



The Freelancer's Guide to Thriving in the Recession

How to develop the right
mindset and take the
right actions



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Get More Freelance Work—Even in a Recession

You can survive—and thrive—despite the recession. But you'll need to develop the right mindset and take the right actions—starting now.

Freelancing in a recession is scary. Many clients cut or stop their use of freelancers.

And with more people freelancing than ever before—an estimated 59 million people in the U.S. alone—competition for the remaining freelance work will be fierce.

Create Your Opportunities

But many clients still need and will continue to need freelance help. If you have the right mindset and know where these clients are and how to attract them, you'll get more freelance work.

Being prepared starts with having—or developing—what I call the freelance success mindset. Then you need to start taking the right actions.

The freelance success mindset and the right actions will help you thrive even in the recession. This guide will show you what to do. And I've included links to more free content to help you.

Let's get started.

Develop the Freelance Success Mindset

You have 3 choices now:

1. Give in to panic and give up
2. Ride out the recession and hope things get better
3. Think positive and prepare to thrive despite the recession.

If you panic and sit around feeling sorry for yourself, then things will only get worse.

If you try to ride out the recession, your freelance business may survive. Then again, it may not—because hope isn't a strategy.

Prepare to Thrive

But if you start doing the right things now, your freelance business can thrive despite the recession. You need to:

- Keep calm
- Develop the freelance success mindset
- Take the right actions.

Keep Calm and Carry On

"Keep calm and carry on" is a great mantra for freelancing in a recession.

Studies show that a mantra—a word, group of words, or sound—helps people keep calm and makes it easier to cope with life's unexpected stressors. And freelancing in a recession is definitely an unexpected stressor.

So when you're feeling stressed, take a deep breath and chant, whisper, or silently say "I'm going to keep calm and carry on." And remember, this recession will end, just like all recessions end.

Use the Freelance Success Mindset

In a recession, what you think—your mindset—is just as important in what happens to your freelance business as what you do. Developing what I call the fearless freelancer mindset (a growth mindset, grit, and resilience) will help you thrive.

If you have a growth mindset, you believe that you can change your freelance future by learning new things, being persistent, and taking the right actions. You'll be willing to work hard to reach your goals.

Grit is having the perseverance and passion to stick with your long-term goals until you reach them. It means carrying on even when you make mistakes or don't feel like you're making progress.

Remember how Charlie Brown kept trying to kick that football, even though Lucy pulled it away from him every time? Charlie Brown never gave up. He had grit.

Resilience, the ability to meet adversity head-on, adapt, bounce back, and keep trying, helps us when bad things happen—like a recession.

You can develop a growth mindset, grow your grit, and build your resilience. Grit and resilience will help you do this. And you can grow your grit and build your resilience.

MORE FREE CONTENT

Learn how to develop the Fearless Freelancer mindset.

[How to Turn Struggle into Success with the Fearless Freelancer Mindset](#)

[4 Easy Ways for Freelancers to Develop the Growth Mindset](#)

[The Superhero Power You Need to Know About: Grit](#)

[How to Boost Resilience When Things Go Wrong](#)

5 Actions to Take Now for Quick Wins

Quick wins make you feel good and fuel your momentum to keep going. Here are 5 actions to take now that can give you quick wins.

1. Accept the Recession

If you want your freelance business to survive, then you need to adapt to uncertainty. Once you survive, then you can start to thrive.

Make this promise to yourself:

"I will adapt, survive, and thrive."

Write this on a sticky note and post it in your office at eye level. When you've done this, you have your first quick win.

2. Focus on Current Clients

Your current clients may need as much or more freelance help as before the recession started. Some clients won't be affected or affected much by the recession.

And clients who have to let employees go still need to get their work done. Freelancers are less expensive than employees because clients only pay us when they need our help and they don't have to give us costly benefits.

Review your client list. Look for clients that are less affected than others by the recession. Even if you're not sure how much the recession is impacting your clients, it never hurts to ask.

3 types of freelance work

Here are 3 types of work you can ask about:

1. **More of the freelance work you're already doing for the client.**



2. **New work on unmet needs:** For example, if all or part of a client's website needs to be improved or updated, offer to work on this. If your client isn't doing something that their competitors are doing, such as white papers to promote their services or products, suggest doing this for them.
3. **Work you don't usually do:** Ask your clients what else you can do to help them. Mention any other services that you could provide but don't usually offer, such as project management.

3. Follow Up with Interested Clients

You probably have a list of clients who said they wanted to work with you but haven't hired you yet. I call these interested clients.

These interested clients are likely to hire you when they need freelance help—**if they think of you first.**

Make sure that interested clients think of you instead of another freelancer by following up with them now and every few months.

What to say when you follow up

Professional follow up isn't about "selling yourself." In fact, most of the time, you shouldn't even mention your freelance services. Follow up is about being helpful, relevant, and persistent.

Customize most of your follow-up to the client or your contact person.

Commenting on news is an easy way to do this. Find news to comment on through:

- Google Alerts
 - The company's Newsroom page
 - LinkedIn updates or tweets.
-

Another easy way to customize follow up is by sharing relevant content like blog posts, reports, and podcasts. Sign up for e-newsletters in your industry(ies) and target markets so this content comes right to your inbox and you don't have to waste time searching for it.

