic experience.

I understood what prospect calls look like, what’s expected from them, and most importantly, how it feels to conduct one.

This call, of course, was just the beginning.

Over time, things changed.

With every new call booking, came new confidence but also new fears.

With every new prospect, came more questions.

With every new question, came more challenges.

With every new challenge, came more mistakes.

With every new mistake, came more sensibilities on how to approach a prospect, communicate effectively and close deals smoothly.

And that’s exactly why I decided to write this ebook:

So you can conquer your fears,
You can learn how to converse with the prospect ,
You can leap over all the hurdles that tripped me,
And you can close deals with confidence.

That’s exactly why I decided to write this ebook:

To show how you can confidently answer when *Money Calls.*

Your career is what you are paid for,
Your calling is what you are made for.

~ Steve Harvey

2.
Prospect Calls Is Money Calling *You*

It has been over 2 years since my first prospect call.

Since then, I've taken more than 500 calls
And I have had thousands of texts and email exchanges with prospects.

What I do now, works.

Here's what prospects have said to me over the phone and follow-up emails:

"By the way you've conducted this conversation, I can already tell you're going to be great to work with."

"This call itself has shown me how professional you are and it is clear to me why you charge a premium for your services."

"I cannot onboard you presently, but I'm impressed by this conversation and will stay in touch."

Conducting such structured conversations with prospects will help you:

1. Establish yourself as a credible professional

When you converse comfortably, confidently and clearly with prospects, you establish yourself as a credible professional.

Meaningfully share your knowledge and expertise with the prospect, and you are easily the *crème de la crème* of freelancers.

2. Quote your rates without needing to justify/ explain them

If your rates are premium, you need to offer a premium experience to your prospect right from your first interaction with them — be it over text or a call.

The better impression you create in the beginning, the lesser you need to explain and justify why you charge what you charge.

Speak to your prospects in the 'right' way. You'll skip all the teary-eyed and frustrating 'here are 5 reasons you should pick me over other freelancers' kind of situations.

3. Stand out and be memorable

As I've said before, most freelancers find it difficult to converse comfortably, confidently and clearly with prospects.

Why?
Because most freelancers use cookie-cutter scripts they've found through a Google search,
And they use these scripts without fully understanding its message or context.

As soon as the call is over, the prospect has forgotten them.

Why?
Because the prospect has heard the same pitch and justification from every other freelancer they have spoken to.

You need to avoid the trap of coming across as boring.
You need to play to your unique strengths so the prospect remembers you.

The more you stick out in a prospect's mind, the more likely it is that they would want to work with you. Either now, or in the future.

And finally, the most valuable consequence:

4. Develop self-confidence and have mental peace

When you have the right system for a conversation with a prospect, you will have more confidence in your abilities, your preparedness, and the potential of your freelancing career.

With this new confidence, you'll be *more* willing to have *more* conversations with *more* prospects.

More conversations means *more* chances of you getting a consistent flow of good clients (and of course, *more* income.)

You will know what you are getting into.
And you will also know that you have it in you to handle what comes with the assignment.

This confidence will also bring you immense mental peace.

So yes, as a freelancer, knowing how to confidently conduct calls with your prospects is a non-negotiable skill.

And to build this skill - or to build anything of value - you need to dig deep and lay the foundation.

When it comes to your freelancing career, you need to dig deep into yourself.

You need to dig deep into your own head.

Remember:
It’s all in your head… all of it.
If you don’t like the story, change it.
If the people around don’t accept your new story; change them.

~ Steve Maraboli

3.

It All Starts In Your Own Head...

When I started freelancing, I focused on improving my skills, pricing my services, finding clients, and getting the work done.

I was doing well, but...
I didn't get the kind of clients I wanted to work with,
I didn't raise the kind of invoices I wanted to get paid,
I didn't have any regular (or growing) freelancing work.

I knew I *had* to do better.
I knew I *could* do better.
I just didn't know ***how***.

After 18 months of trial-and-error-based freelancing, I started gaining some momentum.

Soon, things became regular. And easier.

I was able to find better clients, provide excellent services, make more money, and build long-lasting relationships with my clients.

All this growth was just a natural progression.

The momentum kept picking up, and I kept getting better and better.

I went from not knowing what service I should focus on and at what price,
To establishing myself as a dependable, premium freelancer... in just a few months.

I went from not finding enough leads,
To booking calls with 4-6 qualified leads every week.

I went from closing intensely-negotiated $100 deals,
To instant "Yeses" and $5000+ deals.

What changed?
My mindset.

Success is not built on success.
It’s built on failure.
It’s built on frustration.
Sometimes it’s built on catastrophe.

~ Sumner Redstone

4.
It’s *You* Who Sets *Your* Mind

The function of our mind is to keep us safe and pain-free.

How we do that, is through our mindset.

Our mindset is the way that we, *personally*, set our mind.
Either towards positive outcomes (without being delusional), or towards negative outcomes.

The positive mindset is created when we associate our temporary pain and struggle with our long-term growth, progress, development and achievements. Such mindsets are self-fulfilling.

The negative mindset is created when we associate our temporary pain and struggle with a lasting experience. The pain of growth and improvement takes control and stops us from taking action. Such negative mindsets are also self-fulfilling, yet largely, self-sabotaging.

In the freelancing world, the common self-sabotaging mindsets are:

- “Freelancing pays peanuts…”
- “Freelancers are undervalued…”
- “Freelancing does not have a good future…”
- “Freelancing is not a sustainable career…”
- “Freelancing does not offer any stability or security…”

In my initial months of freelancing, I too had such self-sabotaging mindsets.

Once I became aware of these limiting mindsets, it became easy for me to replace and upgrade them with successful ones.

Once I “upgraded” my mindset,
Once I “chose” my mindset,
Once I started working on my mindset,
I could let go of every mental barrier that held me back.

Then, my freelancing career took off. In visibility and in sustainability.

I pitched confidently,
Closed more deals,
Accepted rejection gracefully,
And learnt to move on easily...

Everything changed for me, only because I changed my mindset.

During this time, there was not much change in my technical skill set. Yet I got 100x better results.

That's because, while technical skill sets are additive and domain-specific,
The right mindset compounds relentlessly and has spill-over effects in all aspects of your life.

Remember, your mindset can either:

1. Draw a box around you and hold you back,

   Or

2. Erase your personal "scribbles" (limitations & fears) and push you towards demanding more from yourself, and achieving more for yourself.

So, choose your mindset wisely.

Start by smashing your mental barriers.

Make your life a masterpiece;
Imagine no limitations on what you can be, have or do.

~ Brian Tracy

5.

Smash These Nine Mental Barriers

Mental Barrier #1: Lack of Knowledge

“I just don’t know how to speak to prospects.”

First of all, congratulations! By reading this ebook, you’ve already taken the first step to smashing this mental barrier.

In today’s world, knowledge is widely and freely available. What matters is *what* knowledge you choose to pick, learn and apply. Focus on *applying* the knowledge rather than simply hoarding it from multiple different sources (and courses.)

In the coming pages, you’ll learn how to confidently and effectively communicate with your prospects.

Mental Barrier #2: Fear of Rejection

“What if the prospect doesn’t show interest?”

I get it.

You set up a call with the prospect,
Spend time preparing for the call,
Make your notes,
Start the call,
And then...
The prospect’s eyes glaze over and the voice becomes monotone.
If you are on a Zoom call, you can see them looking elsewhere and fidgeting.

In short: they have lost interest in you.

