



LONGER TERM CLIENT RELATIONSHIPS

Make freelancing more stable, by building a healthy stream of long-term, mutually beneficial client relationships

by Liam Veitch

AUTHOR, "STOP THINKING LIKE A FREELANCER"



About the author

I've grown my freelance business into something I am truly proud of, yet I know the feeling of battling as a freelancer all-too-well. Following an initial failure I tried again with a renewed mindset and I teach everything I know at freancelift.com.

It took me one failure at the freelance game and a 2 year sentence as a zombie-herd employee at a corporate to figure it out, now I want to give you the benefit of my experience as well as inviting you into the world of the people who have been there and broken the freelance boundaries themselves.

It's too easy to accept unpredictability and 'project-to-project' work so in this book I want to address the fundamental knowledge required to consistently build longer-term, mutually beneficial client relationships.



ACCEPTANCE

Why accept unsteady foundations?

ACCEPTANCE

I've long held the belief that we do ourselves down by 'just accepting' that the freelancer / service provider space has unsteady foundations.

We're expected to be the 'yes person', the subservient order taker, the thankless engineer of a client's success and the unsung hero.

Our financial compensation for solving a client's problem is payment enough in the eyes of most. After all, this isn't the first or the last client we'll have so what else is there to satisfy that need for reimbursement?

So it's interesting to me when we bemoan this fact, with statements like 'if only I could get more clients on a regular basis' or 'it's a roller coaster with work in this game'.

Statements like these suggest we **accept and comply with** this inherent weakness without looking to change the status quo.

Moreover, we're resigning ourselves to the 'up then down' freelancing roller coaster.

In my book 'Stop Thinking Like a Freelancer' I touched on this topic and between this book and the next one I want to dive deep on addressing it.

We're looking at freelancer stability and how it's achieved.

By the end of this book (and the course that runs alongside it) you'll have the required perspective and clarity to make better decisions for the stability of your business.



STABILITY

What is stability anyway?

In the spirit of ‘rebuilding your perspective’ on this I just want to lay out what we really mean when we say ‘stable’.

At some point in your life you’ve probably worked in a steady 9-5, Monday-to-Friday environment.

You likely were paid ‘okay’ and the job itself wasn’t wholly taxing either.

Assuming you were with an established employer you’d class this as stable, comfortable... some might say ‘okay’.

For whatever reason though you decided to leave.

This tells us that ‘financial stability’ itself is only one part of the equation, hence we are not simply talking about **raw income** here.

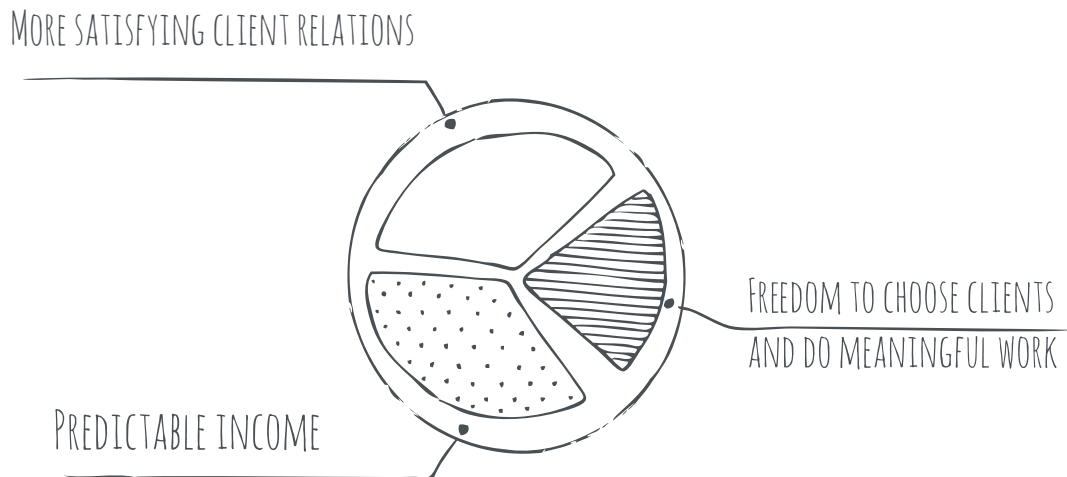
I make this point, as many mistakenly think that the key to stability is ‘more money in than money out.’

Of course, this is a factor but it’s a contributory element to the wider objective, what I believe we really mean when we look for ‘stability’

For me stability should be described ‘professional & creative freedom’.

