

# 7 Reasons the Creative Freelancer is Misunderstood

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I am a freelance content creator. I've been in the business for most of my career, writing human resource documents, newsletters, articles, emails, copywriting, and other types of creative materials for clients around the globe. Spoiler Alert! It can take a long time depending on where you are in the learning curve, how fast you type, etc.

Creative freelancers aren't just "talent." They're visionaries who take risks daily and put themselves out there when no one else will. Creative freelancers are thinkers who challenge the status quo and push boundaries. They're problem-solvers whose minds are always switched on.

You do your job, but sometimes you feel like others don't see how much work goes into your craft. You have to be an expert in your field—not only do you need to know what other people are doing in the industry, but also where it will stay ahead of the curve. And honestly? Sometimes it feels like no one cares about any of that.

With so much talk about technology' disrupting' every industry, it's easy to forget that creativity is the lifeblood of art and business. Innovation and creative thinking are vital for success in any

market. Ultimately, the success of any business boils down to its ability to innovate, which can be hampered by a lack of understanding when it comes to those charged with driving change.

## Pay is a great example

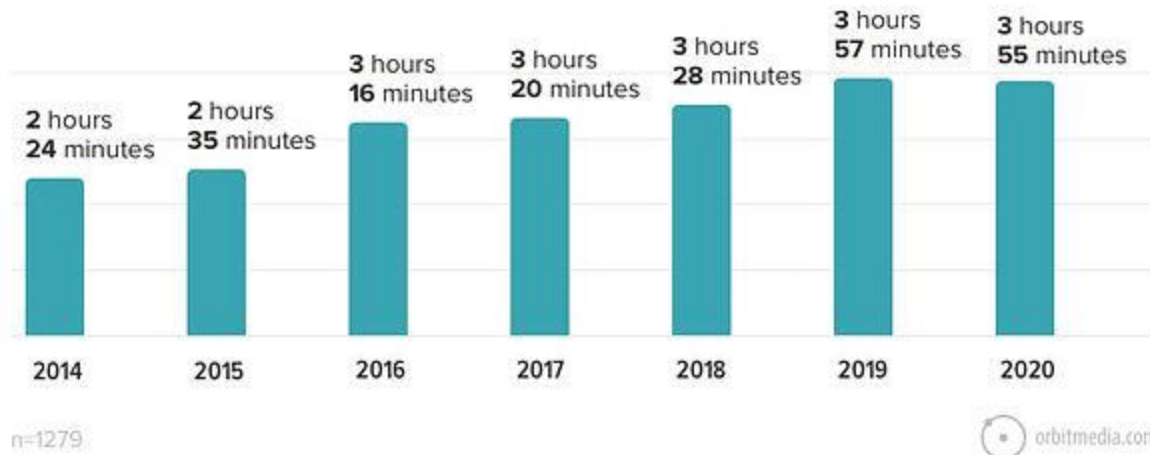
For example, most beginner freelancers start with websites that find work for you. Soon you get to bid on a project or two only to find that the amount the client wants to pay is maybe \$0.01/word up to \$0.03/word if you are lucky. Then you read the rest of the project, which goes something like this:

- *Must be able to write 500-1000 words in 3 days*
- *Must post on the website*
- *Must have written SEO for 1-2 years (it's an entry-level job or even an intern)*
- *Must add images that are optimized*
- *Must thoroughly research and curate content*
- *Must be original (no plagiarism) and have correct grammar, spelling, correctness, clarity, and engagement*
- *Pay: up to \$0.02/word (which would bring your total time to about \$20. If you are lucky enough to get an hourly rate, it usually ranges from \$6/hr to \$19/hr, or a project rate of \$25-\$40/project-research, writing, and so forth)*

