

Transcript from the Freelance Friday #EFAChat, May 23, 2014

Topic: Learning Curve of Starting Your Business

EFA International @efafreelancers

We're about to (at 3 p.m. ET) start our monthly #EFAChat. Today's is about learning curve of starting a business.

EFA International @efafreelancers

Let's introduce ourselves. What's your name, and what do you do? #EFAChat

Eve Levavi Feinstein @evefeinstein

.@EFAFreelancers Editor and proofreader, Palo Alto, CA. Popping in during a quick lunch break. #EFAChat

Stephanie Watt @wattsteph

#EFAChat Hello! I'm Stephanie, and I'm a freelance editor and indexer.

RosemiM

Hi. I'm Rosemi, a book editor in Miami #EFAChat

Liz Hunter @humbieditorial

@EFAFreelancers Hello from not so sunny Scotland. #EFAChat

JenMededit

raises hand Jennifer Holmes, a freelance editor in Texas. I've been doing this a while, but I'm always learning something new. #EFAChat

AplusEditHer

Susan Garcia in Las Vegas, freelance editor, finding things out by trial and error. :-
/ #EFAChat

Editrix ES

Hello! Erin Doherty, soon to be in Portland, copyeditor, focusing on nonprofit communications. #EFAChat

James M. Fraleigh @jamesfraleigh

Back from offsite job just in time! Freelance copy editor, proofreader & writer from northern NJ. Deadlines are my lifeline! #efachat

AdenNichols

Greetings from Virginia! I'm Aden Nichols, freewheelin' independent editor in Charlottesville with a penchant for history. #efachat

AnneKetchen

#EFAChat I'm Anne Ketchen, freelance editor for 19 years, specializing in the training industry, esp pharmaceutical.

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Q2: To start a small business, what should editors or writers do first? [#EFAChat](#)

RosemiM

A2: Decide what type of company they want to be (LLC, S Corp, etc.)
[#EFAchat](#)

James M. Fraleigh @jamesfraleigh

A2 Determine how much they'll need to earn to support the lifestyle and savings goals they have or want. Set a budget. [#efachat](#)

AdenNichols

A2: Draft a business plan. A real, honest-to-goodness business plan! [#efachat](#)

Liz Hunter @humbieditorial

[@EFAFreelancers](#) A2: Network - meet other freelancers, virtually or in person. Everyone so helpful on various forums, Twitter etc. [#EFAChat](#)

Editrix ES

A2: Ask other, more experienced editors what they did/what they wish they'd done. [#EFAChat](#)

James M. Fraleigh @jamesfraleigh

A2 Health insurance: Will you buy your own plan, join a spouse's plan, go COBRA, etc.? [#efachat](#)

Liz Hunter @humbieditorial

[@EFAFreelancers](#) A2: Read [@judyheminsley](#)'s Work from Home. Lots of good advice! [#EFAChat](#)

TootSweetSu

A2 [#EFAChat](#) Start networking! Go to a writers conference or just ask ppl you know what they are writing about. (*joining from Sacramento*)

JenMededit

A2: Good article on the business side of freelancing:[copyediting.com/five-ways-beco...](#) [#EFAChat](#)

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Q3: What are other crucial steps to take when starting out? [#EFAChat](#)

Editrix ES

Q3: Connecting with various editing communities has been crucial for me, esp. as someone w/o publishing house exp. [#EFAChat](#)

James M. Fraleigh @jamesfraleigh

A3 Determine realistically how many hours you can work/week given current nonwork responsibilities, courses you will take, etc. [#efachat](#)

RosemiM

A3: Stay lean. Make every dollar spent count. [#EFAchat](#)

[EveFeinstein](#)

A2/3: Web presence is really important. Website, LinkedIn, etc. And have a good system set up for tracking jobs and \$. [#EFAChat](#)

[TootSweetSu](#)

A3 [#EFAChat](#) put together a portfolio/list of all editing-ish work you've done before whether for in-house job or volunteer

[wattsteph](#)

[#EFAChat](#). A3: I took university courses in editing and proofreading and joined a professional association.

[RosemiM](#)

A3: Set time aside to market and promote, even when work is flowing.