There was almost none of this within your 9-5 gig hence you looked to satisfy that need with a **venture of your own**.

So what does professional freedom look like for a freelancer? Here are the key elements of the puzzle:



This is what we mean by stability – it isn't just having the bills paid every month. Let's break those down further.

More satisfying client relations

Put simply, you'll feel a lot more professional freedom if you can manage clients well. You know the feeling of pressure from a client all-to-well.

Your email blips and it's *that client* looking for an update on *that amendment* to their work and you haven't even started it.

We left one 'boss', we don't want to have a bad apple client filling that void and devouring all of our time.

For me it helped when I could understand how to:

- › Filter out bad apple clients early
- › Work better with current clients
- › Adopt better communication techniques
- › Run smoother projects

Some of the principles that got me to this point I'll teach in this book.

Freedom to choose and do meaningful work

As your experience grows, so do your aspirations. This means that there will come a time you will be tired of 'run of the mill' projects and will seek out more fulfilling work instead.

For you this could mean growth into bigger and better clients, or it could mean adopting the role of teacher or mentor to your peers.

Whatever your version of 'meaningful' is, it's worth pursuing. A spring out of bed in the morning to get to work and a sound sleep with no nagging worry or doubt.

We'll look at how to decide which way to take your own aspirations and how this contributes to the professional freedom you feel.

Predictable income

Predictable income (in my opinion at least) can be quantified as a dependable, certain revenue stream of around 25- 50% your target income.

So for example, if on average you earn \$5,000 per month as a freelancer you'll feel a lot more stable in your position if you knew you could rely on \$1,250- 2,500 being taken care of every month without having to find new clients.

This is the sweet spot; the point at which you can make decisions requiring a little forward planning financially.

Stability of income is the Achilles heel of freelancing, the potential death knell that never really goes away.

So if that is the outcome we're looking for, how do we achieve it?



OPTIONS

What are our 3 options for professional freedom?

You'll hopefully forgive me for this extended introduction, I appreciate we haven't really spoken about 'long-term clients' yet.

It's crucial however to understand what 'stability' really means before we try to blindly chase it.

So with that said, and now that we have a baseline idea of where we're headed, here are your options for achieving it.

There are three ways to achieve freelancer stability, or more accurately **professional & creative freedom**.

In this course we'll tackle **one and three**, addressing the second one in the next course.

1. Be the indispensable asset

If you position yourself as a mutually beneficial partner to a client, you can develop the trust and goodwill that will deliver regular, dependable business from a pool of repeat clients.

In the pages that follow, we'll investigate how this starts and what you need to have in place to facilitate these **longer-term, win-win partnerships**.

2. Productize your expertise to supplement your earnings

Creating a profitable side project - which isn't tied to you or your hourly rate - is a key weapon in the fight against instability.

You are solving problems for clients (and indeed peers) on a daily basis, so you have the baseline ingredients and expertise to build a product around those pains

This can be stand-alone and enable you develop a revenue stream to offset the unstable weeks.

3. Enable more pricing choice with recurring billing options and secondary services

When it comes to pricing tiers and 'bolt- on' options, less is certainly not more.

When faced with options and tiers in a transactional scenario, we have natural tendencies to gravitate towards particular levels.

If you can leverage this pricing psychology and give your clients the opportunity to continue paying you **long after the project is complete** you can tap into another indispensable supplementary income stream.



LONG-TERM

Building long term client relationships

In this book and course we're going to cover how to build effective, meaningful, long term client work.

We'll address the two areas of the previous three to ensure we are the **indispensable asset** and that we enable our clients to **spend more, over a longer period of time** with mutually beneficial, meaningful work.

The power of partnerships

The power of mutually beneficial partnerships is something I'm only really realizing now, after having stability for a long enough period of time to reflect.

For some of our clients we are not 'just web designers', nor are we nameless suppliers, we are **indispensable business assets**.

We've built enough trust and a strong enough relationship with some clients to ensure there are no other options; hence they come back again and again.

In the book 'Stop Thinking Like a Freelancer' I dig into my own example of this and I'd like to recap it here.

It was a realization that my repeat customers were contributing significantly to earnings **long after their initial order**.

Indeed, the strength of these repeat orders (an average 136% of their original order spent again over the following 18 months) resulted in near certainty that every \$10 spent today across all clients would result in **a further \$8.10 over the next 18 months.**

Think about that for a second.