This happened to me many times in the beginning of my freelancing career.

I hated wasting all that time and effort preparing for the call.

I hated spending 30 minutes on a call, even when I knew within the first 5 minutes, that the prospect's answer would be a no.

In fact, I hated it so much,
That I stopped speaking to prospects over the phone for 2 weeks.

Two whole weeks.
Zero calls.

I spent all that time wondering where I was going wrong.
What was I saying wrong?
What skills did I lack?
What expertise did I not prove?
Was I charging too much?
Should I stop asking for advance payment?

I thought about this a lot.

I soon realised that most of the time, **the prospect's interest had nothing to do with what I was saying on the call. They either didn't need my service, or they were looking at competitive offers from me, or they couldn't afford my services at all.**

My problem area? I was not qualifying my prospects before investing time in a call.

Once I started qualifying my prospects rigorously, the quality of my calls improved drastically.

All it took was a short chat over LinkedIn Messages or email, and I could qualify my prospects within 5 minutes.

(I'll show you how to qualify your prospects over text in just 5 minutes.)

Mental Barrier #3: Undermining Yourself

"I won't know what to say and I'll sound stupid."

Yes, there will be times when you will not know what to say,
And yes you'll sound stupid. Especially to yourself.

But you know what?

To be smart, you have to sound stupid to yourself.

You can overcome your feeling of stupidity or inadequatness by exploring exactly *how* stupid you can be while on the call.

With experience and time, you will get used to the drill.

Mental Barrier #4: Scripting Your Own Horror Stories

"What if I don't understand what the prospect wants?"

Don't assume, don't overthink and don't overanalyse.

Don't cook up extreme scenarios in your own head.

If you don't know (or don't understand) something,

1. Tell the prospect you are not aware of this
And
2. Ask the prospect to help you out with some details.

Protip: *How the prospect responds is an excellent client qualification method. If they readily answer your queries over the initial call, they are viewing you as a teammate rather than a service-provider. Such prospects will most likely be highly cooperative when you start working with them. Be mindful of these small details as they can help you understand your prospect better.*

Mental Barrier #5: Low on Confidence

"I am worried about discussing my fees"

The reluctance in quoting the fees while on the call usually comes from the fear of follow-up questions once you quote your price. You can solve this problem by preparing responses to possible prospect objections in advance. This will build your confidence and allow you to comfortably quote your price on the call.

To make things easier for you: if you don't want to quote your price on the call, don't do it initially. Instead, send a written proposal over email after the call. This is a good way to start.

With practise, you will gain more confidence in sharing your fees on the call.

Either way, in this ebook you will learn how to confidently quote your fees on the call... [and once you figure it out, you may never want to send written proposals ever again!]

Mental Barrier #6: Playing The Labelling Game

"[Insert any nationality or other label here] clients do not pay well..."

Be it in my social media DMs or 1:1 consultation calls, I have had countless freelancers share this fear with me.

Having the mindset that clients from certain locations do not pay well might just be your doom.

If you have this mindset,

1. You will not give your 100% in discussions with these prospects

2. You will not even consider responding to queries by these prospects (I know freelancers who did this and were miserable for weeks)

3. You will condition yourself to ask minimal rates by (wrongly) judging your prospect's paying capacity or willingness to pay your price

4. You will lose potentially good opportunities.

There are billions of people in the world.

You may have spoken to, say, 100 people.
Okay, let's say 1000.

I’m sure you can find *someone* who will pay you what you ask for.

Plus, finding high-ticket clients is hard work. It requires long-term commitment, testing of multiple strategies, and dealing with a lot of rejection. That’s why, not everyone can do it.

But there are still people out there who value what you have to offer.

You’ve just got to go out there and find people who do.

Mental Barrier #7: Playing The Blame Game

“Only ‘international clients’ can pay me what I’m asking for…”

I have had many international prospects tell me, “Oh we approached you because we thought *you* would charge less than the writers here.”

So, no, getting paid what you ask for is not as location-dependent or straightforward as you may think.

You need to take charge of your own freelancing career and stop holding others responsible for your failures. Seek your own opportunities and make them work in your favour.

Mental Barrier #8: Fear of No Reciprocation

“What if I am excited to work with the prospect but they don’t want to work with me?”

I had such a client once.

The niche was unique. Probably, once-in-a-lifetime kind. And I absolutely loved writing some paid sample content for them.

They were happy with my work, and we were both happy with the working relationship.

But things didn't seem right at that moment, so we did not continue working together.

This happens.

There will be times when you'll absolutely love the prospect's (or client's) brand or niche or even personality, but you'll have to bid them goodbye.

Don't worry, you'll find someone else, with whom you'll love to work.

Hopefully the prospect you liked so much will get back to you soon!

Mental Barrier #9: Fear of Loss

"What if I lose the deal?"

Well, you and I, both, know that you will not close every deal with every single prospect you speak to.

If you don't get the deal, you don't get the deal.

That's alright. You book some more calls and work towards closing them.

Now you may be thinking, "I may find more prospects, but all the effort of booking and preparing for the call with this prospect was a waste…"

No. Let's not let these calls be a waste.

Here are 2 top-secret ways to leverage a prospect call even if you **don't** close the deal with them:

Secret 1: Improve Yourself

If you are speaking over Zoom or Google Meets, you can record your conversation with your prospects.[2]

---

[2] Always, always, always ask the meeting attendees for permission to record the call. I recommend doing this after exchanging greetings, and right before your introduction.

Play it back the next day, and pay attention to the flow of the conversation, and the words used. Study your call.

- What was the introduction like?
- How did you conduct the call?
- When did you hesitate?
- When did you feel most comfortable?
- Did you ask the right questions?
- Did you answer their questions correctly?
- Could you have handled their objections better?
- What do you need to improve for your next call?

Work upon these aspects of your conversation. Review each and every prospect call you make.

Secret 2: Conduct Prospect Research

The quality of research you do on your prospects decides how hard you have to work later. The quality of your research decides what value additions you can offer to them.

Prospect calls are an excellent method of doing your research.

If you're on the call with the prospect, chances are, they fall under your definition of an "ideal target client."

Conducting a call with such a prospect has given you access to *their* dreams, *their* challenges, *their* requirements and *their* expectations.

This is a goldmine for your freelancing business; dig deep into it.

Consider things like:

- What sort of business do they run?
- What is their role in the company?
- What did they expect from you?
- What challenges are they facing?
- What words did they use repeatedly while describing said challenges?

- What were the common questions they asked you?
- What were the common objections they brought up?
- What did they think about your offer?

Note it all down.

Protip: *Maintain a record of such details in an excel sheet. You can then use this research to qualify prospects, conduct better prospect calls, write eye-catching sales pages, and create content for your own social media profiles.*

Now that you've smashed your mental barriers, it's time to start finding prospects!

You are out of business if you don’t have a prospect.

~ Zig Zagler

6.

Finding Prospects

To implement the conversation strategies that you will learn in this ebook, you, of course, need prospects.

The quality of your prospecting will decide how many calls you book, and your success rate in closing the deals.

Here are 3 methods to find quality prospects:

Method 1: Inbound Leads

These are leads that are inbound, aka, ***people who contact you*** even when you've never contacted them before.

The best way to get inbound leads is to create and publish content online regularly, and commit to this process for the long term.

For example, I started posting content on LinkedIn in September 2018. I've been posting narrative experiences on LinkedIn at least 3-4 times a week for the past 2.5 years.

