

VISIBILITY

Case Study

Ted Leonhardt
Design Career Consultant

2012- 2014

Assignment:

Develop industry awareness and leadership for design career consultant.

Published over 100 bylined columns in leading design and career media. Collected columns were published in book form, "[Nail It,](#)" which led to numerous speaking engagements and a video series.

A sampling of the results follows.

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Negotiations: Raw Fear Rules

Written by Ted Leonhardt / Featured in: Business, Column / 27.11.2014.



Every rung up the business ladder produces additional anxiety. At first I thought, "I can handle this," but as I gained height I began to feel weak. Not good, but a feeling I know too well.

The instructor placed the trapeze in my right hand: "God, it's weighted. Of course, that's why they swing so well," I thought as I felt its weight pulling me off the platform. Only her firm grip kept me from spinning off into the space. Now, feeling the full impact of fear, I said, "I can't do this, I'm going back down the ladder."

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The instructor gently tried to reassure me, but I insisted. On the way down I felt a rush of shame and thought, "Great, there goes my cred as the powerful consultant." Next I thought, "Maybe with my fear being so public they will empathize with me and we'll make a stronger connection." Finally I thought, "Whatever happens I'm safe now, maybe I'll feel better after seeing what the others do." And as my feet touched the floor, "Maybe I'll even get the courage to try again."

After I watched a few team members go through the routine, I did climb back up the ladder, swing and redeem some part of my reputation. Later, in my session with the team, I sensed a closer connection

than in the past. A few days later, I called my client and she said, “Yep, Ted, you were definitely off the pedestal, and I think the empathy they felt for you gave your afternoon session much more impact. They sure took a lot of notes. As a matter of fact, there’s been several spontaneous discussions about your fear of heights and recovery. They saw you surrender to your fear and recover. A great lesson.”

I know from experience that if I force myself to ignore the fear, to avoid the feelings of shame, to avoid being “chicken,” to avoid the imagined public disgrace from the failure to be brave – chances are pretty good that disaster is more likely than success. In fact I’ve been advising students and clients for years to first acknowledge and second to withdraw from any high stress negotiation situation in which their anxiety seems out of control. Upon reflection, I realized that for once I’d taken my own advice and it worked.

In fact, current research has shown that first acknowledging your anxiety, then taking a moment to recover, reduces the amount of time during which you’ll feel the fear by a half. Why? Because admitting your fear shows you are human. It shows you are just like everyone else and the resulting empathy creates a stronger connection. And, a little time allows your rational skills to resume, displacing the fear.

SEE ALSO: Accelerate Agency Growth by Getting on Your Soapbox

Fear can take over when you’re negotiating anything important, from your first salary to the biggest deal of your career. It’s critical to know in advance that the smart thing to do is to acknowledge the fear, not suppress it, and allow yourself to recover as quickly as possible so that you can bring your rational abilities back to full force.

My experience with the trapeze gave me a fresh and renewed personal connection with fear. It renewed my understanding of the feelings my students and clients experience when they’re dealing with the ruling power of raw fear.



Author / Ted Leonhardt

Ted Leonhardt co-founded The Leonhardt Group (TLG), a brand design agency, now Fitch:Seattle in 1985, with his partner Carolyn Leonhardt. The company had 50 employees and \$10 million in annual fee sales when they sold in 1999. Ted served as Chief Creative Officer for Fitch:Worldwide, where he had creative responsibility for 570 employees in 25 offices around the world. In 2003 Ted was appointed President of Anthem Worldwide, a brand-packaging consultancy with eight offices. Ted has lectured and written on the subject of design and business for many organizations and publications. He believes that powerful design driven organizations will play a more definitive role than ever in shaping the future. As a business consultant, he is focused solely on creative services, offering a completely individualized approach to every client.



From Crafting to Consulting

Nov 3, 2014 9:27 am | by Ted Leonhardt

Mary had just retired from a senior VP position with a major corporation. Now she finally had time to dedicate to jewelry making, a longtime passion. A couple friends of hers are working artists and they gave her a referral to a former metals instructor named Shannon.

Mary contacted Shannon and explained that she had a small collection of stones she'd accumulated over years of international travel; she was hoping to find someone to teach her stone setting one-on-one. She ended the call by asking to visit Shannon's studio the following week to discuss arrangements.

"Wow, this sounds like fun," Shannon thought. "What a cool opportunity. I think I like her already. She's direct, knows what she wants, and is out to have fun. But, what should I charge for the training?"

Shannon had a Master's of Fine Arts degree in metalworking and had recently retired from a career teaching at a university in California. Although officially retired, she worked mornings creating alloys for a foundry. She enjoyed the work because it gave her the opportunity to continue working in metal, plus she wanted to stay active in her community.

After her mornings at the foundry, Shannon worked in her studio fulfilling jewelry orders for boutiques and museum stores across the country. "How shall I decide what to charge Mary?"

Shannon was well connected in the craft community so she reached out for some advice. She made a few calls, had some delightful conversations, and

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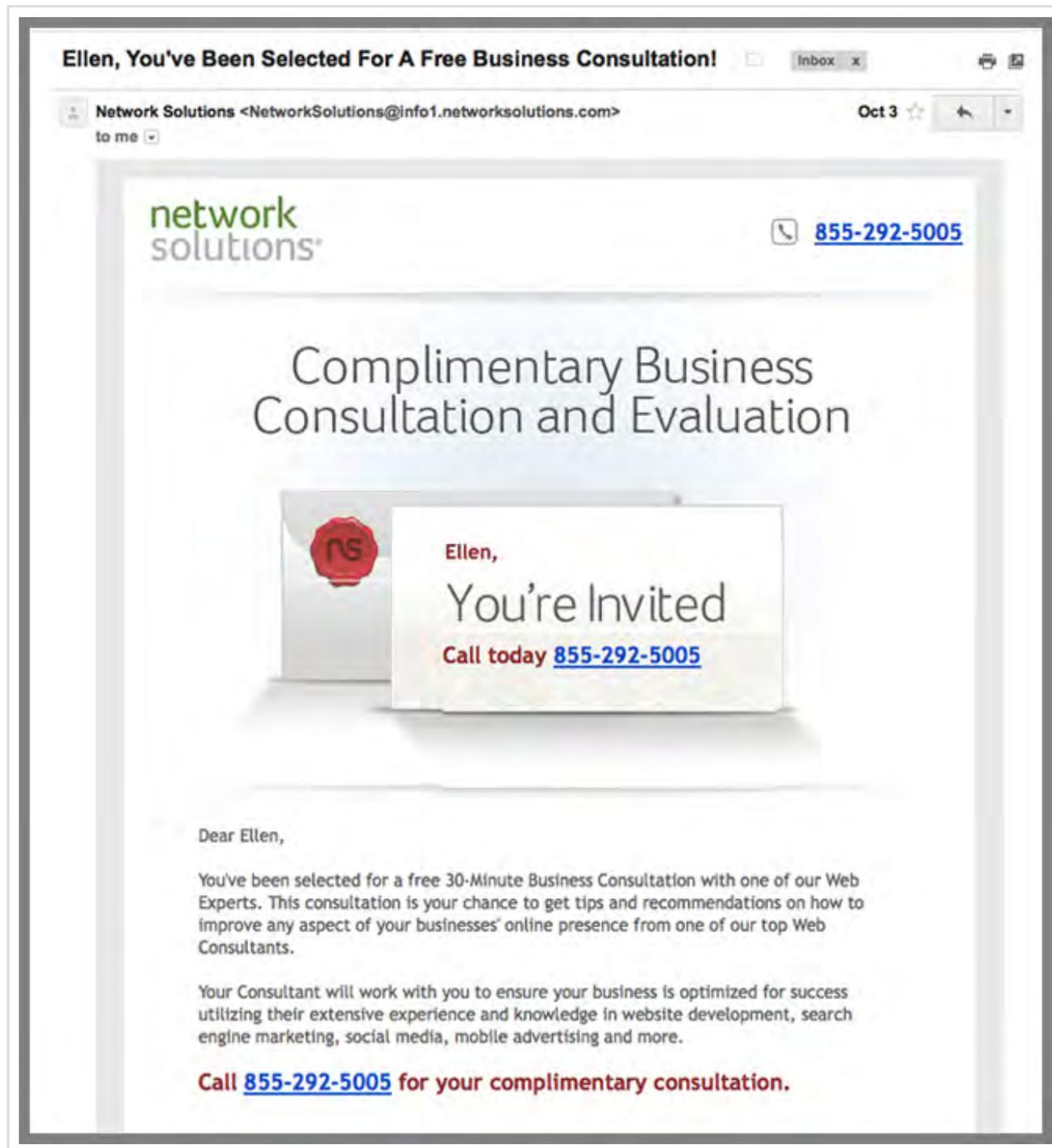
By: **Ellen Shapiro** | October 29, 2014

What's the best way to manage your creative business finances? How do you go about pricing design work? Learn how with [The Creative Professional's Guide to Money](#) by Ilise Benun.

Like many graphic designers, I could use a little more work right about now. Good, challenging work from clients who have interesting assignments and reasonable budgets. Still in the middle of completely redesigning my website, attending every networking event in the area, and trying to develop a marketing campaign, I started getting barraged with personalized emails from Network Solutions offering a free 30-minute business consultation and evaluation.

After about the 200th email, curiosity got the best of me. I picked up the phone and dialed the number.

What were they really offering?



The image shows a screenshot of an email from Network Solutions. The subject line is "Ellen, You've Been Selected For A Free Business Consultation!". The sender is "Network Solutions <NetworkSolutions@info1.networksolutions.com>". The date is "Oct 3". The email content features the Network Solutions logo and a phone number "855-292-5005". The main heading is "Complimentary Business Consultation and Evaluation". Below this is an image of a white envelope with a red wax seal and a card that says "Ellen, You're Invited Call today 855-292-5005". The body text reads: "Dear Ellen, You've been selected for a free 30-Minute Business Consultation with one of our Web Experts. This consultation is your chance to get tips and recommendations on how to improve any aspect of your businesses' online presence from one of our top Web Consultants. Your Consultant will work with you to ensure your business is optimized for success utilizing their extensive experience and knowledge in website development, search engine marketing, social media, mobile advertising and more. Call 855-292-5005 for your complimentary consultation."

The friendly salesperson asked a series of questions and then recommended a Facebook business profile page. Really? He assured me that clients for high-end design services are looking for graphic designers on Facebook. Really? And that for only \$199 (billed every 30 days, with money-back guarantee), they would create an awesome Facebook business profile page for Visual Language LLC. Not only that, included in the cost was an online ad campaign that would put my firm directly in front of carefully targeted decision-makers including CEOs and communications directors in the New York metropolitan area. I took the bait, gave him my credit card number, and uploaded ten images.

