

DIGITAL FREELANCING

*The Top 7 Freelancing Opportunities
In Digital Marketing*



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Are you afraid that your job is under risk? Are you stagnating in your career and your future in your industry is now looking doubtful?

Are you struggling to get a salary revision and hesitate to demand it during such tough times?

Do you want a steady source of income so that you can have mental peace and a feeling of safety and security?

If you have answered “yes” to any of the questions above, then this ebook will change your life.

In this ebook, we are going to talk about Digital Freelancing. By the end of this ebook, you will have a clear idea about the opportunities in freelancing and how you can take a plunge into becoming your own boss by the end of 2020 (and hopefully fire your boss and get freedom from the rat race).

Most of the freelancing opportunities mentioned in this ebook can be done on the side while you are doing your job. A side hustle is very important because you never know when you might get laid off.

Before we get into the different ways to earn money as a freelancer, let's talk about why Freelancing is important, what is digital freelancing and how you should approach the transition.

Digital Freelancing vs. “Real Jobs?”

10 years back the term freelancer was not very popular. If you walked into a party and introduced yourself as a freelancer, people wouldn't be looking up to you.

In fact, people would think that you are unemployed and are a freelancer only because you didn't get a “real job”. It might even be difficult to find a girlfriend (or boyfriend) or get married because people would think that freelancers do not have a “secure job”.

Fast forward to 2020, the world has changed upside down.

The people who took pride in having “real jobs” are now searching online on how to become a freelancer (and you could be one of them). The so-called “real jobs” are more insecure than ever.

The pandemic of 2020 has revealed the harsh truth to all of us – the government will not take care of us, nor the company that we spent years working for. Friends and extended family can give us moral support, but they can’t support us financially.

You have to take care of yourself and your immediate family.

The people who are managing to retain their jobs in corporations are feeling a lot of work pressure (esp. trying to work from home) and have stressful relationships with their bosses and co-workers. Many are asked to work for longer hours.

Many companies have also blamed the pandemic to cut salaries – sometimes as much as half. Senior-level jobs (esp managerial jobs) are easily replaceable with young (single) talent who do not demand much in terms of monetary benefits.

Now more than ever, people are turning to other sources of income (mostly from the internet). People want to earn while working from home – while staying close with their family and staying safe at home.

There are many ways to earn money apart from a full-time job, but many of the opportunities are not suitable for most people. Let’s first have a look at what you shouldn’t be doing before we talk about the different freelancing opportunities.

What I do not Recommend (to start with)

Here are some of the opportunities that make the headlines but are not suitable for certain reasons:

Social Media Influencer: Too much noise on social media. Being an Instagram or YouTube influencer is good for popularity and fame but not so much for a steady dependable source of income.

Blogging: Writing is a great way to build your personal brand. But writing is a path to build a company, a career, or starting up. Writing alone cannot bring in the money if you are writing for your own blog. Blogging is a content marketing method, not a money-making method.

Stock Market Trading: Don't be a fool to think you can game the markets and make money in the short term. The stock market is a way to hold money in the long term and get good returns. It's an investment option, not a money-making method. Certainly not a dependable one.

Becoming a Mentor/Trainer/Coach: Being a digital mentor can be extremely profitable, but no one can teach something to someone without doing it themselves. A lot of "fake gurus" have appeared in the market out of nowhere claiming to teach something that they have no experience in. They just read a book or do a course, and then jump into teaching directly. Such opportunities are short-lived and borderline scams. Digital Mentoring is a great opportunity but in the later stages of your career, not right now.

Book Publishing: Same as blogging. Great for personal branding. Not for making money through sales of books. Authors hardly make money from royalties.

Multi-Level-Marketing: Get out of here.

Starting up an Agency or a SaaS Company: You cannot startup and expect the market to buy your products right away. It's a journey from freelancing, to blogging and personal branding, to consulting, mentoring and eventually starting up. (Refer to the evolution of a personal brand: MassTrust Blueprint).