Within 1 month of consistently publishing content on LinkedIn, I started getting 2-5 leads every week.
Within 6 months, I would get 1-2 leads every time I published a post.
Now, I get 3-4 leads every day, irrespective of whether I publish a post or not. (Whether those leads are qualified is a different story that we'll look at later in this ebook.)

And now I'm also publishing content regularly on Instagram and Twitter, and get inbound leads from these platforms too.

This strategy has the potential to bring you an incredible amount of work and money. Yet, especially in the initial few months, this strategy is based on an incredibly large amount of luck (or the algorithm working in your favour insanely).

A large amount of luck for your posts to receive a good number of views.
A large amount of luck for the right people to see it.
A large amount of luck for getting consistent results from something as unpredictable as social media.

So, along with publishing content online and expecting inbound leads, focus on outbound leads too.

Method 2: Outbound leads

Yes, you guessed it. Outbound leads are the people *you* contact and offer your services to.

Usually, you are reaching out to them “cold”: they don’t know you and they don’t expect to have ever received text/ email from you.

So, what’s the best way to write to people if you’re reaching out to them out of the blue?

Here’s a super-easy template I learnt from @blackhatwizardd:

> **Hi [name],**
>
> **[Personalised line for prospect]**
> - Mention something that you liked about the prospect’s content or website or work. Show the prospect that you know them, and are not just sending out automated messages in bulk.
>
> **[Your introduction]**
> - Introduce yourself and share your offer. Don’t quote the price.
>
> **[Call to action]**
> - Ask them if this interests them, and if they would like to book a call with you.

Here's an example:

> *Hi Shreya,*
>
> *I read your LinkedIn post about always charging in advance. I feared my clients would leave me if I did this, but I actually ended up getting paid in advance — thank you for the tip!*
>
> *I am Sanaya, a graphic designer who helps freelancers like you create attractive images for your Instagram page. I have worked with freelancers like [xyz] and helped increase their engagement by 25%!*
>
> *Do you have time for a call this week?*

That's it.
Use this simple template to reach out to 10-20 people (or more) every single day.

Some things to keep in mind:

1. Always personalise your message
2. Keep the message short and precise
3. Don't quote your fees in the message
4. Follow-up every 3-4 days, preferably 3-5 times per prospect
5. Keep tweaking your template based on the kind of response you get.

Method 3 - References

If you are brand new to freelancing, have no work experience, no social media presence, no professional network... ask your friends and family for references.

Get connected to these references via your personal network,
Use the cold outreach template to get the initial conversation going,
And set up calls with them.

Remember - even if you don’t close a deal with them, this will allow you to practise outreach, qualification, and conducting a prospect call, while also doing prospect research.

The reward for work well done
is the opportunity to do more.

~ Jonah Salk

7.

Qualifying Leads In 5 Minutes

When you are reaching out to a prospect (**outbound leads**), you are (hopefully) qualifying them in terms of their niche, pain points, potential needs, location, business revenue, etc. This qualification, along with the fact that you are a stranger reaching out to *them*, makes directly setting up a prospect call the best option.

*But **inbound leads** need a better system of qualification before setting up a call.*

I get 3-5 leads everyday on LinkedIn.
Are they all qualified leads? No!
Do I book calls with all of them to qualify them? No!

So, how do I qualify my leads? Over text (DM or email).

By the way, to me, a qualified lead is someone who:
1. I can help through my services AND
2. Has the budget to pay for my services.

I keep these factors in mind while using my qualification methods.
You may have more criteria, so tweak these methods accordingly.

Here are 3 methods you can use to qualify your leads within 5 mins:

Method 1: Exchange Estimates

This method involves sharing an estimate of your rates with the prospect right from your first discussion. I use this method when I get a query for a task that I think (read: intuition/ gut instinct) cannot pay me what I'd expect to be paid.

It's important to note that this "gut feeling" is personal and comes through observation and experience. There is no *one* method for you to figure it out. In general, you could consider the message the prospect sent to you, their company profile, personal profile, etc to build that "gut feeling" over time.

Here's how the conversation goes:
Prospect: Hi Shreya, I am looking for a content writer for my website. It would be around 4 webpages. Let me know if you are available to take this up and when we can speak.

Me: Hi [name], thanks for reaching out. Yes, I am available to write web copy for you. Out of respect for your time and mine, I'd like to inform you that my fee for web copy starts from $xxx. If this suits you, I'd be happy to set up a call for further discussion. Does the fee baseline suit you?

That's your template:

> *Out of respect for your time and mine, I'd like to inform you that my fee for [service] starts from [amount]. If this suits you, I'd be happy to set up a call for further discussion. Does the fee baseline suit you?*

Now, the conversation can proceed in 3 ways:

1. The prospect says, "Yes, this suits me."
   You then set up a call with them.

2. The prospect says, "No, this is beyond my budget."
   You thank them for their time and end the conversation.

3. The prospect says, "No, but I can pay $xx for the web copy. Can you write for this discounted price?"
   In this case, you can either:
- Consider the discounted pay and set up a call, or
- You can say no, thank them for their time, and end the conversation.

I'll leave that decision up to you.

Protip: *Only negotiate on the price to the point where it would not affect your commitment and quality of work for the client. Don't negotiate to a point that you will resent working with them — it's neither good for you, nor for your business.*

Method 2 - Quick Questions

As the title suggests, this method refers to qualifying prospects by asking them easy-to-answer, relevant questions. I use this method when I receive a vague query from a prospect, or when I just need a few more details to complete my qualification process.

Here's an example:

Prospect: Hi Shreya, I am looking for a content writer for my startup. Let me know if you are available to take this up and when we can speak.

Me: Hi [name], thanks for reaching out! I have a few quick questions for you that would help us discuss this further:

1. What is your startup about?
2. What kind of content are you looking for?
3. Why did you reach out to me for this?
4. What is your monthly budget for the content work?

You can ask these questions directly over text or email, or you can set up a Google Form.

Once you get responses to such questions, you can decide to set up a call with them.

Protip: *If they are "not sure of a budget" or are "willing to pay well for a good freelancer", you can use Method-1 to further qualify their budget.*

Method 3: Rapid Review

I use this method when a prospect is looking to revise existing content, edit draft documents, proofread the final content etc. Sometimes the prospect says that a 2-page document "only needs a spellcheck", but when you review the content, you find that the font size is tiny, there are about 700 words per page, and every other word is misspelt. This is clearly not just a "spellcheck."

Since such services are related to a specific document that can easily be shared with me and reviewed by me, I ask them to email it to me. I then spend 5-10 minutes reviewing these documents, and then respond with my fees and work details.

If the same thing were done over a call with the prospect sharing the screen and the two of us reviewing the document together, the conversation could easily go on for 30-60 minutes. In fact, I've been in a situation where the call went on for 75 minutes (I was new to prospect calls and had not set a duration for it) and I later ended up getting ghosted by the prospect. To avoid this, I simply ask for access to their document for a rapid review.

Here's an example:

Prospect: Hi Shreya, I am looking for someone to proofread my ebook. It is 30 pages long, and only needs some spellcheck. Are you available for a call tomorrow to discuss this?

My response: Hi [name], I would be happy to help you out with the spellcheck! Could you please email me the draft of your ebook? I will review the draft and let you know how I can help you improve the content, along with other details. My email is xxx.

I've given you 3 different methods of prospect qualification here, each with a unique scenario that I prefer to use it in.

But, the bottom line of all these qualification methods are the same — to get information from the prospect that tells you whether they are worth investing time in or not.

