How to *Find* Students and Customers

WHY A WEBSITE IS A CRITICAL TOOL FOR ENTREPRENEURIAL FREELANCE TEACHERS

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How To *Find* Customers And Students

THE MOST OVERLOOKED YET CRITICAL BUSINESS TOOL FOR ENTREPRENEURIAL FREELANCE TEACHERS

Why your website is your most useful tool to ensuring a steady flow of new students

Which one is right for me? The first is too hard, the second too soft. The third is 'just right' and Goldilocks fell into a contented asleep.

Do you remember the fairy tale of '*Goldilocks and The Three Bears*'? Goldilocks stumbles on their house in the forest and knocks on the door. Nobody answers. However, the door is open and she goes in. Inside she finds and tries out three chairs before she finds the chair that is 'just right'. Likewise, Goldilocks tries out three bowls of porridge… until she finds the one that tastes 'just right'. And so the fairy tale goes on. But what does the fairy tale of *Goldilocks and the three bears* have to do with entrepreneurial freelance teachers?

Quite a lot.

A house in the woods

Suppose there was **no** house in those woods? Then the story would end there, because Goldilocks would not find and try out the three different chairs to find out which suited her best. She would never have been able to find and try out the three porridges to discover which tasted best, nor test the three beds and fall into a deep and satisfied sleep on the most comfortable.

So what does the fairy tale tell us?

1. ***Goldilocks*** is your synonym for any anonymous Internet user looking for your product or service.

    Today, the Internet is the first place a potential student or customer searches when they want a service or a product. It certainly takes less time than getting into a car (or taking the local transport into town) and walking around until you find *one* bricks-and-mortar house declaring their wares. The Internet is comfortable, easy to navigate, and has literally thousands of offers — thousands of virtual houses in an enormous virtual world. It could be an additional advantage for you if a potential student discovers you live nearby, because of course, the student is going to look for several alternative offers.

2. The ***three*** bears, the ***three*** chairs, ***three*** beds, and the ***three*** porridges represent the minimum number of times ***Goldilocks*** carries out an Internet search for your product or teaching service. She wants a choice and she's comparing before she buys because she wants to be sure she's going to make the right choice.

    Your student is looking for THREE teachers or THREE different teaching services

    She's looking for a teacher (or product) that best fits her needs and her pocket. It's easy to research and easy to telephone or dash off an e-mail for any unanswered questions. In fact, the current consumer thought runs like this: If you are not present on the Internet, your service is not serious or good enough.

3.   If you don't have a house in the forest (your teaching service website on the Internet) with a description of what you do and what you offer, *Goldilocks* (nor anybody else for that matter) is not going to come and knock on your front door as in the fairy tale. Simply put: if you don't have a website describing your teaching service — when people can't find you on the Internet — nobody is going to find you. No one will walk in and ask you how and what you teach, and what it will cost them to take lessons with you.

You're out in the cold!

Is having a website so important?

As an entrepreneurial freelancer — yes, it is. It's absolutely critical to make the effort and set up a website. It is the first tool that proclaims your professional trade to the outside world. It's also tells potential students and customers 'you are a professional business'.

Is having a website the most efficient method to ensure a steady stream of new students or customers?

Your Internet house door is not just an efficient method of attracting your steady stream of students; it also has the longest reach (worldwide availability) and your customers and students can contact you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 52 weeks a year. However, is it the easiest tool — and most advantageous tool — for you to use and advertise your service?

The answer is complex.

The Internet Market Place, your Professional Image, and your website

Your website presence is not enough. It's a tool in your bag of business tools. Your website is like building your house deep in the depths of a huge forest and expecting potential students to find it immediately. Unfortunately, it doesn't quite work like that. The Internet market place is not just huge, it's enormous and the market place noise is loud — very loud. You're going to have to do a lot of additional ground work (marketing) to be noticed and attract students and customers to your teaching service. Like everything in life, the learning curve is a learning curve and you can only beat it by jumping in and start learning. But should you dive in and start

learning how to run a website and do the ground work in marketing yourself?

I've taken part in many discussions in Germany and France where customers have stated they will not consider hiring any freelancer who hasn't a website. Such a teacher, coach, or instructor cannot be good or even reputable without a website! Rubbish, we all know, but that is the general opinion.

Here is another reason why you should make the effort to set up a website.

