

How to Get Illustration Clients



A concise blueprint for quickly
and effectively winning paid work
for your illustrations.

By Alex Mathers

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Introduction

Welcome aboard!

Do you think there is a healthy future in illustration for independent illustrators?

Despite the hype, the negativity and the fear, opportunities in the world of illustration exist, and they will continue to exist in abundance.

Entrepreneurialism, content sharing, media production, and the demand for unique visual imagery, from individuals to corporations, is on the up. You only need to do a web search on the growing importance of visuals to see that this is all a reality.

If the massive growth of the Internet was our only indicator of such change, we'd come to see the burgeoning opportunities that are multiplying each day.

It is forecast that 1.6 billion additional people will have access to the net by 2020 (as of writing the figure of people with access is 3 billion - source gsma.com).

With such growth comes a larger market with access to not only the web, but to all the products, applications, web pages and visual material that help keep people engaged.

A lot of people say that the illustration market is contracting. This may be true in certain markets, but overall, the sense is that the opposite is happening.

Even the world of magazines is seeing growth. In North America, more new magazines were launched than were closed in 2011, for the second year in a row (Economist, 2012). And this is just one small subset of the market.

This is not even to mention the opportunities that exist for selling products featuring your artwork to a hungry online market with ever-expanding wallets.

It might feel like opportunities are decreasing for some of you. The fact is, only a few illustrators are truly good at marketing and selling their work or they have good agents to do this for them.

And marketing yourself properly makes a big difference.

It is either them, a few 'celebrity' illustrators, or the severely underpriced, that are landing the jobs.

It's time for all of us to get educated on the process of winning work with dream clients effectively.

Let's start by clarifying some key words...

What exactly is a 'client'?

Unlike a 'customer', which is someone who buys a product, a client - at least in the way I explain it here - is someone who pays for a service completed for them.



Client



Customer

As an illustrator, you can have customers for your physical products like prints, but this guide is about helping you get paid for your work - your illustration as service - billable by hour or completed project.

Both 'clients' and 'customers' have the potential to repeat-buy from you over the long term should they stand to gain from your value consistently.

You might choose to focus on your own illustration products as your main source of income. But this guide is for those who are looking to provide illustration as a service for those that commission it.

Many of us have an excellent body of illustration work and a great level of skill. It is assumed that you have a good illustration portfolio in reading this already.

Here's where people struggle: **we are not putting ourselves in front of the right people long enough, and effectively enough in order to win work with them.** That's the deal. And this is the issue I want to solve with this guide.

I've worked as a freelance illustrator for over nine years and worked as a coach and consultant with several illustrators over many months to great success.

I now want to show you what works, not because I made it up, but because I've seen first hand what works.

The biggest thing separating anyone from getting what they want in career and business is not doing enough to convert potentials and prospects into actual buyers.

What is this guide about?

This is a how-to manual on landing the best illustration clients and projects consistently. I tell you what to do from start to finish.

Not only that, I will show you how to generate new work quickly, if you're really struggling.

I know you're busy. I know you're dying to spend more time getting back into sketching and cranking out beautiful illustrations. But hang in here.

Your illustration career will stagnate if you don't cultivate some knowledge and enthusiasm for bringing the right people into your world and bringing attention to your name as a brand.

Soon you will know exactly what to do to make it big in the world of illustration and make a very good living from those skills.

You've made the right decision to grab this guide if you want to work with great clients, but don't have the patience to wade through thousands of pages of information or listen to someone talk about it for hours.

I've purposely made this guide as simple, and as based in reality, as it can be.

My guess is that you are sick of the lack of clarity and the conflicting information out there. So the mission of this guide is take all the good stuff of what I've learned, and solve this problem through giving it to you straight.

The process I'm about to reveal to you can be followed step-by-step and I absolutely promise you that you will bring in a lot of great projects if you follow along and do the work.

At the very bare minimum, read and take action on Part 2.

Many books tell you that you won't see results without taking action. This applies to this guide, but you need to be prepared to do more.

I don't do things in a weak, half-hearted way.

And I expect you to be equally bold when you do what I recommend here.

This book simplifies the process so that you do not waste your time, but for most of you, this guide will not reduce the amount of work you normally put into marketing.

In fact, it will increase it for most. But that's ok, because when you're finished, you will know exactly what to do, and what will work.

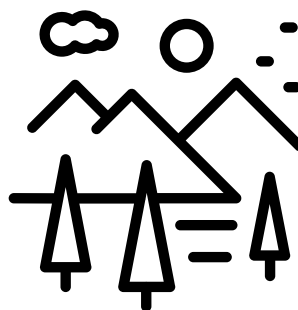
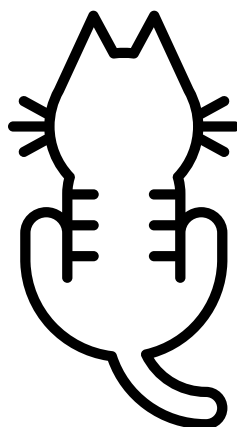
From here all you need to do is take action.

I will tell you this: it's a great feeling to know what you want, to know how to get it, and to actually be paid for your own actions.

This guide will get you there. And I will show you how, each step of the way.

A little about me, before we dive in...

I've been making illustrations professionally since 2006, when I first started adding stock illustrations to the web to make a trickle of passive income. I'd add everything from pictures of cats to illustrations of mountains.



About a year into what was then my part-time illustration career, having struggled with not enough income on far too many occasions, I decided I'd had enough. I put everything into learning about how to best generate new clients.

I've absorbed hundreds of books on sales and marketing, made mistakes, gone through awful periods of financial suffering, and made some very big wins too.

I've now worked with many rewarding clients, from the BBC to Kraft to Google to Mars, and spoken to audiences in several countries, over a nine-year illustration career.

Through my experiences, as well as the insight I've gained as a consultant for many illustrators, I'm very confident this guide will turn your business around when you take the actions I suggest.

Now let's get to it.

Part 1 - Cover Your Bases

This part of the guide is about getting yourself ready to go out and do what you need to do to start winning client work.

Here we cover working out what you actually want, who you could be working with, and being in the best possible position before you start attracting great people and projects.

Decide on what you want

If you are muddy with what you want, that is what you will get: mud.

Being completely clear on what you want sounds pretty straight forward. And that's a reason why most people don't do it effectively. They take it for granted.

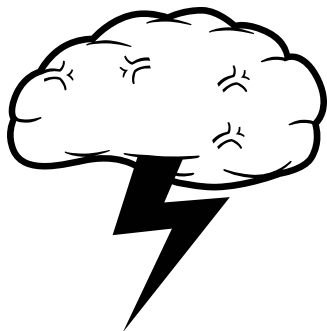
You must know exactly what you want your career, business and life to look like from this point forward.

Do a brainstorm

You want to do a brainstorm of the kinds of clients you want; what kinds of industries and markets you want to work in; what type of work you love to do; what companies or specific people you want to work with; what income you want from client work each month, and write it all down.

Who could your clients be?

Before you get brainstorming, it's important to have an idea of the kinds of people you could be getting illustration work from. This will clarify the direction of your strategy moving ahead.



We need to spend a little more focused time researching the kinds of people, projects, jobs, products, industries and businesses that might need you and pay you for what you create. I'm talking about you and your style of work specifically.

Where exactly are the illustration jobs?

Most of us have a limited idea of where the demand for illustration work actually comes from. For me anyway, my understanding of it was always limited to 'art directors', 'people with websites', 'children's book illustrators', and 'agents.'

The fact is, illustration requirements come from a whole host of different places and people working on different things. You can be employed full time as an illustrator (like I have been), and you can find client work on individual projects that last from hours to years.

The more you know about the spectrum of opportunity out there, the better equipped you will be to make a decision over the types of people you choose to focus your efforts towards.

Here are some examples of illustration jobs that are tied to certain prospects (potential clients) who could hire you:

- **Print:** children's books; invitations; posters; menus; book covers
- **Digital products:** apps, mobile games, icon sets, fonts
- **Everyday objects:** t-shirt designs; labels; greetings cards; stationery; tattoos
- **Live performance:** sketch-noting; murals and street art; caricature art
- **Teaching:** online courses; workshops; talks
- **Publishing:** infographics; self published books; graphic journalism; visual articles
- **Films and animation:** storyboards; opening sequence artwork; concept art; character design
- **Web design:** website illustrations and diagrams; illustrations for blogs and newsletters
- **Branding:** illustrated logos; package and label artwork

You get the picture, and this is only a piece of it (*more ideas are in the Resources Booklet*). Clearly there are many places and people who need your illustrations.

The job roles of people who hire illustrators are not restricted to art, design and creative directors, art buyers and designers.

Illustration requirements exist for company CEOs, marketing managers, founders, print designers, graphic designers (freelance and employed), independent authors, book cover designers, architects and design managers, as examples.

Write down everything you can find: company names, job roles of people who hire illustrators, industries, etc. We will be going a step further and finding the contact details of appropriate individuals a bit later.

Use the following to help come up with more ideas, and write those down too:

- The client lists of other illustrators via their websites.
- Directories like Agency Access, FileFX and BikiniLists.
- Job boards and freelancing sites like Behance and Upwork. Here you can see what kinds of people and businesses are requesting illustration work.
- Social media. Running searches can find people talking about, and sharing illustration work. You can also see who needs an illustrator.
- Illustration agencies - checking their updates on their illustrators can reveal some of the clients that have recently worked with their artists.
- Outsource research work to professionals.

Refer to the 'Resources Booklet' for a range of sources of this kind of information.

In each case, you need to make sure that the target market contains people and decision-makers who are willing and able to pay (and pay well) for your illustration work.

Some people may not, but you need to focus on a group that tips the likelihood of getting well paid work in your favour.

Overall, you want to find those people who lie at the intersection between:

- Those that can potentially pay the most;
- doing work you love to do;
- in a niche market sector or one that experiences low competition

Don't spend too much time initially on this, but just get a sense of what is out there first.

Once you have a big collection of various options for potential client work that you've written down, have a look over it, highlight the areas that interest you the most. This awareness will help in the next parts of this guide.

What you want should excite you. Go bigger rather than smaller. Write plenty of ideas down. Get it out of your brain and onto paper.

All of what you find in your brainstorm can inform what you decide to do from this point on.

Keep hold of your brainstorm list and add to it over time if you want. It will come in useful down the line, should you wish to rethink your strategy behind who you are targeting.

A note on domination

A lot of creatives, including illustrators, have what is called 'shiny object syndrome'.

This is that urge you get to want to try out new things and develop new skills whenever you see something cool that you like the look of. This seemingly innocent, emotionally-driven, very human tendency can and will disrupt the progression of your business.

This can lead to people who either jump from one thing to the next and never gain a solid level of skill in anything particular. Or it leads to a creative who presents themselves as a 'jack of all trades' offering a range of services and products that can confuse potential buyers, and leads to an un-memorable brand.

That's not to say that you cannot eventually offer a range of skills and it's not to say that you cannot work on developing your skills in other areas behind the scenes. Many successful creatives are multi-skilled and do very well in several areas. Being well known helps.