So, while you have three unique reasons to use each method, methods 1 and 2 can be used interchangeably in almost any scenario.

If you like, go back to the beginning of this chapter and re-read each prospect message. You'll realise that methods 1 and 2 (sharing an estimate of your rates, and asking 3-4 quick questions) would fit with each prospect message in one way or the other.

Which one you prefer to use, is up to you.
Ideally, gain proficiency in using both.

Champions are brilliant at the basics.

~ John Wooden

8.
How To Set Up A Prospect Call

Yes, yes, a very easy topic. I know.

But you'd be surprised at how many mistakes I've made while doing something as simple as setting up a call. So you can avoid making those mistakes.

Here's a quick guide for setting up a call with your prospect:

1. Volunteer to send the meeting link to the prospect

As a freelancer, your job is to offer value and convenience to your clients.

By taking the initiative to send the meeting link, you are giving your prospects a subtle sneak-peek into this value and convenience. Although a small step, it makes a significant difference in the impression you create in front of your prospects. So, send the meeting link yourself.

2. Specify the time zone

1 PM IST.
3 PM GMT.
6 PM ET.

Even if both, the prospect and you, are in the same time zone as per the "location" on your social media profiles, mention the time zone while booking the call.

For extra convenience, ask the prospect what time zone they are based in, and mention that as well.

For example, "1 PM IST / 6:30 PM GMT".

This brings crystal clear clarity to the exact meeting time, and prevents the "Oh I thought the call was 1 hour from now" kind of situation.

3. Specify the duration of the call

1 PM - 1:30 PM IST.
3 PM - 3:20 PM GMT.
6 PM - 7 PM ET.

Remember that 75-minute prospect call I told you about earlier? That call was a consequence of not specifying the duration of the meeting.

Yes, I should have found a way to end that call much earlier… but I was new to conducting prospect calls and wasn't comfortable with saying anything about the super-long conversation.

In fact, I wasn't even the one conducting that call; the prospect had full control over how the conversation went. (We'll talk more about this in the coming chapters.)

The focus point here is, specify the duration of the call. 20-30 minutes are usually enough for the call. But it might take longer too, so make sure you have a 15-minute buffer between your call bookings.

4. Clarify whether it's a voice call or a video call

There have been times when I assumed the meeting to be a voice call but the prospect turned their camera on, and I wasn't ready for that.

There have also been times when I have awkwardly left my camera on while the prospect did not turn theirs on.

To avoid this confusion and lack of preparedness, always clarify whether it's a voice call or a video call.

And, an even better takeaway here is this: if you have a call, always be ready for it as if it were a video call. Dress well, comb your hair, clear out all the clutter in your background. Be ready for anything.

Spectacular achievement is always preceded by
unspectacular preparation.

~ Robert H. Schuller

9.
How To Prepare For The Prospect Call

Before the prospect call, prepare thoroughly by following these 3 steps:

Step 1: Study your prospect

Always know the person you are speaking to before you get on a call with them.

Check your prospect's professional digital presence: social media profiles, websites, articles, interviews, videos, etc.

Understand what they do, and think about how you can help them out.

Yes, you will discuss these details on the call too; still, you must do your homework.

Step 2: Prepare your questions

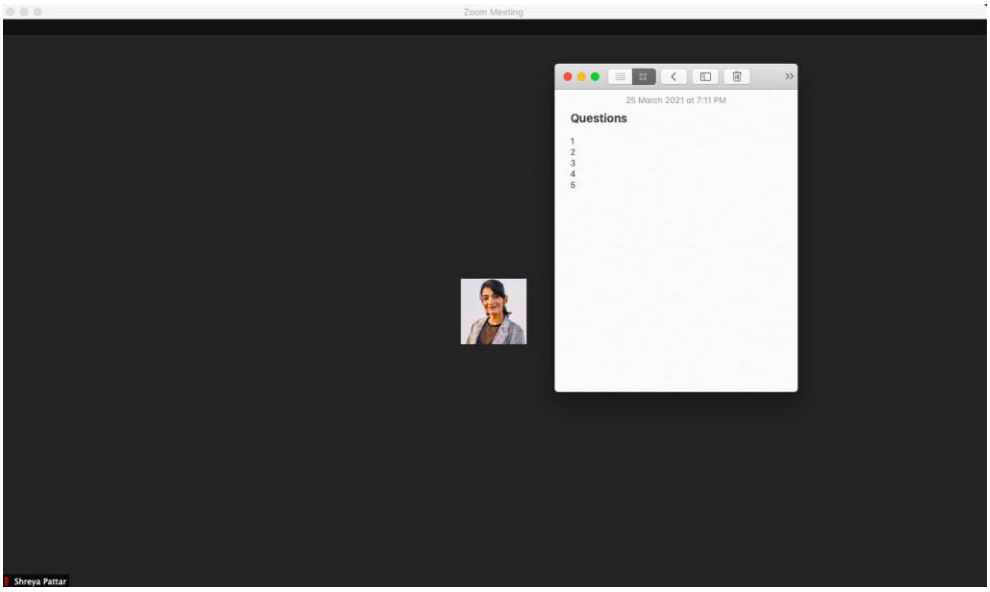
A prospect call is a chance for you and your prospect to get to know eachother better. So, yes, answer a lot of questions, but also *ask* a lot of questions.

The best way to do this is to prepare your questions in advance.

Write them down, and keep those questions next to you during the call.

I like to write my questions in the Notes app on my laptop. I then place this list in the centre of the screen, so that I don't have to look away from the screen (except to make notes).

My screen looks like this:



It’s okay to refer to the questions while you’re on the call. Just make sure you pay attention to your prospect’s responses as well, and don’t solely focus on rushing through your list of questions.

Step 3: Prepare yourself

As soon as you fix the call timing, send a meeting link to your prospect and add it to your calendar as well. Double-check the timezones.

Be ready 10 minutes before the call — drink water, sit in your chair, breathe. Have your notes ready next to you, along with anything else you’ll need for the call. All of this will make you feel comfortable, and help you conduct your call with confidence.

The will to succeed is important,
but what's more important
is the will to prepare.

~ Bobby Knight

10.
How To Conduct The Prospect Call

1. Greet the prospect

“Shreya, why are you telling me something so obvious?”

I’ve had calls wherein some freelance writers and designers started the conversation with “Can you hear me? Great! So, I am a freelance graphic designer who will…”

No greetings.
No breaking the ice.
No interest in knowing me professionally..
No interest in what I need.
No focus on building a relationship.

Only emotionally-detached, sterile and aloof business pitch.

Yes, I realise that this can also happen out of nervousness.

You may be nervous about speaking to the prospect, which is a natural human reaction to new situations.

But you must realise that the prospect has made time for you. And they are looking for someone who can offer them a stress-free and hassle-free service.

So, although some initial nervousness is common and natural, your prospect may not be very accommodative of this. I wouldn’t blame them either — prospects would, of course, prefer to hire a more confident, self-assured freelancer for the task.

Practise these greetings, and you will become a natural in no time.

Say “Hi” to the prospect.
Ask them how they are doing.
Talk to them for a minute or so about their day.

2. Introduce yourself, narratively

When I first started speaking to prospects over calls, I would greet them and then proceed to asking questions about their requirements. This worked fine, and helped me close deals too. But nothing about such a conversation stood out — not to the prospect, and in retrospect, not even to me.

Then, I did something different.

I played to one of my key strengths: storytelling.