[#EFAchat](#)

[EFA International](#) @efafreelancers

Q4: What, if anything, have you had to outsource? [#EFAChat](#)

[Liz Hunter](#) @humbieditorial

[@EFAFreelancers](#) A4 Photographs, but only as far as my husband! [#EFAChat](#)

[EveFeinstein](#)

A4: Just outsourced proofreading my own book because I was too busy with freelance work :-). [#EFAChat](#)

[RosemiM](#)

A4: Design work (web site & book covers) and some proofreading. [#EFAchat](#)

[RosemiM](#)

A4: I'd like to outsource social media updates, but I worry about typos and improper grammar! [#EFAchat](#)

[Editrix ES](#)

Q4: Legal citations. Not my area of expertise, SO worth it to outsource to a legal editor! [#EFAchat](#)

[denisewolber](#)

[#EFAChat](#) Q5: What is the best way to find new clients?

[RosemiM](#)

A5: The EFA! Many clients first contact me after viewing my EFA profile. [#EFAchat](#)

[James M. Fraleigh](#) @jamesfraleigh

A5 The EFA's job board has been hugely helpful for me, esp. early in my career. [#efachat](#)

[Editrix ES](#)

[@jamesfraleigh](#) EFA job board hasn't panned out for me yet, but the email list has been helpful and interesting. [#EFAChat](#)

[EveFeinstein](#)

Q5: Everyone I know (including me) says most work comes through personal contacts and their contacts. @[denisewolber](#) #EFAChat

[EveFeinstein](#)

Q5: My other jobs have come through EFA (job list & profile). @[denisewolber](#) #EFAChat

[EFA International](#) @efafreelancers

A1: Hi, Denise! The EFA tweeter picks the questions ahead of time. Your question can be answered another month. #EFAChat

[EFA International](#) @efafreelancers

Q5: What has come the easiest for you, as a freelancer? #EFAChat

[RosemiM](#)

A5: The editing. *grin*
[#EFAchat](#)

[James M. Fraleigh](#) @jamesfraleigh

A5 Adapting to not having coworkers. Working alone. [#efachat](#)

[Liz Hunter](#) @humbieditorial

@EFAFreelancers Q5: Motivation. #EFAChat

[RosemiM](#)

A5: Managing my time, staying focused. It's in our editorial nature, perhaps. [#EFAchat](#)

[Editrix ES](#)

Q5: Besides the actual work of editing, creating my website. Love to futz around with things like that. [#EFAChat](#)

[wattsteph](#)

[#EFAChat](#) A5: Learning new skills ([#PD](#)), working alone, volunteering with professional organizations.

[JenMededit](#)

A5 Not always the easiest, but the best part of having my own business is being able to schedule work around my family's schedule. [#EFAChat](#)

[EFA International](#) @efafreelancers

Q6: What's been the hardest part of starting a business, as a freelancer? #EFAChat

[Editrix ES](#)

A6: Having no publishing house experience combined with living in a small town where there are no presses. Oof. [#EFAChat](#)

[AdenNichols](#)

A6: The business chores and marketing/networking. [#efachat](#)

James M. Fraleigh @jamesfraleigh

A6 Networking. Many back-of-house publishing jobs have no networking component, so I had to develop it on my own when full time. [#efachat](#)

Liz Hunter @humbieditorial

@EFAFreelancers A6: Getting off Twitter, lengthy blog posts, helpful forums and so I can do some work. We are all so word oriented ...[#EFACHat](#)

AdenNichols

A6: @humbieditorial: Agreed. Limiting social media to biz (mostly).
[#efachat](#)

RosemiM

A6: Defining the business niche/specialization. I didn't do that early enough. [#EFAchat](#)

Editrix ES

@RosemiM That's a tricky one! Defining a niche when you might still be exploring or wanting to build exp. in other areas. [#EFACHat](#)

humbieditorial

@Editrix_ES @RosemiM And when you have to take the work offered rather than what you might want. Difficult to turn work down. [#EFACHat](#)

CHICAGO STYLE HULK @manualofhulk

@humbieditorial @Editrix_ES @RosemiM HULK RELATE—HULK SOMETIMES HAVE TO REMIND HULK THAT HULK MORTGAGE NOT GOING TO PAY ITSELF. [#EFACHAT](#)

wattsteph

A6: Networking. And finding ways of approaching new (dream) clients. [#EFACHat](#)

AplusEditHer

A6: Balancing being an introvert with marketing my services. [#EFAchat](#)

Anne Ketchen @anneketchen

@EFAFreelancers A6: Dealing with feast or famine aspect of freelancing.