It's about you, your Independency, and your Business

It helps you grow your own wings and enables you to break away from dependency to being independent from job offers handed out by colleges, universities, or as in my own case, English language schools. You can choose to work for them (or not) because entrepreneurial teachers can:

- find their own customers without relying on teaching jobs offered by institutes

- set our own prices we feel our service is worth

- choose the customers or students we want to teach most

As an entrepreneurial teacher, you need a website to do all the above. It doesn't have to have all the toys and all the bells and whistles to succeed. There is no need to reinvent the wheel!

Clarity is the key word. The simpler your website is organised to navigate and read, the easier it is to attract potential student visitors to read about your teaching offer.

A website makes a clear statement: you are serious about your work.

You are responsible for your teaching business and this business is you. You are a business. You've invested in your qualifications and invested untold number of hours in gaining experience. Teaching isn't a hobby. It's a profession. A calling if you prefer to place our work as teachers on the same spiritual level as doctors or religious people.

What are the ideal goals of an entrepreneurial freelance teacher?

Perhaps it's time to reflect on what you want to achieve in your life as an independent teacher?
What are your ideal goals?

Are they...

1. Enough students to keep you happy?

2. Enough earnings to cover your long and short term financial needs?

3. Enough recognition and respect for your work?

4. Enough flexibility (time, money, resources)?

What do you want to achieve with your teaching and status as a freelancer and independent business owner (entrepreneur)?

And how do you go about getting what you want to achieve?

How it all began — my own entrepreneur apprenticeship

I've worked as a freelancer in three countries: England, Belgium and latterly Germany. Today, I live and teach in France. I've taught watercolour and silk painting and gave computer courses before and during the early Internet days. I've written travel articles, sales letters, and instruction manuals as a freelancer and all the while struggled to attract new customers with little to no budget. I hadn't a clue how to solve the problem but I did know I needed to learn how to attract customers. I needed a magic wand or a secret formula to convince them to choose — me! ☺ Now be honest! Who doesn't want that?

In German they say: *Ohne Fleiß Kein Preis*

Loosely translated, this means: No pain, no gain.

I began to read and absorb everything I could lay my hands on in marketing and selling. I had to bring my services to the customer somehow.

I moved to France at the end of 2012. The years before, I worked in Germany as a freelancer teaching English to non-native speakers of English. I didn't live in a city, but on the outskirts of a village that thought it was a town. I mention this because there wasn't anybody who would saunter past

and knock on my door to ask about English lessons. I didn't even have a sign on the gate post saying I taught English. Yet the moment I put up a basic website, I had a steady stream of requests from potential students and customers — each week. And they travelled to my home from as far away as 30 miles in some cases. And those that live further away came into my home through the Internet and the computer.

Still, the age-old problem of finding new students hasn't changed. It stubbornly remains the same: Why is it so difficult to find customers? How do I persuade them to choose me — and not my colleagues or competitors?

Is my situation any different today from that of 30 years ago?

Where to find a supermarket of customers and students

How is my situation different today?

Time has changed the way people live because the times have brought new technology in the form of computers and the Internet. In Europe, Google or Facebook are just two of the more popular Internet services. These are vast supermarkets for finding new students and customers! And they are browsing their way through the offers in their thousands.

Technology has made our freelancing job easier to present to the man on the street — yet more difficult at the same time. A paradox, you may say and you would be right. You only need to tap into this wonderland supermarket — but how? This can be best explained by using my own niche — English language teaching.

NOTE: Freelancing as a teacher, trainer or coach has many overlaps but they all follow the same core principles.

Will a Facebook Page be sufficient?

...rather than go through the process of creating your own website?

It all depends on whether your targeted students and customers have an account with Facebook. If they don't, they'll still be able to see it without a login, but they won't be able to interact with the company page.

Secondly, it'll also mean you'll have to learn and understand Facebook options and possibly learn some coding.

Thirdly, people are going to have to 'like' your Facebook company page to see its posts in their news feed.

In short, if you know how to use and understand Facebook's options, and your targeted student and customer uses Facebook regularly, it's good to have a Facebook company page. However, I believe it should not be the *only* option to consider. Facebook's search options are mostly restricted to people who use Facebook regularly — and that cuts out a lot of potential students and customers. For example, some of my own students are against Facebook completely while others interact on Facebook pages daily.

In my opinion, when it comes to search options to find products or services, I believe Google (or other search engines) is the tool most (if not all) students and customers know well and feel comfortable with to find someone offering teaching services.