The results, provided by a sister company, web.com, which advertises heavily on TV, were so bad I had to remove the cover photo they made from cheesy stock images of globes and atoms. I was totally embarrassed by the way-too-promotional posts and ads. (The thing I like least about Facebook is ads in my news feed, and now I was responsible for them popping up in other people's news feeds.) I deleted the offending posts, apologized publicly, and tried to make the page more relevant and useful. After 30 days

with not one inquiry or call from a CEO or anybody else—I cancelled the service.

I then posted a query on my personal Facebook page and on LinkedIn, hoping to crowdsource answers to this question: Designers: have you availed yourself of online promotional opportunities, such as: —signing up to have your work showcased on sites that profess to get you work; —responding to offers to build or promote your website and get higher rankings; and/or —taking part in online design contests? What were your experiences, pro and con?

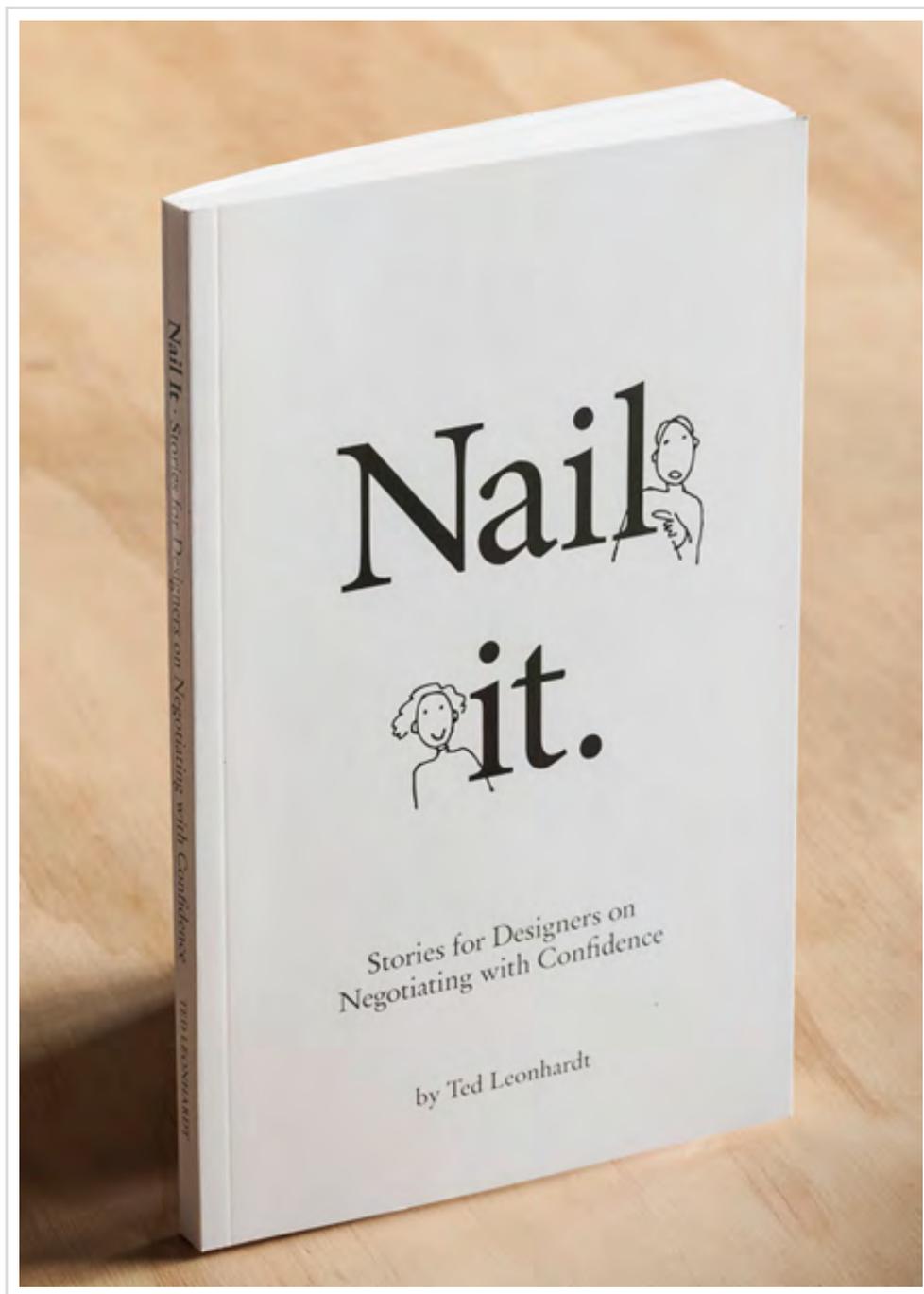
No response. No one will fess up to ever having done any of this.

Was I the only sucker? Probably not. But what is the right way to attract clients these days? The logical person to ask: Ted Leonhardt.



Ted Leonhardt in his Seattle office. Photo: Mike Folden

Ted, a former big-agency head and now consultant to creatives, recently published *Nail It! Stories for Designers on Negotiating with Confidence*, a little book with big ideas about how designers with good negotiating skills can make more money and go about pricing design. I mean, a lot more money. In Ted's world, designers get \$195-an-hour gigs and projects for which the client readily agrees to a \$150k fee. He's currently working on the pilot for a one-hour video series, "Worth It: How to Get Your Share of Money and Respect."



Here is your own “Ted Talk”—straight from the source:

Q: Ted, everybody wants to find clients now. If the good clients aren’t posting their requirements on online logo contests, where, oh where, are they to be found?

A: Good clients do post their requirements on online logo contests. And why not? The price is reasonable. They just might get a logo that will work fine. In fact, a freelance designer client of mine actually uses one of these logo sites himself. He posts the requirements of an assignment he’s working on, uses the results to broaden his own view of possible solutions, and shares the results, along with his own solution, with his client.

Q: What’s your definition of a good client?

A: Good clients are a pleasure to know and work with. Good clients have assignments I love to be a part of and contribute to. And they have the money I need, both for income and for respect, so I know that I’m valued.

Q: Where and how can designers find clients like that?

A: Good clients find you. Good clients search for designers who have a reputation for doing the kind of work that they want and need. To be found by good clients, your community must be aware of your reputation.

In my experience, the designers and small firms that don't have enough work simply have not done a good job of getting the word out. I've encountered this situation many times. The firm, or freelancer, is kept busy for an extended period by a couple of clients, often for a few years or more. Then for one reason or another, the work dries up. While they were busy, they were too busy to do any self-promotion, so their community is simply unaware of them.

Q: So true. What do you recommend?

In the short term, the solution is to reach out to the opportunities that are most likely to provide work: clients in the same category as your past clients, individuals you've met through your work who already appreciate your expertise, clients you meet through professional and industry associations, and so on.

In the long term, you need to create a continuous chain of outbound messages that lets your community know how your expertise helps people and businesses succeed. Most creatives aren't natural self-promoters, and that can make this task seem difficult. But I've found that if you think of self-promotion as your next creative project—a challenging problem to solve and one that's every bit as interesting as any client assignment—the effort can be fun. And of course, the results—a few inbound calls—can be very motivating.

Q: You are a major advocate of storytelling. Please tell us how that can work in the context of self-promotion.

A: Here's the formula: You do great work for your clients. From doing the work, you gain insights and examples. Now you need to create stories about how that work or the insights you gained from doing the work helped your clients achieve success. Post the stories in places where your community will see them. The stories can be rendered in any form that's digital: videos, images, cartoons, narratives, or whatever tells the tale. They just have to display in a compelling manner how your expertise helps others.

The result of this effort will be inbound opportunities from prospects that are somewhat qualified because they are responding to your messaging. This forms a virtuous cycle in which your work and messaging provide the opportunity for more work.

Q: Once the prospect contacts you, what's the next step?

A: When a prospect reaches out to you, your first priority is to differentiate yourself from your competitor. But first, spend some time qualifying the prospect and the assignment to see if there's a good fit. Do this in person, on Skype or Google Hangout. By phone if you have no other choice, but never through email.

Because, to win the gig, they must like you. You must develop a relationship with them to win their trust, and that will not happen if they don't like you. When you speak in person, ask:
"I'd like to ask you a few questions to see if there is a fit. Is that all right with you?"
"First, how did you hear about me (us)? What was it that prompted you to call."

You want to know if someone referred you or if they are responding to your outbound messaging. Referrals can be extremely powerful. If the referral was to you only, that is very differentiating. And simply asking reminds the prospect of that. If they included you in their search because of something they saw or read, your questioning needs to uncover what it was, precisely, that got their attention, because that, too, is differentiating.

Ask as much as you can about the assignment. You need to know what their expectations and experience with the projects are. Asking questions helps them see your experience and expertise in action. Questions also show your genuine interest in them, and as a result are very flattering. Questions honor their knowledge and expertise.

Ask them what they expect to spend on the project what their schedule is and what they expect you to deliver. If their answer seems unreasonable, ask, "How did you arrive at that number?" Their answer may give you new insights on their expectations that will further the conversation, or it may be that you'll choose not to pursue it further.

Q: Now we've gotten to the toughest part. I've found that clients almost never state a number. How can you get them to reveal their budget? How do you go about pricing design from there?

A: There is nothing better than telling them what a project will cost to get them to reveal their budget.

Remember, if the opportunity is a good one, before you even get to the budget, you need to inspire them. That is the most important step. Inspiration. That is where your creative skills will be most effective. From your questioning and the ensuing conversation, you'll sense who they are. You'll feel what they are feeling. You'll intuit how they would like to see their future and the future that the project will help bring to life.

You can demonstrate all this when you describe the opportunity in a way that dramatizes the results they are seeking, what you can add to the effort that will make the project a success. Start your inspirational remarks with, "In my experience..." and keep it short.

You need them to know that *you and only you* will approach this project in your unique way and get the results they need. Inspiration is how you show them your passion and win.

Then you can talk budget, schedule and deliverables.

Q: When I ask about budgets and pricing design, they often say, "We don't know. You tell us." And then when I state a number I think is reasonable, they say it's way too much. Or they might agree and ask for a proposal. When they get the proposal, there are often no more 'inbound calls.' I end up suspecting that they agreed to the number just to get the proposal, and now they'll take every idea therein and use them—or find someone else to do it all for less.

A: I always like summarizing in person before giving them anything in writing. Summarizing costs, schedule and deliverables extends the conversation and gets an immediate response, allowing you to adjust as required or decline the assignment long before writing a proposal—saving a lot of time and effort. If they push back on your summary, ask a few more questions, clarify, refine your approach and summarize again until you both agree on what's to be accomplished.

Q: Let's say they do state a number. How can you get them to understand that the \$300 they had budgeted is not enough, and that they need to spend more?

A: Ask them how they arrived at the number. Maybe it's an appropriate figure. Maybe you could actually do something appropriate for \$300. Or maybe not. In any case, you want to know if \$300 is all there is before, not after, you put in more effort.

Q: I was just kidding about pricing design work at \$300. What kind of project is worth \$300 to both the designer and the client? I'm figuring three to four hours. Doesn't a number that low start the relationship on the wrong foot?