You just need to be careful about the way things are presented and divided, and the order in which you do things. **Make sure, early on, that you present your main skill before all else.**

Additional skills should be in the background or shared with the client on further enquiry.

You need to master one thing at a time before moving onto the next thing. Dominate an area of the market in something specialised (i.e. a single clear illustration style). Get really really good at your illustration style in a particular medium rather than spreading yourself thin.

Become well known for a specialisation, even specialising in a certain type of client if you can.

Competition will be non-existent if you have a clear style backed by an excellent service that specialises in a particular area of the market. Too often, people make it very hard on themselves by trying to do a range of things for a huge swathe of people.

For example: someone who does 3D illustration, logo design, vector illustration and graphic design all at once, and presents themselves as such.

It's much easier, and much more effective, to be well known for something in a corner of the market before moving on to the next shiny thing or expanding into other markets.

It's ok to do a range, just be careful about how you present yourself to prospects. Be known for one thing. Everything else you can do should be presented as an added bonus.

I don't want to go into more detail than by telling you it is better to aim for one end of the spectrum: your specific niche.

Forget 'aspiring' - a quick mindset shift

If you want to land great clients, you need to be seen as an accomplished professional. You are not an 'aspiring illustrator', a dabbling artist, or even a 'startup' (even if you are!).

Even if you've just set up shop, you are a pro, and your clients need to feel this from you. At no point should you describe or think of yourself as an amateur. You're either an illustrator or you're not, and actually more than that.

Prospects need to know that you know what you are doing and that you can really help them. But what if you're an illustrator for children, for example? Is it that important that people know that you know what you are doing? Publishers and agents do yes. If you want to sell children's books, your skills must go beyond making beautiful watercolours.

You need to understand what works to engage children. You need to be able to manage your schedule so that you can deliver work when you say you will.

You need to understand what others in the market are creating so that you can produce something different and outstanding.

People of all backgrounds in a massive range of fields are creating things of outstanding beauty and craftsmanship. Being simply great at illustration is no longer enough to secure clients and your success.

You will gain by understanding with clarity why you do what you do, who it will help, and how to bring it to market effectively.

This mindset will filter down into everything you do from here on.

Just letting you know! Read on...

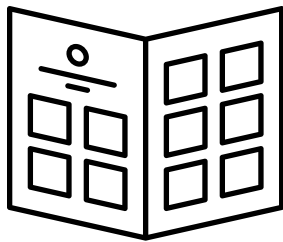
Presenting Yourself

This guide will show you how to bring great potential clients over to your work and make a decision on hiring you.

Presenting yourself in a way that encourages people to want to work with you is therefore crucial.

Let's talk about your portfolio...

Your portfolio



The ideal portfolio looks like this:

- You have a style that is unique only to you
- Your work is very well suited to your core target markets, i.e. they would love it
- One style or one medium only (other styles or media can be shown elsewhere, even under a different brand)
- Does not include substandard work and stuff that would put off or confuse your core markets
- Demonstrates skill - your work is accomplished. Hopefully you've put in hundreds of hours of practice

Your Website

You need a personal site, and it will ideally look like this:

- Clear, high definition, large images of your artwork on the homepage
- Your name or logo on the homepage, nice and clear
- Your own brand or name domain URL
- Minimal navigation and clutter - keep it as simple and user-friendly as possible
- An 'About' or bio page that shows your face
- An About page that shows the user who you are; where you are based; your story; and why you are the best person for the job from the perspective of your target clients
- A call to action button or line encouraging users to take some action that moves them closer to a deal with you
- Testimonials from happy past clients, ideally with their logos or photos.
- A means to contact you: an email address and a contact form
- Optional, though recommended: a newsletter sign up area. An email newsletter is a great means of keeping in touch with a following. Have something of interest to share, or simply share updates of what you are working on.

Website-creation tools, Newsletter providers, and more are listed in the Resources booklet.

I've worked with many creative professionals and their websites. All of the above are important. It's key to have your own personal website if you want to be taken seriously as a professional.

Something else that is extremely powerful that you want target prospects to look at on your site, is a presentation on how your work can improve their business. A brief list of benefits can really open up your prospect's eyes. I designed one such presentation for my own work that you can [see here](#).

Overall, a solid portfolio with a clear, aesthetically appealing, refined illustration style will do most of the talking anyway.

If you can't have a personal site right away, deliver as much as you can of the above on the various free platforms that are available across the web, including a social media presence.

'Value Stacking'

Now that we have a personal site and beautiful portfolio that is aligned to your target market or markets, we can add even more value. We want someone's decision to hire you to be an easy 'no-brainer', and the more obvious a solution you are to what they want, the better.

Adding value to you and your image will directly help with this. We want to pile on as much real (and perceived) value onto your name that we can.

This can be something you do over time, so don't worry too much about doing all of what I'm about to show you at once.

Here's how to add more value in what I like to call 'value stacking':

- **Build your social proof beyond the testimonials shown on your site.** Build your social media followings (yes this helps a lot) and show it; show case studies of previous projects you worked on and how they helped someone's business or made a difference, especially for a target client; get testimonials from celebrities; get video or audio testimonials from people.

- **Become an expert on something other than illustration** that directly helps the people you are targeting. For example, if your dream clients are game app developers, what knowledge might they be missing that would help them, that they might lack? How about how to market apps or how to connect with influencers who can take your app to the next level?

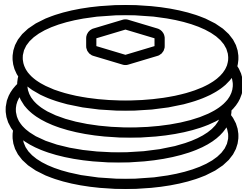
People pay for solutions. Remember, you are not just an illustrator, you are a multi-faceted package. You will be rewarded well for solving problems and helping people even if the illustration itself is just a small piece of that solution.

- You could **set up a parallel business as an authority or teacher on something that would really benefit your target illustration market**. This business would complement the illustration work you do. The more niche the better. You could give workshops and write blog posts on 'getting your book published' and work with authors on illustrations, for example.
- **Do research on your target prospect's businesses, problems, and needs** so that you can help them as best as you can with solutions. Be an expert not only on your business, but theirs. Take it a step further and put in the research on the specific individuals that you hope to work with. This will propel you out of the competing masses.

One of the reasons I landed an illustration job with *Google+* was shortly after I released a how to guide on using *Google+*.

This clearly demonstrated my interest in - and support for - the company. This is the kind of thing clients love to see. I also demonstrated an interest in the work and interests of the contact that eventually got me a referral inside *Google*.

- **Be influential.** Start an event (especially one that attracts your dream clients); be a connector by linking up people all the time; build a successful blog or website; create a film; make an app; do public speaking; host a podcast.
- **Apply for competitions and awards** and begin adding extra credibility through the prizes you've won.



Stack it like pancakes

When the prospect comes to having to decide between you and another illustrator, you can't afford to lose that job to someone else. This is why having a great portfolio is often not enough to seal the deal.

You need to add as much value, authority and credibility as possible for your targets so that their decision becomes easy.

This is not to say you cannot win illustration work without the added value, but all of the above will really help set you apart.

Contact List Set Up

Before we move into the actual process of getting the clients you want, let's talk about managing your contacts. Any successful business revolves around the relationships you build.

The process we will use relies on having a well managed contact management system - not a hugely technical one - but a well managed one.

If you don't have a system for keeping track of who you know and who you plan on connecting with, we need to set that up, or make some updates to your current system.

In any case, the system I'm about to share with you will make a huge contribution to the opportunities you will see coming in to your business, so make sure you follow the next bit.

Many of us have enormous networks of contacts and acquaintances in our email contacts, or on social media, for example. That does not matter right now.

We need to organise the people that are most important to us. I call this group of people your 'Value Network' and it is vital for the success of your business.

Your Value Network contact list is not the same as your email newsletter list/s. A newsletter is important but it is not what I'm talking about here. This is a list that you dedicate your ongoing awareness to - particularly to the individuals that exist within it.

Keeping individuals aware of you over time must form a core part of what you do to keep opportunities for work and more, coming in.

These people are vital in your life because a lot of them represent income coming in, and potential income yet to come in.

'Top 150'

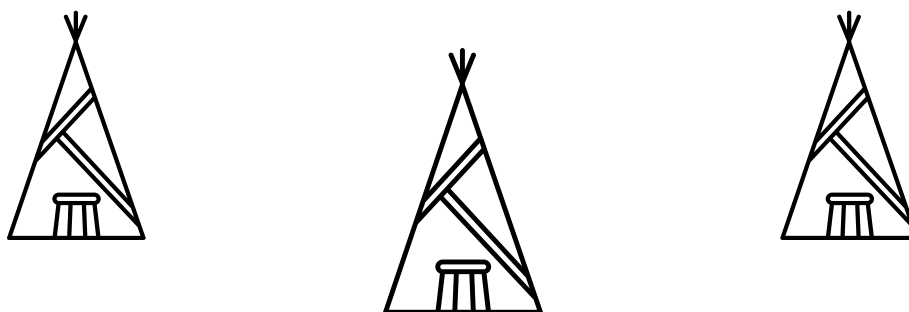
Here's my system, and the one I recommend you use:

I have a single spreadsheet that lists everyone important to me in my life and business. That's a list with a maximum of 150 individual contacts. You don't necessarily have to include people just because you know them, but they do need to know you. You also do not need to fill up the full list.

They need to be worth contacting regularly to be included in your 'Top 150'.

Anthropologist Robert Dunbar has said that 150 defines the cognitive (in our brain) limit of people we are able to maintain stable social relationships with. You might have thousands of social media buddies, but this list is perfectly suited to a core 'tribe' of social relationships that you can maintain and keep an eye on.

You want to be connected to the best tribe possible and you need to be ruthless with who you choose to include in it.



Here are the kinds of people to include in your 'Top 150':

- Close family and those who are a source of love and support
- People who bring you joy and lift you up
- Your own mentees and others you choose to help who in turn provide fulfilment
- Those attached to resources that benefit you, like current and potential future income (like clients)
- Those who are sources of mentorship and knowledge that will further your own goals and purpose

Here's who to not include in your 'Top 150' list:

- People who bring you down
- People who refuse help
- People who are holding you back from your goals in any way

The above may seem obvious, but some of the people we hold on to in our lives are actually holding you back more than you think. People may be a source of value in some ways, but hold you back more than not. Do not include those people in your list, or in your life.

Tip: I would be sparing with the friends you choose to include in your list. It's easy to list out hundreds of people who are a source of joy and fun in your life. But because there is a limit to the size of the list, you might want to focus on the top three or four of your closest buddies. Beyond these core friends, give room for people who will bring extra value to your professional life. If they are also friends, great.

Having all your important contacts in one single sheet makes everything easy.

The list is essentially made up of one chunk of 150 rows in a spreadsheet (can be coloured to help you see this more clearly).

A spreadsheet template for this list is provided with this guide.

You want to have a good rapport with each and every person in the 'Top 150'. And if you don't, your job is to make sure that you do.

You should look over this list every day if you can.