EFA International @efafreelancers

Q7: What did you learn about running your own business that was most surprising? [#EFACHat](#)

RosemiM

A7: I never want to stop working. I thought I'd be giving myself 4-day weekends by now. [#EFAchat](#)

Aden Nichols @adennichols

A7: @RosemiM, yep, but that didn't come as a surprise! [#efachat](#)

denisewolber

[#EFACHat](#) @RosemiM I have the same problem lately. It's hard to separate my work and personal life working from home.

James M. Fraleigh @jamesfraleigh

A7 That it would be sustainable. I started in 12/08 amid the recession; after 2 growing years, it began to take off. [#efachat](#)

Liz Hunter @humbieditorial

@EFAFreelancers A7 That it is not a hobby. [#EFACHat](#)

CHICAGO STYLE HULK @manualofhulk

@EFAFreelancers WHEN BUSINESS = HULK, HULK NOT HAVE SAME HEALTHCARE LEVERAGE THAT BIG COMPANIES DO. IT HARD TO GET FAIR SHAKE. [#EFACHAT](#)

EFA International @efafreelancers

Q8: What is an optional step freelancers can postpone for a while? [#EFACHat](#)

AplusEditHer

A8: Ummm, eating? *grin* [#EFAchat](#)

Liz Hunter @humbieditorial

@EFAFreelancers Dusting! [#EFACHat](#)

AdenNichols

Q8: Going LLC. [#efachat](#)

EFAFreelancers

A8: Yes, @AdenNichols, well-written contract can largely take place of LLC. [#EFACHat](#)

James M. Fraleigh @jamesfraleigh

A8 A full social network calendar. You don't need to do a blog, tweet & FB all out of the gate. Choose a medium when comfortable. [#efachat](#)

RosemiM

A8: For new businesses, hold off on new equipment, gadgets, and furniture. You want it, but you don't need it (computer aside). [#EFAchat](#)

Amber Wingfield @awingfieldsvcs

A8: But pretty pens and fun folders are ok to buy! @RosemiM [#EFACHat](#)

James M. Fraleigh @jamesfraleigh

A8 @RosemiM And style guides! I bought one book in a binge that I've used maybe 2x in 5 yrs. [#efachat](#)

Wattsteph

A8: I agree with @AdenNichols. LLC can wait. So can a fancy website & a blog. Editorial blogging will come with experience. [#EFACHat](#)

RosemiM

A8: You'll get all sorts of offers once you set up a business account. Ignore them for a while. [#EFAchat](#)

[Editrix ES](#)

A8: paying for a logo or fancy website. It can wait til you have a little income & there are many great, prof. templates for sites. [#EFAChat](#)

[EFA International](#) @efafreelancers

Q9: What business websites, books, magazines or blogs have you found most helpful? [#EFAChat](#)

[AplusEditHer](#)

A9: Katharine O'Moore-Klop of KOK Edit has been very helpful. [#EFAchat](#)

[RosemiM](#)

A9: 'Publishing for Profit' by Thomas Woll [#EFAchat](#)

[EFA International](#) @efafreelancers

Q9: What was that book good for, [@RosemiM](#)? [#EFAChat](#)

[RosemiM](#)

A9: Anyone who wants to set up a publishing company. But it could also be helpful to understand the publishing biz, what your authors go through and how publishing companies think [#EFAchat](#)

[AdenNichols](#)

A9 I like Rich Adin's "An American Editor" blog--focus on the business of freelancing. [#efachat](#)

[wattsteph](#)

[#EFAChat](#) A9: [@LouiseHarnby](#)'s books and blog. [@sciEditor](#)'s blog and podcasts. Business sites? [@freelancersu](#) offers great tips.