Why Should You Take Freelancing Seriously?

When you are moving from a full-time job to a freelancing career, the following things are probably what you are looking for:

- An additional source of income
- Income stability and multiple sources of income from multiple clients (get eventually get confidence to quit your job).

Some level of scalability (where you can have vendors and partners) and need not bottle-neck everything at your end.

- Creating a unique niche and market positioning for yourself so that you need not be afraid of the competition – and can get better at one thing over a period of time.
- Opportunity to work from home, save time on travel, spend more time with family, and stay safe at home.
- Have enough time to upskill yourself by learning new things.
- Ability to keep the income going while you take a sabbatical and also keep the opportunity open for a job you love to do (if it comes across).

You can eventually look into mentoring and starting up but you have to start with freelancing.

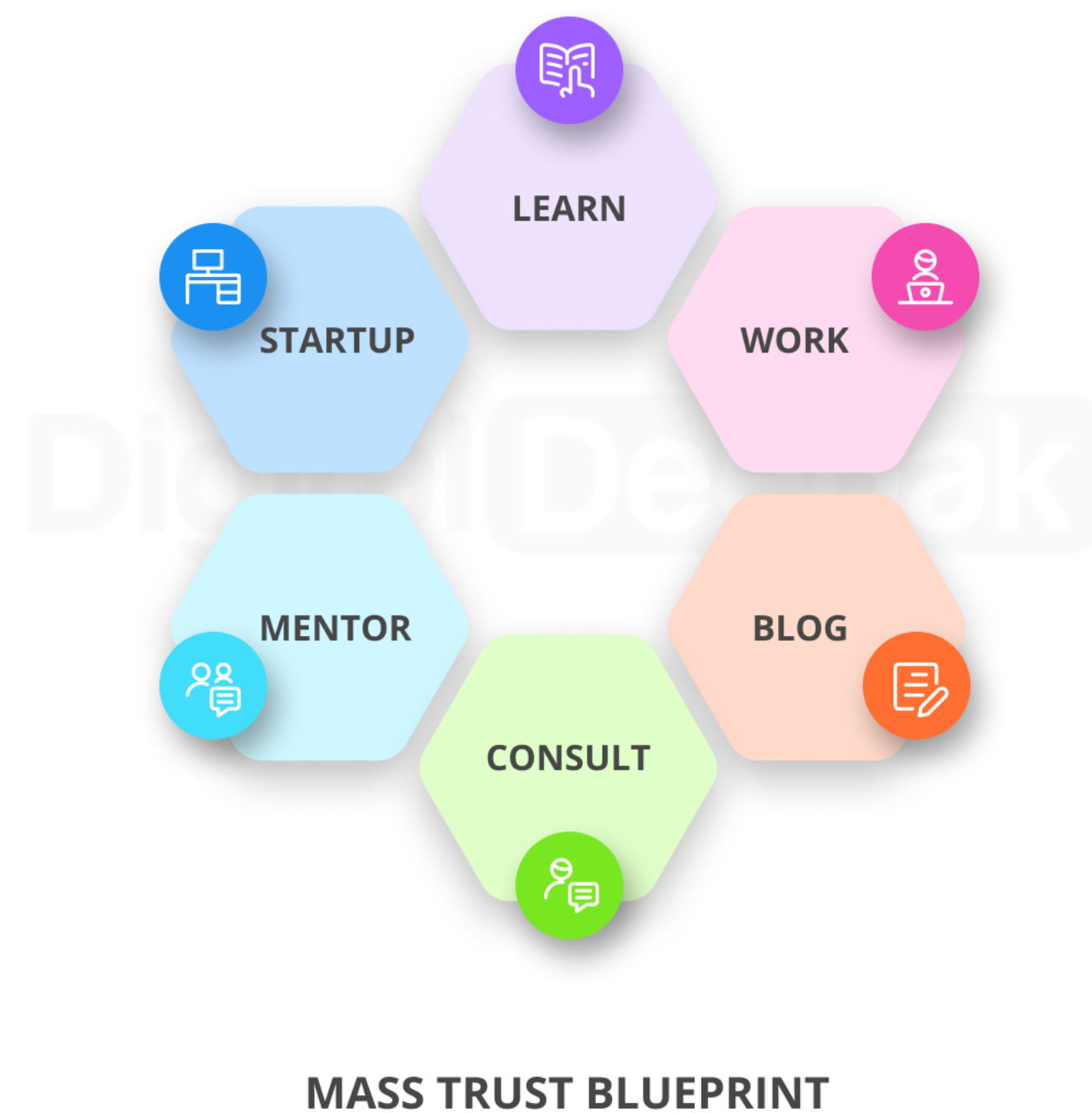
You will evolve as a professional and go through different stages. If you try to startup right out of a job, you will burn your fingers and then you will blame the market and external conditions for your failure.