You must stay in touch with every member of the list at least once every two months. I don't want to complicate things by dropping a load of rules on you right now, so when it comes to frequency of contacts, go with what you know is right.

Many people will need to be contacted more frequently than every two months, especially if you are interacting with them in a conversation. But if in doubt, don't let a contact go more than two months without so much as a hello.

Not too hard, right?

Over time, you want to be gradually increasing the value of the list by adding new people regularly swapping people out, dropping others and enriching the quality of the network.

Am I terrible for dropping people out of the list?

It might sound harsh to drop people out of your list. But your personal success in life will constantly increase in line with the 150 you hold dear.

It doesn't mean dropping people out of your life. Those people will unlikely disappear forever - you will find them somewhere, whether that be through your email contacts, LinkedIn, etc.

This list is about those people who are of utmost importance to your well-being and professional life, and it should always be improving in quality.

The whole point of the 'Top 150' list is to really make you think hard about who is worth repeatedly contacting in your life as a priority. Those who are not can be put into your other contact lists and kept in touch with over time of course, but truthfully, 150 is all you need to be focused on at any one point to get everything you need in life. That includes prospects and ongoing clients.

We are too preoccupied and worried about keeping large lists of people with weaker connections. All you need to do is focus and really take an interest in a smaller group with stronger connections.

If you don't already prioritise the relationship-building you make with prospects and clients, you really should. They are a source of income. They are the life-blood of your business and directly rooted to your survival.

This list will take time to fine tune and fill out. It will evolve and morph. Start adding contacts to the list as best you can. Just get people in there you feel are important in your life. You can change and update over time.

Make sure you fill out the full list of 150 before you start 'deleting' people out. Once it is full, then you can start the process of adding and replacing and dropping people.

What about customers?

Remember that those in the 150 list are people that require one-to-one attention. Customers who buy your products might go into another list and contacted as appropriate, such as an email newsletter.

You must pay regular, close attention to this list, keeping it up to date, tidy, and most of all, the people within it should be constantly aware of you. It is your baby.

20 'Additions'

Below this list of 150, is space for a maximum of 20 new contacts. To this list, I add the names and details of other people that I am working on adding to the 150 list, including people I've just met who I plan on nurturing a relationship with.

These additions will include prospects I want to work with down the line, potential future mentors and advisers and business partners, for example. Basically anyone that I want to include in my Value Network and who fit in line with my future goals.

This is where you add individual target clients that you identified in the earlier brainstorming.

Who you choose to add to your network, and how many new people you choose to add, depends what you need and how you are planning your career and business.

If you're in the early stages of a new business, have a small network, and don't already have client opportunities coming in, then yes, you need to be adding plenty of new people to your network each week, as well as connecting with people that you already know.

I will turn as many of these ‘additions’ into leads as I can. I move them into one the 150 list above **as soon as they have responded to your communication with them in any way**, and become a lead. We will talk more about how to do this in the next part of this guide.

I would recommend making sure everyone in your 150 list has a good level of rapport with you and has been contacted by you recently, before focusing too much on bringing new people into the list.

The key thing is that you have 150 important people that you focus keeping in touch with. It’s as simple as that. Doing this is more than most people ever do.

Value Network



Max 150 Contacts (people who know you)

20 Additions

Keeping track

Monitor each and every person placed on your list. I use letters and dates to show when a contact was last contacted, and the method used.

This is important, because you need to keep relationships ‘warm’ over time and you will lose track if you don’t monitor your last interaction with some care.

Therefore mark the connections you make with people in some way. This can be in the form of a code, a colour, and/or a date of the communications you have with each contact on your list as best you can.

This means that when you review your list, you can see how and when you engaged with each person the last time, and how and when you will do so the next time.

You don’t need to mark every single interaction you have with each person, but you want to be aware of roughly the last communication you had.

You can assign your own ‘coding’, but here are some examples that I use:

AA = Awaiting My Action

CC = Cold Connect

LI = LinkedIn

TW = Twitter

FB = Facebook

E = Email

M = Met in Person

C = Call or Skype

So you might have entries in your additions list that looks something like this:

Name	Job/role	Company	Last contacted
J Reynolds	Founder	Snake Oil Ltd	E 3/2/15
P Patel	Creative Director	Mars	TW 7/2/15
A Smith	Marketing Manager	Lyons	M 12/12/14

The biggest reason businesses of any kind fail to win ongoing clients is because they don't connect with the right people enough over a long-enough time period. Don't be them.

Recording and tracking your people effectively will separate you from the confused masses, and it will bring a whole host of other opportunities into your life.

But this is too much work!

I get that dating and coding every person you interact with is quite a lot of work and plenty to think about.

Doing this and keeping up with it will really help keep you on top of who is in your list, keep the process running smoothly, and ultimately boost your business. But, if you can't deal with all this coding right now, at a minimum, keep a regular eye on your 150 contacts and 'additions' lists and keep in touch with everyone as well as you can.

I have a Google Drive spreadsheet for the 150 list open in my browser all the time, or I fire it up at the start of the day.

For those of you new to this, it will **entail a whole new habit to build into your life.**

The more frequently you review your list and take action on keeping everyone in the loop, the more client opportunities you will generate and the more success you will see.

8 Things

I'd love to dive straight in to showing you how to take action for generating client work. Before we do, I want you to get in the right mindset. The right approach will save you energy and frustration spent in the wrong mindset.

Here are eight concepts you need to know first that will dramatically improve your success rate with the actions we'll be taking...

1. The Importance of Hustle

Getting customers, landing clients and building an audience simply takes work and interacting with lots of people.

There is no way around it.

In this subdued economy especially, taking a lot of action to fill your pipeline and keep work coming in is hugely underestimated and a huge part of the winning system.

Businesses from freelancers to large corporations are floundering and suffering because they are either too complacent or they are not aware of the importance of putting in the work to rise above the masses. Almost everyone underestimates the amount of work (and rejection) that is required in order to get the results you want.

I hear of a lot of illustrators who say they are on several social media sites, have a newsletter that goes out, portfolio sites, send out emails and even call prospects, but get little work coming in. They lose confidence and end up doing even less, and wonder what to do.

The problem is not presence, it is taking consistent, persistent and plentiful action.

Many of you might be noticing that it is getting increasingly difficult to get people to notice you, respond to you, return your messages and generally engage with you these days.

This happens on the net, but sometimes you see it in person! People are distracted, and they have lower attention spans. It is a feature of society that we will just have to make the most of.

In the few short years I've been on *Twitter*, for example, the engagement rate with my tweets has gone down, and I can assure you I am not sharing lower value content. It's a lot better than it was.

So what's happening?

Beyond lower attention spans, more people are entering the market and signing up for the web and social media. The competing noise that results will only increase over time.

The solution, if you have even just a decent product or service, is to take more action.

Landing clients is not just a game of quality over quantity. It's both. It is a numbers game as much as a game of setting clear targets with a superior, value-added service.

You need to be producing and serving things of excellence, but also be pushing yourself into people's awareness as much as you can, and then some more.

If you tweet twice a day, you can tweet five or even ten times that (like me!). If you send out a newsletter a month, send out four a month.

I know it sounds overwhelming. But if you want to make money in anything these days, you simply need to commit to the idea that it will take a lot of work to push through the chatter and get your name, brand and products seen.

The good thing is (for you), most people don't. The business failure rate will go up for those who don't get it. The hustlers will win in this modern age.

Be the hustler.

If you have a product that is extremely well-suited to an audience and group of target clients (thanks to the work you did in the previous section) it should be in their interest to be aware of you and your brand.

Stop worrying about being 'pushy' or over the top, as well as about people unsubscribing from- or rejecting you. This will inevitably happen if you plan on being successful.

If you are an illustrator looking to be paid well for what you create, you have automatically opted in to a situation that requires you to work hard to get in front of those people who could benefit from your quality work.

Think about *Coca Cola*. It's everywhere, and people rarely complain about that. Could there be such a thing as seeing a brand name too much? Not for you.

Your business requires you more than ever to be bold, creative and omnipresent. This all requires a lot of action to rise above the noise.

Commit to making your illustration business a project-generator. This is guaranteed by putting in daily work to generate sales and clients.

Don't compete, dominate.

2. Discomfort is inevitable

For the majority of us, putting in the work, organisation, research and action to reach out to people and get to know them in whatever way, is uncomfortable.

We are all programmed in one way or another to not take social risks, to not rock the boat, to not stand out, to be nice to people, to not be pushy.

If you want to build a network of valuable people in your life, not to mention great clients, you need to ignore - and rise above - this programming.

You need to know and expect that connecting, networking, marketing and selling is and will be uncomfortable. It can be tedious, and it can sometimes feel like a waste of valuable time. It can even be painful and make you fearful. Anyone who ever saw success felt exactly the same.

When you know to expect discomfort, doing what you need to do on a regular basis becomes almost empowering. None of us sell ourselves because we feel uncomfortable and then stop what we're doing. The tragedy is that discomfort is a sign that you are doing the right thing here.

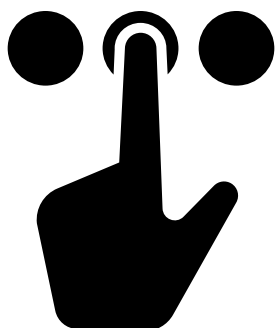
If your heart is pounding before calling up or meeting a prospect or someone new, you're on the right track. Keep pushing. You need to adopt the mindset of a fighter.

Are you a spectator or a warrior?

3. Have more options than you need

Ever notice how when you have client work, everything feels great and you take less action to market yourself? If you have 'enough' work coming in, you still need to take action.

For too many people, they only put in work to generate clients when they are suffering at the last minute. This is not a good thing.



A hand with options

To have consistent opportunity, and to minimise the ups and downs of the freelance life, **you need to be generating more options than you need.**

You must put yourself into a situation where you consistently have more options for jobs than you can handle. This means that income is always coming in.

Not only that, you are in the excellent position of being able to choose the clients you want rather than reacting sheepishly and desperately to any job that comes along.

You need to get comfortable with rejecting clients regularly - nicely of course. Saying no to people with tact is good for business, because you are painting the picture in the prospect's minds that you are busy, in high demand and valuable.

That's the kind of reputation you want, and nobody really loses.

A lot of the clients you reject will likely come back to you down the line with offers, especially if you have been keeping in touch with them.

How do you reject a client?

You tell them that you appreciate the offer, but you are unavailable to commit to helping them right now. You are open to enquiries at a later date however (keep the door open).

Deliver them some value at this point also, like a helpful online resource and note them down in your contact list.

4. Make others look good

If you forget all else about how to land clients and build solid relationships with people of all kinds, being aware of this one thing will get you very far indeed.

Every interaction you make with people from this point on should be to make them look good, important and/or add to their success - or at least help them do so. This applies to businesses and companies, as well as individuals.

It's human nature to feel great when someone is made to look good by others. People will feel the need to reciprocate when others add to their own success. This is where you will be rewarded in life with strong connections, friendships, support and jobs.