If you earned \$60k in a year as a freelancer and had the infrastructure required to get a similar proportion of long term relationships as we have, you'd earn an additional \$48k from that **same crop** of clients.

That's a cool \$2,650 every month from clients you know and with whom you enjoy working for the next year and a half.

What would that do the stability of your business? Would that help take away the 'up then down' roller coaster feelings?

A predictable \$2,650 a month for 18 months probably covers your overheads, it ensures you can live a little, cover your mortgage and keep food on the table.

What we're working towards in this course is building a baseline of clients who will ensure you don't go hungry and you have a little more creative freedom to say 'NO' when a potential bad apple shows up.

I'd certainly not planned for this at Tone, I cannot claim this as a masterstroke on my part but it soon became apparent how it came to pass.

We've instilled a spirit of partnership within the team at Tone when it

comes to dealing with every new client. An aspiration for World Class output and communication, which permeates every touch point.

This brings us stability as a business now and a baseline of revenue we feel we can rely on.

The possibilities

We have a unique example of this too, our biggest spending client to date. I'd like to share with you an email that I sent around to my team at Tone underscoring this:

FROM: LIAM VEITCH

TO: ALL TONE STAFF

Hey all,

I thought I should share this; as we reach a milestone and a record with our largest client in terms of spend [ClientName]. Here's their all-time account:

Outstanding or Open			All Time Totals		
INVOICES	BILLS	THEY OWE YOU	RECEIVED	PAID	THEY HAVE PAID YOU
£4,356.00	£0.00	£4,356.00	£59,766.00	£0.00	£59,766.00

The initial order with this client was just £5,800, 14 months ago... If we had done anything other than a great job they probably wouldn't have used us again.

Instead, the relationship we've built has ensured they've spent 11 times that initial order amount... and I am quite sure they'll eventually hit the £100k (\$150k) mark.

CONTINUES...

Put another way, if we had a similar repeat-order rate for every existing client we would pretty much never need any new ones.

It's not the numbers I'm pointing out here though, and I appreciate it's never easy but the point is that sometimes it pays to put the **relationship strength & goodwill above immediate return**. If we do, and ensure we are seen as a partner you can see above what might happen.... that's the power of partnerships.

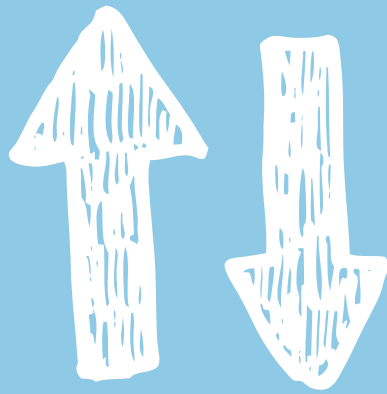
I think everyone has had a hand in building this one so it's a shared success this story, but thanks - here's to many more :)

Liam

In this book and course I'll map out what your client's journey should look like and what frameworks you need to have in place to get it right.

It started for me when I understood the difference between a partner (that indispensable asset to a client) and a laborer (the useful but disposable instruction taker).

Which do you aspire to be?



LABORER VS PARTNER

Two types of freelancer

LABORER VS PARTNER

There are shades of grey between these two polar opposites, but empirically there are only two types of freelancer, the partner and the laborer.

The Laborer

You may have utilized the services of a laborer in the past, perhaps for the heavy lifting of data entry, some coding you just couldn't stretch to or maybe they helped you with some content entry or admin once.

There is definitely a place for a laborer; it's just not a place I'd like you to operate in.

You will find laborers aplenty on Fiverr. Working to very specific outcomes with a precise, low cost and swift delivery. You'll also find them among a sea of web professionals on Elance and perhaps in your junk folder purporting to provide SEO or link building.

The Partner

Partners take the time to understand their clients deeply, investing themselves in the client message and establishing an expertise that isn't easily pigeonholed.

That is to say, as a partner you'll put yourself forward as a person to be trusted, to have as a sounding board and a thoroughfare to other experts.

A partner ends up being an indispensable asset to any business, building a mutually beneficial relationship.

The grey area

At this point, I'm hoping you have elected yourself out of the laborer group but there is a grey area, that you may fall into inadvertently and which you should know about.

Here's the thing, bad apple clients have the ability to make laborers out of partners.

I've spoken in other modules about well researched - in their mind at least - clients arriving at your door with pre-conceived ideas of what they need and a sturdy - again, in their mind - brief.