Is there an easy way to create a website?

Yes, many! If you are starting out, you should opt for a simple website to keep your costs down. Your choices are DIY or to get someone to do it for you.

Everything new has a learning curve to go through, so whichever method you choose, have a little patience. How much of a learning curve depends on how much control you want over your website. Do you want to keep everything in your own hands? Or do you prefer someone else to set up your website and you pay a maintenance fee for its upkeep? Either way has its advantages and disadvantages.

I chose the DIY route. This has the advantage of keeping everything in my own hands, so if I want to make a change to some text, I can do it immediately. After days of research, I decided for WordPress, but these days there are many others just as simple to use.

I will go into setting up your website in more detail on the next pages.

What about learning computer languages?

With a website building tool using drag-and-drop (page 15) you will not need to know anything about computer languages! But as your knowledge and interest develops, you might want to learn HTML and CSS in order to make minor changes.

Trisha Cupra of *Blue Owl Web Design* offers a very, very easy-to-understand Adobe e-report on basic html codes, which you can also download using this link: The HTML Crash Course — especially for WordPress Users.pdf

How should your website look?

If you are concerned about the professional appearance of your website, take a look at *Trisha Cupra's* website. She became a website designer through her own trial-and-error learning process. She emphasises the need for a good, professional appearance of a website to show your business as serious and credible. Her website is full of good and useful information. You can access her information through her landing page titled '*Does your website need a Make-Over*?' here: http://www.trishacupra.com/

How to choose a website name

NOTE: All website hosting services have an area to check if your chosen website domain name is available

> **!**
>
> Choose a name that in some way reflects your freelancing profession.

If you're serious about finding a steady source of enquiring students and customers, you'll need your own website. It doesn't matter which teaching area or business area you work in as a freelancer. You could be a freelance translator. You could be a life coach. A teacher giving guitar or piano lessons, or you offer Pilatus courses, or train students in Asian combat martial art techniques. Perhaps you offer ballroom dancing lessons or Middle East belly dancing workshops... Whichever, it will be your website that is going to be your major key in opening the door to a steady stream of new students and customers.

In freelance English language teaching, one of the fastest growing sectors is in providing English lessons for business employees. Why? Because English has become the international language of business and most companies recognise the need to know and to be able to communicate in a basic minimum of English. Your own website must have a name (known as a

domain name) that reflects in some way the nature of your freelancing profession — a name that makes sense to somebody looking for your products and your services.

I should know… because even after all this time working as a freelance English teacher, I am still surprised at how many people find me at my German website: **English Communications**. Since I have had my website published, I received an average of two e-mail enquiries a week and one telephone enquiry every other week when I used to live in Germany. My new customers and students were finding their own way to my doorstep. Although I live in France now and have changed the contact information, my address and telephone number on the website, I still receive about two enquiry e-mails each month for English lessons.

How a website domain name attracts new students

Not living in a city with a steady stream of potential customers walking past your door is difficult. However, attracting a steady stream of new students far from a major city means laying the foundations first. It's a change in your mindset from 'I'll just start a teaching business and see what happens!' to deciding what you need to get done to get a successful teaching business going. It requires you to give some thought about what exactly you do, what type of target students you want to teach, coupled with some common sense practicalities (business and teaching).

For example:
The first practical rule to follow is to ensure that your website has a name that isn't difficult for your customers to remember.

You can use your own name for the name of your website if it is available. If not, then use some derivative of it.

It gives your customers a way to remember and find you should they mislay your contact details (though modern search engines will find you using a few keywords). And if that doesn't work (because your name or derivative has already been taken in the Internet directory of web names) then pick something that's easy-to-say *and* easy-to-spell. Forget the clever or fancy names — like using numbers and the letter 'A' to be at the top of the list — because nobody will ever remember you've called your web page **123AvZo!**

!

Your website name must be an easy-to-remember name.

How creative should the website domain name be?

Why *not* to have a creative name? Why is this so important?

Why should having an easy-to-remember website name give me a better advantage, you may ask, than a creative or unusual name?

It's because people might find it difficult to associate your service with a fanciful name. People search the Internet using words and phrases to help them find what they want.

If you were looking for lessons on how to play the bass guitar, you would type in words such as:

'learn how to play the bass guitar'

'bass guitar lessons'

'bass guitar lessons, <plus the town name near where you live>'

'how to play the bass guitar', etc.

