

A WORKSHOP FOR FREELANCERS

Set Out Your Stall!

How freelancers get noticed, get hired, and get hired again

with Athina



90 MINUTES • BRING A PEN

Today's market day

- | | |
|------|---|
| 0:00 | Welcome — and the questions you sent in |
| 0:10 | The big idea — freelancing is like running a market stall |
| 0:15 | What's on your stall? — your business, values and customers |
| 0:35 | Setting out the display — portfolio and marketing assets |
| 0:45 | Bringing people to your pitch — footfall and networks |
| 1:00 | Making the sale — pitch, email, call, and a practice round |
| 1:25 | Keeping regulars — and your three actions for the week |

SOUND FAMILIAR?

The four big worries

Getting seen

"Nobody knows I exist."

"Do I need a logo before I start?"

Getting chosen

"I freeze when someone asks what I do."

"How do I message a business without sounding desperate?"

Starting from zero

"I've no paid work to show."

"Am I too new to charge?"

Keeping clients

"I got one job... then silence."

"How do I get them to come back?"

Your turn: add your own worry to the board. We'll answer them all today.

THE BIG IDEA

*Freelancing is like
running a market
stall.*

*Not a big shop on the high street. A stall — small,
personal, set up by you, every single week.*



THE BIG IDEA

Five things every stallholder knows

1

The display sells first

People decide in seconds whether to stop. → Your portfolio, profile and first email.

2

Tasters turn into buyers

Nobody buys a whole cake from a stranger. → Small first projects and samples.

3

Your pitch matters

In a market, your “pitch” is your spot. → Which platforms, events and groups you show up in.

4

Neighbours send customers

“Try the olives two stalls down.” → Referrals, mentors and collaborators.

5

Regulars pay the rent

The Saturday-morning regulars are the business. → Repeat clients and word of mouth.

1

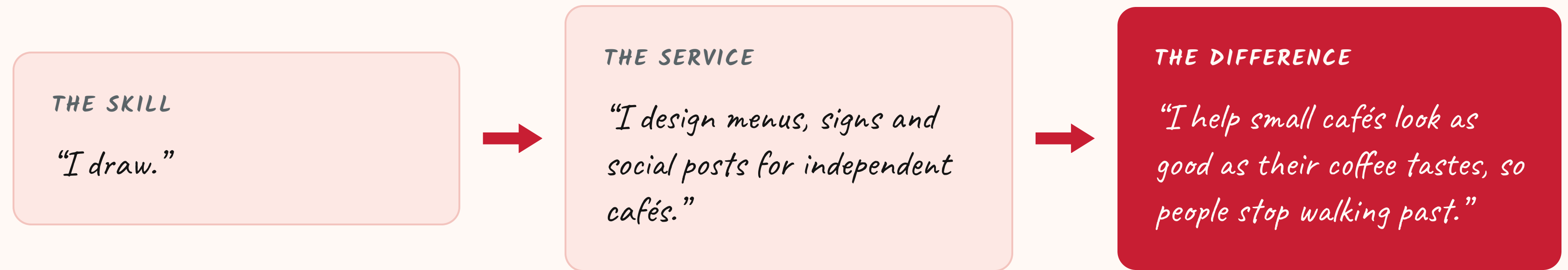
What's on your stall?

The business you're really in, what you stand for, and who you're for.



EXAMPLE: A FREELANCE ILLUSTRATOR

What business are you really in?



Your turn · 4 min: write your three lines. When someone asks what you do, lead with the last one.

Set Out Your Stall · What's on your stall?

YOU ARE THE BRAND

Overheard at your stall

"Honestly, so easy to work with."

"It was early, and it looked amazing."

"They made our little shop feel like a real brand."

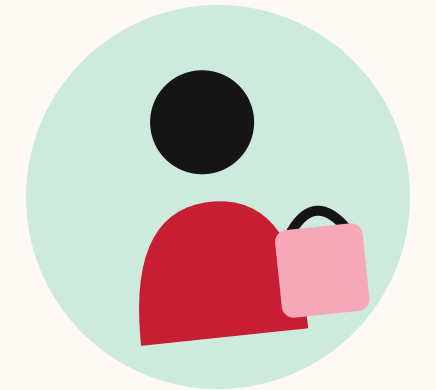
1. Write five things you'd love to overhear a client say about you.
2. Circle every describing word: easy, early, bold, calm...
3. Keep the three that feel most like you. Those are your **stall words**.



The theory: the mere-exposure effect (Robert Zajonc, 1968). We warm to what we see again and again, so use your three words everywhere, every time.

YOUR IDEAL CUSTOMER

Who stops at your stall?



Who are they?

Their job, their sector, the size of their business.

What's bugging them?

The problem you solve, in their words, not yours.

Where do they browse?

The platforms, events, groups and newsletters they use.

Who else do they buy from?

Your competition, and what makes you different from them.

What makes them say yes?

Price, speed, style, trust, or a friend's recommendation?

What brings them back?

Keep this one in mind. We'll come back to it at the end.