## Here are some facts

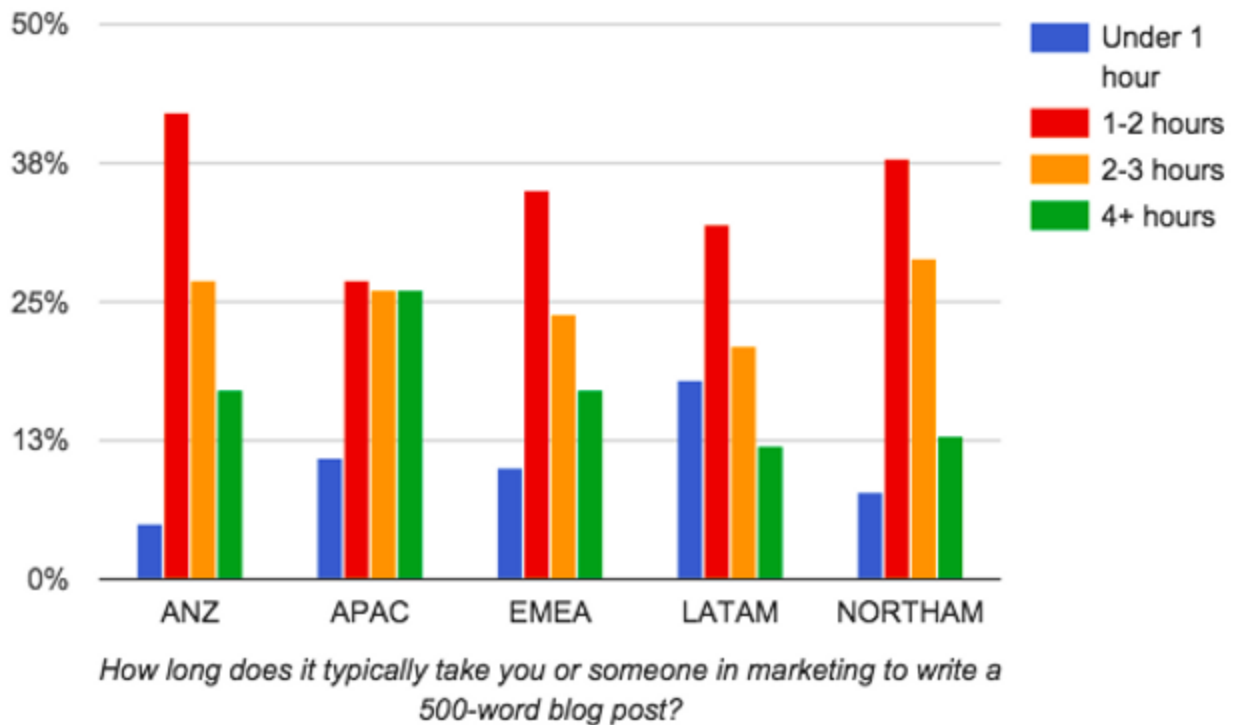
An **Orbit Media** survey of 1,279 bloggers found that spending extra time on a blog post by researching and collecting data has a higher success rate than those that don't. The survey also showed that a beginner blogger could spend 5-6 hours creating a **good 1,000-word blog**. **For an experienced blogger, a good 1,000 words blog post takes around 4 hours to write.**

## How long does it take to write a blog post?



**Hubspot** collected data from 4,000 marketers and salespeople around the globe. The question asked was, how long did it typically take someone on their marketing team or themselves to write a 500-word blog post?

## How long does it typically take you or someone in marketing to write a 500-word blog post?



With all of this data to emphasize the need for excellent creative content, why are creative content freelancers so misunderstood regarding the time it takes to provide that service?

## Reasons the creative freelancer is misunderstood

Here are 7 reasons the creative freelancer is misunderstood:

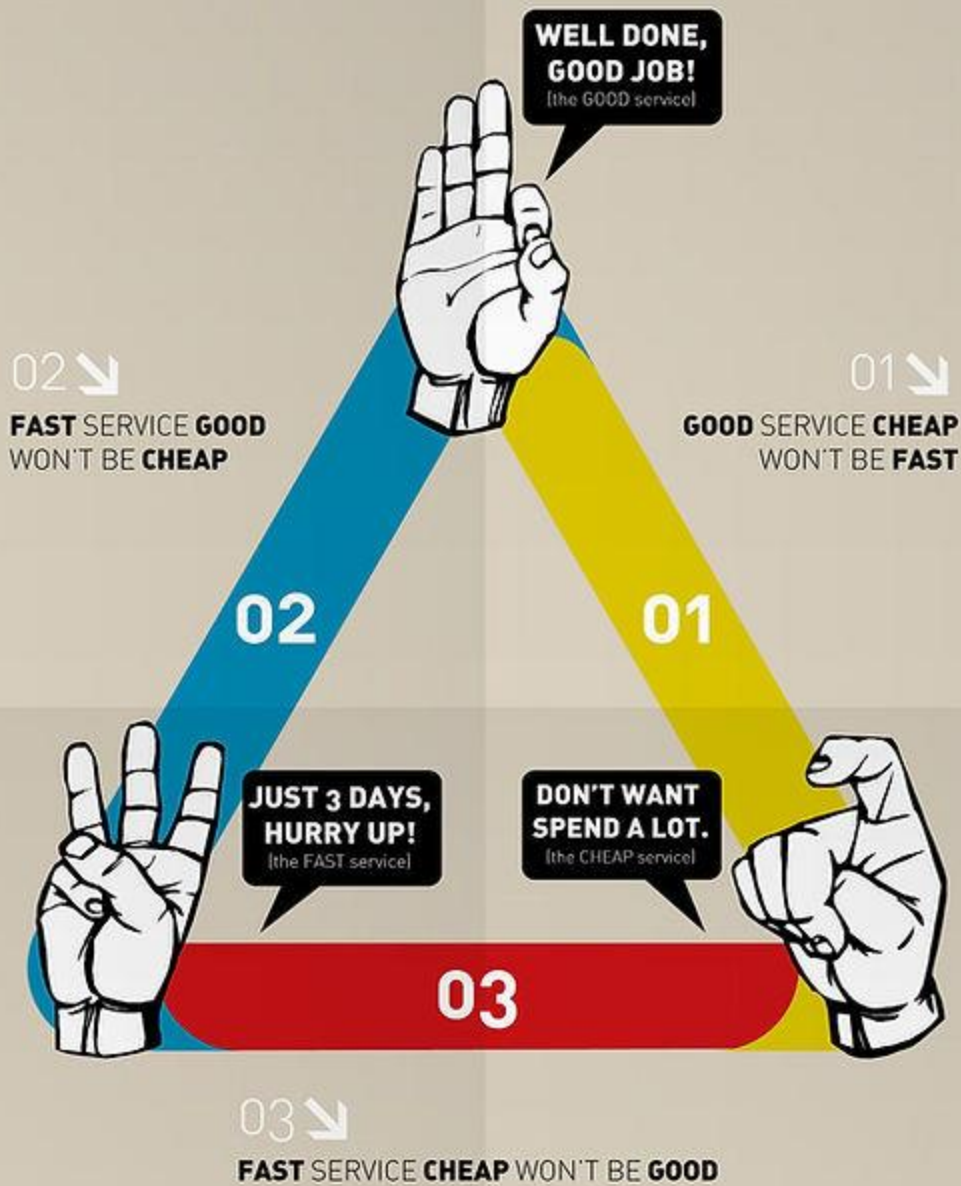
**1. Creative content is a craft.** When you think of a craft, you think of an artist, musician, or photographer. Writing, whether a novel, ebook, copywriting, or blog, is also a craft. You don't tell artists to "hurry up" or "we pay peanuts for a high-quality photograph" or "anyone can do this. How hard can it be?"

The writer must understand the brand, tone, and message for which the piece is written. The writer must understand the topic to be written and the message to be conveyed.

The writer researches and curates the most up-to-date information and puts it into a specific format using keywords and SEO compliance.

Once written, the piece is checked for grammar, spelling, plagiarism, clarity, and engagement. Then read and reread to ensure all elements are in sync to produce a quality piece of work.

The unattainable triangle then goes into effect with the client wanting something of high quality cheaply. It puts the client and the blogger at odds.



GOOD service CHEAP won't be FAST  
 GOOD service FAST won't be CHEAP  
 FAST service CHEAP won't be GOOD

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**2. Creatives are underappreciated.** Many clients do not appreciate the value a creative writer brings to their business or even the value of the craft. Sometimes clients outsource creative jobs overseas where people work for a fraction of the cost. Companies want to get the same effect for half or even less of what it costs to hire a freelancer in a developed country. And ultimately, they get what they pay for, fast and cheap.

**3. A freelancer is a builder.** Creative freelancers are among the most talented professionals in the world. Their unique skills allow them to build a final written product from the ground up, ensuring the research is of value, the elements are in place, and the article is developed correctly. They must be innovative to establish engagement and credibility for the content. These skills are rarely appreciated.



**4. The consumer mindset.** Relativity is the new currency of the 21st century. Marketing creativity is a complex process that requires time and diligence. Marketers must know how consumers approach purchase decisions with different *mindsets* that can affect how they shop. In social psychology, a mindset is defined as a set of cognitive processes and critical criteria that, once activated, can carry over to unrelated tasks and decisions. In other words, if you get a consumer *thinking a certain way*, that mindset can influence their subsequent shopping behavior.

There are two types of consumer mindsets – abstract and concrete. Consumers in an abstract mindset who face an array of related products will focus more on how it may make them feel. At the same time, consumers in a concrete mindset focus on solid factors such as cost, size, etc. For



example, an abstract mindset consumer may see a Corvette, imagine themselves in one, how it might feel to drive one, and make an impulsive purchase. Conversely, a concrete consumer mindset might think a Corvette too unsafe and head down to Subaru.

What does this have to do with creativity, you ask? Blog or copywriting, designing, photographing, creating window displays, websites, or creativity and innovation of any kind, take people who can navigate the marketing mindset. These individuals must understand how the consumer mindset impacts their writing, design, etc. and how it relates to the product or service sold. It takes a level of talent not just anyone can deliver.