In addition, if you look at the websites listed on Google, you will notice that there is usually a sentence that says something about the nature of the website. This information is taken from the opening (index/home) page of the website. So, if your website name reflects the nature of your business, this associated sentence will really help make a search-engine (e.g. google, yahoo) listing stand out.

So the second practical rule is: Don't use fancy, creative website domain names.

How the website gives you an edge over your competitors

People live differently today than 20 or 30 years ago. Today, most people automatically use a computer to find the best offers, the cheapest products or services on the Internet, or to make comparisons between products and services. Nobody buys a new washing machine or buys a second-hand car without first checking the Internet!

The Internet is the new *superdooper* supermarket where everybody goes to look first! So how do these people — your future customers and students — search this gigantic supermarket?

!

No fancy names.

Choose a website name that describes what you teach.

Best practice is to incorporate a word or phrase into your domain name that people will use to find your website in an Internet search.

How your future students search the Internet

Each time your future student researches the Internet for English lessons (or your own teaching service or product), they will use a mixture of single words and longer phrases to define (and refine) their quest. They are going to type in a search phrase such as '**learn business english, hamburg**'. The search engine is going to come up with several pages (with very long lists!) of all domain names bearing some identification or reference to the search word or phrase.

This is an easy and simple overview of how your website can attract and find an on-going stream of new customers and students. The first information on how to write a web page so that the Internet Search Engines will pick up your website and display it on the first page(s) of search results(SEO Search Engine Optimisation) can be discovered by looking at the website www.google.com itself. This is a mine of useful information. However, the FTT website and the TEACHER'S DEN community forum will provide you with additional information.

The FTT website and newsletter has articles and e-books on how you can tweak your website and your freelance professional image to attract the type and kind of customer or student you want to teach.

The TEACHER'S DEN community forum is a place to ask and answer questions, participate in smaller mastermind workshops available only to paying TEACHER'S DEN members, or longer courses set up in a private online environment. The TEACHER'S DEN community is a safe place. No question is too small or too silly to ask! ☺

Whether you are just starting out as a freelancer, or are a qualified and trained teacher, trainer or coach with several years' experience, it *is* possible to find students and customers willing to pay you for the take away value you give them when they learn with you.

But first they have to find you! First, they have to know you even exist!

Nowadays, it is without doubt your biggest advantage for your teaching service to own your own website. It is also without doubt one of your best business tools to ensure a steady stream of new and enquiring customers and students.

How to set up a website — further knowledge

Setting up your website is admittedly at first glance, an awe-inspiring, time-consuming and a scary idea. Well, don't worry. The first requirement is to decide between an *easy* method (a hosted website platform) or a *simple* method (a stand-alone website platform) to create your website.

What is the difference between the two website platforms?

Consider this situation: You want to live in a new house or a new flat...

If you choose to live in a house you must first find a plot of land. Then you need to decide what type of house you want to build. You also have to take into consideration and decide what services and facilities you need to be connected to. Some are free and some have to be paid for on a quarterly or yearly basis. It is, however, unfurnished. When the house walls and roof are finally built, you have to buy the fittings and furniture you want in it. These too can be either free or you have to pay for them.

Equivalent comparison of a new house to a *Stand-alone* website:

- A plot of land = the stand-alone website with its own website address.

- Type of house = an individually designed website

- Services and facilities = website maintenance

- Inside decoration = layout theme and plugins

Equivalent comparison of a block of flats to a *Hosted* website:

You decide owning a house involves too much work and opt to live in a flat.

You choose a nice looking block of flats and then choose the right-sized flat to live in. With the flat comes a variety of furniture. All you have to do is go into the cellar and choose which pieces of furniture you want and then take and position them where you want them in your new flat. In addition, to paying the monthly rent, you have to pay a quarterly or annual fee for services and facilities that are shared by all the other flat owners including the fee for the caretaker who manages all the maintenance services.

- Block of flats = the hosted website

- The flat number is part of the block of flat's address = your website will be part of the host's website name

- Type and size of flat = choosing between a simple website design or a more expensive one with more features

- Services, facilities and the caretaker = your website updates and maintenance carried out automatically by the hosting service

- Inside decoration and furniture =your website theme and plugins chosen by a drag-and-drop method.

As a first time website owner, let's take a look at the easy way to get started to create an attractive and simple website using a hosted service.

Pros

Cheap or Free to run

Relatively easy to set up

Simple to run

Updated automatically

Indexed in Search Engines quickly.