A: My friend/ Photoshop guru routinely helps me make a photo glorious and prints it out large to boot for \$300. We have a great relationship. As a matter of fact, I'm heading out to his office this afternoon to have him add his touch to some giant wall prints I want to make. His fees for a couple of hours will be in the hundreds.

Q: When it comes to larger projects, are there general design pricing guidelines that designers can use as a reference?

A: *The Graphic Artists Guild Pricing & Ethical Guidelines* is the best source. I've used it for many years. Also, just Google, "What should I pay for..." Or ask anyone you know in the industry.

Q: Google, 'What should I pay for?' Seriously? I just Googled, 'What should I pay for a logo design?' Site #1 said, "One should expect a simple logo design to cost approximately \$200... a logo design with intricate patterns and fonts will cost twice as much as a simple design. Expect to pay around \$400 for a design of this type." Another site advises owners of startups to do it themselves by picking a nice font and a color. A third site has a chart with \$200 at the low end and \$1,000,000 for 'world-famous designer.'

A: Yep, it's all over the board. And yes, you can pick a color and a font all on your own. And if you have good taste you might do all right.

In my experience, it's all a matter of context. If the client wants to design it themselves or pick an off-the-web solution, that's okay too. The thing is, if they can't see the difference between your work and the off-the-web design, they will never need you. Move on.

Q: I'm in the market for a car right now. I can buy a new Mini Cooper or VW Beetle for around \$20,000 or a Tesla for \$95,000. There's a logical, understandable connection between the price and the car you get for the money. It kind of makes me crazy that prices for design have such a huge, ridiculous range. PS: And please tell Ivan Chermayeff about the simple logo design for \$200. Aren't the most effective, enduring designs often the most simple?

A: What you get depends on your position in the marketplace, reputation, and how you behave. Cars are commodities. Designers are individuals.

Q: That's a great answer. Back to my original situation. Ted, do you think there's a value to having a business Facebook profile, and that clients might be looking for designers on Facebook?

A: Yes, yes and yes! FB, LinkedIn, Google+, Skype and Twitter are all quite wonderful for getting the word out. I'm a total fan and frequent user of all, and get a great response in return. Thanks to those services and Amazon, Kindle, Apple and iTunes, I have connections all over the world and clients in South America, Europe, and all over the US. And so do many of my consulting clients.

Q: Let's hope this works for others, and that we get many positive responses from designers who follow your advice.

Thinking of starting your own design business, but not sure where to begin and what needs to be done?

Everything you need to start a design business, whether it be a detailed marketing plan and marketing calendar, tips for negotiating with clients, how to price your work, or guidance on the financial and legal aspects of running a business, the 7 resources in the **How to Start a Design Business Ultimate Collection** give you the tools you need to determine what you excel at, where you can improve, and how to successfully run a design business. The collection is now 81% off, so **get it here today**.

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got suggestions on what she might charge. She decided to determine a per-day-rate, prorated from her university position. Feeling a bit guilty, she rounded it up to \$350 a day.

Mary dropped by Shannon's studio on the afternoon of the meeting to check out the space and see her tools. She was full of excitement. "I've heard about these, but never seen one up close," she said inspecting the specialized kiln.

Shannon liked her instantly. "This will be fun," she thought as they settled into a conversation about what Mary wanted to focus on.

After they'd talked for almost an hour, Mary asked what Shannon would charge her. Shannon responded, "Well, this is the first time I've been in this situation, so I asked around to determine a fee..." as she said this, Shannon could see Mary begin to stiffen. "So," Shannon continued, "I decided to base the fee on my university salary. How does \$400 a day sound?"

Shannon could see Mary catch herself before saying, "Shannon, you need to charge me at least half again that for an afternoon session, say three hours. You have spent a lifetime developing your expertise, after all. Just look at the studio you've built-it's gorgeous and much more comfortable than the community art center workspaces I'd have to use if I didn't know you. People in my industry with this many years of experience charge more. And so should you. Why don't I pay you \$525 per session? \$400 is for your time, \$125 for the studio fee. And, while I'm at it, that's what you'll be charging any future client going forward."

Shannon was astounded and a little embarrassed. "Thank you, I don't know what to say, other than, really?"

"Yes Shannon, this is what experts charge for your level of experience. I spent years negotiating with overpriced consultants in a variety of fields to get their fees inline with reality. And believe me, plenty of them, mostly men with far less experience than you, asked for more. I'm sorry if I seem a bit condescending. I just want you to be fairly paid. You are such a valuable resource."

"I've been on a bit of a mission lately to help women ask for and get what they are really worth. I'm tired of men asking for more than they are worth and

getting it while women are underpaid."

Shannon, with a new perspective on her value, happily signed up Mary as her first private student. Over the course of their work together, Shannon gained a new appreciation for what her time is worth. Some of her other takeaways:

Expertise. She came to understand that the many years she'd both spent metalsmithing and instructing had real value that others could benefit from.

Referral. Mary came to Shannon on a referral from trusted friends who were also working artists. The referrers knew Shannon's experience would meet Mary's needs. That referral was only to Shannon; it eliminated the possibility of competition.

Range. Shannon did the right thing in reaching out to her immediate community to determine what to charge, but she didn't reach out to those in other professions. It just didn't occur to her. Shannon didn't look far enough to determine the appropriate fee range for a consultant with an advanced degree and thirty years of experience.

Interests and issues. Shannon understood that Mary wanted to learn to make jewelry. Materials, studio usage, time spent on instruction, and fees were the issues. Issues like these are the practical, concrete aspects to be taken into consideration when negotiating fees. Interests on the other hand are the underlying, intangible things that are always more important to reaching an agreement. In this case, Mary was interested in developing a rapport with a recognized artist, and wanted that "insider" feeling of working in a metalsmith's private studio. Luckily for Shannon, another one of Mary's underlying interests was fair pay and respect for women. Money wasn't an issue for Mary. The fairness principal was what mattered. Because of this Mary became Shannon's champion and paid her fairly.

You might be surprised to know that this kind of outcome is not uncommon in negotiations between creatives and clients who trust, respect and need their expertise.



How to Use Creative Power to Negotiate

Oct 8, 2014 8:13 am | by Ted Leonhardt

Here's the dilemma. Our power to create is what makes us human. The results of human creativity are all around us. Those of us who are lucky enough to make our living through our creative expertise make an immense contribution. We routinely help make the emotional connection between: companies and customers, products and people, movies and audiences, music and listeners, concepts and feelings and on and on. Yet we're also routinely under paid. As an example, a quick Google search shows that lawyers are paid five times what designers are in big cities.

Creatives, on the whole, are terrible at asking for the money. Why? We love doing the work yet don't ask for money and, yes respect, in return. Money, after all, is respect in our society.

I've been looking for answers to that question for years and I've come up with a few.

It turns out that we creatives are more sensitive to our feelings and the feelings of others than most. That very sensitivity is why we're able to make the emotional connections that we do through our work. But those same sensitivities can make us very anxious when we're facing or in a stressful situation. And, let's face it, negotiation is stressful. That feeling of discomfort is deeply personal. We're always measuring ourselves based on how our work is received. It comes down to our feelings of self worth or lack of self worth. Naturally, it makes us uncomfortable.

On the other hand, doing the work makes us very happy. So, it's not surprising

that creatives often just fold when pressed on the price so that they can get to the good part: doing the work.

What to do

Think of negotiation as a part of your creative process because it is. Negotiation is a highly creative activity. It's all about finding a path forward to mutual success while gaining and retaining the trust and respect of the other party. Negotiation is an interpersonal journey of discovery. You may not get exactly what you want, but you will get an understanding of what it will be like to work with the other party. Just engaging in the discussion gives you the opportunity to shape the outcome and to get to know whether the opportunity is one you want to pursue.

Make a list of your accomplishments. Here's why this is important. One of the traits of creatives is that we're more focused on what's next than we are on past achievements. When we're under stress we tend to forget our past accomplishments and fall prey to our self-doubts. If you make a list just prior to an important negotiation you can easily remember your all-important accomplishments. They will give you confidence even if you don't mention them.

Do your homework. Decide in advance what you want. Know what your bottom line is. Know what the range is for what you are being asked. Be as aware as you can be about your opposite, what their situation is, what they are looking for. Use what you've learned to create a list of questions that you can use in the meeting. Feeling prepared will increase your confidence.

Get past your feelings of anxiety about what they think about you by reading the room. Use your sensitivity to the feelings of others by observing them and making a few mental notes. Use your observations to inform the questions you ask during the discussion.

Understand their stated issues and why they are important. Issues are concrete things like schedule, budget and deliverables. But know that their underlying interests are far more important. Interests are more complicated and more sensitive. Interests always have an emotional foundation. Hence they must trust you before they will reveal their interests. Interests include

personal aspirations like how this effort will impact their future. Personal values are interests. Are you aligned socially? Politically? If your interests are aligned then you have a shot.

Get a coach. Get someone you trust to help you prepare. They must understand the situation and have at least a fundamental appreciation of what's involved. They can be a co-worker, industry insider, friend or significant other. Their role is to give your advice without being emotionally involved. You may not agree with, or use, all their suggestions, but what's important is that discussing the situation with them will give you insights that you couldn't get on your own. And again, the discussion alone will build your confidence and relieve some of those anxieties.

The goal is to use the traits you've developed as a creative to advantage when you're in the hot seat and (maybe) purchasing is breathing down your neck.

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SHARES

9 Steps to Closing for Creatives

Written by Ted Leonhardt / Featured in: Business, Column / 03.10.2014.



The secret to understanding what's going on when negotiating a project engagement is to simply take control. These nine steps provide a formula for getting control and starting on the path to getting the deal you need to succeed.

Step 1. Establish your expertise

What are you known for? What keeps you working all hours while making you happy? Did it start when you were a child? Do people pay you money for it? Are you respected for your skills and the insights you've gained from using them? If the answer is yes, then you have expertise. If what you're known for helps others achieve their goals, then your expertise has real value.

Step 2. Tell your world

Compose your story. Focus on how you help others. Use insights you've gained from your work as source material. Identify who will benefit most from your experience and reach out to them. Use all the channels available to spread the word. Refine your story and fine tune the channels based on feedback you receive.

Step 3. Respond to queries

When someone reaches out to inquire about how you might help them, you know that they respect your expertise. When that happens, it is expected that you will ask for something in return. So, the first thing to do is to ask a series of questions: What they need, what they are trying to achieve, how they think you can help. Start your questions with “help me understand...”. Their answers are your plan.

Step 4. Understand their issues.

Issues are concrete. Budget, schedule, and deliverables are the basics. Their descriptions of the issues will quickly determine if and how you may be able to help. Get as many of those facts nailed down as quickly as possible. They will be flattered by your interest and happy to answer your questions if they feel you can help.