Freelancing might not make you a millionaire, but it is the next step from a job. You will learn sales, how to handle clients, how to manage a team without putting too much money into risk. It's like a middle-ground between a job and a startup. And the best part is that you can get this started without quitting your job.

You can aim to make at least 30% of your salary as a freelancer, while you are in a job so that you are not dry when you quit your job. Do not make the mistake of burning your savings or borrowing money from friends, family, or a bank to start a business. A lot of people take

“thinking big” in the wrong way and crash before they can take off. You need a runway to take off. Your freelancing career will be your runway.

I created this blueprint for professionals.



It’s called the MassTrust blueprint, and this is how you build your personal brand.

Learn: A new skill.

Work: As an employee or as a freelancer

Blog: Build your personal brand through writing

Consult: Sell advice based on your experience

Mentor: Guide other people to follow your path

Startup: Build a startup from your experience

Now that we have set the context right about freelancing and why it is the right thing to do for you as a professional, let’s talk about the top 7 digital freelancing opportunities for 2020 that will help you get started with earning something on the side.

The Top 7 Digital Freelancing Opportunities

Based on a lot of research, I have identified the Top 7 opportunities you can pursue as a digital freelancer.

1

CONTENT WRITING & CONTENT CREATION



Writing is one of the oldest professions that there is. It has existed since the invention of written language. People used to write on clay tablets even before the paper and pen were invented.

Through writing, you can eventually become a blogger or an author (like me), but the best way to start your writing career is to write for others.

It is said that you need to write at least a million words before you can become a world-class writer. You need to get the bad words out of your system before the good words start flowing.

When you are just getting started, you might want to write ebooks for other publications to build your portfolio. You can also have your own blog and write a few ebooks so that you can showcase it to potential employers or clients who would want to hire you as a freelance writer.

When you get started and do not have a strong personal brand, you might not be able to earn much for every word you write. In India and other countries, the basic pay for a writer starts with around 2 cents per word. (Around 1.5 rupees). This might look very low in the beginning but that's how you start.

As you improve your writing skill, writing speed and your personal brand as a content writer, you can increase your charges.

Here are the different types of work you can do as a content writer.

Ghost Writing

When you start writing, people might expect you to write without attributing your name to it. This will pay well but might not help your personal brand.

Transcription

Convert audio and video files like podcasts and course videos into written content. This will also be ghostwriting. Doesn't pay much but there are plenty of opportunities.

Proofreading and Editing

This is a good way to improve your writing skills because you are reading other's work and are improving your knowledge of writing while helping someone else improve their content.

Copywriting

When you have enough experience and a personal brand as a writer, you can become a copywriter. You need to learn sales, consumer psychology, persuasion, and need to have a lot of life experience to become a good copywriter.

Experienced copywriters earn as much as 50 rupees per word in certain cases. If you write a 2000 word sales page that can bring in the sales for the client, you can earn as much as 1,00,000 rupees (Around \$1500) for such a piece of work.

