

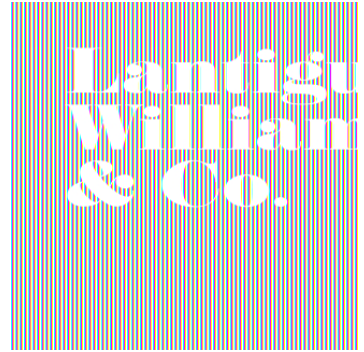
Top Ten Mistakes Freelancers Make (and How to Avoid Them)

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I've made these mistakes too...

- Freelancing 20 years
- Still freelancing*
- Edited 100's of contractors
- Been edited by dozens of editors

- Learned by erring & being mentored
- Developed good habits; jettisoned bad ones
- Mentoring last 10 years
- Own studio (40+ contractors)

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10. Not Having a Formal Sponsor

We do this when we:

*...think 'I got this' by myself
...are afraid to ask for help
...are the 'only one' in the place; too proud, scared
...avoid accountability
...want a 'mirror mentor'*

How to fix it:

1. Talk to people who have sponsors
2. I.D. three accessible potential sponsors at work, the industry, a complimentary field
3. FORMALLY ASK FOR SPONSORING
4. Apply to established mentoring programs: [IWMEF](#), [AirMedia](#), [Werk It Bootcamp!](#) [Third Coast Residency](#)
5. You manage the logistics (meetings, agendas, goals, deadlines)
6. **Become a mentor yourself.**

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9. Not Raising Your Hand Enough

We do this when we:

...limit ourselves to core competencies (e.g., audio production only)

...do not ask for 'reach assignments' that build other strengths

...play office politics in **our heads**

How to fix it:

1. Ask yourself, 'Where's the evidence?' that they will say no, that I will not have help, that I am not ready...
2. Offer to support a particular person with a task that you want to learn
3. Offer to draft something for someone else to edit/finish
4. Do some additional research/work and bring new ideas/methods to the team w/o being asked

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8. Not Checking in Regularly

We do this when we:

...have a lot on our plate
and/or are juggling clients
...aren't sure how to
prioritize
...procrastinate until the
deadline
...overcommit but
underdeliver

How to fix it:

1. Make a calendar reminder to call or email quick status updates with clients 1x a week (or whatever cadence is appropriate)
2. Set growth goals for you with project manager
3. Schedule calls throughout project; make an agenda.

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7. Not Digitizing Transactions

We do this when we:

- ...handwrite/scan W9s
- ...lack proper invoices
- ...lack digital payments
- ...sign contracts manually
- ...mishandle/mislabel reimbursements

How to fix it:

1. Use an invoicing software ([Due.com](#), [FreshBooks](#), [Harvest](#), [QuickBooks](#))
2. Make an invoice template
3. Address invoices to right person
4. Update your W-9 yearly; send a new one when you change addressed
5. [Save W-9 as PDF](#), never on drive or with a password



6. Not Up on Current Rates/ No Rate Card

We do this when we:

- ...don't have a rate card
- ...ask for a per diem
- ...fill out/read industry surveys
- ...read 'best practices' articles on our industry

How to fix it:

1. Read Werk It's [What Podcasting Pays Now](#) report on salaries
2. Ask others what they charge
3. Check out AIR's rate guide
4. Read AIR's [Code of Fair Practices](#)
5. MAKE A RATE CARD: if you're charging hourly, have different rates for different work, based on time/difficulty/ technicality



5. Not Being Familiar w/ Client's Work

We do this when we:

- ...send cold emails that don't mention any shows*
- ...send a query that does not mention specific episodes*
- ...do not set fees appropriately*

How to fix it:

- 1. Listen to the last season of the client's show*
- 2. Browse the client's social media for past month*
- 3. Identify a specific role you'd like to have on the show*
- 4. Offer specific services/skills that would enhance/compliment the work*
- 5. Ask what they pay for such work, then set your price accordingly*



4. Not Taking Time Management Seriously

*We do this when we
openly:*

- ...miss deadlines
- ...underdeliver on work
- ...compare assignments
- ...compare clients to one another
- ...compare scopes of work
- ...discuss other client work
- ...say other work is a higher priority

How to fix it:

1. Do not take on more work than you can handle
2. Set realistic deadlines/deliverables
3. Do not mention other work/clients
4. ASK FOR HELP EARLY
5. Overestimate how much time you need to finish something
6. Block time in your calendar each day for every assignment
7. Break everything up into small bites
8. Set calendar alarms!

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3. Not Setting Goals w/ Every Project/Asking for Feedback

We do this when we:

- ...do not have our own ongoing projects*
- ...take on work blindly*
- ...accept lowest level of difficulty*
- ...do not share growth goals*
- ...settle for WWB (Working While Bored)*

How to fix it:

- 1. HAVE YOUR OWN PROJECT**
- Take on a mix of work that is difficult and manageable*
- Share your growth goals with your client/Ask for feedback regularly*
- Set measurable outcomes based on the client's needs and your growth goals*
- Seek out work commensurate with achieved growth goals*
- Continue to increase your level of difficulty*



2. Not Setting Quarterly/Annual Goals

We do this when we:

...go from job to job mindlessly

...let others set goals for us based on projects

...do not assess what we need to grow

...lack mentors/sponsors

How to fix it:

- 1. Get a mentor for accountability*
- 2. Set goals before the new year; quarterly, yearly, project-based*
- 3. Set measurable goals (\$, travel, publications)*



1. Not Acting Like a Business

We do this when we:

- working without contracts/[Statement of Work](#)
- not setting terms in writing
- not negotiating rates, fees, contracts
- Missing simple deadlines (invoicing, feedback, late to meetings)

How to fix it:

1. *Register your company*
2. *Formalize your processes (contracts, invoices, rates)*
3. *Manage your projects formally*
4. *Set quarterly and yearly goals (income, projects, prof. goals)*



¡Gracias!

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