As a content writer and speaker, one of my key strengths is storytelling. Be it writing my own LinkedIn posts or creating content for my clients' personal profiles, I love crafting narrative pieces. So one fine day, by a matter of chance, I used this skill in my conversation with a prospect. It went something like this:

> "First of all, I just want to tell you that I am so glad to be speaking with you. I came across your post a few months ago; the one about the secrets of running an online business. I have been following you on LinkedIn since then, and have even bought some of your courses. I found your course about content creation to be incredibly helpful, and that's exactly what made me reach out to you!"

I told the prospect how I came across them, and how I've been following them and their work for a while. This created a ***visual experience*** for the prospect, and also made them happy.

The end result is: you make the prospect happy, and you become memorable. Win-win, right?

3. Introduce the purpose of the call

One of the best ways to conduct a call — any call — is to set an agenda for the call in the beginning.

To make the call worthwhile, make your prospect aware of these 2 things:

1. What the call is going to look like
2. That this is a sales call, wherein you plan to pitch your service and expect them to make a decision.

So, you can say something like this:

“Thank you for getting on this call. Over the next 20 minutes or so, I would like to know more about who you are, what you do, and what kind of services you are looking for. By the end of the call, if we find that we are a good fit for each other, I will pitch you my service. How does that sound?”

Most prospects will say “Yes, sounds good.”
You can then proceed to the next step.

Sometimes, your prospect may say, “Yes but I just want to know how much you charge for Instagram marketing. Just tell me your charges…”

Here’s how you can handle this response:

“Yes, we’ll definitely get to that in a few minutes. I have some questions for you that would help me understand your needs and goals better. I can then offer you a customised service meant to bring YOU the results you’re looking for. How does that sound?”

“Understand”, “customised”, “bring results”… there’s usually no push-back on words like this. Use them to persuade your prospects.

4. Ask what the prospect is looking for

After setting up the agenda for the call, start asking relevant questions to your prospects.

Your aim with these questions should be to understand who they are, what they do, what their challenges are, what their goals are and how they expect you to help solve their challenges and help accomplish their goals.

Let’s say I am pitching a LinkedIn Marketing Service to my prospect. Here are some questions I would ask:

- Why did you choose to speak with me?
- Have you created content on LinkedIn before?
- How has your experience of LinkedIn been so far?
- Why did you decide to start creating content on LinkedIn now?
- What is your goal through this content creation?
- Have you tried anything previously to achieve this goal? How did that go?
- How would you expect me to help you out?

You can also create a similar list of questions for your services. It would be best to create a unique line of questioning for each of your top 2-3 services.

Also keep in mind that some of these questions can be broad and overlapping. So I recommend you skip some questions (and add new follow-up questions) based on your prospect’s responses.

5. Keep asking as many questions as required - now focusing on the scope of work

Once you have insights regarding your prospect’s challenges and goals are, you can start asking questions related to the scope of work.

This is your chance to understand the technical elements such as the number of articles, number of designs, preferred word count, frequency of content, preferred project duration or deadline, etc. These are the questions that would help you create a customised offer and add a price tag to it.

My list for the LinkedIn Marketing conversation would be something like this:

- How frequently do you wish to post on LinkedIn?
- What kind of posts do you want to create?
- How much time can you commit to this every month?
- Do you see this as something long-term, let’s say, 3-6 months?

Make notes of all this information.

6. Relate to your prospect + Explain your process

Now that you have understood what the prospect is struggling with and exactly what they are looking for, give them a summary of everything they said. This will remove any ambiguity or confusion regarding the scope of work. It also shows the prospect that you've paid attention to everything they have said on the call.

Now give your prospects some insight into how you help your clients, and explain your process of working.

Here's how my conversations tend to go:

Me: All this information was super-helpful, thank you for your responses. I understand you want to build your brand on LinkedIn and that you have a lot of stories and lessons to share, but you just don't know how to put them out as posts. You need someone to get those stories out of you and post them.

Prospect: Yes, exactly!

Me: Perfect. It's great that you want to focus on your entrepreneurial journey. I've read your interview about how you launched your startup, and it's incredibly inspiring. I'm sure your experiences would make for fantastic LinkedIn posts.

Prospect smiles

Me: All of this sounds great! Just a few months ago, I helped a Founder build an audience of 10,000 followers on LinkedIn in under 30 days. I can definitely help you out with what you're looking for. Would you like me to share my process of working?

Prospect: Yes please.

Me: Awesome. So here's how this goes: As soon as we confirm things, we'll set up a 30-minute introductory call to discuss the plan for the month.

Post that, I will send you a detailed content strategy for the entire month, along with specific cues for the LinkedIn posts. We can set up another call to discuss these stories, or you can share them over email or text.

I'll then start sharing the posts for your approval over a Google Doc. You may add any edit requests by commenting directly in the document. It's super-straightforward, and everything will be available in one place.

How does that sound?

Prospect: Excellent!

7. Pitch your offer. Your *complete* offer

Now it's time to pitch your offer.

Once again, ask your prospect if they'd like to listen to your offer.

Make sure you are pitching your **complete offer**, which includes all the terms and conditions. Don't leave anything for later.

I focus on these 3 things while pitching my offer:

1. Provide a personalised pitch
2. Quote my fees
3. Share my terms & conditions.

Here's how the conversation goes:

Me: That's great! Would you like to hear my offer for you?

Prospect: Go ahead.

Me: My recommendation for you would be to go in for a minimum of 8 posts per month, instead of 4. This would be a suitable frequency, such that your posts keep popping up on people's feeds regularly, and we can also quickly understand what posts bring you the best results. What do you think about that?

Prospect: I'm not sure if I'll be able to come up with so many ideas for posts. But if you can help me out with the ideas, then yes, I am open to considering 8 posts per month as well.

Me: Yes, absolutely, I will provide you with all the relevant cues. And we'll get the stories out of you!

Prospect: Sounds great.

Me: Awesome! As mentioned, we will have an introductory call to discuss the plan and strategy for the month. All content will be shared with you on a Google Doc. I offer 2 rounds of edits per post, which you can request directly in the document.

Prospect: Sounds great.

Me: Would you like to hear my fees for this?

Prospect: Yes, go ahead.

Me: Perfect! For strategising and writing 8 posts per month, my fee is $XXX. I offer 2 rounds of edits, and will share 2-3 posts per week for your review. How does that sound?

This conversation included:

- Asking for go-ahead to proceed at various stages
- Sharing recommendations for the scope of work (eg. number of posts)
- Reiterating my process of working
- Reiterating the scope of work
- Quoting the fee and sharing the terms and conditions.

8. Get a response on the call

One of the most common ways to end a prospect call is,
"Thanks for the call. I'll send you a proposal and wait to hear back from you."

There are 3 main drawbacks of this method:

1. Your proposal consists of the same information as you have shared on the call. By sending an email, you are simply delaying the prospect's decision-making process.

2. Once the prospect reviews your proposal, you may need to set up another call to answer their questions.

3. Once the prospect gets off the call, they may no longer be interested in you or your proposal, and end up ghosting you. Meanwhile, you keep following up with twice a week for almost a month, unsure of what went wrong.

To avoid spending more time thinking about this prospect and this deal, get a response from your prospect while you are on the call with them.

Here's a method I learnt from Jose Rosado:

Simply ask the prospect, "Would you like to proceed with <service name>?"

Now, the prospect could say one of these 3 things:

1. "Yes, let's get started!"