The Hosted Website for beginner website owners

If you've never built a website before, choose a hosting platform that uses a drag-and-drop design system to test the waters. (See About drag-and-drop website building platforms below.)

A hosted website is the platform most suitable for newbie website owners wanting to set up a website for the first time. Most administrative tasks and nitty-bitty fine tunings are automatically carried out by the hosting platform, such as program updates, email accounts, backups and the like. The website owner is free to concentrates solely on producing a nice looking layout and his written text.

However, if you are well versed in using a word processing program (e.g. Microsoft Word) you might prefer to create your first website by choosing a free WordPress template on a stand-alone website platform.

Cons

Constricted design options

Limitations to template designs

Less own control

Generic URL

Upgrading to Stand Alone can be difficult

Both hosting services are user friendly. You'll soon have a professional looking website to be proud of!

About drag-and-drop *hosted* website building platforms

A really easy method of building your website is to use a 'drag-and-drop' website builder that hosted website platforms offer.

Everything is pre-built for you. You just choose the bits and pieces you would like to have in your website (graphics, contact forms) and pull (drag) them into place where you want them.

There are many drag-and-drop website builders, so it is simplicity itself to design your website. When your design is finished to your satisfaction, a single click is all it takes to publish it on the Internet once you have purchased your domain name.

Website *hosted* platforms (suitable for beginner website owners)

There are many hosting website creators suitable for beginning website owners such as:

www.WordPress.com

www.1und1.de

www.weebly.com

www.blogger.com

NOTE: The all hosting platforms generally offer you a choice of different languages where you can choose your language. (English, German etc.)

The *Stand-alone* Website Platform (for more experienced website owners)

- Choosing a Stand-alone website platform means you are no longer a newbie in building websites.

- A Stand-alone website platform is really only suitable for people who know or are not afraid of working with computing languages!

A Stand-alone website platform is where a website owner has total control over the website. The website owner starts a website from a WordPress template for example, and is able to choose a domain name without having the wordpress.com as part of the domain name. It also means the website owner is responsible for all administrative tasks such as program updates and backups, changes to the layout and email and forwarding accounts — and more.

Website *stand-alone* platforms for more experienced website owners

Here are a few hosting providers for stand-alone Web Site platforms:

www.bluehost.com

www.wordpress.org

www.hostgator.com

www.hostpapa.com

www.1und1.de

www.strato.de

A website built on a WordPress template

WordPress has a free service for making a website. It uses pre-made templates that shape the basic structure of a website and its pages. These templates vary from simple layouts to more complex designs.

The choice in free templates is huge! There are literally thousands of webpage designs available with WordPress. However, the more complex ones request fees. Then there are also custom-made templates but these will cost serious money.

The advantage of a WordPress template is how easily and quickly you'll be able to create a decent looking website! If you can type and format a document on your computer with a word processing software (e.g. MS Word) you'll have no trouble in typing in and formatting your text in a WordPress document.

You can find free WordPress templates at the WordPress website: www.wordpress.org

There is a marked difference between the twin brothers that causes confusion. Here is a short description to help you differentiate between them:

What is *WordPress.org*?

WordPress is an open source software that millions of website owners take advantage of to build their own website.

WordPress.org lies at the heart of this bubbling WordPress centre and community.

It is the place to look for templates and plugins (little programs that do extra work inside your website that was not built into a template), the necessary documentation to get started, as well as a help forum for WordPress users.

Once you have designed your website you will need to get it onto the Internet. This where the WordPress.org's twin partner comes into action; we now need WordPress.com.

What is *WordPress.com*?

WordPress.com is the commercial website –a domain hosting service — that website owners use to get their website published on the Internet.

Every website needs a 'host' to provide a domain name (the name of your website) where it is legally parked as a website on the Internet and added to the virtual Internet domain names directory. Otherwise, your website remains on your computer at home where no one can see it but you!

NOTE: All website hosting services have an area to check if your chosen website domain name is available.

As with most free software, WordPress has its limitations, such as the number of pages you can display on your website, having to allow advertisements to appear on your website, and having wordpress.com as part of your website name. You might even have to pay for upgrades as your website grows. If this is not acceptable, the alternative is to pay WordPress.com a basic annual fee to remove these restrictions or choose a different website hosting service.

What now remains is the website content — adding pages to your website, writing your text and inserting photos.