**5. The commodification of creativity.** Clients need to understand the importance of creativity, innovation, and design to business in its entirety, as vital to our national prosperity within a framework of global competition. The competition in the intervention arena and the mechanisms by which solutions may be implemented are slow at changing business attitudes toward creativity and creative people. Clients often fail to recognize creative peoples' critical role in business and a creative's ability to understand and encourage creativity and innovation. Creativity is NOT a commodity.



**CREATIVITY IS NOT A COMMODITY**



**6. Ambiguity and vulnerability in freelancing.** I'm sure you've heard many people say that freelancing is the way to go. It's how you get to do what you love and make more money than you ever dreamed possible. But the truth is that freelancing isn't always easy. It can be downright risky.

There is an understated belief that anyone can take a picture, design a website, copywrite, make a video, paint, or create a beautiful marketing piece. Frankly, to do it right can be time-consuming and complex. Not only is there complexity in creative work, but there's also often a risk.

Freelancing involves a lot of ambiguity and risk—you don't know precisely what your clients will want from you or how well they'll pay. You also have no real way of knowing if your client will pay! And even if they do pay, there's always the possibility that they won't pay on time or in full. This kind of uncertainty can be stressful and frustrating for many people.

It's not straightforward to know when or how much work will be coming in. You could have a lot of work one week and then none the next. You might have to spend time trying to find more gigs—and even if you find some, it could be hard to predict how much money you'll make from it. It's not always easy to judge whether or not what you're doing is worth your time and effort!

As a freelancer, you don't have an employer who will take on some risks for you. If something goes wrong with a client or project, there may be no one else to pick up the tab for any associated costs (or losses). This can mean you need to carefully plan for unexpected expenses or delays—and maybe even invest in an insurance policy just in case something goes wrong with one of your projects!



Finally, the main challenge of being a creative freelancer is that you're in charge of your success. You have to manage your schedule, find work, and market yourself. It can get overwhelming quickly if you're unsure what to do with all of this.

You never really know if your client will like what you do. It can be hard to tell if they'll think your work is good enough until after they've seen it—which means that sometimes freelancers are left feeling uncertain and nervous about their chances for success.

**7. Clients don't understand their business or its objectives.** Many clients don't understand their business or its goals. Usually, they want something that looks great, grabs attention, and provokes interest. The reality is clients could care less how it looks or if they are losing money over your hard work. They probably wouldn't know what to do with a pen or brush if they had to do it themselves. You see, most clients have no idea about designing a successful project. And rightly so because that's not the business they started.

Sometimes they are just unrealistic in their wants and desires. For example, I often see ads for a content writer who not only has to write the content but also needs to be able to post on social media, upload to the website, edit others' work, and so on. What's that all about?

You might have to work with clients who don't know exactly what they want. They may give you a vague description of what they need and expect you to fill in the blanks. That can make it challenging to figure out how much time and money to spend on producing their project. It also means that if you don't do a good job, you might have to do many redos—which is expensive!

Another show stopper might be that when you're freelancing, you're not just working for a single client. You're getting paid by one client, but any number of people could use your work—and it's not always clear who they are or what they'll do with the content. That can be both exciting and scary, but it also means there are a lot of risks involved when you freelance.



## Conclusion

The creative freelancer has been misunderstood for far too long. We work hard to make the world more beautiful. Creativity is not a skill learned overnight—it takes years of practice, knowledge, and dedication to become a truly great creative freelancer. And yet time after time, we are told that what we do is not necessary or valuable enough to be rewarded appropriately for our efforts. "Oh well," they say, "you're just an artist!" as if this were somehow synonymous with loserdom.

But creativity and innovation are essential! It makes us human—it shows us what it means to be alive on this earth together as one species among many others sharing this planet with us all at once! Creativity can bring people together from all walks of life into a shared space where they can come together through a mutual appreciation for each other's imagination—and yet creatives are often shunned by society because their work seems frivolous or unimportant compared to different kinds of jobs?

One thing I've learned over the last few years of being a freelance writer is that it's easy to lose sight of your work's importance—even when you're doing it daily. This isn't just true for writers; it's true for all kinds of creatives, from designers to architects to photographers, who are often underpaid or not given the credit they deserve for their work. It's also one of the reasons I've written this blog: to ensure that everyone, including creative freelancers, values creativity and innovation. And a final message of "be kind!"

"NO MATTER HOW  
RICH, TALENTED  
OR GREAT **YOU**  
**THINK** YOU ARE...  
**HOW YOU**  
**TREAT PEOPLE**  
ULTIMATELY  
TELLS ALL"

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