



# Life as an Independent Writer

The good, the better, and the best of it

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# Who am I?

- Founder, TechWritingLabs
  - [www.techwritinglabs.com](http://www.techwritinglabs.com)
  - 5 years and going strong
  - 100% word of mouth marketing
  - Healthy mix of new and repeat customers – small, medium, and MNC companies
- I'm just like you
  - Love technical writing
  - Want to be my own boss
  - Hungry to succeed
- I was a freelancer too – and went on to establish my boutique firm

# Agenda

- Life as a freelancer
- Typical challenges
- How do you get started?
- Tips to succeed
- Moving up the value chain

# The Joy of Freelancing

- You enjoy the FREEDOM
  - What you work on
  - Whom you work with
  - Where you work from
  - When and how long you work
- But...being your own boss comes at a cost

Trade-off

# A Very Different World

- You're free – to fend for yourself, literally
- No managers – you manage customers' expectations instead
- No direct pressures – but your reputation is at stake
- No peer pressure – but you'll face stiff competition
- No “9 to 5” desk job – it's 24 x 7
- No daily commute – no assured monthly salary either!

# Tough Questions; Difficult Answers

- Where do you find work?
- Why should a company choose to work with you?
- How can you gain their trust?
- At the end, will you get your payment?
- How do you keep the work, and the money, flowing in?
- Is this sustainable in the long run?

# Four-Step Execution



The diagram consists of four overlapping circles arranged horizontally. Each circle has a different colored border and contains a step of the process. The circles are: 1. Light blue border with 'Gear Up', 2. Light green border with 'Scout for Work', 3. Light orange border with 'Present a Proposal', and 4. Red border with 'Delight your Customers'. Each circle has a soft grey shadow underneath it.

Gear Up

Scout for  
Work

Present a  
Proposal

Delight  
your  
Customers

# Gear Up

- Create a portfolio
- Develop your website
- Start blogging – a writer must write!
- Network, network, and network

Gear Up

**Find your niche**



# Get Busy

- Word of mouth
- Freelance portals
- Mailing lists
- Job portals

LinkedIn and Facebook connections

Scout for  
Work

**It's ok to be choosy**

# Get Going

- Study the requirement / seek clarifications
- Estimate time and effort required
- Arrive at a pricing

Keep room for negotiations

Be willing to make trade-offs

Present a  
Proposal

**It's ok to start small**

# Keep These in Mind



- Customer timelines
- Research
- Industry and audience analysis
- Pace of work
- Current commitments
- Meetings with SMEs
- Customer review
- Edits
- Packaging and completion



- Fair price / market price
- Level of experience
- Level of difficulty / complexity
- Volume of work
- Timelines
- Future work from the same customer
- Relationship with the customer

**Time and Money Matter**

# Succeed!

- Deliver on time
- Deliver on your promise of quality
- Be willing to edit to your customer's satisfaction

Ensure that you get paid as per  
agreed terms

Delight  
your  
Customers

Enjoy yourself

# Tips for Success

- Choose your customers carefully
- Ask questions upfront
- Customers don't always have the answers
- Take timelines seriously
- Get feedback early on
- Be willing to go that “extra mile”

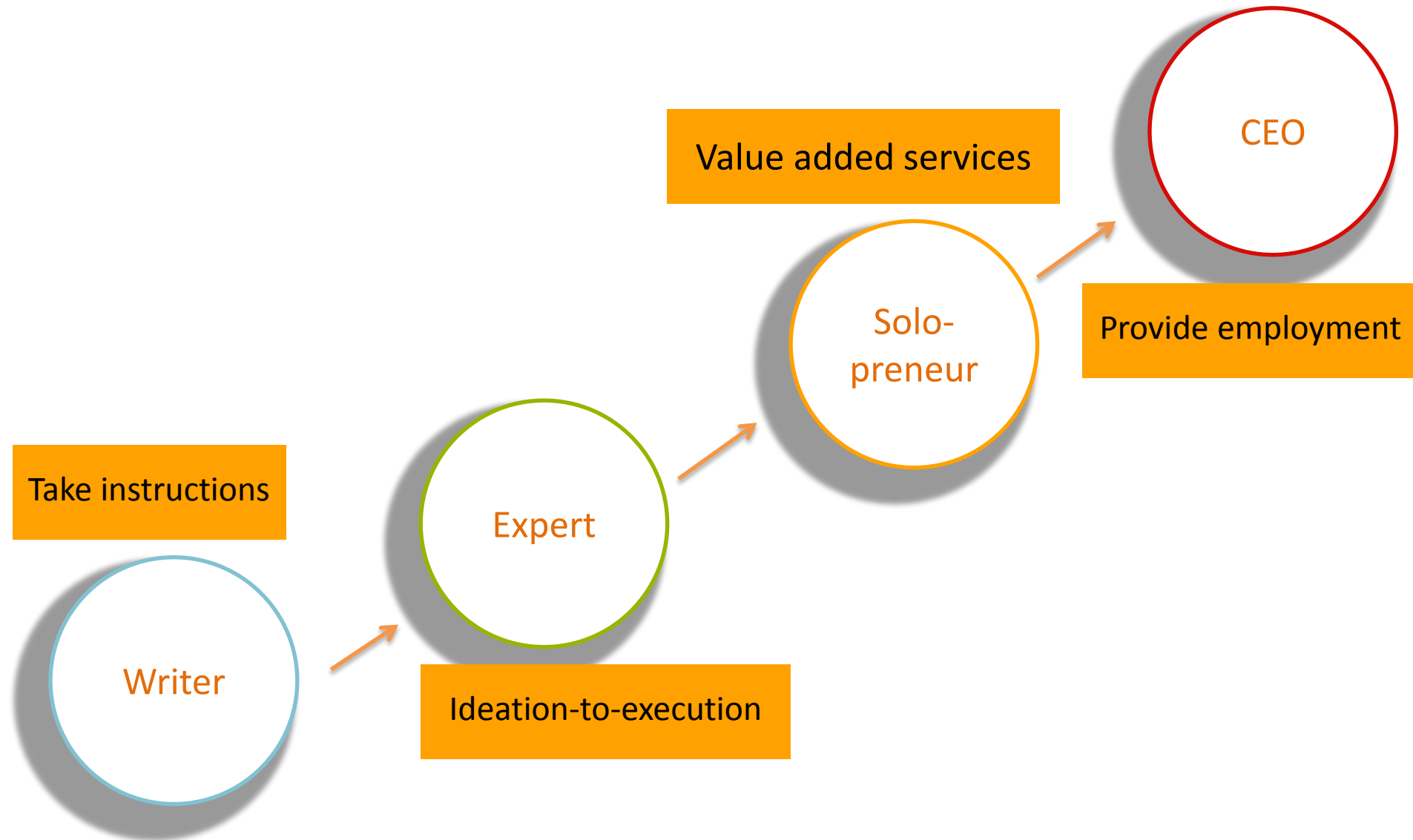
# Help Yourself

- Maintain regular work timings
- Keep your work area organized
- Figure out what process works best for you – you are unique
- Don't take on more work than you can handle
- Keep learning; keep improving



Best  
Practices

# Move up the value chain



Happy Freelancing!



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