Step 5. Uncover their interests

Interests are more complicated and more sensitive. Interests always have an emotional foundation. Hence, they must trust you before they will reveal their interests. Be sensitive to how they feel about you; use the conversation to guide your inquiry. Interests are underlying things, usually personal, that are far more important in terms of making a deal than the issues. Interests include personal aspirations like how this film, album, project, or design will impact their future. Personal values are interests. Are you aligned socially? Publicly? If your interests align, you have a shot.

Step 6. Inspire them

Here comes the most important step: Inspiration. This is where your creative skills will be most effective. You can sense who they are. You can feel how they are feeling. You can intuit how they would like to see their future. You know, because of your experience, how to describe the opportunity in a way that dramatizes the results they are seeking. And most of all, you know what you can add to the effort that will make the experience a success. Tell them. Start your inspirational remarks with “in my experience...” and keep it short.

Step 7. Summarize

Describe how you will meet their schedule, what the costs will be and what you will provide in the broadest possible manner. Make sure that your budget and schedule can be easily met so that you can complete on time and under budget. If they question, push back or say you’ve left something out. Ask a few questions, clarify, refine your approach, and summarize again.

Step 8. Close

If they agree with your summary, tell them that you’ll follow up with a one-page summary, which, once they sign, confirms your relationship. With their signature, you’ll get started.

Step 9. Reinforce. Confirm

Everyone gets buyer’s remorse. You must quickly prove your worth after the close to make the deal stick. That means you must demonstrate your expertise with action as quickly as possible so they are reminded just how perfect you are for them.

**‘Good’ Campa
Amnesty Inter**

by: D&AD



Author / Ted Leonhardt

Ted Leonhardt co-founded The Leonhardt Group (TLG), a brand design agency, now Fitch:Seattle in 1985, with his partner Carolyn Leonhardt. The company had 50 employees and \$10 million in annual fee sales when they sold in 1999. Ted served as Chief Creative Officer for Fitch:Worldwide, where he had creative responsibility for 570 employees in 25 offices around the world. In 2003 Ted was appointed President of Anthem Worldwide, a brand-packaging consultancy with eight offices. Ted has lectured and written on the subject of design and business for many organizations and publications. He believes that powerful design driven organizations will play a more definitive role than ever in shaping the future. As a business

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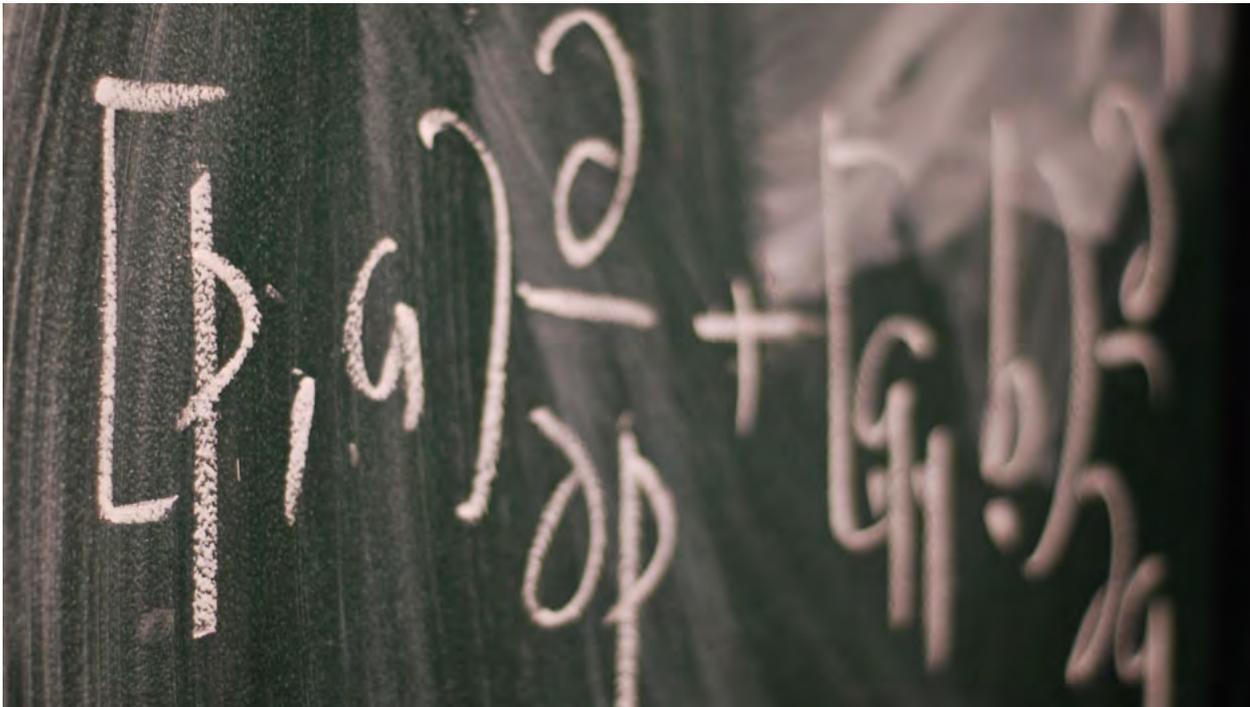
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A Formula for Successful Negotiations

Written by Ted Leonhardt / Featured in: Business, Column / 17.08.2014.



Creatives are very sensitive to their feelings and to the feelings of others. We use our feelings to connect to people through our work. We've learned that if our work feels right, it is right. We're constantly adjusting to assure ourselves that our work is achieving what we're looking for. This is never really done; we're continually adjusting and responding to what we think, see and feel. We're constantly 'reading' others to gauge their reactions. These same skills can be used to our advantage during negotiations, but rarely are.

The dilemma is that the feelings we get from our insights into others' reactions opens us up to our own insecurities. As a result, when we're in a stressful situation – and negotiation is always stressful – anxieties flood in. If we're not careful, we'll be overwhelmed with unwanted emotions just when we need focus and clarity. We really feel it when we are being evaluated. And when we're negotiating, our self worth is front and center. Our vulnerabilities are exposed.

The standard advice from master negotiators is to separate your work from yourself, or to care but not care too much. Great advice for the majority, but it's almost impossible for an artist, an actor, a designer or any creative to follow. In my experience, suppressing our vulnerabilities is exactly the wrong thing to do.

Instead, embrace those feelings. Use them as a guide to what's really going on. Use them to your

advantage. Being able to read the situation and your opposite gives you a way to use the very traits that can work against you, work for you instead.

Leading Story

Here's my negotiation formula for creatives:

Expect anxiety.

Say to yourself, "This will be stressful, and I know that means it's important." Or say – to yourself – "Signal to self, anxiety means pay attention."

Remember your accomplishments.

Prior to the encounter, write down your accomplishments. Include anything that has advanced your work and marked your progress in the eyes of others. Make note of your accomplishments so you remember them when you're feeling stressed.

Be honest.

Tell your opposite, "You know, I don't do this every day, and frankly, it's making me a bit nervous." Studies have shown that revealing your vulnerabilities reduces the discomfort time by half. Letting them know how you are feeling reminds them that you are human just like them.

Take action.

Questions are great ways to take action. Action gives you control and the result is always a boost in confidence. Start with light, get-to-know-you questions like: Are you enjoying the weather? How was your flight? Are your kids back in school? Follow up as appropriate. These simple, human questions build connection with your opposite and confidence in you. Once the connection is started, you can move to more substantive issues. But, the key is taking action. Taking action is a documented way to build your confidence.

Observe.

Watch them carefully. How do they seem? What do you sense? Are they encouraging? Are they nervous? Why? Do they seem real? Are they artificial or genuine? And, in every case, why are they being that way? Use your insights to guide your next steps and further questions. Constantly evaluate whether or not you wish to move forward.

Separate issues from interests.

Issues are concrete things like money, schedules and deliverables – clearly definable, measurable things. Interests are values, relationships, hopes, dreams and aspirations. Use your insights to help you recognize their interests. Know that the underlying interests are far more important than the top-line issues.

Inspire.

With their needs fully understood, summarize your insights and how you will help them. Demonstrate your expertise. Let your conviction show. Light the fire.

Think about it.

Don't make a deal on the spot. Think about it overnight. Talk with those you trust to get additional insights. Use your creative insights to consider and expand your vision of what you can do.

Always remember that they need you. They need your creative skills and insights more than you need them, and they know it. Inspire and demonstrate your creative advantage when you negotiate and you will get what you need to succeed for your clients in return.

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Learn to Use Your Creative Insights at the Bargaining Table
 By: [Ted Leonhardt](#) Date posted: July 10, 2014



“When you hear hoofbeats, think of horses, not zebras” goes the quote from Dr. Theodore Woodward, who was instructing medical students not to let their intuition lead them astray. I never studied medicine, but that quote always reminds me to look for the obvious reason the person across the bargaining table is behaving the way they are and to examine my insights very carefully before acting on them. People’s behavior is always driven by something. It’s no accident when your opposite is aggressive, or elusive, or in a hurry to close. This is an area where your creatively enhanced insights are to your advantage. Learning to use your creative insights at the bargaining table will help you uncover the other’s underlying interests and better understand how you can

help. And, given the poor state of compensation for creatives, we need all the help we can get. Creatives are vastly underpaid in our society. Think about it: The world around us was co person discovered how to use fire, and others conceived the wheel and every other invent creatives receive in major cities. I've nothing against lawyers, but why? It's simple really, What's good for them is bad for us.

It's a dilemma that stems from the depths of our creative roots. Creatives are more in touch vulnerabilities, which are closer to the surface, can burden us with uncomfortable feelings brought on by negotiations. The very sensitivities that we use to make our work connect e table. They are a liability unless we learn to expect the feelings and use our sensitivities to Then our insights and intuitions become a powerful advantage.

Behavior is always the result of something. We humans are predictable:

Is your opposite being aggressive? Why?

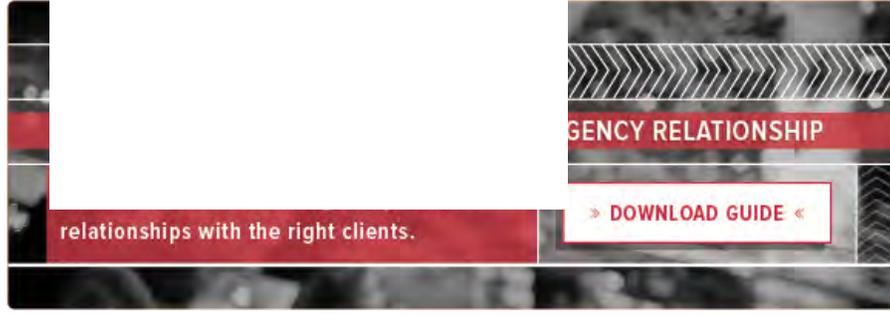
Are they in a hurry? What's the hurry about?

Does something not feel right? What could it be?

Ask yourself what's going on. Add the feelings of the moment to what you know about th to be in a hurry. Should we move our conversation to another time?" Listen to the answer goal of uncovering what is or is not the best way forward for both of you.