2. "No, I'll skip it this time"

3. "Maybe. Send me a proposal and I'll think about it"

If they say "Yes", you can move on to the next step of getting paid on the call.

If they say "No", ask your prospect what's holding them back. Answer any questions and objections they may have. If it's still a "No", thank them for their time and conclude the call.

Here's where it gets tricky: the prospect says, "Maybe...".

If the prospect says "Maybe...", you need to get them to make their decision while on the call. In this case, dig deeper into their reason for a "Maybe."

Ask, "Is there anything I can do to make your decision easier?"
Then answer their questions and objections.

If the prospect still says, “Send me a proposal and I’ll let you know,”

Tell them (with a smile),

“I can definitely do that, but the proposal would include the same details as we discussed on the call. And in my experience, when people ask for a proposal, they usually don’t get back to me at all. So I would really appreciate a confirmation from you over the call itself. I would be happy to answer any more questions you may have that will help make your decision easier.”

Whenever I’ve said this line, prospects tend to relate to it easily (based on their experiences with *their* clients), and often smile and give me a confirmed “Yes” or a “No.”

In case your prospect insists on you sending a proposal, or insists on some time to get back to you, you can ask them, “By when may I expect to hear back from you?”

Suppose they say, “By this Friday afternoon.”

Then, you ask them, “Perfect, may I follow up with you on Friday?”
Make sure you mark this date in your calendar, and then follow up with the prospect on that date.

Note: In my experience, those who insist on more time to confirm the deal usually do not end up hiring me or even responding to my follow-ups. So, make sure you continue to look for new prospects and keep booking new calls. Don’t keep waiting for one deal to work out… it may be a long, long wait.

Here are some other objections you may face:

- “I’m speaking to more freelancers for the role.”

  - Ask them what their decision-making factor would be in the hiring process, and what you can do to help them make the decision right away. Hint at how deciding now might save them the time and resources of speaking with more freelancers.

- “I need to discuss this with my team.”

- Ask the prospect by when you can expect a confirmation, and follow up with them on that date. To avoid this situation in the first place, I highly recommend you book a call only with the decision-maker.

9. Get paid on the call

Until a few months ago, I would send my prospect an invoice after our call, which they would then process in the coming days.

This worked out well most of the time.

But, there were times when:
- The invoice was paid up to a month late, delaying the project start date, OR
- The invoice was not paid at all, and the prospects ghosted me.

These 2 major issues were resolved when I started asking for the payment while on the call.

Now, once the deal is closed, I just ask the prospect, “How would you like to pay? Does PayPal suit you?”

I instantly copy-paste my PayPal payment link in the chat box, and the payment is processed right there, while on the call.

That’s how you get paid on the call - by asking for the preferred mode of payment and sharing the payment link instantly.

If you don’t have a payment option like PayPal or Stripe or UPI Transfer yet, I highly recommend setting one up. Paying via bank transfer is a tedious process, especially while on the call. So offer your prospects the convenience of an instant online payment system instead.[3]

---

[3] PayPal or Stripe deduct effectively 5-10% of the amount in transfer fees, conversion charges, etc. I find it better to pay these fees and close my deal while on the call, than try to save 5-10% by sending my bank details and waiting for multiple days for the payment to be processed.

Paying via PayPal or Stripe or UPI Transfer can also take the prospect around 10-15 minutes. So be patient, and guide your prospect through the process.

[More on this in the coming chapters]

10. Close the call

Once you've received a response (and hopefully the payment too) from your prospect, your conversation has come to an end.

If you have closed the deal with the prospect and they **have** paid you on the call, do this:

- Thank them for the payment
- Share the next steps:
  - Set up your next call if needed
  - Login to your client's social media accounts if you need the access (it's easier to share OTPs while on the call)
  - Inform them of when you'll get in touch next
- Exchange numbers (if you are okay with this)
- Ask them if they have any further questions
- Thank them for their time and express your excitement to work with them!

If you have closed the deal with the prospect but they have **not** paid you yet, do this:

- Tell them you'll send the invoice within the next 2 hours
- Guide them on the next steps once they pay the invoice
- Ask them if they have any further questions
- Exchange numbers (if you are okay with this)
- Thank them for their time and express your excitement to work with them!

If you haven't closed the deal with the prospect, do this:

- Tell them they can reach out to you over email when needed
- Thank them for their time.

To Summarise...

1. Greet the prospect
2. Introduce yourself, narratively
3. Introduce the purpose of the call
4. Ask what they are looking for
5. Keep asking as many questions as required - now focusing on the scope of work
6. Relate to your prospect + Explain your process
7. Pitch your offer. Your complete offer
8. Get a response on the call
9. Get paid on the call
10. Close the call.

Congratulations! You've learnt how to conduct an excellent prospect call!

Now, let's dive deeper into negotiating, closing the deal, and getting paid while on the call.

You do not get what you want.
You get what you negotiate.

~ Harvey Mackay

11.

How To Discuss Prices
& Negotiate Successfully On The Prospect Call

In the early days of my freelancing career, I would book a call with a prospect *only* to understand their requirements.

After the call, I would send them a detailed proposal and ask them to get back to me with any queries.

This led to us to exchange multiple emails over the next few days, possibly even setting up another call to discuss the proposal, and then, after 10-odd days, *maybe* close the deal. BIG maybe.

Then, one fine day, I decided to quote my fees while on the call. I did some calculations in my head and came up with a number on the fly. As soon as I said the number, I realised that I had made an error in the calculations and had underpriced my service by 30%. But the prospect said yes instantly and asked me to send the invoice.

That was the first time I quoted my fees on the call. It was a mess in terms of the amount I got paid.

BUT! I had closed the deal instantly.
And that was a BIG win for me.

After this experience, I spent some time working on my pricing and creating a "Rate Card" of my services for personal use. Whenever I got on a call with a prospect, I would refer to my rate card, calculate the total amount on my phone, and instantly share a well-structured quote that I was happy with.

Soon I realised that most of my prospects had similar needs and expectations. So I created a monthly offer for a fixed fee. For example, 4 articles per month for $XXX. This was a baseline offer, from which I could come up with other offers.

I then started pitching my baseline offer during my calls. At times, the prospects would tweak these offers and I would instantly give them the revised pricing.

Over time, I gained confidence in quoting my fees comfortably on the call. And now I don't need to refer to a rate card to do this.

This is how I progressed with quoting my fees on the call.

I am sharing this story because I want you to know that such skills are built with time and experience. You might mess up one or two times, but it gets easier after a few prospect calls.

If you have never quoted your fees over a call before, here are some ways to quote confidently:

Have an offer in place

Your offer is basically a package of your services that you recommend to your prospects.

While coming up with an offer, make sure you consider the kind of services you commonly get requested for, and the kind of services that would be of most value to your prospects/ clients.

You can create an irresistible offer by focusing on 3 main things:

1. What service am I offering and in what niche?
2. Exactly what does my client get?
3. How much does it cost the client?

For example, let's say you are offering graphic designing services to fitness coaches. You could answer the above questions as follows:

1. My service: Graphic designing for fitness coaches
2. What the client gets: 15 Instagram carousels per month
3. Cost: $500 per month.

Finally, your irresistible offer looks like this:

> *I offer graphic designing services for fitness coaches like you. I will create 15 Instagram carousels per month, and my fee is $500 per month.*

Based on your skillset, you may want to create 2-3 signature offers.

Once you have a fixed baseline offer (or 2-3 offers), you can effortlessly quote this to your prospects while on the call.