If you learn SEO on top of content writing, you can become an SEO content writer and you can charge more because the client doesn't need to hire an SEO professional separately to optimize their content.

The best way to practice writing and become better at it is to start writing. Write on your own blog, write guest posts and do SEO for your own content. No one is going to certify you as a content writer, and no one is going to hire you based on your "qualifications". People are going to hire you as a freelancer based on your work and work alone. So get started writing.

Once you learn how to create text-based content, you can also try your hand in video content and charge for video creation. Infographics can also be an opportunity.

(In my digital marketing internship program, there is a week dedicated to content writing and my interns also do a content writing assignment to improve their skills).

There are plenty of ways to bid on writing projects and get clients but talking about them is beyond the scope of this ebook. I am going to publish a follow-up ebook where I will talk about how to get clients as a freelancer.

2

TRAFFIC GENERATION



The biggest challenge that businesses face is the lack of traffic to their websites. Traffic solves a lot of problems for businesses. You cannot generate leads without traffic. You cannot generate ad revenue without traffic. You cannot build a brand without traffic. And you cannot build an email list without traffic.

There is no business in the world that would say that I do not want traffic. Everyone needs more traffic. They want high traffic.

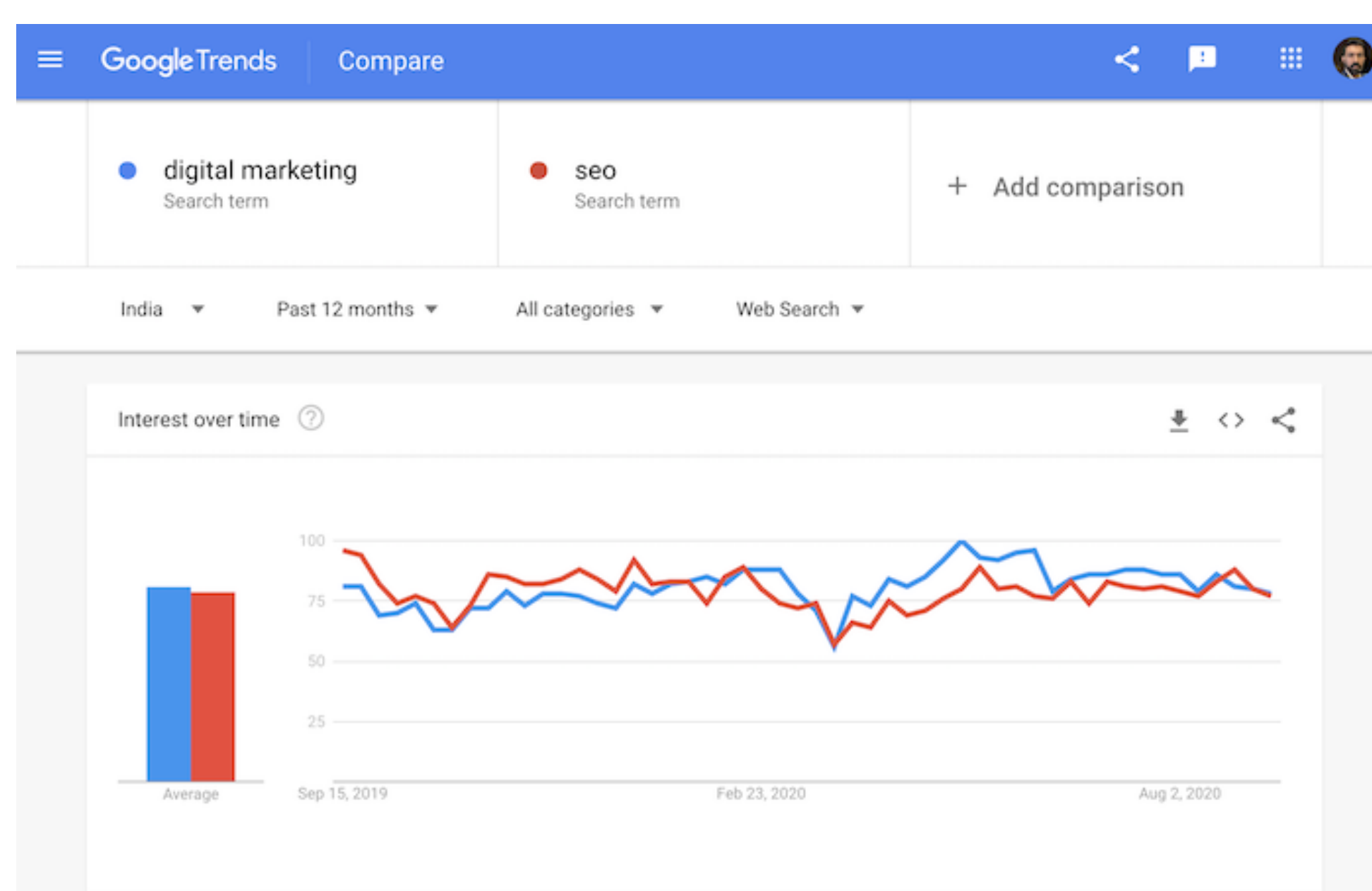
As a digital freelancer, you can help businesses get more traffic to their websites.