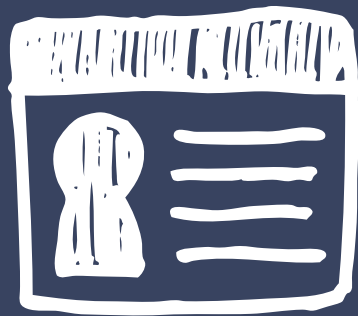
I covered that at this point it's too late to influence their outlook, so you should be vigilant to spot these characteristics before they arise.

You know the type; midway through the project you wished you'd never even agreed to take the project.

In the end you accept any request without question in the hope that there may be light at the end of the tunnel and that it'll soon all be over.

Unfortunately, at that point you've been ground down to a laborer status, even if you started off with the best intentions.

For the purpose of brevity I'm going to assume you're already focused on being the partner, so let's look at how we'll do it.



FUNDAMENTALS

What are the **key traits** of a partner?

FUNDAMENTALS

1. Firm but fair - partners aren't walkovers

If you could describe to me an ideal client your depiction would probably go something like this:

- › Understands that good work takes time
- › Is clear with their feedback
- › Has an exciting vision we can all work towards
- › Works collaboratively rather than giving instructions

The interesting thing is that all of these are just **'properties'** and the good news is that properties and traits can be influenced.

It's the same thing as walking into a shabby diner or fast food outlet. You are a little less concerned with your appearance and your demeanor. Sure, you're classy (as always, Pro Army) but your effort levels drop in line with the establishment you've just entered.

Contrast that with the best restaurant in your closest city. You are struck by their kind greeting and mirror the courtesy of the concierge; you make an effort for the occasion, align yourself with their atmosphere and generally raise your own bar to their level.

You're the same person, yet you are a better version of yourself.

It's your job (and your job only) to make the client a better version of them; it'll only bite you later if you don't.

As we progress through this, we'll talk about onboarding, which is a crucial part of starting that relationship firmly and on your terms.

2. Transparency builds trust

One of the phrases I really enjoy using is ‘clients don’t care about you... yet’.

What I mean by this, is that **before** you’re their supplier they really only care about one thing... **solving a business problem they have.**

You aren’t being hired because you can design / write / market / code
you’re being hired because the client has that problem.

Your service (in the client’s mind and yours) is the solution to that problem.

So before you start the relationship it’s vital to talk about **their** problem and how you’ll solve it more than you talk about **you and your own** achievements.

When we’re looking to build mutually beneficial, longer-term relationships however you can develop trust by being open, letting them into your life.

Don’t unload to them all at once but just be prepared to tell your story. This gives you context and depth, even if it won’t be consumed immediately. To overcome the ‘I don’t care’ reflex though, you should tie your experiences to the struggle your client is experiencing and a good story is useful for that purpose, building attention with empathy.

- › What’s your struggle?
- › Why do you do this?
- › How did you overcome them
- › What are you most proud of?

3. Strong communication enables repeat orders

A partner has a much higher likelihood of long-term, stable income from their clients and understanding this should help you break away from the ‘project mindset’ – which can loosely defined as the thinking that a client is here today, gone tomorrow and eventually replaced.

Your clients are (hopefully) busy people. They have lots of their own plates spinning and will almost always look for the dependable, easy option.

Earlier in the book I talked about the client who we’ve been able to help 11x their spend. At almost every point they tell us the same thing:

“You’re not the cheapest but you’re damn good, and we love working with you”

We have made it our mission to be omnipresent for them, to be ready and willing to help them with anything in the realm of creative services.

Even if we don’t offer the service we are on-hand to **provide advice** and recommend a solution. We enable this with rock-solid communication by telephone, email and in person when necessary.

You should look to become the thoroughfare, be available on whichever communication channel the client prefers and respond quickly and efficiently.

To continue with the Tone example, we certainly aren't the cheapest partner they could choose but we've been able to cement a solid relationship and stable communication to make it easy to provide us with new work.

In taking away some of that strain by being proactive with communication we make it more difficult for them not to use us, and this is what you should look to try and emulate.

4. Long-term-ist mentality

If you're being honest with yourself, do you really make it your mission to deeply understand a client's business? What their market is, who their competitors are, their problems and the way they handle themselves.

Even for projects that take a few weeks you're still investing time in creating that deliverable, in getting to know the client well enough to do a great job.