This is especially helpful when the prospect is undecided of how many posts or articles would be a good start for them… you can simply quote this offer as your best recommendation.

Two things to keep in mind here:

1. Know your offer in detail. While pitching, mention all the terms and conditions, and clarify what services are **not** included in your package.

2. Have a clear idea of the maximum amount you'd be willing to negotiate to.

"What if the prospect tweaks my offer?"

What if your offer includes 15 posts, but your prospect only wants 10?

In such a situation, you can consider how much work has been reduced (or added), and simply deduct an equivalent percentage of the amount from the fees.

For example, if the prospect wants 10 posts instead of 15, simply deduct 30% or so from the price of your offer.

If your prospect wants 30 posts instead of 15, simply multiply the amount by 2. (You may also choose to offer an additional discount to the prospect for offering you a larger amount of work.)

OR…

Create a rate card and keep it next to you while you are conducting the call. If you get stuck, simply ask your prospect for a minute, refer to the rate card, and calculate a customised offer instantly.

No per-word rates.
No hourly rates.
Share only project fees or monthly fees.
And get paid in advance.

“What if the prospect negotiates with me?”

The most important thing to keep in mind about negotiation is to not be afraid of it and to not be defensive about it. Look forward to negotiating as a chance to showcase your expertise and reinforce why you are an exceptional freelancer, best-suited for this job.

Follow these steps:

Step 1: Understand why the prospect wants to negotiate

Is the service not a priority for the prospect?
Does the prospect not have clarity on the value you are offering?
Does the prospect have any more questions about your work?

Find these things out.

By the way, negotiation is also a cultural thing. People from certain countries tend to negotiate more, and out of habit. So assess that cultural aspect as well.

Step 2: Offer alternative payment plans

Alternative Payment Plan 1: Payment in instalments

If YOU are okay with it, offer your prospect the option to pay in two instalments.

If you choose this option, I highly recommend you charge 50% advance, and the 50% balance halfway through the project. So, effectively, you’d charge

50% advance, do 50% of the work; and then, charge the balance 50% advance and complete the remaining 50% of the work.

This ensures that you are always paid for the work you do, and you don't end up chasing your client for your payments *after* completing the work.

Alternative Payment Plan 2: Overall Discount

Offer your prospects an overall discount of 10-15% for booking you for 3 months in advance. Your offer can be something like this,

"My monthly fee is $500. If you book me for 3 months in advance, you will get an overall discount of 15%, bringing the total down from $1500 to $1275 for 3 months."

Protip: *Round up the numbers to make your prospect happier:*

"If you book me for 3 months in advance, you will get an overall discount of 15%, bringing the total down from $1500 to $1275 for 3 months. I'd be happy to round it off to $1200 for you. How does that sound?"

Note: If you are offering a discount for a 3-month period, then your advance payment would be the amount worth 3 months of work ($1200), and not one month ($400).

This method works great on all offers. It works especially well on high-ticket offers, say, $1500+ per month, wherein the overall discount amount becomes larger and significant for the prospect.

Step 3: Dig into the numbers

If the second step didn't work out for you, you can now consider the prospect's pricing suggestions.

Let's say you quoted an offer of $500 per month.

Your prospect says, "I can do $350 per month. If that works, we'll start right away."

Here, one of the following three things can happen:

1. You find the negotiated amount suitable.
   Then you can agree to the prospect's amount and close the deal.

2. You don't find the negotiated amount suitable.
   Then you can renegotiate on the prospect's preferred amount. You could quote $400 and ask your prospect to consider this 20% discount off the original fee.

3. You don't find the negotiated amount suitable.
   Then you can decline the work, thank the prospect for their time, and move on to the next prospect.

Now, although I have done my best to simplify the process of negotiation and offer you simple solutions to multiple negotiation possibilities, your prospect calls may not (and will not) be as structured and straightforward as this. At times you may need to use only one negotiation strategy in a call, and at other times, you may need to use multiple negotiation strategies within the same call.

I recommend you play out some mock conversations and mock scenarios, and practise dealing with them in your own way. And of course, the more calls you conduct, the better you will get at using these strategies without thinking twice.

So, keep practising.

Overall, the bottom line of your negotiation must be to close the deal at an amount that you are happy with. **You should never ever negotiate your prices down to a point where you will resent working with the client**. Turn this into your **"Law Of Pricing"**, and you'll make your freelancing life much, much easier.

You make your own luck if you stay at it long enough.

~ Naval Ravikant

12.
How To Get Paid On The Prospect Call

Getting paid while on the call is a life-changing method.

I learnt this method from Jose Rosado.

I have used this method with my prospects from all across the globe — including those for my 1:1 coaching programme — and have seen exceptional results.

The steps to getting paid on the call are straightforward:

Step 1: Ask your prospect, "Are you ready to pay now?" *or* "How would you like to pay? Does PayPal or Stripe suit you?"

[If you're speaking with Indian prospects, you may want to ask for UPI payment options]

Step 2: Send the payment link to the prospect while on call

Step 3: Wait for them to make the payment, and confirm receipt while on call.

What's **not** so straightforward is getting the prospect to agree to pay while on the call.

Well... this method may be easier to apply if you're working with prospects from the US. Making payments while on the call is common practise in the US, so you may not face much resistance from them.

But to people from other countries, this method is pretty much unheard of.

So here are some possible objections you'll face, and how to deal with them:

“Why do you want me to pay now?”

- Tell the prospect that the payment will allow you to confirm the deal, book them as a client, and get started with the work instantly.

“I need an invoice for this”

- You can email an invoice to the prospect after the call. If the invoice is absolutely urgent, you can create one while the prospect is processing the payment. PayPal also allows you to create invoices on the app itself and share it instantly.

“My team will process the payment”

- You can email the invoice to the prospect post the call, and have their team process the payment. This usually works fine too (but I wouldn’t rely on it as the go-to method.)

In three words, I can sum up everything
I have learnt about life:
It goes on.

~ Robert Frost

13.
If The Prospect Says No...

Always remember that the prospect is saying no to your offer, not to you.

If the prospect call doesn't work out in your favour, there is still a lot you can learn from it.

Follow the 2 secret methods I shared with you in the beginning of this ebook.

A quick recap:

1. Improve yourself.
   Study the recording of the call and work on the aspects you found most challenging or you wish you had done better.

2. Conduct in-depth prospect research.
   This will be incredibly helpful when creating your offer and pitching to your future prospects.

Learn from the first call and **apply** the learnings in the second call.

Learn from the first *and* second calls and **apply** the learnings in the third call.

Learn from the first *and* second *and* third call and **apply** the learnings in the fourth call.

And so on...

Focus on being true to yourself and self-sufficient,
and you will eventually find like-minded people.

~ Ed Latimore

14.
The 14 Golden Rules of Prospect Conversation

Golden Rule #1
Be the first one to start the conversation, with a smile.

On every call, be the first one to smile and say hello; ask “How are you?” and ask any ice-breaking questions.

Doing this creates a conversation in the form of a response loop. Right from the get-go, the prospect is nudged towards *responding* to the words you’ve said or asked. This expectation to *respond* will continue throughout the conversation.

You are now leading the conversation and have full control of how the next 20-30 minutes of the call will go.

Golden Rule #2
Keep the conversation *conversational.*

You don’t need to use big, fancy words and long, memorised scripts to lead a strategic and “professional” conversation. Don’t start by introducing your services or talking about your offer either. These things can make your prospect feel detached and uninterested in the call.