2

Setting out the display

Your marketing assets, and how to fill the table when you're just starting out.



YOUR MARKETING ASSETS

Front of the table, back of the van

Lay these out first

Portfolio: your 6–10 best pieces, each with the brief and the result.

Short bio: two sentences, written for the client, not about you.

Email and signature: a professional address and a link to your work.

CV or LinkedIn: up to date and matching your three stall words.

Bring these out later

Website: your own permanent pitch, open around the clock.

Showreel or case studies: the story behind your best work.

Proposal template: so quoting takes minutes, not evenings.

A short presentation: five slides about you for meetings and calls.

NO EXPERIENCE YET?

Empty table? Stock it yourself



Set your own brief

Pick a real problem and solve it as if you'd been hired to.

Redo the obvious

A local menu, website or poster. Show before and after, and label it self-initiated.

Team up

A film needs a composer. A café launch needs a photographer. Make things together.

Start small and paid

Friends of friends, clubs, local charities. Real briefs bring real feedback.

Show your thinking

Sketches, drafts, decisions. Clients buy the way you work, too.

Fewer, better

Six strong pieces beat thirty okay ones. Curate hard.



3

Bringing people to your pitch

How passers-by become regulars, and why your first clients are closer than you think.

AWARENESS · LIKING · TRIAL · REPEAT

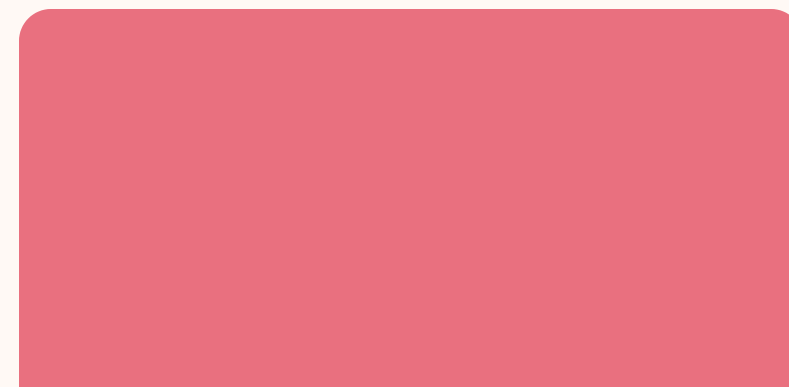
From passer-by to regular



Passer-by

Do they know you exist?

Show up where they already are.



Browser

Do they like what they see?

A clear display and a consistent style.



Taster

Can they try you, low-risk?

A small first project with a clear price.



Regular

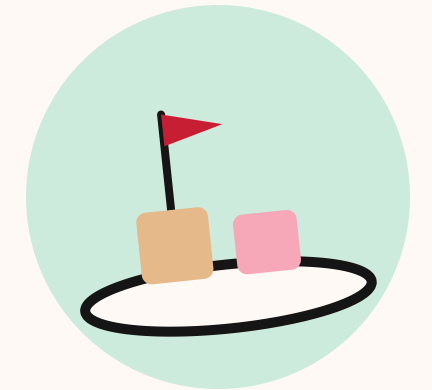
Is there a reason to return?

Great service, then stay in touch.

Set Out Your Stall · Bringing people to your pitch · Bars are illustrative: fewer people reach each stage

THEORY: ROBERT CIALDINI, INFLUENCE (1984)

Why people stop at a stall



Reciprocity

The free sample. Give something small first, like a quick idea or a mini review.

Social proof

The queue. A busy stall looks trustworthy. Show testimonials and past clients.

Liking

The friendly face. We buy from people we like. Be warm and find common ground.

Authority

The award rosette. Show what makes you credible: training, results, press.

Consistency

The small yes. A small first job makes a bigger second one feel natural.

Scarcity

“Last few today.” Limited slots work, but only ever if they’re true.

PUSH VS PULL MARKETING

Calling out vs the smell of bread



	<i>Push: calling out</i>	<i>Pull: fresh bread</i>
<i>Who moves?</i>	<i>You go to them</i>	<i>They come to you</i>
<i>Looks like</i>	<i>Emails, DMs, applications, events</i>	<i>Portfolio, posts, website, talks</i>
<i>Speed</i>	<i>Fast: work this month</i>	<i>Slow to build, then keeps working</i>
<i>Effort</i>	<i>Every single time</i>	<i>Up front, then less over time</i>
<i>Best for</i>	<i>Getting started, quiet months</i>	<i>The long run, a steady flow</i>

Starting out? Mostly push, a little pull, every week.

NETWORKING WITHOUT THE CRINGE

Your first clients are nearby



Inner circle

Friends, family, tutors, old managers. Tell them exactly what you do now.

Middle circle

Classmates, alumni, clubs, people from part-time jobs.

Outer circle

Followers, event contacts, friends of friends.

Dunbar's number: we keep up about 150 meaningful relationships. You don't need more people. You need them to know what you do.

THEORY: MARK GRANOVETTER, "THE STRENGTH OF WEAK TIES" (1973)

Your next client is probably an acquaintance

Close friends know what you know.