So why not leverage that insight to **make suggestions** which may require using your services again?

You should look to voluntarily build yourself into the client's future strategy, provide regular ideas for improvement and look to maximize the impact of your presence.

This commitment won't go un-noticed and that collaborative approach and long-term mentality will be crucial in your pursuit of long-term client relationships.

To close off this idea, you should view every client dealing as if it's the start of a five year relationship, spot the early signals of bad apples and look to cement longer term partnerships with clients who understand your sensitivities and show willing to build something more tangible long term.

In doing so, you can build enough repeat custom from your current pool of clients to get some way towards your stability goals.



THE PATH

How to navigate project phases to assure great relationships

Here's where the rubber meets the road, the key phases of a mutually beneficial client relationship and how you can guide every stage of the project to ensure it happens.

What we're talking about here are practical mechanisms which ensure a smooth project and translates to a happy client and **happier YOU**.

Step Zero - Discovery

I like to ensure the books and courses I create overlap and naturally follow on, so I'll briefly recap the value of discovery (from your pre-sale stage – brush up on the course '[Building Desire](#)' for more) and how this starts a client relationship off on the right footing.

If you take the time to truly understand your prospect's space and current situation, you'll have the inside track on what makes them tick, what an average customer is worth and how your work will make an impact. You have the ability to speak to their sensitivities and a much greater chance of developing a longer-term relationship.

This helps for two reasons. It allows you to fine-tune your messaging so that there is no element of doubt in your client's mind that **you are the right person** for this job (prior to the sale) but more importantly it'll help you build a sense of collaboration and trust between you and your prospective client.

I can't overstate the importance of trust and a sense of collaboration during a project, it'll see you through the tough days and weeks so I strongly urge you to double-down on anything that'll help you get more of it.

Step One – Define clear deliverables

Whoever invented the saying 'the customer is always right' certainly wasn't a freelancer. When what you're selling is a commodity you can sometimes bend your rules for a mistake or grey area... when 'time' is the only thing you have though it makes life a little more difficult.

An ill-prepared list of deliverables can quickly spiral into a 100% overspend. You're doing double the work, for the exact same rate and this was a lesson I learned the hard way.

Over time I've developed the way I put together deliverables or 'specifications' and it's something I insist on getting right at Tone.

You should be crystal clear about the output and 'what they will get' within your proposal. This will form the foundations of your onboarding process and will lay the path to your client's ultimate satisfaction.

Managing expectations towards these deliverables

Do clients care if the project runs 3 days over the deadline? If you tell them the night before the proposed completion date then sure, expect the wrath!

If you communicate it to them 3 weeks ahead and back it up with valid reasoning and a message which echoes this spirit of partnership the outcome will be very different. So why the differing response to what is, effectively the same net result?

Put simply, communication.

It seems so obvious yet it's the most common reason larger - potentially dream client - businesses will opt for using an agency instead of a better-qualified freelancer.

Dream clients look out for - and expect - solid communication, consistency and long-term relationships, so you should show them why you can deliver on all of those counts.

Step Two - Onboarding

'Onboarding' can best be described as:

“Gradually introducing a client into a specific relationship or situation via a set of induction actions.”

If you've ever started a new job, you'll recall how effective (or not) your employer was at welcoming you into the team.

If you've invested in new software, you'll have gone through a series of emails or on-page walkthroughs, which introduced you to key product features and generally got you up to speed.

But how does this apply to service businesses?

Whether you are aware of it or not, you already have an onboarding process.

After you receive the signed order or the email that says ‘Yes, let’s do it!’ onboarding includes every step that takes place from there, until such time as the client receives the first batch of work.



“Ensuring everyone is on the same page is critical to a successful partnership. Effective communication begins with careful listening with intent. How well are you communicating with your clients?”

[Shawn Hesketh](#), founder of WP101 on the Freelancelift Podcast

By not managing expectations, you’re leaving the door open for bad apples.

At [Tone](#) we build websites (predominantly) and have a relatively simple, but effective onboarding process for new clients:

1. Discovery survey

- a. Client fills out an online survey (built with Typeform)
- b. This asks probing questions which require some thought on the part of the client to answer

Continues...