The more questions you ask and the closer you listen to the replies, the more you'll be able to separate the horses from the zebras. But best of all, you're genial questioning, coupled with asking for what you need monetarily, will gain the person's respect. And respect leads to increased compensation.

Law



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Ted Leonhardt is the founder of [TedLeonhardt.com](#), a management consultant firm for creative businesses.

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Negotiations: Use Your Creativity to Advantage

Anxiety means 'Pay attention' because it's important

[Ted Leonhardt](#) | Jul 31st 2014 11:52AM



Getty

Creatives are very sensitive to their feelings and to the feelings of others. We use our feelings to connect to people through our work. We've learned that if our work feels right, it is right. We're constantly adjusting to assure ourselves that our work is achieving what we're looking for. This is never really done; we're continually adjusting and responding to what we think, see and feel. We're constantly 'reading' others to gauge their reactions.

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The standard advice from master negotiators is to separate your work from yourself, or to care but not care too much. Great advice for the majority, but it's almost impossible for an artist, an actor, a designer or any creative to follow. In my experience, suppressing our vulnerabilities is exactly the wrong thing to do.

Instead embrace those feelings. Use them as a guide to what's really going on. Use them to your advantage. Being able to read the situation and your opposite gives you a way to use the very traits that can work against you, for you instead.

Here's my negotiation formula for creatives :



Referral, Expertise, Inspiration, Summary: Close

Jul 23, 2014 4:57 am | by Ted Leonhardt

Ben awoke at 4:00 am with that old familiar anxiety. It was pitch day. He was recommended for the project and knew that the client, Ed, loved his work. But that was acting and this was directing. Worse, Ed had been directing his own stuff. He was a good guy, but maybe he was just a bit too much in love with his own directing. Ben thought, "Might as well get up and gather my thoughts. Here I am wide awake, obviously I want this one."

Need to focus. Ed needs to keep costs down and he'll want to get this film shot and uploaded as quickly as possible. Those are the issues. What else? Ben grabbed his pad and wrote, "higher purpose. What's Ed's higher purpose? Yes, he's trying to get the word out to his community that there's a better way to deal with the fundamental concepts, and win in the process. I need to appeal to his higher purpose."

The meeting wasn't until the afternoon and Ben had a full day scheduled but he managed to squeeze in another call to his coach, Adam, who headed the video team on the previous work for the client. "Adam, what's going on? I got the article, it's a good little scenario, a good story, in fact, but it's not a film script. And you said that he wants to go on location this time. What else can you tell me?"

Adam filled in a few blanks. The client was already interviewing for the lead and talking about using the same improve style that he'd used in the previous films. Yes, Adam agreed that was no way to shoot on location. It would be much better to tighten down the script so every shot, every line, was planned and the team could really focus, but how to disabuse the client of that? Hmm.

Ben grabbed a sandwich and made a few more notes. "Okay, I've made a few shorts already, I'll share my experience with the shorts and using the camera and location to help tell the story, letting the audience fill in the details. He'll understand. I'll remind him that we want the audience to connect emotionally and to feel the story."

As Ben arrived at Ed's office he thought, "Okay here we go. I'm feeling pretty good about this. I've got the expertise. This is what I do. It's show time!"

After the weather and how the day was going chit-chat, Ben said: "Ed this is a great project, but in my experience on location, which will give us a more persuasive result, requires much more planning than the improve we did last time."

Ben asked Ed, "Help me understand how you'll use this film?"

Ed explained what he wanted to accomplish with the film and Ben, picking up on Ed's remarks, summarized how he would plan the shoot and the need for a tight screenplay, both to keep costs down and to help the actors get into the roles. "The whole point of going on location is to help the audience feel the message. To get past the 'this is how to do this bit' and get viewers to really feel it. They'll get so much more out of it if we tap into the experiences they bring with them when they're watching."

Ben said, "I know a writer who will take your story and turn it into a tight screenplay that we can work with. Once we have that we can plan the everything in detail, not just the acting, but locations, sound, lighting, the roles of the whole team. I know you like your film guys. They are more event oriented, but they are smart and efficient and I've worked enough with them to feel good about what they bring to the party."

"Based on my reading of the your story and what you've said today we can get through it and make a real impact in 15-20 minutes. Figure a thousand a minute. Say \$25k to be safe. How's that sound?"

Ed said, "When can we start?"

"I'll connect you to the screenwriter this evening. You'll love her She's great, I'll fill her in on the big picture and send her your story. You should meet her and expand on the details and the backstory. Let's not rush this. Get the screenplay the way you want it. I'll give you my insights. Then we should start casting, scout locations and so on."

"Thanks, Ben, I'm looking forward to this. I can't wait to get started."

They shook hands and Ben left thinking, "That was easy. Why was I so worried? Well, my anxiety helped me focus and I got a great little directing project. Cool."

Ted Leonhardt

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THE FUTURE OF WORK

WHY CREATIVITY IS YOUR BEST NEGOTIATION TACTIC

HERE'S HOW CREATIVE PEOPLE CAN CONQUER THE DREAD OF NEGOTIATING--AND FINALLY GET PAID WHAT THEY'RE WORTH

BY JANE PORTER

Ted Leonhardt always got the jitters before a big client meeting. It didn't matter that he ran a design firm with big name clients like Boeing and Charles Schwab, raking in \$10 million a year in fee revenue. Closing a deal with a new client always brought up those same feelings of insecurity.

Leonhardt would duck into the men's room before a meeting, lock himself in a stall, and jot down a list on a scrap of paper--projects he'd done successfully, awards his company won, other accomplishments. "I would make two to three lists a week and they were always the same," he says. "I never needed to read them, but making the list, and putting it in my coat pocket made me feel okay about whatever it was that was stressful."

And it gave Leonhardt the confidence to tackle what so many creative professionals dread doing: negotiating.

Today he's made teaching creative people how to be better negotiators his main focus, writing a book, consulting, and offering a new online course focused on the topic.

THE SAME QUALITIES THAT MAKE CREATIVE PEOPLE GREAT AT COMING UP WITH NEW IDEAS TURN THEM INTO LOUSY

"For about 10 years I've been consulting with creative firms and over and over I would find people who are sophisticated professionals running firms with 50 to 100 people [who are] terrible negotiators," he says.

NEGOTIATORS

Why is that? Leonhardt draws inspiration from psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's seminal book *Flow*, which identifies 10 contradictory traits creative people tend to possess.

Essentially, the same qualities that make creative people great at coming up with new ideas turn them into lousy negotiators.

A common weakness of creative people is impostor syndrome--that nagging voice telling you that you're just a big fake, no matter how successful you are.

Creative work requires a healthy measure of sensitivity. You want your work to move people, which means being in-tune with their emotions. But at the negotiating table, this same sensitivity can backfire for creative people. "They are too sensitive. They don't want to bicker over the price. They just want to get over it and get to the work," says Leonhardt. "Learning to ask for what you need is really important and it's hard to do."

Still, it can and must be done. Over the years of first tackling his own struggles with negotiation, then working with creative clients on beefing up their own skills, Leonhardt has come away with some important tactics for not only dealing with the dread of negotiation, but being stellar at it.

1. REMIND YOURSELF YOU'RE WORTH IT

Sneaking into a bathroom stall to jot down your accomplishments, re-reading testimonials from clients, rattling off your accomplishments in the shower--whatever you can do, giving yourself that small reminder that you're worth it will go a long way. Coming to the negotiating table with confidence is key, but it starts with believing in yourself.

2. REHEARSE YOUR LINES

Of course, you don't want to sound rote when you speak, but running through what you want to say aloud and in front of others, will help you feel more confident. When Leonhardt ran his design firm, he would get his team to go over their lines for a presentation in advance. "Walking through the words would reduce everyone's anxieties including mine," he said.

3. KNOW YOUR FACTS

What's the range for how much a person in your role gets paid in your city? This information is available online with just a little bit of digging around. When you're armed with the facts, you can feel confident about the numbers. "Once you know what the range is, you can always assume your opposite knows as well," says Leonhardt. "Ask for a little more than the top of the range and feel fine about that."

Feel fine about it! How? Reread No. 1 above.

4. DON'T HAGGLE. INSPIRE

Creative people love their work. The work is the most important thing. We get it. But while your work can feel very personal, that shouldn't make negotiating about it feel wrong. And it doesn't have to feel like haggling either. In fact, the most important tactic you can take when it comes to negotiating is using your creativity to inspire potential clients.

That means coming to the table ready to show how your ideas are exactly what your client needs. It means asking lots of questions about what they want and need and inspiring them with your vision of how you'll get there.

"Make sure they understand what you are going to do for them," says Leonhardt. "Do that by inspiring them, not by adding up columns of numbers."

[Image: Flickr user Zaheer Mohiuddin]



JANE PORTER

Jane Porter writes about creativity, business, technology, health, education and literature. She's a 2013 Emerging Writing Fellow with the Center For Fiction.

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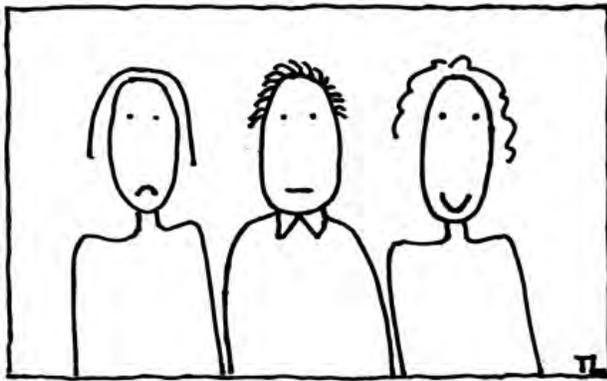
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June 27, 2014

How to Know What You Are Worth

By: Ted Leonhardt



I recently gave a talk to a group of design students on negotiating their first salaries. Worth and how to determine it was very much on their minds. Three were in the process of bargaining:

Mary:

Laid off from her first position out of school (the company closed), she was interviewed at another company, which offered her \$45k. Then, they asked her what her previous employer paid. She said \$38k and they lowered their offer to \$40k. The drop caught her completely by surprise. She went from feeling good, to feeling sick, in a heartbeat. Her self worth had just dropped \$5k. The shock was physical; her chest clenched. What should she do?

My observations:

- >If she accepts the \$40k she'll lose respect.
- >If she asks for the \$45k they'll attempt to get her down to \$42-\$43k.
- >If she asks for more, say \$46-\$47k, they will be impressed with her confidence. She may not get the job, but she'd walk out with their respect and her own.

What happened:

Shocked and overwhelmed, she turned down the \$40k. The meeting ended. She's now expecting offers from two other employers. Further, the experience helped her understand why she shouldn't reveal her past salary history and to ask for what she needs.

Bridgett

Just out of school, she was offered slightly under a \$100k by two firms. The two offers filled her with confidence. Better yet, one of them also offered Bridgett an \$18k signing bonus. She favored the firm that had not offered the bonus. Both firms told her she couldn't tell competitors what she'd been offered. Should she use the signing bonus offer as leverage?