Acquaintances know people you don't.

Try this

1. List 10 people you know a bit: ex-colleagues, coursemates, a friend's friend.
2. Send three a friendly update on what you do now.
3. Ask a question, not for a job.

MENTORS, SPONSORS, INTRODUCERS

Make friends with the neighbours



The mentor

Helps you get better

*An older stallholder who shows you how to price, pitch and pack up.
Advice, not work.*



The sponsor

Vouches for you

Puts their own name behind yours: “Go with them, they’re brilliant.” Earned by doing great work for them.



The introducer

Connects you

“You two should talk.” Make it easy: give them one line about you they can forward.

Write one name for each. Who could be your mentor, sponsor and introducer?

4

Making the sale

The 60-second pitch, the cold email, the first call, and a practice round.



FOUR BEATS, ONE MINUTE

The stallholder's pitch



Why

What you believe

"I believe great little cafés deserve to be noticed."

How

What makes your way different

"I draw by hand, on site, so it feels like your place."

What

What you actually offer

"Menus, window boards and social posts."

Taste

One small, easy first step

"Can I sketch one board idea for you this week?"



The theory: Simon Sinek's Golden Circle. People buy why you do it before what you do. Watch his TED talk "How great leaders inspire action" (2009).

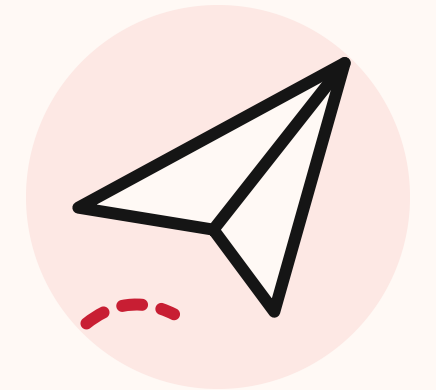
Cold emails that get replies



Part	What it does
Subject line	About them, and specific: “Three ideas for your menu boards”
Hello	A real name, spelled right. Never “Dear Sir/Madam”.
Their problem	Something you noticed that they might want fixed
Why you	One line: what you do, and for whom
Proof	A link, a result, or someone you both know
Small ask	Easy to say yes to, like a 15-minute call or three quick sketches

EXAMPLE

What a good one looks like



Subject: Three ideas for your new menu boards

Hi [Name],

I walked past [Café] last week and loved the new terrace. The chalkboard out front is working hard, but it's tricky to read from across the street.

I'm an illustrator who designs menus and signs for independent cafés, so people stop instead of walking on.

[Another café] used my boards for their spring launch. Here's the before and after: [link]

Would it help if I sketched three quick ideas for yours? No cost, no strings.

[Your name]

Why it works

It's about them, not you

One problem, one fix

Proof they can check

A tiny, easy yes

Readable in 15 seconds

THEY SAID YES TO A CHAT

On the call: ask, then listen

Find the job behind the job

“What made you look for help *now*?”

“What have you tried so far?”

“What would make this a win in three months?”



While they talk: RASA

Receive: give them your full attention

Appreciate: small “mm”, “right”, “ok”

Summarise: “So what you need is...”

Ask: questions afterwards



The theory: Clayton Christensen’s *Jobs to Be Done*: clients “hire” you to get a job done. RASA comes from Julian Treasure’s TED talk “5 ways to listen better” (2011).

ACTIVITY · 15 MINUTES

Market day: practise your pitch

1

Write it

Your 60-second pitch, using the four beats. 5 min.

2

Pitch it

In pairs: one stallholder, one shopper. 1 min each.

3

Feed back

“What I’d buy...” and “What I’d change...” 2 min each.

4

Swap stalls

New partner, pitch again with your change. 3 min.

REGULARS PAY THE RENT

Turning tasters into regulars



A little extra

One small, unasked-for touch. The extra strawberry in the bag.



Follow up

A week later: "How's it working?" Few people ever do this.



Ask while they're happy

For a testimonial, and for one name who might need you too.



Stay in touch

Every few months: a useful link, a seasonal idea, a quick hello.

Remember: *keeping a regular is far easier than finding a new passer-by.*

BEFORE NEXT WEEK

Three things to open your stall



1

Write your sign. Your three lines (skill, service, difference) and your three stall words.

2

Set your table. Pick your best six pieces. Add one line each: the brief and the result.

3

Call out once. Send one message to someone in your inner or middle circle about what you do now.

KEEP LEARNING

Watch, read, steal like a stallholder

Type	Title	Use it for
TED talk	Simon Sinek, “How great leaders inspire action” (2009)	Your pitch
TED talk	Julian Treasure, “5 ways to listen better” (2011)	Client calls
Book	Robert Cialdini, Influence (1984)	Tasters and testimonials
Book	Clayton Christensen and others, Competing Against Luck (2016)	What clients really want
Paper	Mark Granovetter, “The Strength of Weak Ties” (1973)	Finding work
Book	Robin Dunbar, How Many Friends Does One Person Need? (2010)	Your circles



Open for
business!

Questions? Let's hear them.

Athina