[Kimberly Nugent](#) @blueteaediting

[@EFAFreelancers](#) A9: I like "How to Start a Home-based Editorial Services Business" for the basics [#EFAChat](#)

[James M. Fraleigh](#) @jamesfraleigh

A9 My So-Called Freelance Life by Michelle Goodman ([@anti9to5guide](#)). Got it 2 weeks before my layoff & was priceless. [#efachat](#)

[Editrix ES](#)

A9: I enjoy [@ChicagoManual](#) online Q&A; it's helpful and I really enjoy it when they get a little snarky. [#EFAChat](#)

[BlueTeaEditing](#)

[@Editrix ES](#) [@ChicagoManual](#) Agreed! Can't beat CMS and the online site! [#EFAChat](#)

[EFA International](#) @efafreelancers

A9: [@FreelanceFolder](#) is also helpful. [#EFAChat](#)

[RosemiM](#)

A9: 'The Barefoot Executive' by Carrie Wilkerson was motivating & she offers generic biz advice. She has a YouTube channel, I think [#EFAChat](#)

EFA International @efafreelancers

Q10: What would you do differently if you were to do it again? [#EFAChat](#)

Kimberly Nugent @blueteaediting

@EFAFreelancers A10: Jumped in sooner! But sometimes it's scary to follow your dreams! [#EFAChat](#)

James M. Fraleigh @jamesfraleigh

A10 Do it 10 years earlier! [#efachat](#)

AplusEditHer

A10 Build up a client base BEFORE quitting my full-time job. [#EFAchat](#)

Editrix ES

.@AplusEditHer Yes! That presents its own challenges, tho. I'm currently working 60+hrs/week. [#EFAChat](#)

RosemiM

A10: I'd hire an assistant sooner. By the time I did, I was almost too busy to teach her how I liked things done. [#EFAchat](#)

Stephanie Watt @wattsteph

@rosemim A10: That's excellent advice! [#EFAChat](#)

EFA International @efafreelancers

A10: Inspiring words, @RosemiM! [#EFAChat](#)

Editrix ES

Q10: All my answers to this require access to a TARDIS. [#EFAChat](#)

AdenNichols

A10: More float in the bank. [#efachat](#)

AWingfieldSvcs

A10: Have more confidence! [#EFAchat](#)

jamesfraleigh

A10 in 1998 I was still part-time freelancing amid full-time production editing. Good time to dive in [#2020Hindsight#efachat](#)

jamesfraleigh

RT @humbieditorial @EFAFreelancers A10: Remember weekends/days off and what you are actually working for. [#EFAChat](#)

Editrix @editrix_es

@humbieditorial @EFAFreelancers Wise words. Burning out doesn't help anyone. [#EFAChat](#)

[wattsteph](#)

A10: Gain editing and indexing experience in fields I love: food and geography. Why wait? [#EFAChat](#)

[RosemiM](#)

A10: I'd charge more from the get go. I wasted time working on lower paying jobs rather than seeking out higher paying clients. [#EFAchat](#)

[EFA International](#) @efafreelancers

Q11: What topic would you like to discuss on a future [#EFAChat](#)? We've already got building website, how to find clients on list.

[Amber Wingfield](#) @awingfieldsvcs

A 11: Working vacations/networking while on vacation [@EFAFreelancers](#)

[AdenNichols](#)

Q11: Fave tools of the trade (esp. digital ones). Contracts. [#efachat](#)

[James M. Fraleigh](#) @jamesfraleigh

Q11 Financial side of the business? Budgeting, saving enough for taxes & retirement, implications of various business types, etc.? [#efachat](#)

[AplusEditHer](#)

@[jamesfraleigh](#) what you said plus how to collect from clients. [#EFAchat](#)

[Jennifer Holmes](#) @jenmededit

@[EFAFreelancers](#) A11: With a quarterly tax payment due date coming up, how about tax tips for freelancers?[#EFAChat](#)

[RosemiM](#)

A11: I'm always up for technology chats. [#EFAchat](#)

[Kimberly Nugent](#) @blueteaediting

@[EFAFreelancers](#) A11: This might have been covered before, but perhaps the balance between life and work while freelancing. [#EFAChat](#)

[RosemiM](#)

A11: Our future clients. The young generation will be needing editors soon; how do we edit them without seeming stodgy? [#EFAchat](#)