If you're wondering what to say when approaching a new prospect, think about how you can add to their success in some way or at least show an interest in doing so.

The Google job I landed came as a result of me spending months making their company look good through the Google+ course I designed, as well as positively engaging with their employees.

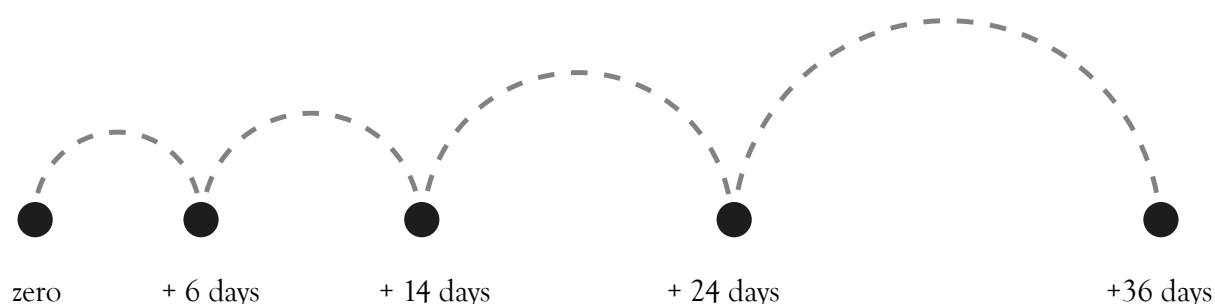
It should become your mission to make others look good and add to their success at every opportunity, especially those people you want to bring into your network. It's not manipulative, it's simply pointless to not do it any other way.

You help others, they will often help you, even if it takes some time. Taking this attitude to the people who stand to benefit from your value will lead to huge rewards in life.

5. The importance of follow up

Another absolutely massive element of not only winning clients but of success in life in general is to follow up, follow up, follow up.

Don't waste the effort of cold contacting some new prospect by letting the dialogue fizzle out.



A follow up in the way I talk about it in this guide is not simply one communication after you've met someone. It is any communication that is not a first meet or first-time connect. Follow ups keep the conversation or interaction going.

You must follow up even if you don't get a response. This is extremely common for most new prospects you want to connect with, especially via email. A lot of people will not respond on the first, even second, fifth, sixth time you reach out to them.

The 'National Sales Executive Association' says that *48% of sales people never follow up with a prospect, though 80% of sales are made on the fifth to twelfth contact.*

Read that again.

And that's professional sales people. Think of the effect you could have if you factored in the importance of following up to your interactions with prospects.

Your aim for each and every potential client, customer, friend, adviser, and mentor that you begin a conversation with should be to **keep things going until you close some kind of a deal.**

For a customer, that is making a sale. For a potential friend, that might be meeting up for a dinner. For a prospect, that could be landing a job and turning that prospect into a client or getting referred to someone else.

With persistence, everyone turns into an opportunity. I really mean that, and you will find this out for yourself.

Following up means either taking decisive action to lead someone through the process of building rapport and closing a deal, or simply taking enough repeated actions to get someone to respond to you in the first place and become a lead.

Following up is vital. You really need to hang in there with doing as many follow ups as it takes to get to a close, whether that close be a job or a getting a referral.

Though it's nice to develop a relationship with someone, your business is not generating revenue until you actually close a deal with them and get paid.

So always be pushing to generating a close.

As a reminder, if you have a product or service that is well-suited to someone and can potentially improve their lives, it is your duty to get it in front of them.

Pushy sales people are pushy when they push products you don't want on you. That's different. Push your services on people who will benefit from it. They will thank you in the end.

And if you annoy a few people along the way, who really cares?

Your business will flourish, and you're bringing a great product into the world.

6. Be consistent

Marketing, even if you hate the word, requires consistency on your part. Put up an ad on Facebook - great. You get exposure for a split second. But when you consistently market your work into the long-term, keep up with people, share value to the world, your results will begin to accumulate.

You want your exposure to gradually build up.

I can tell you that the biggest problem businesses of any kind have with their marketing is not using social media, making a sale, increasing revenue, or reducing costs. It is doing the right things consistently, even if you don't feel like it.

It is doing what needs to be done day in and day out and not losing momentum.

I have a large *Twitter* following because I tweet value and engage on 90% of days. I also manage my followers and follow hundreds of new people every week - most days even. I've done all this consistently even though the last thing I wanted to do on a Sunday night was follow more people.

Now I have over 110,000 people hooked into what I say on *Twitter* alone. I can tell you the number of opportunities this has created for me is very significant (think full time jobs, speaking engagements, client work and being flown to other countries to give paid workshops).

People begin to have you on your mind when you keep pushing out your content and your presence. The Internet is marvellous for this.

Consistency requires commitment. Commitment to winning more work than you need and commitment to building your business to higher levels than you can even imagine. Commitment to the smaller tasks that make it all possible.

Consistency requires that you are excited about your product and expanding your potential. Reach out to new people each and every day. Do what other people won't ever do. Over time, this consistency will turn into gold.

Hang in there.

7. Every person is a potential lead

Each and every person we reach out to, whether it is a cousin, a friend of a friend, a past employer, a neighbour, or a marketing manager at a company who does not know you from Adam, is a lead or will point to a lead.

It's very easy to get impatient with the process of getting to know people over time. We want clients now and if someone doesn't appear to bring us that client immediately, we jump to the next.

Or we send out 2000 bulk emails. Or we stop contacting them.

How about this: with patience, consistently following up with individuals, building connections and friendships, helping others, sharing value and otherwise nurturing relationships with people - **you will be eventually rewarded with either a new client or a new lead.**

At the very least, every person you get to know can provide value for you in some way down the line.

Perhaps the Mandarin teacher you connect with can't link you up with an illustration job right away, but they may be able to give you excellent advice on losing weight. Or something.

If you stay in contact long enough, that teacher will likely find you a lead in any case.

Every person leads to a lead.

And so it pays to put effort into all the interactions you choose to make with people. You have to know when to ask for it, and you need to regularly be asking.

Life is too short to never ask.

Imagine for a minute that for some reason the government banned you from being able to communicate with anyone but your old school friend Jeremy Guthry. You're an illustrator in need of paid client work.

Jeremy is a plumber. He's your only contact. What do you do to start bringing in illustration work?

With restriction comes creativity.

You start talking to Jeremy. You tell him the benefits of working with an illustrator to help him build his business and you add value by learning about marketing and making fliers. He doesn't see the need for an illustrator right now, but he has a close friend, Paul, who is a painter/decorator who has just started his business.

You talk to Paul, agree to work with him, and draw his company mascot and you design the fliers they go on. You also help him market his business through your expertise. You can then talk to Paul about sending you client work from friends he knows, especially having seen your excellent work for Paul's business.

Paul likes you and thinks hard about people he has recently met that could help you. He links you up with a dream client of yours - an advertising guy he painted a house for, who works for *BBDO London*.

Does knowing this mean you need to prioritise building a massive list of prospects or does it mean that you need to build relationships with a smaller selection of people and those you already know?

Your Value Network 150 list provides the framework for encouraging this.

8. Keep track

The real winners in any game that involves making sales or a deal of some kind is to keep track of everything you are doing to push you closer to a deal.

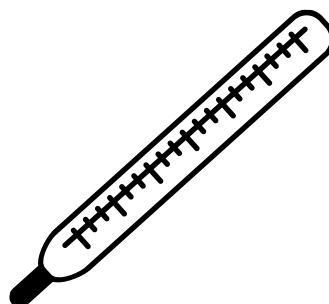
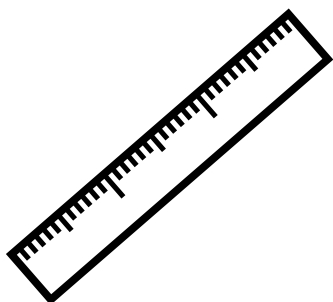
This means recording all the interactions you make with people in your contacts list for one. But it also means setting up a spreadsheet to monitor as much of all the marketing activity you do as you can, and the sales and clients you generate.

This could be as simple as marking the number of people you cold-emailed in a day to including the number of tweets, *Instagram* images and youtube videos you sent out.

After a while, you might begin to see what kinds of activities successfully led to a particular kind of client project or sale, and you'll be able to see your progress, and your business growing right in front of you.

This allows you to see what input contributed to which results. Without these kinds of metrics*, you are unable to see what things work and don't work as a direct correlation. You want to know what works, so that you can maximise those activities.

What you measure, grows. If you measure what you do in your business, it will grow. If you measure the income you have coming in, it too will grow.

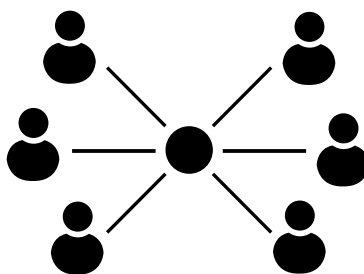


Part 2 - Build Your Value Network

This part of the guide deals with what I view as the fundamental piece of your strategy for getting clients.

Not only that, but doing this will create amazing opportunities for you, inside and outside of business, well into the future.

We will be taking the ‘150 list’ that you started building in the last section, and growing a buzzing, ‘warm’ network with it.



Don't worry, this doesn't mean (necessarily) going out and mingling with others at cocktail parties.

Everyone in this network is valuable in some way to you, as you are to them. This is what I call your ‘Value Network’.

A visible network of individuals that you are always aware of forms the backbone of your marketing strategy for generating clients and a range of other opportunities.

You must make sure you have a solid network in place first and foremost. Then comes all the additional stuff like a social media following, a newsletter, a blog and a *YouTube* channel, which will bring more attention to you and your brand.

Just know this: with whatever form of ‘marketing’ you choose to do, make sure that you’re always building and ‘tending to’ your value network into the long term.

Whether you run a business or not, having a Value Network is invaluable.

So how do we use the 150 list to get clients?

Start Adding Your ‘Power Base’

You want to start adding individual contacts to your spreadsheet (or however you choose to organise them). This starts with people who already know. J Robinett, in her book: *‘How to Be a Power Connector’* calls this group your ‘Power Base’.

These are friends, family, former teachers, mentors, neighbours, coaches, colleagues, bosses and more.

They are powerful, because they already have developed a level of rapport with you. As such, these are people that should be more receptive than anyone else to help you when you contact them.

You would be wise to prioritise connecting with these people, especially if you need to generate opportunities fast.

They can help you in several ways, including in actually getting your jobs, and in knowing others who might.

I'd recommend you spend time listing out all the people you know, and who know you and get it down in writing.

Add these people to your 150 list. Don't hold back on who you add, and don't fret over all the little details. Your list will organically develop over time, and you will swap people out when it becomes full.

For now, you just want a selection of people to focus on.

Contact your Power Base

With a selection of people in your 150 list who know you, reach out to each of them one-by-one. You can do this with whatever frequency you like, but I'll be talking more about this in the strategy section in the last part of this guide.

Run through everyone on that list (all at once or over time) with an email or written message. You want to eventually ask for a referral or job.