Like most things to do with computers, making your own website is strange and new at first, but because you are doing a lot of repetitive work day-in and day-out, it soon becomes second nature. Take a look around the Internet at other websites to get ideas about layouts and content.

Writing your first website text

There is only one rule to follow when you are preparing your first-ever website text: Keep it simple!

By simple I mean, first sit down and work out exactly what teaching service you are going to offer, the type of student you want to teach, and of course where, when and how you will do your lessons.

In the second stage, organise your information and write about your teaching service or the teaching product you offer. How will your teaching or product help your students solve their particular problem? Why? How can your future students contact you?

Choosing which way to build your website

Your house on the Internet where your students and customers are going to find you — just like Goldilocks found the 3 bears' house in the woods

Whether you choose to create your website on a hosted web site platform or a Stand-alone web site platform, this is where your 'house in the woods' is virtually located and stored. Here is your website home.

The best recommendation I can give is that if you have colleagues with web sites of their own, ask them which hosting platform they use and how reliable it is and then make your own judgement.

Okay, we've talked about the advantages of having a website, let's now talk about the disadvantages of creating and owning a website.

What are the disadvantages of a website?

Well, your first problem will be in setting up the website itself... Under the motto of:

'Aaahh! I'm not technical. I don't have the slightest idea on how to go about setting up a website!'

Let me reassure you, you are not alone. I didn't have a clue when I started mine (a long time ago) — and I was just as scared and anxious as to whether I could manage the task and remain sane at the end of it.

I'm still here, and still sane... 🙂

Like most things new, there will be a whole new vocabulary to get your head around as you go along.

No-one, but no-one will ever know everything

We are all scratching our way along the learning curve. Don't be scared to practise with the absolute basic things to begin with. Focus on doing one thing at a time and get the feel of the way things work. Once you get the hang of adding simple things to your basic website, you'll find your learning curve will be exponential!

Of course, you're going to get stuck sometimes — in which case, you have two choices:

1.   Go to Google and type in your 'how to…' question — you'll be amazed how many people are out there willing to help you!

2.   Go to the TEACHER'S DEN forum and ask for help there.

Is running a website expensive?

No, but setting up a new website is also not free. Here are three essential items you must have as a website owner!

1.   You will need to buy the rights to your web site domain name.

2.   A program against hackers and viruses.

3.   An additional Backup program to protect and reconstruct your website if it becomes damaged (corrupt) and is no longer accessible by either yourself or by visitors to your website (unthinkable!)

!

<u>ONE</u> new student covers my annual web site costs.

Is the cost worthwhile?

Yes — absolutely! Let me answer that based on my own experience: One new customer covers my annual website costs.

Maintenance and updating a website

Updating can prove to be difficult if you are not computer savvy.

There is one big disadvantages that you have no control over... Your hosting platform can go down *and* from time to time needs upgrading. Unfortunately, you have no control over how they run *their* business!

Customer care — or the contact between you and your customer:

Once you have your website up and running and published on the Internet, then of course, you are hoping that your prospective students are going to send you e-mails enquiring about your lessons or training sessions.

You are going to have to keep abreast of all your e-mails daily once your website is online. This is going to need some organisational effort on your part. Your prospective students are living in a technologically modern world and expect the immediacy of the Internet. When they send you an e-mail, they want an almost immediate answer. This means, you will have to monitor your e-mails daily — even during your holidays.

An automatic e-mail reply that says '*Sorry I am not in the office today, I am on holiday and shall be back in the office on such-and-such-a-date*' is not going to satisfy your prospective and inquisitive student.

This is important, so let me repeat it:

You are going to have to keep on top of your e-mails — especially in the start-up phase of your freelance business.

Keeping abreast of all e-mails sent to your website's e-mail address is a natural part of your day-to-day business. Your customers are psychologically expecting an answer within an hour of having sent out their e-mail. (Are you any different?) They want an answer. Now. And being on holiday is not acceptable especially when they learn this through an automatic reply. They will be annoyed and you will lose a student. He or she will look elsewhere because the Internet is a huge supermarket.

You can never go on holiday...

Naturally you can go on holiday. 🙂

However, you will need to ensure you have Internet access to control your e-mails. A timely and personal e-mail reply is often accepted by the prospective student. They are usually happy to wait until you get back.

Why is there a difference in these two similar texts? The difference lies in the method. In the one a real live person has answered their e-mail; the other was a machine.