Once or twice a year, send interested clients a friendly reminder that you're available for freelance work. But this must not be the only time you contact these clients.

4. Ask for Referrals

Referrals are the #1 source of the best clients for freelancers. The reason is simple: Clients want to do business with people they know—or people recommended by people they know.

Make a list of current clients and colleagues you already have strong relationships with. Politely ask them for referrals. When you ask freelance friends and other colleagues for referrals, also ask how you can help them.

5. Touch Base with Your Freelance Friends

Freelance friends are always a great source of referrals. Some of them may have or know of clients who need more help right now.

And your freelance friends can also share how they're coping with the recession and help you feel less lonely or stressed out.

MORE FREE CONTENT

Learn about networking and follow up.

[The Ultimate Guide to Networking for Freelancers](#)

[How to be First in Line for Freelance Work](#)

[Why Other Freelancers Should Be Your Best Friends](#)

6 Actions to Prepare for the Future

Once you've got some quick wins, you're ready to do the more intense work where it takes longer to see results. Here are 6 actions to help you prepare to thrive despite the recession.

1. Develop a Simple Strategic Plan

If you want to thrive, you need to know where your freelance business is now and what changes you need to make.

Answer these 4 questions and you'll have a strategic plan to guide you:

1. What was going right before the recession?
2. What has already changed?
3. What do I expect to change over the next 6 months?
4. What do I need to do to thrive in the recession?

FREE TOOL

[Simple Strategic Plan for Thriving in a Recession](#)

2. Diversify or Choose a Better Specialty

Your specialty is the industry(ies) you work in and the type of clients you work with (target markets). The projects you do can also be part of your specialty, but industries and target markets matter more.

To thrive despite the recession, you may need to diversify your freelance business by adding new industries, new types of clients, and/or new types of projects.

If you don't have a strong specialty, you'll need to choose a new specialty.

A strong specialty:

- Has clients who can afford to pay you what you're worth
- Offers lots of freelance opportunities, even in a recession
- Makes it easy for you to find and reach prospects through professional associations.

The **Simple Strategic Plan for Surviving a Recession** has more information about specialties.

3. Create Client-Focused Marketing

There's going to be more competition for freelance work. And the freelancers who have the best marketing will get most of the work.

The best marketing, especially your LinkedIn profile and website, shows that you understand the needs of your clients and can help clients meet their needs.

Since most freelancers don't do client-focused marketing, you'll rise above the competition if you do.

FREE TOOL

[Ultimate Guide to the Freelance Success You Deserve](#)

4. Market Directly to Clients in Current Target Markets

If your industry(ies) and target markets are still doing well, do a direct email campaign. A direct email campaign is a 3-step process:

1. Develop your prospect list(s)
 2. Send the direct emails
 3. Follow up.
-

Choose one or two target markets and develop a list of about 100 clients in each. Try to find companies that are responding to the pandemic, not reacting.

Direct email is writing a customized email for each client that focuses on helping that client meet his/her needs. The focus of direct email is on helping prospective clients solve their problems, not trying to sell your services.

FREE TOOL

[Direct Email Swipe File](#)

Tips on writing direct emails, templates, and examples

5. Market Directly to Clients in New Target Markets

If you've chosen a new industry(ies) or new target markets to work in, choose one or two target markets for a direct email campaign. Follow the directions in action 4. But you'll probably need to do more direct emails to attract clients since these are new target markets for you.

FREE TOOL

[Direct Email Swipe File](#)

Tips on writing direct emails, templates, and examples

6. Build or Strengthen Your Network

Networking can be more important than anything else in finding high-paying freelance work and building a stable, successful freelance business.

That's because clients want to do business with freelancers they know and trust—or freelancers that someone they know and trust referred to them.


Along with getting more referrals and meeting more clients, building a trusting, strategic network will give you practical advice and support from other freelancers.

Professional associations are the best way for freelancers to build a trusting, strategic network.

And networking doesn't have to be scary. It's about getting to know people, not about "selling yourself." And when you give more than you take, networking is easier and more effective.

FREE TOOL

[The Ultimate Guide to Networking for Freelancers](#)



The image shows the cover of a free strategic plan. At the top left is a mouse cursor icon. The logo for 'THE MIGHTY MARKETER' is at the top center, with the tagline 'Your guide to getting the clients you deserve'. Below the logo is the title 'Simple Strategic Plan for Thriving in a Recession' in blue text. The central graphic features a green clipboard with a checklist and a green target with a dollar sign and an arrow hitting the bullseye.

[Click here](#)
[for your free strategic plan.](#)

Ready to Thrive?

I don't know what the future holds. No one does.

But I do know that freelancers who prepare for the recession will be able to thrive. Preparing will take the right mindset and hard work.

You can do it!

Get More Help

Learn my easy-to-follow, proven process for finding the steady, high-paying clients who need your help—from a freelancer who's thrived during three recessions. Here are two ways to do that.

Check out my book, "[The Fearless Freelancer: How to Thrive in a Recession.](#)"

Or get personal coaching and develop or update your marketing through my online course [Finding the Freelance Clients You Deserve.](#)

Just [email me](#) and write "Yes, I want personal coaching" in the subject line. I'll send you details.



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