My observations:

- >With little experience, she needs all the help she can get.
- >Bridgett's cred is expanded significantly by the two offers.
- >Employers use their power to hold down salaries.
- >Bridgett should absolutely use the signing bonus as leverage to get the position she wants, on terms she is happy with.

What happened:

Bridgett told the company she favored that she wanted to work for them, but that she was concerned about the high cost of living in their area. She also told them that she'd been offered the \$18k signing bonus. They matched it and she accepted.

About the Author
Ted Leonhardt

Ted Leonhardt has provided management consulting and negotiation training exclusively to creative businesses since 2005. He cofounded the The Leonhardt Group, a brand design firm in 1985 and sold it in 1999. In 2001 and 2002 Ted served as Chief Creative Officer for Fitch Worldwide, out of London. In 2003 through early 2005 Ted was president of Anthem Worldwide, a brand packaging design group.

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Andrew

He told the first recruiter what his last position paid and they offered \$2k more. Andrew declined. He refused to tell a second recruiter what he'd been paid and they said they couldn't make an offer if he didn't tell them and the meeting ended. Andrew left with that sinking feeling that you get when you think you pushed too hard. The next day they called and offered \$20k more than he'd ever been paid. Why did that happen?

My observations:

>Clearly, the recruiter was impressed with Andrew.

>The recruiter's offer had to be based on their appreciation of Andrew without the past salary reference point.

>Andrew raised the recruiter's respect by refusing to reveal his salary history.

What happened:

Andrew took the position.

And finally:

Widely available salary surveys provide a way for determining your worth. And it's important to know the range. But, developing the confidence to ask for what you need is an emotional skill and harder to master than gathering pay range facts. Learning to note and master your feelings during stressful situations is the real key to negotiation success and with it you'll gain respect as well.

Ask yourself: Do I know what I need to succeed and how to ask for it?

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Worth It: Online Negotiation Class for Designers

Jun 19, 2014 3:59 am

CreativeLive will host a free, interactive, multi-day [class](#) on negotiation and workplace communication for creative of all stripes - designers, photographers, musicians, actors, etc.

Beginning June 23, author, design powerhouse, and entrepreneur [Ted Leonhardt](#) will share his expertise over three days of live education designed to help creatives [negotiate](#) the salaries they deserve.

Leonhardt will help explore negotiating as a collaboration in which creatives guide those they are negotiating with. Students will learn how to use time and context to define opportunities, create contracts instead of proposals, and align people with their vision.

"Creatives are vastly underpaid, vastly undervalued for what they contribute," explains Leonhardt, "what I've learned is that knowing the value of your expertise and how to leverage it is the most powerful foundation for negotiating a great deal with anybody."

Worth It: Negotiation for Creatives *(Webinar)*

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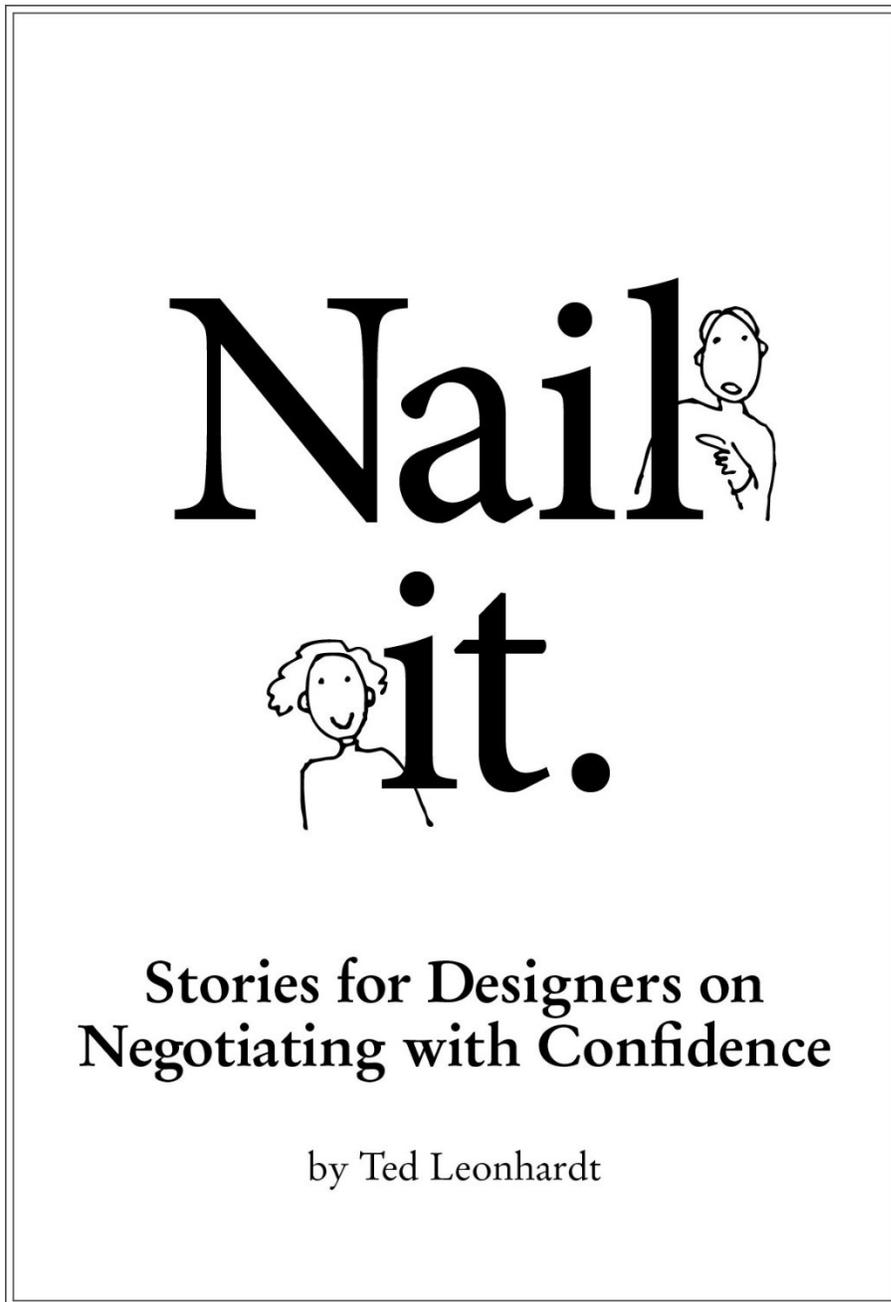
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Do You Know What You're Worth? This Books Helps You Find Out [Review]



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The author of this book states that creative people have the power to make a positive impact in the world. However, they do not get paid what they deserve and his main goal is to change that.

We have to be mindful that despite of our professional background, we still operate in a business-oriented environment. No matter what your position is, [effective] communication is crucial for the success and growth of a business.

Despite of the fact that you are experienced or a recent grad, this book will give you insights from different

real-life situations when negotiating a salary or a contract.

So, what were the main takeaways of this read?

1. Do you know what you're worth? This question is very important because depending on the answer that's how you are going to operate, sell your services and make a living from it. You can answer this by knowing what you need to succeed and making a plan to ask for it.

2. Be confident. You're a person. You're a part of a team whether you are collaborating as a freelancer or working in-house. You're as important as everyone else; therefore, you have the right to speak up and express what you feel in a professional manner. I bring this up because some people feel like if they speak up, they are going to generate conflict. They aren't... that idea or concern might be a breakthrough.

3. Less talk, more questions. This shows how committed, passionate and curious you are.

4. Don't be ready. Be prepared and have a plan. This will help you act with confidence when negotiating a salary or a contract with a client. Also, your client will be more likely to accept what you're charging for your services.

5. Ask for advice. Look for insights from people who have been there and done that. Also, many books like this one are out there waiting for you to be installed in your brain.

6. Let it go. I understand that you have bills to pay, but if you are in a low pay position and not growing as a professional, I would leave. The time you're spending at that job could be spent looking for a better position or freelancing in the meantime.

7. It's business after all. Most of the time you'll be told that your salary is out of the company's budget or you're charging too much. As a business, they are trying to make the most of you. Take a deep breath and stick to your position... or lose respect.

8. Don't give up. Some clients and business might do you wrong, but learn from these experiences. Your past doesn't dictate your future and don't waste time blaming others. Take charge of your career TODAY.

In conclusion, this book provides you with all the tools to negotiate with confidence from a contract to your salary. What's powerful about this book is that it is made from real stories that teach you to build your confidence.

Would I recommend this book? Definitely! this is MUST-READ specially for designer/creatives that focus on creating great work (nothing wrong with that), but unfortunately, we often neglect our communication skills.

Negotiation comes before creating; therefore, No Clients = No Designing

Send the author, [Ted Leonhardt](http://www.tedleonhardt.com/) a shout out on [Twitter](https://twitter.com/tedleonhardt) and you can find this book on Amazon [here](http://www.amazon.com/Nail-Stories-Designers-Negotiating-Confidence-ebook/dp/B00GU3GU46/ref=sr_1_fkmr0_3?ie=UTF8&qid=1400198761&sr=8-3-fkmr0&keywords=nail+it+negotiate) for \$5.

Leading Stories

What Will Ever Become of VAIO?

by Daniel Todaro

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Ask Ted: Is My Price Too High?

Written by Ted Leonhardt / Featured in: Business, Column / 14.05.2014.

**Ask Ted: So W
Get the Job?**

by: Ted Leonhardt

Chuck had submitted a proposal and, aside from acknowledgement that it was received, had heard nothing from his client contact, Robert.

Chuck asked, "Ted, I'm worried that my price was too high or that they've found someone else to do the work. Also, I don't know if they'll need me to do five interviews or twenty. I do know that the project needs to be done for a mid-June presentation to the senior guys in Rome. And that's a fixed date."

"Cool!" I responded, "I love fixed, unavoidable dates. First, you're perfect for this assignment. I wouldn't worry about them finding someone else. Look, two weeks have gone by. You'd have heard if they'd found somebody else. In any case, there's an easy way to find out what's going on. Ask."

Use the right channel

Me: "So, Chuck, does your relationship with Robert use Skype, email or text messages? I know he's nine hours ahead."

Chuck: "We started with email and FaceTime, but since I spent all that time with him in Rome we now use IM as much as anything."

Me: "Okay we'll wake him up with IM and see what's up."

Together, we composed the first text to say:

"Hi Robert, I'm getting concerned about time. I know you have that June event looming. Have you decided how many interviews I'll need to do?"

Me: "Notice that my message assumes that the assignment is yours. Also, I'm reminding him of the deadline in the spirit of helping him. My 'concern' is clearly in his best interests."

Chuck: "Let's see, nine hours ahead, he should still be up, let's send this first message now and see if he responds."