In summary:

Your customers and students are out there in their thousands — in a gigantic supermarket called the Internet. It's no longer necessary to build your freelance existence on bricks-and-mortar. Nor do you need to be a computer professional to create a website for you.

Your only requirement is:

- a dose of courage and
- a good portion of willingness to work and to experiment, and
- a healthy portion of common sense.

A simple two or three-page website with a couple of photographs or graphics is generally sufficient to present your professional credentials and provide all the information and incentives visitors need to know (special skills and areas of expertise) to convince them take to call you.

However, do be prepared that your 'experiment' may work!

So, what is your next step? What action must you undertake now? On the following page, I've prepared a 10-Step guide (page) to help you on your way.

The 10-Step Guide to Get Your Website Online

Here are ten steps to help you get your online, if you've never done this before:

Step 1

As a freelancer, you are running a small business. A business must be maintained if it's to thrive and become successful. However, not all benefits appear by magic and immediately. It requires patience and persistence and putting up a new website involves immediate costs in both your time and money. Have you calculated the monetary costs and the amount of time you are prepared to spend on your website?

Step 2

Define exactly your freelance teaching service or the teaching product you sell. Be as specific as you can; the more specialised you can be, the better. Avoid the Jack-of-All-Trades syndrome.

Step 3

Define the student or customer you want to teach.

Step 4

Decide on your website domain name. For example, use your own/chosen name if it is available, or some derivative of it — or pick something that's easy to say and easy to spell. Make a small list of alternative names in case your first choice has already been taken.

Step 5

Decide whether to create your website yourself or pay a website designer to do the job for you.

Step 6

Decide on a website hosting service and register your domain name with them. If your first choice is no longer available, you can try to register one of the other names on your list of alternative names.

Step 7

Decide on a basic structure (the outline) of your new website on paper before you try out one of the free templates. Think Simplicity and Clarity because it's the visiting student who dictates how he uses it, and if it's too complicated to navigate, he'll leave. He'll want to know: Who you are? How can he contact you? What do you teach or what teaching products do you sell? Tell me why I should choose your teaching lessons and not the others?
In other words... *What's In It For Me*?

Step 8

Write your text for your new website based on your work in (2) and (3) above.

Step 9

Believe in yourself. The two most critical attitudes to running a freelance business is self-confidence and self-motivation.

Step 10

Publish your website: Go online!!!

Reminder!

Get prepared for starting up your teaching business as a freelance entrepreneur. Your potential new students and company customers will be searching the Internet looking for something to suit their training needs.

 If you are relying on student referrals, local community programmes or adverts in the local newspaper, then your students are not going to find you.

A website is like being able to send out 24 hours a day, non-stop, a full-colour, multipage brochure of your services to all interested students and customers all over the world without having to incur postage or printing costs.
The Internet is undoubtedly the biggest worldwide supermarket
 — join in — get your website going!

Janine

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Wouldn't you love to stumble upon simple, yet electrifying ideas on how to grow your freelance teaching business and find more students successfully?
Go to http://www.ft-training.com/articles and judge for yourself.

ENTREPRENEURIAL FREELANCE TEACHERS — PRODUCTS

http://www.ft-training.com/elearning/products/

Why do most freelancing careers come to an untimely end within 3 years?

This eBook shows you why it's so difficult to promote your teaching services. It's shows you what you need to do so students can find you on the global market. Written for freelance teachers by a freelance teacher.

Among the topics covered are:

1. *Case study*: How a personal brand helped one teacher find a steady stream of students
2. How to develop your own personal brand
3. How to develop your own personal unique selling proposition to attract students to your teaching service

Click here to get on the mailing list for the 'Spotlight on You!'

Why is it so hard to determine an adequate price for your lessons?

This book shows freelance teachers how to begin planning their own financial security.
The book is about using successful strategies (and avoiding pitfalls) to creating and setting up your own individual system to plan your financial security. It will help you decide your freelance teaching service rates, for example. Among the topics covered are:

1. How to avoid undervaluing your teaching service
2. What your rates reveal about your teaching service
3. Pricing strategies to attract your *preferred* students

Click here to get on the mailing list for
the 'Freelance Teachers: Pricing Matters and How To Avoid Underearning'

MARKETING FOR FREELANCE TEACHING PROFESSIONALS
ARTICLES TO HELP YOU GROW YOUR BUSINESS AND FIND MORE STUDENTS

Report written by Janine Bray-Mueller