2. Onboarding / welcome call

- a. Walk through the project management system
- b. Introduce project manager
- c. Describe communication channels
- d. Lay out timeline
- e. Review specifications
- f. Cover off 'scope creep'

3. Project initiation workshop

- a. Introduce project team
- b. Understand the client's business deeply
- c. Who is their dream client?
- d. Review discovery Typeform form responses
- e. Review key objectives and agree on what constitutes success
- f. Develop initial ideas based on the intersection of these objectives and our pre-conceived ideas

4. User journey and site structure

- a. Now that we know what the client's goals are and who their audience is, how will we structure the website so it enables their visitors to achieve these goals most efficiently
- b. How many website pages will it take to achieve these goals and how should their visitor move from page to page?

At this point, the client is completely inducted into our way of doing things, is clear what's expected of them, the team is engaged with the project, and we can proceed in earnest. Onboarding gives everybody that clarity to start a project with gusto.

By establishing yourself as a partner with firm, fair and deliberate guidelines pre-project you can start the project off well and raise the bar in all of your clients.

Step Three – Keep them in the loop, ensure clarity

This is a no brainer of course, but something so few get right it bears repeating. If you've ever had this scenario then unfortunately you've failed to keep the client in the loop:

Client email: 'Ping – just checking in about my email on Tuesday, were you able to look at that?'

You: 'Yes, was just putting together your reply as it goes'

You can count every 'chase' like this as a slight chip off your reputation and the client's satisfaction. The more of these seemingly innocuous chips the more fragile the structure until cracks begin to appear.

I think we all know this, but sometimes look to the wrong areas to find the answer.

If you've ever tried to work with Basecamp or similar you'll know that after initial bursts of productivity you revert back to the tried and tested email route.

What clients really need is **clarity**, not necessarily a different way to communicate.

In your onboarding phase you should outline **how and when** you will update them, ensure they understand that at any time they can check in on project progress without contacting you directly.

You should consider breaking your project into milestones, with a pre-defined set of communications before, during and after each milestone.

Even though we refer to it as ‘Project Management’ what we’re actually talking about is ‘Client Management’, in particular ensuring they have clarity at every stage.

Step Four – Over-deliver but clearly state when you do it

As a species we become accustomed to new experiences very quickly. You only have to go on vacation for longer than a couple of weeks to almost settle in as if it were your home.

If you consistently over deliver your clients will see this as the **new normal**. In most cases this isn’t a problem, but what about that time you deliver ‘as expected’? You’re now underperforming against this ‘new normal’ precedent.

I advocate expecting a 10-20% over delivery and building this into your price (without explicitly showing it in your costs of course). A good client will not quibble pre-project over a fee for the sake of 10%, yet the trust built from not billing extra at every juncture mid-project will go a long way.

This is especially true when you explicitly tell the client you’re over delivering. Here’s an example line you can use:

“I just wanted to let you know that while the scope of the project didn’t actually include [over delivered item] I would like to do it for you, in the spirit of partnership at no additional cost.”

Over delivery and excellent service are to be encouraged and applauded, but you need to make it clear that this is not normal practice.

Step Five – Grow together and enable more spend

As a partner, you should already be doing what you can to maximize the lifetime value of each of your clients by looking towards the long term and by investing in the relationship.

This is especially helpful for repeat orders for the same product, but what opportunities do you have for maintenance options, retainers, ‘refresh’ work, consultancy or other value-add activity a client can be given the choice to sign up to? How many of these options are you offering?

Introducing secondary services

You’re a writer, or designer, or coder primarily sure, but you’ll build longer-term relationships by introducing a secondary set of services a client can call upon you for.

By establishing yourself as a partner and embedding yourself within a client’s strategy you’ll have opportunities for ongoing revenue by assisting clients in other areas loosely related to your own.

‘Refresh’ options & ‘next steps’ strategy sessions

How many times have you reached out to a client after a few months and said:

‘I’ve been mapping out some ideas of how [the project you completed] can be made even better, can we talk about them?’

Unless what you’re proposing is a complete ‘start over’ project clients will generally be receptive to this for two reasons:

1. You’re thinking about their success without being prompted
2. If you’re working with ambitious clients they’ll be intrigued as to how they can be even better

How can you improve or ‘refresh’ a project you completed 3-6 months ago? Why not reach out to three clients now and introduce your ideas.

Maintenance & support option

At Tone we offer a three-month bug fix period as standard with each of our site builds. This gives the client some comfort that we’re not just waving goodbye to them once the project is over. Tapping into this same sense of reassurance we also offer an annual support contract.