Here are the different areas you can focus on:

SEO:

Every business wants to get free traffic. They want to rank for keywords that their customers are searching for. Most of the websites out there are not optimized for search engines and could use the help of an SEO expert to fix their search traffic.

SEO is one of the highest in-demand skills according to Google Trends – almost as much as Digital Marketing itself. If you can combine your SEO skills with content skills, you become even more valuable.



Social Media Marketing:

Businesses want branding and engagement with a community along with traffic.

Every business wants a social presence. Social Media marketing has become harder over time with more brands being active on social media and creating a lot of noise.

A freelancer that can help companies have a social presence is more needed than ever. Within social media, you can develop expertise in a few platforms and help your clients with a social media strategy.

Paid Advertising (Performance Marketer):

Businesses spend millions of dollars on Facebook Ads and Google Ads. Many freelancers and agencies charge 10-20% of the ad spend to manage campaigns on a platform. This involves ad copywriting, creation of ad images, setting up the campaigns, managing the campaigns, and optimizing them for maximum ROI. People who are good at managing paid campaigns are called performance marketers. The most important skill here is targeting the right audience, communicating the right message (using copywriting), and getting high-quality scalable traffic at a low cost.

Digital PR:

Lots of businesses go crazy about getting mentioned in reputed publications, getting interviewed, and getting featured in well-known media channels (including online channels). It is usually very difficult for the company to get inbound requests. Digital PR professionals can help companies in getting their names out.

The best way to learn how to drive traffic is to have a blog of your own and try all the different methods. That’s why in my Digital Marketing Internship program my interns start their learning process by creating their own blog.

You can refer to my HighTraffic Blueprint which is a methodology I have developed for driving traffic through various methods by placing content at the heart of everything.



3

LEAD GENERATION



After traffic, every business wants leads. Billion-dollar companies have been built on top of a lead generation model.

As a freelancer, you can do research and generate B2B leads for your clients. You can charge for every lead generated or based on conversions.

Once the leads are generated, most businesses do not follow up with the leads. Starting with lead generation, you can offer the following services to your clients:

Lead Magnets:

You can create lead magnets for your clients so that the lead generation process becomes easy. You can put your content creation skills into use. Build lead magnets. Create landing pages for your clients. And then drive paid traffic to the landing pages to generate leads.

I have mentioned the different skills for freelancing in an order where you can stack one on top of the other. If you know how to create content, you can drive traffic to it. If you know how to drive traffic, then you can generate leads. If you have multiple skills as a freelancer, then you can charge your clients more with integrated solutions.

Lead Nurturing (Email & Marketing Automation):

Most of the businesses that generate a lot of leads ignore them. The leads become cold. And the investment in lead generation goes to waste. If you are generating leads for a business, you might as well help them nurture the leads through follow up messages.