Chuck pressed send and we waited. And yes, moments later we got Robert's reply:

"Sorry, Chuck, last week was crazy. I'm on it."

Me: "Wow, it worked! Okay, we're on. We've got the gig. So, Chuck, let's follow up with another text to add a bit more urgency with a human touch."

We composed the following:

"I'm a new father and will need to schedule help for my wife while I'm away."

This text reminds Robert that his relationship with Chuck has a personal level as well as a professional one. It also reminds Robert that Chuck is a kind, caring person.

Robert didn't respond instantly to this second message, but the next morning Chuck awoke to Robert's follow-up message:

"Chuck, I just spoke to Fred, good news your framing is acceptable. Let's talk tomorrow. 5 pm Rome work?"

So now we have the assignment. The next step involves refining the scope, nailing down the dates and the number of interviews. Naturally, they could still push back on the costs; however, that June deadline is out there providing all the leverage we need.

RELATED: Ask Ted: Framing the Interview

And then

Sure enough, the next day I got the following email from Chuck:

Hi Ted,

Robert called to say his boss, Fred, wanted my day rate to be lower — matching Allison's, which they said was \$1,000. (Ted, I think you remember that Allison and I teamed up on that assignment we did for Fred three years ago).

Robert needs to get Fred's approval but will be funding it from his own budget. He told me that with my travel expenses (which he estimated at \$5K) on top of my \$37K fee the proposal was too expensive, but he would be happy if all together it were kept under \$37K. I'm fine with that. Now that I've spent some time studying what I'll need to do for them, \$37K will be fine.



Leading Stories



What Will Ever

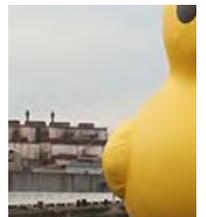
by: Daniel Todaro



The First Law Help Me Help

by: Radomir Basta

Editors' Pick



Adding the Un to Consumer E the Eye

by: Joel Weinberger

I am planning to keep my day rate at \$1,500 but to knock a couple days off so that with travel my proposal totals just under \$37K.

Robert will be OK with this. These fees are coming from his budget, so Fred should be okay too. Hopefully Fred will not balk at me keeping the day rate. Lowering my day rate seems like a bad precedent going forward.

My concern is that Fred could make a sticking point out of the day rate and try to get me to lower it after I have reduced the number of days. I think I'm in a pretty good position because they need this project to be completed before mid-June for that senior level briefing, so I don't think it will fall apart.

Any advice?

Chuck

To which I responded:

Hi Chuck,

Respect. The most important thing to come away with in any negotiation is respect. Here's something you can say if they continue to push back on your day rate:

"People choose to work with me because they respect my skills, knowledge and achievements for them and others. They pay my day rate out of respect and because they know that I will produce the results they need. In turn, lowering my day rate for you would be unfair and disrespectful to my clients who do pay my rate."

I'd use the above on the phone with Robert. And remember June is coming up fast. They have no real alternatives to using you.

Ted

The result

Robert was happy with the travel compromise, smoothed over the day rate issue with his boss, and Fred gave Chuck the go ahead. The lesson: When in doubt, ask. But ask in a manner that is clearly in your client's interest and, if possible, connect on a personal level. Someday Chuck may tell his new daughter that she helped seal a deal that moved his consulting career to a new level. Thank you, Emily!



Branding Is No

by: Bruce Levinson



Author / Ted Leonhardt

Ted Leonhardt co-founded The Leonhardt Group (TLG), a brand design agency, now Fitch:Seattle in 1985, with his partner Carolyn Leonhardt. The company had 50 employees and \$10 million in annual fee sales when they sold in 1999. Ted served as Chief Creative Officer for Fitch:Worldwide, where he had creative responsibility for 570 employees in 25 offices around the world. In 2003 Ted was appointed President of Anthem Worldwide, a brand-packaging consultancy with eight offices. Ted has lectured and written on the subject of design and business for many organizations and publications. He believes that powerful design driven organizations will play a more definitive role than ever in shaping the future. As a business consultant, he is focused solely on creative services, offering a completely individualized approach to every client.

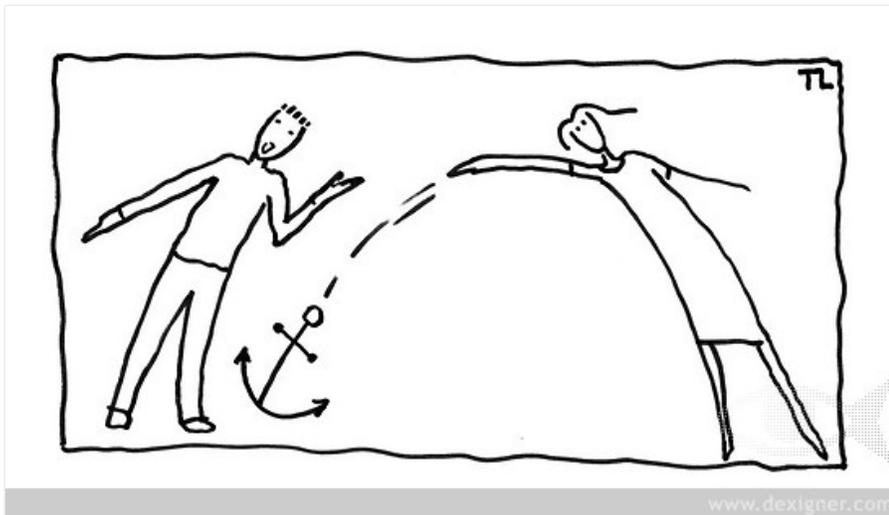
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Creatives: Establish Your Fee or Salary First

Apr 23, 2014 4:45 pm | by Ted Leonard

It's called throwing out an anchor. When you know the range and the scope of work it's to your advantage to establish your price first. There's several reasons to do so.



When you describe the scope, schedule and price - especially price - the other party tends to move to it. They feel that your price must be respected, even if they don't want to pay it. If they do wish to haggle over price, they'll do so with the assumption that your price is the top of the range. They'll negotiate knowing that to keep you in the discussion they can only offer what would be considered an acceptable level below your anchor price.

There is a bit of the reciprocity effect going on here. When we want to keep the conversation and the relationship going we respond in a manner that is not disruptive. It's just good manners to honor the other person's needs and point of view. It's automatic. It feels right. We can't counter too low because it would feel rude.

Finally, there is the expert effect. As a creative professional we're experts in our field. We have the education, experience, perhaps a few case studies that demonstrate our expertise. We're credentialed. So when we establish what is required to achieve our client's goal they have to accept it. After all, they came to us asking for a proposal. This does not mean that they will not push back on price, but that they are limited to how low they can counter.

Price range is important in all of this. If you are negotiating over a salaried position it's easy to check the salary

surveys to determine the range. If it's a creative consulting project you should know the price range from past work. But, you can always go to the creative guides and press accounts to uncover typical fee ranges.

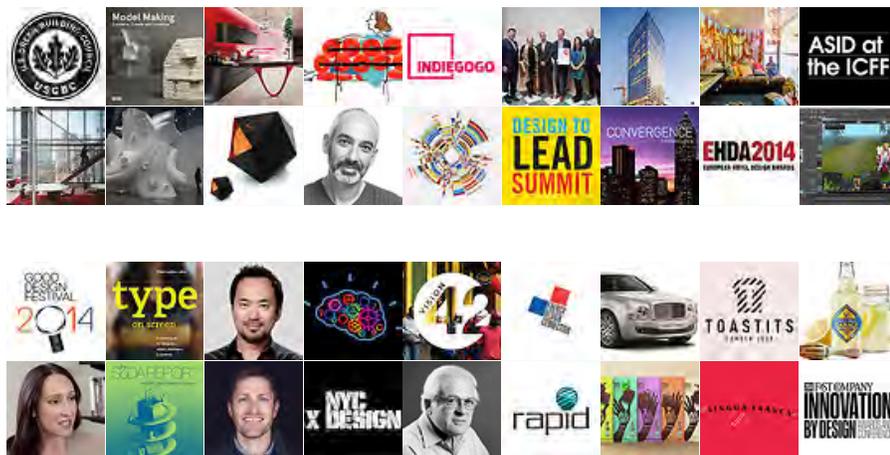
Remember, you always want to ask for just a bit more than the top of the range. Doing so honors your client, or employer, by indicating that they are getting the best talent at a "best talent" price. After all, you get what you pay for.

So, throw out the anchor.

Ted Leonhardt

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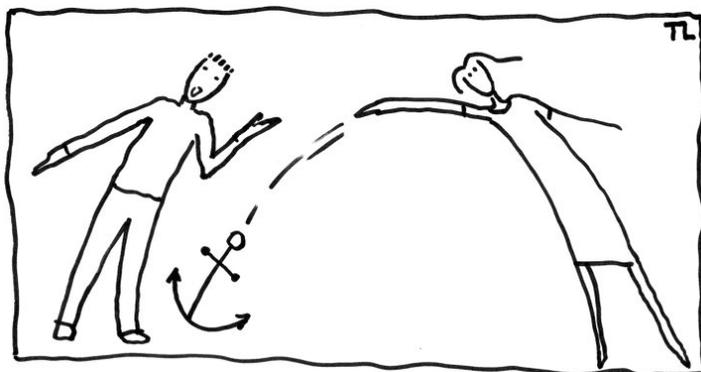
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April 29, 2014

Anchoring: How to Negotiate Any Price

By: Ted Leonhardt



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About the Author Ted Leonhardt

Ted Leonhardt has provided management consulting and negotiation training exclusively to creative businesses since 2005. He cofounded the The Leonhardt Group, a brand design firm in 1985 and sold it in 1999. In 2001 and 2002 Ted served as Chief Creative Officer for Fitch Worldwide, out of London. In 2003 through early 2005 Ted was president of Anthem Worldwide, a brand packaging design group.

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TALKING ABOUT EARLY DESIGN CAREER SALARY NEGOTIATIONS

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I was chatting to [Ted Leonhardt](https://twitter.com/tedleonhardt) about his new book *Nail It: Stories for Designers on Negotiating with Confidence* (http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00GU3GU46/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B00GU3GU46&linkCode=as2&tag=20). Ted has compiled a collection of true stories about designers getting the salaries they deserve. I've excerpted one of the chapters below, followed by a few design salary resources.

WHAT AM I WORTH?

I recently gave a talk to a group of design students on early career negotiations. Worth, and how to determine it, was very much on their minds. Three of the students shared their bargaining stories.

Margret

Focus: *publication design*. Region: *Washington, DC*.

Laid off from her first position out of school (the company closed), Margret was interviewed at another company, where they offered her \$45K. Then they asked her what her previous employer paid. She told them the truth and said \$38K, so they lowered their offer to \$40K.

The drop caught her completely by surprise. She went from feeling good to feeling sick and jilted in a heartbeat. Her self-worth had just dropped \$5K! The shock was physical; her chest clenched. What should she do?