Yes, you will ASK for it!

Your first message to most people will be simply to reconnect. You don't want to come out of the blue asking for something too soon, unless your rapport with them is pretty warm and you connected with them within the last few months.

How to connect with your Power Base:

- Simply write to say hello
- Coincide a celebratory message with an event like Christmas or a Birthday
- Compliment them on a recent achievement
- Send them something of value that is relevant to them such as a link to an article
- Send them something in the mail with a note

Don't feel like you're being needy or manipulative by asking someone for something. You are setting an example by maintaining your connection with people and being bold about moving your business forward.

No excuses. Everyone should be doing this more often. Lead the way.

In your spreadsheet, mark in the 'notes' column, the code for the means of communication and the date at which you did it or record the interaction in whichever way you can.

For example, if you contacted your cousin John on the 3rd May 2014 via email, you'd mark his row: E 3/5/14 (it's marked as an email 'E', which is a follow up. This is not the first time you've contacted John, which would be a CC - cold connect if it was).

If you want to use a more sophisticated software programme for managing contacts, or a CRM, go for it, but I find it's better to have everything manual and simple in one spreadsheet.

It's my belief that the more automated things become, the less aware you are of who you are in touch with.

When you have exchanged one or two messages or ideally talked to them in real life or on the phone, and you are on good terms with the contact, ask them for some help recommending someone they know who might want to use your illustrations.

Often, people will not be able to think of anyone. Push them further. Tell them if they had to name one person who would it be. They will very often give you a name with this one question.

They can either contact their contacts to ask, link the both of you up via email or some other form of communication, or they can give you a name that you then contact yourself. **Any new prospects they find for you should be added to your 150 List, and if they don't yet know you, added to your 'additions' list.**

Don't stop at them saying they will try their best or they don't know. Follow up again in a week to find out whether they can help you if they have not already. Follow up again a week or two after that if you get the same deal. Following up is effective. Don't worry about being pushy.

How often should you really follow up?

There is no rule to the frequency of check ins and follow ups you make with people. The only thing I would suggest, is to **err on the side of what feels a little more often than is comfortable for you.**

If you feel that it would be right to contact someone again in a week, do it in 5 days.

Most people will be impressed at your willingness to hustle and get your name out there and generate new opportunities. A lot of these people know they should be doing the same for their own products and services.

You often won't find an opportunity the first time you ask for it. It sometimes takes a while for you to be the right fit at the right time.

This is why following up the communication is so important.

Do what no one else does and no one expects you to do: contact, mark it in the spreadsheet, follow up, mark it, follow up, and land a new client.

A note on follow ups after a job:

Following up does not just happen prior to getting a job or a client. You need to be following up after a job has been completed. Many people fail to do this.

You need to demonstrate your interest in your prospect's business and life over time. You want repeat work yes? Show an interest in their business.

Ask how your illustration was received. Was the project successful? How could your service be improved next time? Ask these questions.

Three things benefit you when you do this:

- 1) You stay in the minds of your prospects, which is what marketing is all about.
- 2) You demonstrate your interest in your client and you will therefore stand out.
- 3) You will gain feedback on how effective the work you do is, and see where you might improve, to make your own brand and business stronger.

This applies to all kinds of client work.

Power Base Connecting Overview:

- Make a list of people you already know in your 150 list
- Contact them and get a conversation going
- Record and date your interactions
- Call or meet up with as many of them as possible
- Ask them for a recommendation or a link up with a prospect for you
- Add any new prospects to your 'Top 150' and / or 'additions' lists
- Keep following up and checking in with your Power Base and clients over time
(don't stop if you get a job from someone)

Let's move on to our next source of illustration clients...

Past Clients

Before going out and seeking out brand new clients, you can't overlook the potential value that exists among the people you have previously worked with, if any.

Past clients are the group of people that are most likely, out of any, to lead to more paid work for you. They have worked with you before. They are likely to hire you again if you did a good job the last time, when the right time comes.

Why don't we ask them first, before our Power Base?

As long as it does not take you forever to get through contacting a large chunk of your Power Base, we don't want to leave any stones unturned when routing out potential illustration projects. This is why we start by asking anyone you know first.

You already have a strong connection with those people. **Anyone that knows you are likely to respond well to your requests.** That's human nature. This is why digging into your Power Base is an important first start before checking in with your past clients.

As I talked about before, you should ideally be already regularly communicating - and checking in with - past clients.

Many if not all of them should be contacted at least once per two months, depending on the closeness and relevance of them to the success of your business and yours to theirs.

Collect names

If you have not already, make a list of all your past illustration clients (and past clients in other fields if you want work beyond illustration). Make the list as comprehensive as possible by referring to your past accounts, email interactions, and stored past contracts signed, if required.

Add those past clients to your 150 list. You might replace some over time, but just fill up the list for now.

If you're running out of space (we're still yet to add new ideal prospects, etc to the list) it's up to you who to include, perhaps your best 20% of past clients in terms of income or you might want to swap out a few of your Power Base members.

See? This process should really be making you think about who is important to your business, and life. Just don't lose control by adding more than 150 (170).

Talk to past clients

Go down the list and contact all of your past clients one by one. As with your Power Base, the first interaction should be a check in message without any pitch, unless you've recently been speaking with them and/or rapport is warm.

Mark the date, the method of the interaction and any other helpful notes right after you have contacted them and move on to the next person.

When you next run through your list, you want to be able to know with clarity, the nature of the last interaction you had, so that you know exactly what step to take next time.

Remember what I talked about in the section on following up previously. I would encourage you to read it again and apply it to the process of winning jobs (and referrals) with past clients also.

When you contact past clients, and depending on how much rapport you have with them (rapport can go from warm to cold if you leave it a long time), you will be faced with either being totally ignored, the email might get accidentally deleted, told that there is no work available, or that yes, they need you for a job at that point, in which case it's time to throw your hat in the air for joy!

If they don't respond, send them another email or communication after a few days. You'll know what to do when you check over the list again because of the note you made next to the contact.

In addition to emails, you can also contact past clients through interacting on social media, commenting on their blog posts, sharing value via a newsletter, calling them, and even meeting them at events.

These all 'count' as forms of communication that can be marked down in your list.

If they do respond, get a conversation going until it is a good time to pitch them for a job or ask for a referral. Make sure you demonstrate as much of your extra value and interest in their business as you can.

For clients you have worked with before, an email pitch asking them whether there is anything the two of you can work on is often all you need.

Be aware that most past clients will not have a job for you immediately, which is why you need to keep checking in with them once every few weeks, but make sure you actually clearly show them you are willing to work with them at intervals.

When is a good time to ask for work?

Whenever rapport is friendly again. For most of your past clients, rapport will be pretty good because you have worked with them before, so just go for it.

Different ways to contact and follow up with past clients:

- Check in to say hi
- Ask them about the project you worked on with them
- Ask them about their businesses and be helpful
- Ask them if they need anything from you
- Tell them that you have an opening for some work if they need anything
- Send them something of value that is of use to them

Refer to the Resources booklet for examples of approach emails.

Past clients are extremely valuable assets to your business because they represent the opportunity of repeat work into the future.

So really nurture these relationships when you have them. Keep checking in over time and being helpful.

Once every month or two is great. Just do it. It seems almost too simple but keeping in touch and staying aware in their minds is honestly the secret to filling your pipeline and running a healthy business.

Past Clients Connecting Overview:

- Make a list of your past clients
- Contact them and get a conversation going
- Record and date your interactions on your contact list
- Ask them whether they have a job going or for a recommendation or a link up with a prospect for you
- Add any new clients (from referrals) to your 'Top 150' list
- Keep following up and checking in with them over time (don't stop, even if you get a job from someone)

Tip: Set up a calendar alert on your computer or smart phone reminding you to look over your 'Top 150' list at least three times a week. Ideally, however, you want to look through your list every day and make some kind of communication with at least one or more daily.

If you want the edge and more opportunities in your life, look over your list and contact individuals like you are obsessed. This will pay.

Side note: It takes some time

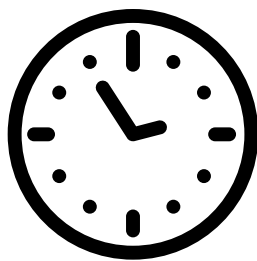
Interacting with your Power Base and your past clients should begin bringing you illustration jobs and further opportunities and referrals over time.

Don't expect to get jobs immediately if you have only just got back into talking to these people.

These actions are taken over the long term and it will take a few days to a few months to start seeing results. Start early and connect more and you will get results sooner.

I would even go as far as saying this: **don't expect to win any client projects until your 150 list is completely filled up, and that you have recently communicated with everyone in your list.**

For me this was a great motivator in doing whatever it took to fill up that list with prospects and others.



tick tock

New Prospects

This is where things get (even more!) exciting.

Hopefully you've begun warming up some of the connections you already know and seeing some traction. Great. Let's drum up some opportunities for working with those clients that we identified in Part 1.

The time to do this is when you begin gaining some stability in your business with revenue coming in, though you can start contacting new prospects from the start.

What's a 'new prospect'?

A new prospect is someone who is not yet in your 'Top 150' who has the potential to become a paying client that you have identified as wanting to work with. They may never have heard of you.

You want to turn them into a lead, create rapport, then pitch for work.

We now need to add some new prospects into your '20 Additions' section in your spreadsheet.

The additions area is capped at 20 people to help you focus on a select few people at any given time, and to reduce overwhelm.

As a side note, you can also use the additions area to add other kinds of people that you want to bring into your network. Your Value Network is not just for prospects.

Where to find new prospects

Referring to the types of clients and industries you highlighted in the earlier brainstorming session, we need to get hold of the contact details of the individuals operating in these groups.

It's perfectly ok to include a mix of target clients in your additions area. For example, you might want to start reaching out to a few magazine art directors, but also put one or two CEOs in startups in there and perhaps a marketing manager at a dream company for you.

Just bear in mind that it can be more effective to focus on one industry or market segment at a time, and to tailor your online presentation to that area. When a prospect comes to look at your site and portfolio, the more it appears that you are suited to them, the better.

Where are my clients hiding?

We need to find the names, job roles, companies and other details of the people in your core target market.

So if you chose the 'iPad fashion magazine industry' as one of your target markets from before, you'd do a search for decision-makers working in that industry so that you can add that contact/s to your additions area.

There are many sources of this kind of information:

LinkedIn - Sign up as a user if you have not already, and use the advanced search function to scope out people in certain companies, certain keywords, or people with certain job roles.

You will get access to a wider selection of results with greater accuracy and detail when you become a paying member, so it is worth signing up for a paid LinkedIn membership, at least for the time spent collecting prospects.

Tip: LinkedIn is also a great way to send prospects messages if they have accepted a link up request from you. To do this, add them as a friend and write a message tailored to them expressing your interest in keeping up to date with their updates. More often than not, they will accept your invitation, so that you can contact them through LinkedIn.

Web search - Google search will reveal all kinds of information in the form of company sites, databases of companies, yellow pages, local businesses, etc. Find the contact details of your prospects on their company / brand websites and load them into your own list.