This is where marketing automation comes into play. You need to learn marketing automation before you can do this for your clients.

Marketing automation is one of the best skills you can learn – because without automation and lead follow up, you cannot convert cold leads into warm leads. And without warm leads, you cannot get sales. And without sales, you cannot generate enough profits to invest back into content creation and driving traffic.

They say that it is 10 times easier to sell to an existing customer than to a new customer. You can also build nurturing sequences for existing customers for your clients.

With advanced marketing automation, you can also customize the messages that you are sending to each segment of the audience. I call this Deep Marketing. Talking about deep marketing is beyond the scope of this ebook. Topic for another day.

Lead nurturing is important for both B2C and B2B businesses.

If you want to learn more about lead generation, check out my YouTube Channel.

4

SALES AS A SERVICE



Content is of no use if you cannot drive traffic to it. Traffic is of no use if you cannot capture it and convert the traffic into leads. Leads are of no use if you cannot convert them into sales. Without sales, you will not make enough money to reinvest back into content creation, or traffic generation, or lead management. Sales close the cycle.

Most of the businesses have a very poor sales system. They have random salespeople – literally pleading the leads to buy. Sales when not executed properly can affect the brand of the company.

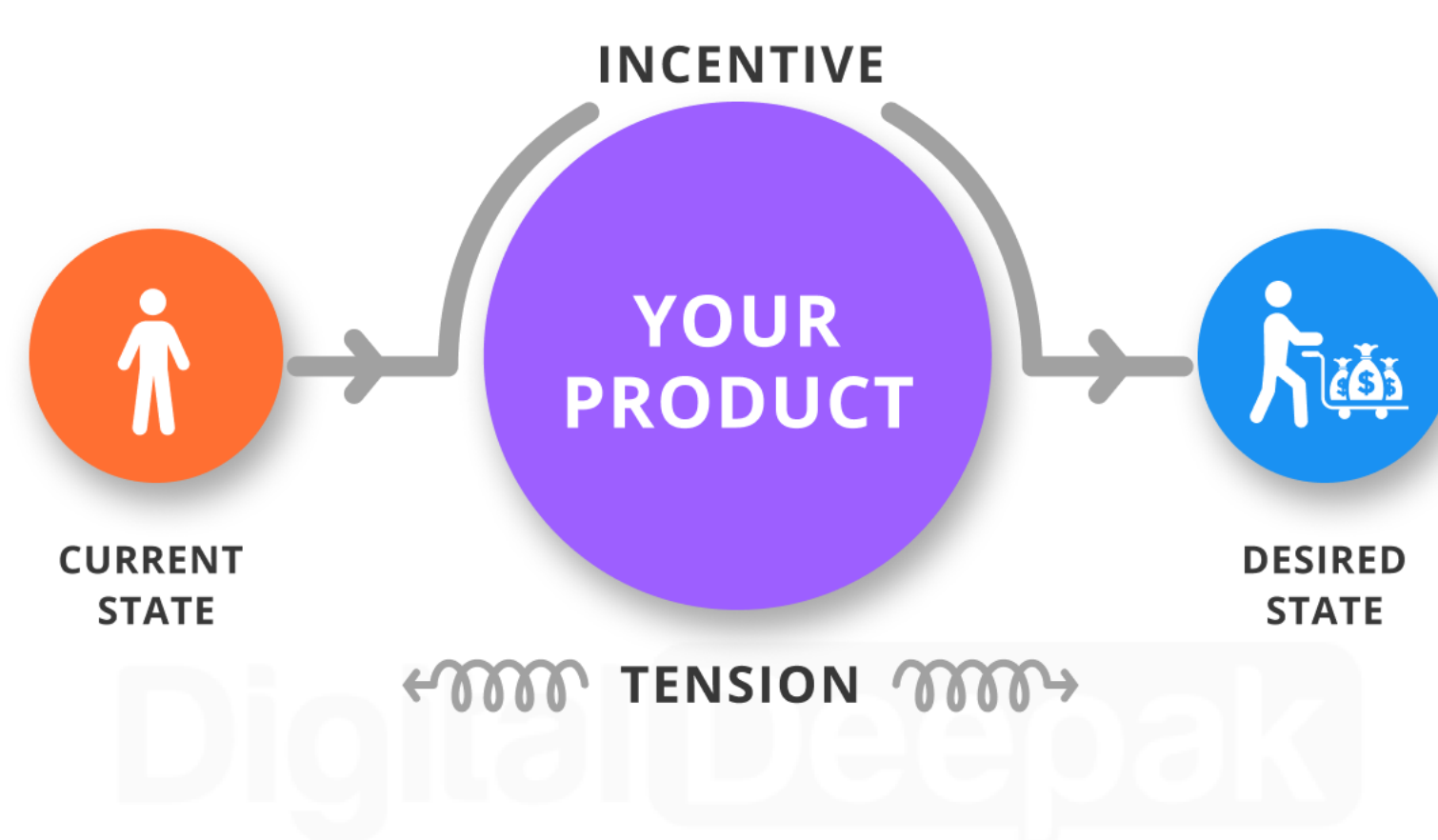
You can offer sales as a service and earn a commission based on sales. You can also be an affiliate where you are earning on the sales of other's products and services.