For 15% of the overall project cost we’ll be on hand for an unlimited amount of fixes and any other general query that can be resolved in less than 20 minutes. The client pays monthly for this security and reassurance.

Even on an entry-level website cost of \$10,000, this provides us with \$1,500 per year, or \$125 **each and every month**.

The clincher here is that we have an uptake rate of about 70% on this, we frame it as a complete no brainer, a security blanket with a direct line into a simple ticketing system and someone who can take care of anything they need, at any time.

Then guess what? A client will often use this time sparingly so there is no major drain on resource as a result.

This applies to any industry and is a completely alien concept to most freelancers. So add an option for ongoing support to your next proposal, make sure you frame it as a no brainer option, being sure to speak to the worldview of the client and filling in the gaps in their knowledge.

If they are generally not tech savvy talk to them about keeping a CMS updated or by preventing malicious attacks. If they are new to your area, talk in and around training or 'help by email'. If they are time-poor frame it as a service to help them do the things they can't, like reminding when its time to do certain activities.

The psychology of choice here will help you have at least a 25% uptake on this option.

Retainer option

Maintenance and support is easy to justify, it gives your client security and access to you for an unlimited amount of short, simple fixes and responses.

An extension to this is to offer a retained option to your service. That is to say, a regular, agreed piece of the work (or time allocation) at a reduced rate based on a longer-term commitment.

So if you're a writer, this could be a monthly blog post to extend out your services, if you're a web designer this could be bi-weekly split-testing to boost conversions, as a marketer this could be weekly analytics review.

You are ensuring value within partnership at this point, putting in place a formal agreement with clear activities, which you can frame as building momentum and ensuring your client is not left behind by their competitors.

Web hosting (even if you're not in the web field)

Web hosting is a great value-add for your proposals, often it can be simple to persuade a client to opt for hosting for their project and the value is easy to justify, even if you're not in the web field.

When it comes to using hosting to facilitate stability there are two options.

The first way, if you're comfortable with the technical aspects (perhaps as a design/development freelancer), is to host your client's sites on a server you own. You can purchase a cloud server for around \$40 per month.

If you re-bill your clients around \$25 per month for this privilege you have the ability to quickly build up a pool of recurring income. This

is especially attractive to clients who prefer the ‘hands off’ approach as you can just incorporate this into your service as an additional line item. Over the course of a year you may end up with 15-20 clients on your hosting platform, which provides you recurring income of maybe \$500 every month.

The second, potentially simpler option is to register on an affiliate basis with a platform like [WPEngine](#). With some of the best technical support I’ve witnessed, and **prepared to pay you \$200 for every new client you bring** this should be a no brainer.

Indeed, this notion came up on a Freelancelift podcast with prolific freelance writer [Tom Ewer](#) of **LeavingWorkBehind**. Tom will extend his service by offering a ‘free blog setup’ option. For no additional cost, he’ll handle the domain configuration, setup WordPress with a theme that looks good for the client’s market, migrate in the content he has created, install relevant plugins and ensure everything works well, **at no extra cost**.

He can afford to do this – and not be bankrupt - as he makes a clear stipulation, they have to use his recommended hosting supplier.

The setup takes around 30 minutes but his client sees this as superb value, then with a platform like [WPEngine](#) or Bluehost (Tom’s choice but not mine, as the commission on Bluehost is slightly less than WPEngine) he can earn \$175-200 in commission for the new customer.

For this value-add aspect of his service, he’s earning \$350-400 per hour.

Consider how you can extend your service to include hosting and register with WPEngine to have this provide you with the stability you need.

IN CLOSING

Bad apple clients are grown, not inherited

In closing, I just wanted to reiterate that it's up to you alone to ensure **good apples don't go bad.**

What we're looking to do here is achieve 'professional & creative freedom', by ensuring longer-term, mutually beneficial client relationships.

Remember, this is what you left a comfortable 9-5 gig to pursue so it's vital you take it seriously. Longer-term clients assure you of every one of those three areas:

MORE SATISFYING CLIENT RELATIONS

PREDICTABLE INCOME



FREEDOM TO CHOOSE CLIENTS
AND DO MEANINGFUL WORK

Most of what you have just consumed may not be new information, but I hope it is really becoming clear now how important it is to break away from the 'project mindset' and into the realm of awesome partnerships, the ideas I've laid out in this book should help you make better decisions with any new client win.

LONGER TERM CLIENT RELATIONSHIPS

This was short book for
Freelancelift Pro members.

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