Client listings from other creatives - the personal sites of other illustrators and creative businesses will often contain a list of past clients they have worked with. These places can give you ideas for prospects to approach as well as similar clients you could be working with, in combination with other forms of research.

Company databases - most companies and businesses from all over the world are organised into databases, many of which are free online, for example through *Hoovers* (US), or *Companies House* (UK). Use these databases to find the company details and websites that you are interested in, and subsequently the people operating in those businesses.

CrunchBase and *AngelList* are great databases to find companies that have recently received investment if that's what you need.

Paid databases exist all over the place, which you can take plenty of great information from. *BikiniLists*, *Agency Access* and *FileFX* are popular amongst illustrators looking for decision-makers in agencies, like art directors.

Do note, however that those people listed in places like these are often inundated with competing emails, often sent in bulk, which are not effective. They are still great for getting hold of the details of an individual, and applying the methods we talk about in this guide.

What you could do with paid databases is pay for a month or so membership, take all the information you need, then unsubscribe.

Articles and global media - a ton of information on companies, industries, and individuals is published every day in various forms of media.

You might want to dip into the latest edition of *Inc Magazine*, for example, which often does run-downs of fastest-growing companies in particular industries - a great source of contacts with money to spend. Trade magazines for a particular industry can also be insightful (see the Resources Booklet for ideas).

Social media - the search tools that integrate with various social media platforms (*Social Bro*, *Manage Flitter*, etc) are good sources of people, companies and business details. *Manage Flitter* for example, allows you to search through *Twitter* based on the keywords that show in account profiles. This means you can run pretty effective searches there to find people who describe themselves with certain keywords, like 'art director', or 'CEO', etc.

Your own newsletter - If you've been cultivating your own newsletter, especially one that is targeted at a specific type of client, you can approach the individuals in that list.

Other company employees - often your best source of information on where to find the right decision-makers to approach (those people who hire illustrators), is to talk to people working in that industry or company.

So if you are trying to find out who to talk to in order to make connections in fashion magazines, do a search for one such magazine company, and ask anyone in that company for who is best to talk to. You may even get lucky and get through to the right person to start.

Facebook, *LinkedIn* and *Google+* also allow you to search for the businesses that are listed there through their search tools.

Pay someone else to do the research

Don't forget that there are a ton of places online to find people to do a lot of good research for you for a fee. Often, the quality is surprising and the costs low and the turnaround times are really fast. You might have to hunt around a bit, and try out a few to dig out the best people

I've personally hired people working in the Philippines to get hold of large lists of contact details for people in certain industries, with success. Sometimes I'll have to refine the lists, but generally a huge amount of time and energy is saved.

Places like *Upwork*, *Perssist*, *Guru*, *iFreelance*, *PeoplePerHour*, and *Fiverr* have people that offer these services for you.

Make sure you are absolutely crystal clear in communicating what you need, to save on wasted time.

Add names

Add a selection of target clients (new prospects) to your 'Additions' list. Add a few to start, and more depending on how much you can handle and what you want.

If you are desperately in need of client-generation, you will want to add more people than usual, as long as you are prepared to do a lot of work in engaging with and keeping up with all the interactions.

As all this will be new to most people, putting in the bare minimum (perhaps one new person a week) will be a huge improvement on doing nothing at all.

You will find that 20 contacts at any given time is plenty to focus on, as long as you doing the work to engage with them, turn them into leads, and add new contacts if necessary.

Your main aim with additions is to turn as many of them as possible into leads.

Being a lead makes someone 'worthy' of inclusion in your main 150 List.

Reach out to all of them individually. You can call them, email them, connect on social media, etc.

When they respond in any way to your communication, they count as a lead, and they can be transferred to your '150 List'.

If additions do not respond after at least five attempts to contact them, you can delete them.

From here, your job is to keep everyone in your 150 list up to date, so that you are regularly front of mind.

When interacting with those in your 150 list, though you should eventually pitch your product, theoretically all you need is to keep a dialogue going for it to ‘count’ as marketing. I.e. you are getting your work and brand in people’s awareness.

What the heck do I say to them?



The approach with new prospects is a little more refined than with people you already know.

You need to do a little more work in turning a stranger into a promising connection. The more research you have demonstrated to have made on the prospect, the more likely they are to respond and engage.

Do not make any communication you make to a new prospect look like a copy and paste. It’s a waste of energy on your part.

As with all other sources of clients, you do not want to appear as though you want a job too soon.

You want to bring plenty of value over several interactions if possible prior to asking for work.

How to contact and follow up with new prospects:

It does not need to be complicated. Remember these things, and you will get results:

1. Show an interest in the person or their business in the first email. Be specific. Get some information about them that helps you. Ask them whether they would consider using your style for their projects for example.

Try not to overtly pitch or share your link on the first email or connection. You want to be helpful, or be asking for information before making that pitch (asking for work).

See the end of the Resources booklet for examples.

2. Don't be all weird and overly formal. Just talk to them with a relaxed, professional tone. Speak to them as people, in words they themselves use. You'll be surprised how often this was not the case with many of the clients I've worked with.

3. Adopt this frame of mind:

“I have a brilliant product/service that is likely well-suited to you that I want to help you with. I'm just not sure we're a perfect fit, so I want to connect with you and see what you're like.”

Don't necessarily use these exact words, but this is the mindset you want. This is how someone of high value thinks and approaches new clients.

4. Keep the message as short as possible. You don't want to load work on the recipient. Make it really easy for them to take action. Ask one question, not five. Remember, the key thing is to get them to respond. Then it's a lot easier to engage them from that point on, over time.

5. Be honest. If asking, ask questions you actually want the answer to. Even if you don't know what to say, just say that you don't know what to say. Authenticity is always well received.

6. Try and mention something you both have in common; an event you've both been to; a shared interest. Commonalities like this will help establish trust very quickly, and you will more likely get noticed by the recipient and not put in the rubbish bin.

7. Share value. As an alternative to asking a question, you can bring the recipient some value. Effectively, just introducing yourself to someone is value, in some respects, because you present value with what you are capable of.

But you can bring value in more overt ways, such as through a compliment, or offering some advice or help. Being helpful on forums and social media often work well to get on someone's radar.

Your aim with all prospects must be to improve their lives in some way.

Every question you ask, and every interaction you make should be enriched with this approach.

You need to create a sense that you are interested (ideally be genuinely interested, of course) in adding value to them and their business.

If the first thing you say to someone new is that you are available for work or that you have something for sale, it does not send the message that you are interested particularly in the client, but more in you.

You want to turn this around as well as you can.

There is no doubt that the wording and knowing exactly how to communicate to new prospects (and old clients) can be seen as a challenge.

You will improve the more of it you do, with the feedback you receive and the practice you give.

Tip: For people who are really influential, or positioned a lot higher up on the 'social hierarchy' than yourself, it is recommended to get on their radar as best you can BEFORE contacting via email (or their gatekeepers), LinkedIn or elsewhere.

This is why you need to make use of social media, blog commenting and physical mail (and anything else creative) as best you can for them to see that you are useful and interested in them, before you direct a message straight for them.

Keep talking

Develop a conversation and lead the dialogue to a job by simply asking for it when rapport is good.

This could be after the first or fifth interaction with them or after the first phone call. It is up to your gut to know when is right, but push for what you want more rather than hanging back and missing opportunities.

Get feedback from taking action rather than feeling like everything needs to be perfect first. The more of this you do, the more you will get a sense for what works, what language works and what questions strike a chord.

If they can't offer you anything at that point, ask for a recommendation/referral. Then, like with your other connections, stay in contact over time, being useful, sending value and just developing a friendship.

The nature of the illustration industry is such that many prospects will not need you for work at the moment you ask for it. Because of this, it is vital that you keep them in your list and stay in contact so that you are front of mind for when an opportunity does pop up.

Make sure that everyone you've decided to include in your 150 list leads to something fruitful over time. Don't put all the time you spend on people to waste. Keep contacting someone until they either get you work, or know something they can put you in touch with.

Remember: everyone is a lead.

Consecutive messages

When you send messages and get no response to new people, I'd advise you to make each consecutive email you send to demonstrate more research done on your contact than the last (without being creepy).

For example, your first email to your contact could be to ask them about their business. If that fails to get a response, the next email could be a question about a specific recent project they worked on, and so on.

Again, be persistent with your follow ups. If someone does not respond. Try them on *Twitter*. If not there, send them another email. Remember the statistic from before: 80% of sales are made on the 5th to 12th contact. It takes persistence and effort, but you will eventually see success.

One of the main reasons people don't get clients is because they never hang in there long enough to secure a sale at the time you are required.

This is rooted to not having a system in place that pushes you to regularly see who you know that is due a contact and getting in front of them regularly.

We will talk more about your plan of action in the final part of the guide.

New Prospects Connecting Overview:

- To your 'additions' list, add your desired new prospects, ideal and dream clients
- Contact them and transfer anyone who responds (leads) to you to your 150 list
- Get a conversation going with these leads in the 150 list
- Record and date your interactions
- Call or meet up with as many of them as possible
- Ask them whether they have a job going or for a recommendation or a link up with a prospect for you
- Keep following up and checking in with them over time (don't stop even if you get a job from someone)

Part 3 - Extra Magic

This part deals with additional promotion and ‘opportunity-creation’ methods you can use once your fundamentals have been addressed.

What we talk about here will benefit not only your chances of gaining more client work, but will have a very positive effect on the attention you bring to your work and brand, your following, and any products you have for sale.

Most people who hope to generate new clients, attention and sales usually start with the methods, like social media sharing, that I’m about to discuss.

This is great, but too often people are not getting sorted with their Value Network first and missing out on the massive long-term benefit that such a network provides. This is theoretically all you need to get all the client work you want.

There are, however, many other things you can do to win work, as well as to expand the awareness the world has of you in addition to individual contacting.

You want to be getting as much attention as you can for you and your business.

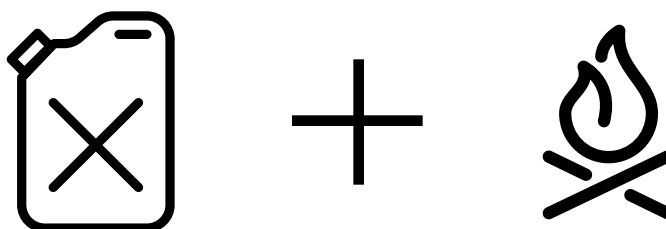
Why?

Because attention brings more and greater opportunities and more credibility (i.e. bigger and better clients).

Most people struggle to get anywhere because they are obscure. **Nobody knows who they are.**

Take it a step further than contacting people in the ways we discussed previously, and absolutely blast your name and your products out into the world.

Add fuel to the fire. Turn up the heat. Don't allow the opportunities available to you to go to waste.



Ok, how?

There are so many cheap, valuable and free tools available to everyone to get attention. The following ideas show you how to attract the attention of the individual contacts you want in your life, and a wider audience also.