You can sell via Email, Blogposts, Videos, Webinars, 121 Sales calls, or even 121 sales meetings offline.

If you understand the needs of your customers (or the business' customers) clearly and if you have converted the cold leads into warm leads, you should be able to sell without being salesy.

Sales is focused on conversions and is a part of marketing. Marketing as a whole involves understanding the customers, getting the product-market fit right, branding and conversions.

I have developed a blueprint called the Natural Sales Blueprint which helps you learn how to sell effortlessly. I will explain this in-depth in another ebook.



NATURAL SALES BLUEPRINT

5

WORDPRESS AND WEBSITE CREATION



More than 70% of the internet is on the WordPress platform. Many businesses have out-dated static HTML websites that are not dynamic.

If you master WordPress, it is a skill that can be monetized easily. In my Internship Program Week 4, all my interns build their own WordPress blogs as part of the assignment that I give them.

WordPress includes the following benefits:

- WordPress is open source and free to use
- You can modify it according to your requirements
- Ready-made plugins help you enhance the functionality of your site. (This includes SEO, Images, Analytics, and so on).
- Ready-made free and premium themes help you to get very professional designs without having to design and develop from scratch.
- You can add multiple users and assign different roles such as Author, Editor, Admin etc.
- Most of the hosting companies in the world support WordPress hosting and even manage it.
- WordPress is constantly evolving and can be updated with a click of a button.

When you start learning WordPress, hosting, domains, DNS, and so on, it can become a bit technical. But at the same time, tech talent is scarce compared to people who can write content.

Even if you want to become a WordPress expert, I would still recommend that you start with content writing, traffic generation, marketing automation, and sales. These skills will not only help you to get results for your clients but also would help you to grow your own brand and sell your services to clients.

Sales, marketing, and branding are the golden links in the chain to wealth. Learning these skills is non-negotiable. Everyone needs to learn them.

You can charge as much as \$1,500 (1 lakh rupees) for complete website setup. There are a lot of people who might be providing cheap services, but if you know how to brand yourself and sell then you can charge a premium.

You can offer site speed optimization, CDN (content distribution network) deployment, analytics, daily backup, and security monitoring as additional services.

You can learn design and UI/UX as a skill to add on top of your website creation skills to go to the next level. Which brings us to the next skill.

6

GRAPHIC DESIGNING



Once people have their website up and running, they also want to make it look good.

If you learn graphic design, then you can offer premium services on top of all the services that we have mentioned above.