Instead, talk to your prospect just like you would talk to anyone else that you meet: Greet them, ask them how they are doing, introduce yourself… and maybe even talk about a book or an action figure that you see in their backdrop on the video call!

Just focus on knowing your prospect better.
Keep the conversation natural,
And build a strong rapport with your prospect. *(That’s why homework matters)*

Golden Rule #3

Ask before proceeding.

At every stage, get your prospect's go-ahead before giving them any further details:

- "May I record this conversation? It's for personal use only"
- "What do you think about this?"
- "How does this sound to you?"
- "Do you have any questions about this?
- "Would you like to know about my process of working?"
- "May I share my screen and show you some of my previous client work?"

Get their nod of agreement.
Avoid monologues.

Golden Rule #4

Ask questions — A lot of them.

Asking the right questions is a skill that you develop over time. The more intuitive the questions are, the easier the conversation becomes.

With your questions, your goal should be to get as much information about the prospect as you can:

- Why did they approach you for the task?
- What do they need your help with?
- How will you help them improve their life? (Make money, save time, get more followers, build thought leadership...)
- How will you not helping them impact their life? ...

Ask a question.
Ask a follow-up question.
Ask a follow-up question to your follow-up question.

To follow up on questions, use phrases like:

- "That sounds interesting, tell me more about that!"

- “What happened next?”
- “How did that go?”

The more (relevant) questions you ask, the easier it gets to create a customised offer and win over your prospect.

Golden Rule #5
Use dynamic words.

Words have power. Words have energy. Harness them.

Throughout your conversation, use dynamic words to show your confidence and excitement to the prospect:
Awesome!
Perfect!
Sounds great!
Excellent!
Let’s do it!

Choose words that are natural and authentic to you in the conversation.

Golden Rule #6
Listen. And listen actively.

The aim of listening is to create a conversational flow with your prospects. When you are on a call with them, listen actively and reflectively.

Active Listening is when you are listening to what the prospect is saying, and also observing non-verbal cues.

Reflective Listening is when you understand your prospect’s words, and then reconfirm that you are on the same page with them.

Pay attention to everything the prospect is saying. Even to the words that are unsaid or avoided.

While it’s good to have a list of questions ready for the call, make sure you don’t let it completely occupy your eyes and mind. Don’t just ask questions for the sake of ticking them all off your list. Instead, listen to the prospect, and don't interrupt them.

Once they have paused, you can either ask an impromptu follow-up question,
Or quickly refer to your list and ask your next question from there.

Golden Rule #7

Take notes.

Taking notes is a skill that improves with practise. By value, it is equivalent to mining gold.

When you take notes, do it in a notebook (even a digital notebook like an iPad will do.)

I was once on a call with a freelancer who was making notes of our conversation (great)... on her laptop (not so great.) Throughout our 15-min call, I could hear her typing away on her keyboard. I don't recommend this. Don't take notes on a phone either — you don't want to look like you're texting.

Even if you're recording the conversation, take notes.
Here's why...

Golden Rule #8

Use the prospects' words.

Words have personal meaning and significance.

When you take notes, highlight the words that your prospect is using repeatedly: these words have a personal significance to them. Then use those exact words in your conversation.

For example, one word that most of my prospects use repeatedly is "time."

They say things like,

- “I tried posting on social media, but it just takes me so much **time** to write one post…”
- “I don’t want to spend any **time** on trial and error…”
- “Having you work on this would save me a ton of **time…**”

I make a note of these statements.

Then, I weave these words and ideas into our conversation:

- “Oh yes, absolutely. When I started out, I spent around 15-20 hours per month trying to figure out social media… that’s a lot of time.” [Relating to the prospect & making them feel heard]

- “Let’s just say that you can save 8 hours every month. How would it feel to save all that time?” [Asking more questions]

- “One of my clients has saved 10+ hours per month by hiring me to manage her social media…” [Giving proof of work]

Using the prospect’s words and relating to their challenges will show that you are invested in them. It will also make your service appear more personal and specific to *their* needs.

Golden Rule #9
Break it all down.

Until a few months ago, I used to tell my prospects, “I recommend posting **carousels** on Instagram…”

9 out of 10 times, the prospect would go, “Huh? Carousels???”

Now I say, “Have you ever seen those “swipey-posts” on Instagram? The one that has multiple images or slides?” [On a video call, I show a side-swiping motion with my finger]

The prospect’s face lights up… “Yes, yes!”

“Awesome! Those swipey-posts are called carousels on Instagram. I highly recommend creating such posts for your page…”

Either skip the jargon or break it all down for your prospects. Make the conversation buttery-smooth to follow.

Golden Rule #10
Be honest and authentic.

Being honest and authentic are exceptional character traits. These are also traits that your prospects can capture in the way you conduct yourself during the call.

If you don’t have experience in a particular niche, be honest.

If you need a longer deadline, be honest.

If you don’t offer a particular service, be honest.

If you don’t wish to answer a question, refuse politely.

If you want to stand out and be memorable, be honest and authentic.

Golden Rule #11
Be prepared for either result.

The conversation may seem incredibly promising, but the result may disappoint.

The conversation may pick up really slowly, but it may bring in a good end result.

Be prepared for either. And follow this:

Golden Rule #12
Don’t react emotionally.

“You have only 1 year of experience, I can’t pay you more than $10 per article...”

"All other freelancers have created a free sample for me. If you want me to hire you, you will need to create one too..."

"Why are you charging in advance when no one else is?"

No matter what your prospect says on the call, don't react emotionally.

Emotional reactions and responses can be avoided when you don't take things personally.

Be aware of your emotions,
Keep your composure,
Take a pause,
And deal with the prospect's objections impersonally.

Golden Rule #13
Don't be pushy.

The prospect should never feel overwhelmed or forced into hiring you; they should be allowed to make their own decisions.

If the budget is the main concern for a prospect, then you may consider pitching them a lower-end service.

Ask them, "I have another offer that may help you out and also suit your budget. Would you like to hear about it?" **If they are interested,** pitch another suitable service for them.

For example, instead of content *writing*, you can offer proofreading and editing. Instead of social media marketing, you can offer them bi-monthly social media consultation calls.

Again, don't be pushy.

Being pushy not only ruins your impression right at the goodbyes, but also makes you look desperate for money and work.

Golden Rule #14
Know when to end the call.

If you don't think you are a right fit for each other, it makes no sense to keep dragging the conversation.

Just bring the conversation to a close, tactfully and respectfully,
Thank the prospect for their consideration and time,
And end the call.

You can,
you should,
and if you are brave enough to start,
you will.

~ Stephen King

15.

Here’s To New Beginnings...

The system that I have shared with you in this ebook is not just mine alone.

This system is a combination of various systems that I have learnt by reading books, watching courses, listening to successful freelancers and creators, and most importantly, by living through my own experiences.

Now that you have this system, you must apply it.

But you must also apply it in a way that works for YOU.

And you must OWN the system.

Own the system,
And you will own the results.

Own it,
Shreya

Thank you for reading *Money Call$*!

Reach out to me on:

LinkedIn: Shreya Pattar

Instagram: @shreyapattar

Twitter: @shreyapattar

YouTube: @shreyapattar

My Telegram Channel: The Freelance Game

My website: www.shreyapattar.com

Get my other infoproducts:

#Anthology - Writing Content , Building An Audience On LinkedIn & Freelancing Successfully

Book a 1:1 Consultation Call with me

Happy Conversing,
Shreya