Continued exposure means more and more people begin to hear about you and talk about you.

When this happens, deals will start to fall on your lap. If a prospect has heard about you in some form when you come to speak with them, you will much more likely get a job or a referral, or at least some support from them.

People like to help and work with people who are known by others. Again, it's human nature. If you are followed by many and people know of you, you will gain better traction with people who are aware of this.

Here's how to get more attention and massively increase the opportunities for more paid work, sales and more:

Job boards and freelance sites

There are many portals across the Internet that present opportunities for illustration projects. Job boards like those at *Behance*, *Folyo* and *Dribbble* all feature requests for illustrators and designers that you can follow up and apply to.

'Freelance' sites like *Upwork*, *Guru*, *iFreelance* and *Craigslist* (if you're feeling brave) do have some opportunities for illustration jobs, though most are heavily competed for and underpaid.

Freelance sites are worth looking into if you are looking to make small (or big) quick wins, if you put in the work and apply for the right work.

I used freelance sites a lot more early on in my career to begin building up my portfolio, generating quick work and gaining experience and client testimonials. You can do the same, and you can use them later in your career also.

Sign up, search for available work that you can help with, and apply. Again, don't forget to hustle. Do the work.

I've included a range of resources, including more freelance sites, in the Resources booklet.

Paid lists

I mentioned using databases like *Agency Access* and *FileFX* earlier for getting access to the contact details of people across a range of creative industries. That's fine.

I do not encourage you to send mass, unpersonalised emails to thousands of people.

However, **I'm including this here because they can be useful if you are really in need of generating work quickly.**

It does cost money, so it's up to you, but you might be able to generate a few leads quickly by using the mass sending capabilities offered by these databases.

Just bear in mind that the people in these databases are being contacted by hundreds of other 'creatives' at any given time, and the method is just not sustainable.

People do not want to be spammed, and you could annoy large numbers of people by doing so. However, the contacts in these paid lists have evidently given permission to receive emails, so you might give it a try.

In the long term it is much better to engage with individuals as we discussed before, rather than a mass of people.

These lists will of course contain the contact details of a large number of people that you can contact individually (added to your 150 list), which is great.

Getting access to the postal addresses of contacts in these databases will also be useful for sending physical, printed promo, however, and that's fine with me.

Social media

This is a no brainer but most people are using it incorrectly if it's exposure that you want.

This is what you need to be doing on social media in order to get clients:

- Concentrate on building a solid, engaged following on one social media platform at a time. Sure, have a profile everywhere. Why not. But make sure you do not spread yourself thin when it comes to taking action.

Have a social media platform of choice and absolutely nail it. Mine is *Twitter*, and I spend most of my 'social media time' there.

- Follow lots of prospects consistently. Use tools like *Manage Flitter*, *Social Bro* or *We Follow* to find them. Many will follow you back if your bio and feed speak directly to them.
- Add people you'd love to work with to specific lists so that you can keep an eye on them every day and engage with what they are saying. *Twitter*, for example, allows you to do this easily.
- Share content specifically useful or entertaining to your target clients, or customers if looking to sell products.
- Re-share and interact with the content of your prospects regularly.
- Share about 85% value and 15% stuff about your brand and selling your services.

- Use tools like *Bufferapp* and *Tweetdeck* to help manage your social shares if it helps. This could, however, encourage you to share the same stuff to different platforms, which is better than nothing, but I'd recommend sharing unique content to each platform so that you can cultivate different followings in each.
- Turn up the volume - share a lot and consistently. Do this across platforms but make sure you are able to do this well on a single platform first.

You have a huge opportunity here for free advertising, so use it. If you lose a few followers by sharing a lot in the process, so be it. They can find you elsewhere if they really want to. Visually-inclined social networks *Instagram*, *Twitter*, and *Pinterest* are particularly hot places right now to be discovered as an illustrator. Engage there plenty.

Don't forget to use these platforms as tools to communicate with targeted individuals, like founders, authors and art directors also. Sometimes you can get through to someone on Twitter, when email would have been difficult.

It's really that simple. Like with reaching out to prospects, it requires hustle and consistency.

Showcase sites

'Showcase sites' are places on the web that are built specifically for creatives to show their work and updates to the world and in most cases gain feedback from the web community.

For illustrators, these are sites like *Behance*, *Dribbble*, *Deviant Art*, and *Designers Couch*.

For the most part, they will tend to attract other illustrators, but I've heard **many clients say they have found illustrators to work with through these sites.**

Most of these are free, so do not delay in getting your work displayed there. Don't skimp on your presentation - put in the time to create a good profile, and post to these places with some regularity.

I've personally received client work through *Dribbble* (invite-only right now), *DeviantArt* and *Behance* in the past from great clients with minimal time spent on either, but I do have solid profiles on each.

Many portfolio-creation sites like *Cargo Collective*, *Prosite* and *Carbonmade* that showcase the art of the members themselves, so you might consider designing your portfolio through one of those.

Blogs

Many blogs exist out there that feature the work of illustrators. The people who run illustration, art and design blogs are keen to share new work, so don't hesitate to build relationships with the site owners and get your work featured on there for free.

I run *Ape on the Moon*, a blog that gets plenty of exposure, for free, for a range of illustrators each month. We're happy to hear from, and include quality illustrators regularly. *IllustrationAge*, *Illustration Friday*, and *Form Fifty Five* are other avenues.

See the Resources booklet for a list of 'showcase sites' and popular blogs read by people that take an interest in illustration.

Also offer to do interviews, podcasts and guest posts on blogs. These are great places to share your work and expertise with the world, especially where site owners are looking for more content to add.

This will be a less targeted means to generate attention, exposure and ultimately clients, but will certainly help create opportunities.

Forums and online groups

Interacting on forums can open you up to a whole spectrum of opportunities.

Forums often exist on popular online platforms, websites and blogs.

Forums can be great places for talking with like-minded people on a range of topics, but it can also be a place to do research on your target clients. Not only that, if you are visible on a forum that is also frequented by people in your target markets, you can generate work through there.

You just need to run a *Google* search for the kind of discussions or communities you want to engage in or with, plus the word ‘forum’ or ‘discussion’, and you should find forums that suit you.

LinkedIn groups are also great places to communicate with other professionals - prospects and illustrators alike.

Question and answer sites like *Quora* have shown themselves to generate clients for illustrators also.

A friend of mine, illustrator Maggie Appleton, once posted a well-researched answer to a question asked on *Quora*, and has been getting a good amount of leads, traffic and illustration jobs over the last couple of years from that single contribution.

Like with social media websites, you will see results from engaging with value and consistency. This will be massively helped by putting together a strategy, or plan of action, which I will talk about in Part 4.

Real world events

In our Internet-driven world, it's often easy to overlook the value of meeting people in the real world for generating opportunities.

Something I could not stress enough for getting results is the value of meeting people in person. **Real life interaction is the most effective way to build rapport and relationships with people, and to stay in someone's mind.**

Meeting someone is one of the best things you can do to start creating leads that you can add to your '150 List / Value Network' to be communicated with over time.

This is especially true when you get in front of the kinds of people who could either potentially hire you, or recommend you to someone that can. This takes some forward planning, but is a wise thing to do.

Events like talks, lectures, workshops, openings, conferences, and classes are excellent places to find prospects to talk to. You can of course contact someone to arrange a coffee meet up or even lunch.

The thing to keep in mind when meeting people in this way is to adopt the approach of simply going out to meet new people and to enjoy it.

Your goal is to expand your network. Simply take an interest in others and grab their business card and share yours. If they ask you what you do, great - that's an opportunity to sell yourself a little.

With anyone you do meet, make sure you add them to your 'Additions' area, and follow up with them.

Creative Directories

Similar to 'showcase sites' - and there will be some overlap - are directories made to list creative businesses like yours, small and large.

Sites like *Workbook*, *Hire an Illustrator*, *The Loop*, *The iSpot*, *3x3*, the *Directory of Illustration* and *PinkToffee* offer illustrators and creatives a space to list themselves so that they can be found by potential clients and other decision-makers who are searching for them.

Some are paid, many are free of charge, and many are specific to certain locations, such as *Bristol Creatives*.

Make sure you find all the directories that are relevant to you and your audience and list yourself on there, especially the free ones. It is up to you whether you want to pay to be listed. I have not personally been on any of the paid sites for a while, though I have won work through them.

Directories are busy and you may find it hard to stand out, but it is certainly worth a try being on there. Just keep an eye on how much you are paying for them if it is not leading anywhere.

Put in the research amongst your target audience to see whether they actually search for talent on such sites.

I have listed a good number of such directories in the *Resources Booklet* for you to have a look at.

Additional creative promotion

In the previous sections, my recommendations for methods to contact people, old and new, was limited to emails, calls and meetings. All these are excellent.

You might consider experimenting with other forms of communication to contact someone or get someone thinking about you in addition to emails.

What can you do that few other people do that will attract attention?

Here are some ideas:

- Leaflets and fliers
- Knock on the door of your dream client's office and ask to meet them
- Hand-written letters
- Animated gifs in emails or social media rather than static images
- Linked audio or video
- Tag targets on social media (on relevant posts)
- Printed booklets, books, calendars, bookmarks, labels, tags, maps, boardgames, cards
- Send a *LinkedIn Inmail* and get guaranteed response for what you pay for

Extra creativity = Stand out



Don't limit your creativity to the mode of communication. **Think about how you can do something that will stand out:**

- Send over a book you enjoyed, with a note to your ideal clients.
- Email or tweet someone a link showing a pre-recorded video of you introducing yourself and talking about how you could help them.
- Do a short video presentation of your portfolio, explaining the benefits to targets, as if standing in front of your target clients. Record on *Camtasia* and send the link.
- Create a beautiful fold-out illustrated map that shows clients all your online websites and profiles, for example.
- Design an illustrated resume and send it to your targets.
- Do a mockup of an illustration (new or an old one) on the website of a client and show it to them.
- Create a fridge calendar featuring your illustrations and send to dream clients. They will likely see your work for the full year.
- Tag targets in a relevant Instagram picture in addition to other forms of communication.
- Write an article about how your target clients could benefit from illustration and send it to them.
- Buy or make some wooden boxes, paint them with your illustrations and send to select clients.

Clearly, you are only limited by your creativity. And, as an illustrator, I'm sure you have plenty of that!

These are all things you can do to add fire to the other methods of communication and to simply keep those in your '150 list' in the loop, year-round.

Further Promote Your Authority

One of the best things you can do for your exposure and your brand is to become an expert, as I mentioned earlier, on something specific. Develop and master your knowledge in an area, especially one that would be of real interest to your prospects, fans and customers will bring them to you.

With all this knowledge, there are several ways to generate opportunities for paid work through sharing what you know:

- Teaching illustration, or something that would interest your target clients is a great way to get on their radar. Teaching is one of the best ways to demonstrate credibility and share value. It can also be very powerful marketing in itself and can earn you extra income.
- Set up workshops or free presentations actually for target clients. Give talks on something really useful where your prospects go.
- Do online written, video or audio courses and tutorials on your expertise and get it out there. Write articles and share them on your blog and other people's blogs.