Here are the design-related services you can offer:

Logo & Identity Design:

Not everyone can be a logo designer. If you feel you have a knack for design then you can become a designer. However, if the concept of design is alien to you, you can hire a freelance designer and you can bundle your services along with website design and other services. Businesses also need business cards, letterheads and other assets designed.

Ad Banner Design:

If you are offering digital marketing services, it would help if you know how to design ad banners yourself. The efficiency of your digital marketing campaigns will depend on the CTR of the banners. A well-designed banner will have a better CTR.

If you can't then you can hire a banner designer to work with you. (This is where you will start learning to work as a team while still being a freelancer).

Social Media & Content Assets:

Businesses need good graphics for social media. This includes cover page design, video thumbnails, infographics, memes, box packs, ebook cover pages, and a lot more.

Website design and landing page design:

The visitor to lead conversion ratio and the leads to sales conversion ratio depends on good design. If the design offers a premium feel, then the conversions will be higher. Website design and landing page design is an important requirement for many businesses (though not everyone realizes it). Good design sets you apart from the competition. The world's most valuable company was built on great design.

UI / UX:

Have you ever tried to book a ticket in IRCTC? That's an example of a bad UI (user interface) and a bad user experience (UX).

Plenty of websites, especially the functional ones need UI / UX help. This is an advanced skill and not recommended if you are just starting out. I would recommend Ui / UX as a specialization.

7

CODING



Coding, without a doubt, is one of the highest-paid skills in freelancing. Coding is not easy to learn (I do not know coding myself).

If you can learn to code, then here are the different services you can offer as a coder:

Website Coding:

WordPress, though it offers a lot of features, often needs customization. You can customize WordPress websites for your clients at a premium. You can also build HTML websites by coding it directly – or using a tool.

Mobile App Development:

Almost every business out there in the world can benefit from a mobile app. If you learn how to develop apps on iOS and Android, you will be able to earn a lot as a freelancer. I have spent as much as \$5000 in app development. Smartphone penetration is already at a all time high and it will only go up as 5G becomes the norm.

Software Development:

If you can build web apps or software, then this is a very highly paid skill. I have spent upwards of \$25,000 in developing a web-app for my business, OptinChat.com.

But before you spend years learning how to code and become a programmer, I would recommend that you learn how to write, how to build your personal brand, and basic digital marketing.

Just remember, one of the world's richest men, Bill Gates, is a coder at heart.

Other Freelancing Opportunities

Based on my research, I have mentioned the top 7 digital freelancing opportunities that anyone can get into, starting with the basic going all the way up to advanced skills.

Here are some of the other freelancing opportunities that came up in my research that did not make it to the top 7, but can still be great niche areas if you think you have an inclination towards it.

- Business Strategy and Consulting
- Virtual Assistant
- Resume makeover and career guidance
- Voice-over services
- Accounting and Finance
- Cybersecurity
- HR & Recruitment Consulting
- Video editing and production
- Data science
- Business process & workflow automation
- Competitive analysis
- Market Research

I hope this ebook has opened your eyes to the world of digital freelancing.

There is a long way to go before you can become a successful digital freelancer, but I hope this ebook has given you the right direction to start moving and take the first step towards freedom.

I will be writing a lot more on the topic of digital freelancing in the coming weeks.

If you liked the ebook, please mail your feedback to mail@digitaldeepak.com or tweet with the tag @highdeepak.

[This ebook has been written in collaboration with a live audience from the Batch 4 & 5 of my Internship Program. Credits: Raman Sharma, Himasha Raichura, SVN Prasad, Chetan Ranganath, Aashita Hetamsaria, Divya Subramanian, Kritika Agarwal, Suraj Jaiswal, Hitesh Bodhe, Diksha Sachan, Debasish Sahoo, Pradeep Devaraj, Maher Khan, Karthik Tatikonda, Jayant Kumar Padhi, Joseph Vinodh Kumar, Ramanand Lal, Ishan Bhaskarwar, Preethi S].