Apply the same actions of attracting clients through your main list, in attracting influencers to help take your teaching or value-sharing to the next level. Get popular bloggers to work with you and help share the word.

- Write a book targeted to your clients or customers and get it on Kindle, sell it on your blog or share it online for free.

Generate mailing list sign ups through your teaching, book writing and start building a newsletter of potential clients. Over time you can share more and more value with them till they are screaming to work with you.

- Offer to be interviewed on other blogs, YouTube channels, podcasts and radio shows. People love to have new guests, and this will open your name and brand up to new audiences and new opportunities.

Competitions

Getting involved in competitions for illustrators can also be a great way of generating further exposure, not to mention encouraging you to improve your style.

If you get selected, this can get you in front of some big players and clients, as well as giving you an excellent credibility boost, and something that you can 'show off' on your personal website.

You only need to do a Google search on illustration competitions or awards to see that there is a wide range (*also see the Resources Booklet*). Ask around to see what is worth signing up for.

A note on getting an agent

Obviously this is a guide about getting out there and bringing in clients from your own actions.

Often clients ask me whether it's worth using an agent. If you have a good agent that understands marketing and has access to good clients, then yes, of course having an agent can be a huge benefit.

And a lot of agents will take out a lot of the work of not only marketing, but also dealing with admin, such as putting together contracts.

Having an agent, however, will not guarantee getting new projects in consistently, and it is not ensured that an agent that wants to work with you will be any good.

Many agents have a ton of illustrators on their books, and fail to get the majority (80:20 rule) of those illustrators much work.

I view having an agent as an additional marketing channel (like the agent I have), in the same way that having your own list and a solid social media presence is a channel. It can bring in a little work or a lot.

Great if you can find a good agent, but do not rely on them. You need to be working on your own network regardless, and you don't want to get complacent. What if the agent drops you out of the blue?

You need a backup, and that backup is knowing how to do your own marketing.

By all means, use your Value Network list to find an agent if you are looking. The list is not just for prospects.

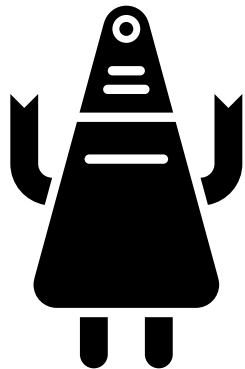
A reminder on outsourcing

As I mentioned earlier for gathering contacts and doing research, don't forget that you can get help for a fee by people who can do a lot of the work for you.

This also applies to other tasks, like having someone find the addresses of people in your target market, print and even send your envelopes. Have a look at the resources booklet for outsourcing sites, and peruse through some of the things people can do for you from there.

You could save a huge amount of time and stress this way.

Let's now have a look at putting together a simple plan of action so that you start getting results ASAP.



Meet your new assistant.

Part 4 - Strategy and Taking Action

This short section is about taking everything you now know, and putting it all into bold and consistent action.

Everything I've talked about so far, are things you can do that will lead to clients. If you do good work, there is no doubt that it will.

None of what we spoke about is much use if you don't actually do it. Not only that, none of it is much use even if you do each thing once or twice.

You will see wins when you are regularly aware of what you need to be doing to generate clients and actually keep doing it over time.

Taking action consistently will set you apart, and ensure your success. It is the most challenging part of this process, for most people, but if you get a handle on it, you will win.

You need a plan of action. You need a framework that keeps you focused and moving forward.

Having worked with many clients on their marketing strategy, and worked on my own, I know for a fact that the biggest challenge is not building a social media following or what to say when cold contacting people.

Your biggest challenge is to actually take consistent action. That's it. For the 150 list to have any effect in your life, you can't just let it sit there. It will only bring you the opportunities and the clients you desire when you engage with it regularly.

If you can build all the actions you need to take to ensure you don't disappear into obscurity, into your daily actions and habits, you will succeed in this game.

So we need to put together a workable strategy. You need a means to plan your actions in advance.

My Weekly Plan

At the start of every week, I sit down and plan out everything I need to do over the next seven days in order to achieve my longer term goals. I plan for everything that I need to prioritise doing for that week.

A lot of these tasks will be contributing to your goals that go beyond building a successful illustration business, but many of them, of course, will be dedicated to marketing my illustration work for getting clients.

I use a simple spreadsheet and split the columns into the days of the week and each day into morning and afternoon.

See the weekly plan template that came with this guide to see some examples of what I do there. This has been copied from my own, simple system.

I also have an area underneath these rows called 'recurring tasks'. Here I put all the activities that I regularly do on specific days and I often copy and paste these into new weekly plans.

Weekly Plan

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
am							
pm							

Recurring tasks

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A lot of these will include marketing activities like connecting with a certain number of people and doing a certain amount on social media, for example.

Every day, I look over my weekly plan and see what I need to do that day, including the recurring tasks. This plan keeps me focused. I don't dilly dally. I know what I need to do, and it's simply a case of doing it, no matter what. This includes the marketing stuff.

I also have many parts of the week set aside to **focus on a specific type of task**, such as 2 hours spent on marketing activities four times a week. I don't allow myself to do anything else in that time, with no distraction.

I want you to do the same, if you don't already have some kind of a weekly plan. Set one up, and check in with it as often as you can, or is necessary.

Plan what you need to do to start building your network, fueling the attention you want, and generating the opportunities you want.

This means deciding on a certain amount of activity, and certain types of activities you do each week.

There is no blueprint to what you need to do. But you do need to commit to something. **This is where it becomes a numbers game.** Everyone's circumstance is different, so the strategy will vary.

Make a commitment to connecting with a certain number of new people each week, for example. Do the connecting, then see whether that strategy needs to change.

The formula is: commit to action, take action, get feedback, tweak strategy if needed.

I can't tell you how many cold emails you need to make in order to win a new project. I can only tell you to commit to action, to see what works and what does not work, and adapt accordingly.

Having a plan in place will allow you to do this most effectively.

What I can do is give you some suggestions on what you can commit to doing right now and putting into your plan each week.

Examples:

- Every Tuesday, Thursday and Friday morning reach out to 3 new target clients to add to your '20 additions'.
- Share or retweet ten tweets daily - bar Saturday - about an area of interest to your prospects.
- Share an Instagram pic daily and engage
- Engage in an art directors' forum website every Friday morning.
- Share a blog article every Monday evening and promote through social media.
- Make sure everyone in your 150 list is up to date with a contact, every Monday and Thursday morning.
- Send out 20 promotional booklets to key targets on the 21st of every month.

When deciding on what marketing actions to include in your weekly plan, I recommend you start small. Decide on something. Do that thing, and feel the small win. Grow from there.

At a bare minimum, and if you forget to do all else, make sure you keep your 150 list Value Network up to date and continually strive to improve the quality of that network over time.

With everything, the more you take action on, the more you hustle, the more opportunities and wins will come your way.

Accountabilibuddies

Something I'd really recommend, especially as you are getting into these new habits, is to have someone hold you accountable each week.

Find someone, perhaps a fellow illustrator (tell them to buy this book) and make an agreement with them to update each other on your weekly plan, what tasks you did - and didn't do, and anything else you want to get into the habit of doing.

Stிக்க.com can also help make sure you are held accountable for your actions and reach your goals. Have a look - it really helps to have something to lose if you don't write your plan each week, for example. I use it, and it really works.

Build these actions into your weekly plan, and just get out there and do it. Do more than feels comfortable.

You will not be comfortable as long as you want to see and feel real success.

I never used to do this kind of stuff. I thought it was too petty and pedantic and silly to plan each and every action I took each week. I preferred to go with the flow. I'm not the personality type to be so organised.

I'm a creative damn it!

But then I began to look around me and see that I was falling behind, as were the opportunities available to me.

After getting even a slice of my marketing organised I began to see results. Now my life is a balance of being creative, but **respecting the need to plan and be organised**. And you need to do this too.

You may come across many instances of frustration. This is a good thing. This means you are opening up to things you are not used to, and you are learning.

I see this all the time in my clients. They don't see the point. They don't feel the time is right to reach out to new people. They don't know what on Earth to say to them. They can't stay on track. They procrastinate.

We all do it. We're all human. But those of us who manage our human qualities for good in this way are taking giant leaps while the rest of us meander and pussy-foot.

When the people I've worked with think hard about where they don't want to be (a powerful motivator) and they do take action and stick with it, magic happens.

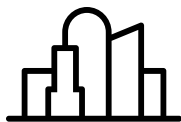
They start to see small wins. Little successes. Fruits of their labour appear because they planned to do the work and did it. Small wins turn into big successes.

Take action even if you don't feel you're ready. Don't wait until everything is 'perfect' - it never will be.

After a while all that work you put into building and nurturing your Value Network will turn into a thriving network of people who back you up, provide work for you, support you and strengthen you.

For those that commit and take action, the results will be very real, and they will be yours.

Now it's up to you to build your empire.



Full Recap:

- Decide on exactly what you want in life and career
- Research the spectrum of possible illustration jobs for you
- Define your ideal target clients
- Build a beautiful online presence
- Align your portfolio and website to your target clients
- Stack value to suit the needs of your targets
- Set up your '150' contacts list
- Be mentally prepared for hustle, follow up, and being uncomfortable
- Locate, list, contact, and follow up your Power Base for jobs and referrals
- Locate, list, contact and follow up your past clients for jobs and referrals
- Locate and add new prospects to your 'Additions' area
- Turn prospects to leads and add them to the '150' list
- Contact and follow up to build rapport with prospects in the '150' list
- Pitch your warm prospects
- Generate more opportunities with the other tools and platforms available
- Stoke the fire with more action to get attention over time
- Create a plan of action so that you take action consistently
- Find someone to hold you accountable for taking action
- Rinse and repeat

Congratulations on getting to the end of this guide. A lot of people never will.

I sincerely hope you get the most out of what you have read over the coming weeks and months.

I am happy to help with any questions you might have, and would especially like to hear your success stories.

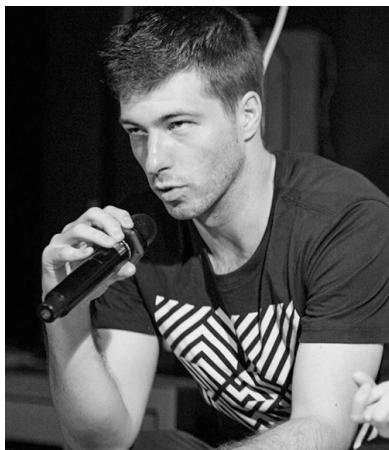
If you have not signed up for the Red Lemon Club newsletter, do so via [this link](#).

Through the newsletter, I provide new ideas on promotion, motivation and productivity for creative businesses like yours every week. You will also receive a free ebook on what you need to know to get clients.

Also make sure you are following @RedLemonClub on Twitter and Facebook for more help and advice in all areas for illustrators.

Contact me directly through my personal website: alexmathers.net.

Thank you!



Your tireless author.

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