My observations:

- If she accepts the \$40K, she'll lose their respect.
- If she asks for the original \$45K, they'll attempt to get her down to \$42K-\$43K.
- If she asks for more, say \$46K-\$47K, they will be impressed with her confidence.

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She may not get the job, but she'll walk out with their respect — and her own.
What happened:

Shocked and dismayed, Margret turned down the \$40K. The meeting ended. She's now expecting offers from two other employers. Above all, the experience helped her understand why she shouldn't reveal her past salary history, and to always ask for what she needs.

Bridget

Focus: user experience. Region: San Francisco.

Shortly after graduation, Bridget was courted by some big firms in Seattle (where she attended design school) and eventually was offered

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Design salary negotiations

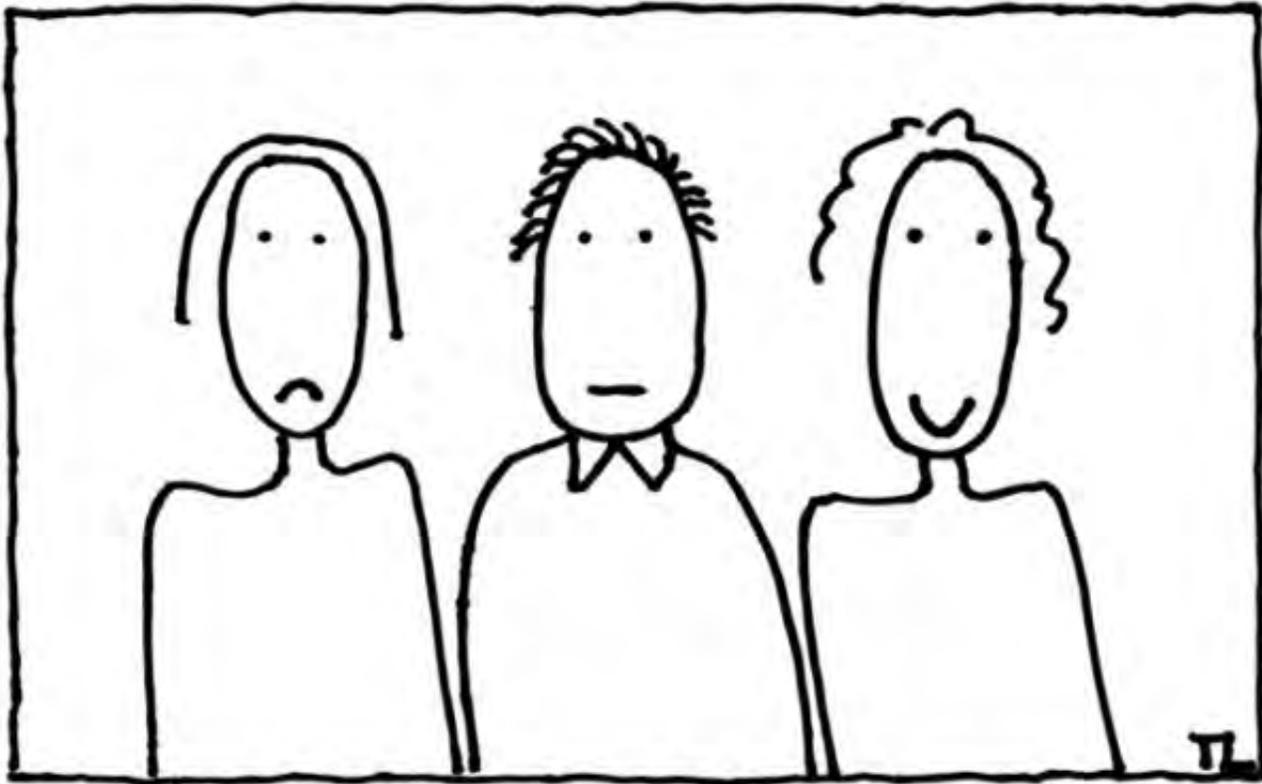
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Great article over on [David Airey's blog](#) about

negotiating design salary, with excerpts from [Ted Leonhardt's](#) new book [Nail It: Stories for Designers on Negotiating with Confidence](#). This is a great resource for both established & up and coming designers. I wish I'd had this info earlier in my career, it would have went a long way even if I would have been able to miss out on things like nightly ramen dinners or rent check roulette. Anyways, click on the link above or check out the complete article after the jump.

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Bridget

Focus: user experience. Region: San Francisco.

Shortly after graduation, Bridget was courted by some big firms in Seattle (where she attended design school) and eventually was offered slightly under \$100K by two different firms in San Francisco. Naturally, these offers filled her with confidence. Better yet, one of them also offered Bridget an \$18K signing bonus (although she favored the firm that had not offered the bonus). Both firms told her she couldn't tell competitors what she'd been offered.

Are her hands truly tied? Should she use the signing bonus offer as leverage?

My observations:

With little experience, she needs all the advice she can get. She should turn to books, articles, friends, or family.

Bridget's credibility is expanded significantly by the two offers.

Employers use their power to hold down salaries.

Bridget should absolutely use the signing bonus as leverage to get the position she wants, and on terms she is happy with.

What happened:

Bridget told the company she favored that she wanted to work for them, but that she was concerned about the high cost of living in the area. She also told them that another company had offered her an \$18K signing bonus. They matched it and she accepted.

Andrew

Focus: Brand Design. Region: Chicago.

Andrew originally received two job offers. He told the first recruiter what his last position paid, and they offered him \$2K more. Underwhelmed, Andrew declined. He then politely refused to tell a second recruiter what he'd been paid and was informed they couldn't make an offer if he didn't

share his previous salary with them. The meeting ended. Andrew left with that sinking feeling you get when you suspect you pushed too hard. The next day they called and offered \$20K more than he'd ever been paid. Why did that happen?

My observations:

Clearly, the recruiter was impressed with Andrew.

The recruiter's offer, like all offers, needed to be based on an appreciation of Andrew, without the past salary as a reference point.

Andrew raised the recruiter's respect by refusing to reveal his salary history.

What happened:

Andrew took the second position.

And, finally

Widely available salary surveys provide a way for determining your worth, and it's important to know the range. Professional associations are the best place to start.

Still, developing the confidence to ask for what you need is an emotional skill, and harder to master than gathering pay-range facts. Learning to note and master your feelings during stressful situations is the real key to negotiation success, and with it you'll gain respect as well. This book and others like it can help.

Ask yourself: Do I know what I need to succeed, and how to ask for it?

—

Nail It is available to buy on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) and [Amazon.co.uk](https://www.amazon.co.uk).

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[Design salary guide](#), by Coroflot (worldwide)

[AIGA Aquent Survey of Design Salaries \(US\)](#)

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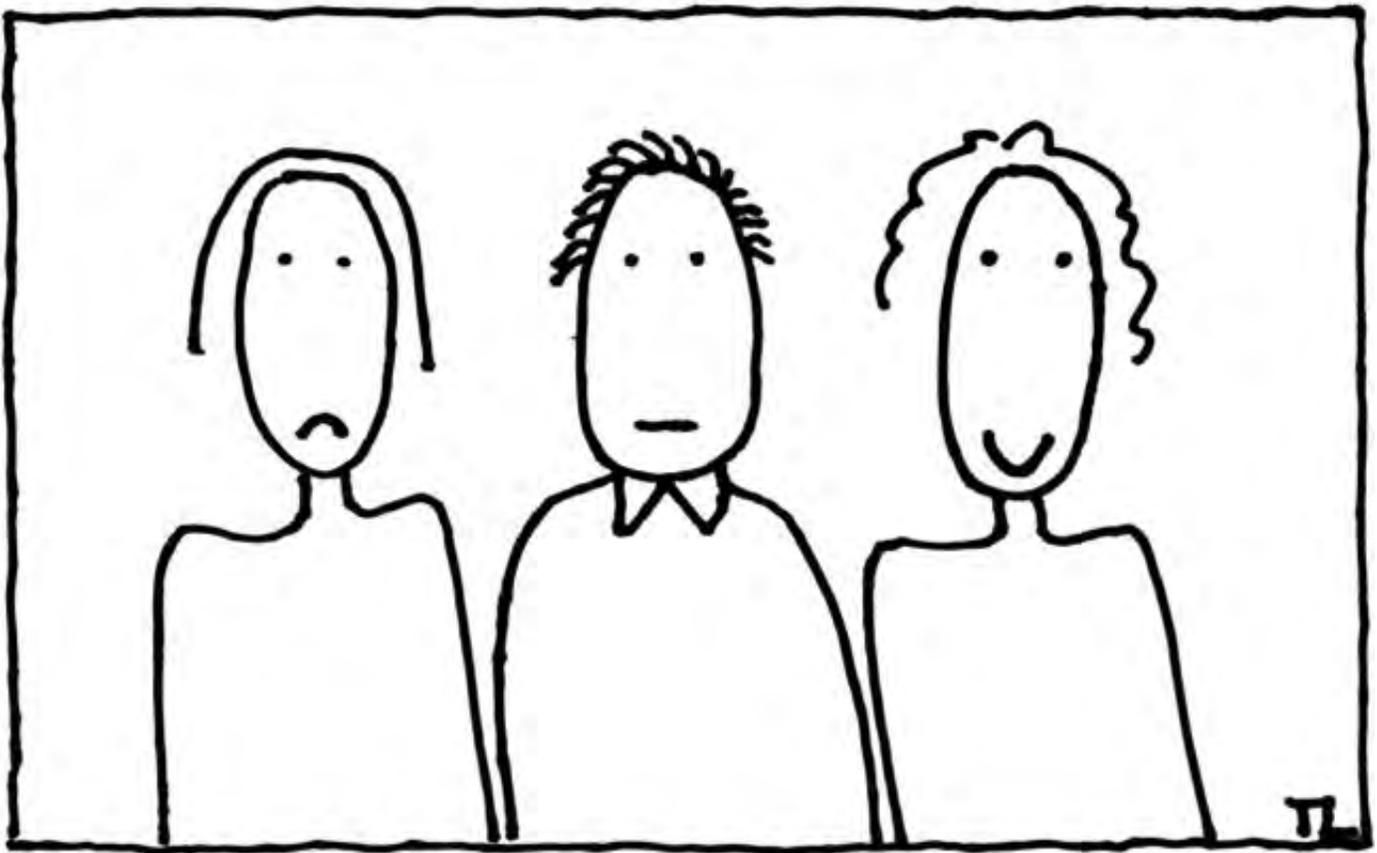
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On negotiating your design salary

Written By: Marty - Mar• 09•14

*I was chatting with Ted Leonhardt about his new book *Nail It: Stories for Designers on Negotiating with Confidence*. Ted has compiled a collection of true stories about designers getting the salaries they deserve. I've excerpted one of the chapters below, followed by a few design salary resources.*



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David Airey, graphic designer

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Uncovering the Issues

Feb 13, 2014 10:09 am | by Ted Leonhardt

I paid the cab and hoped I'd landed at the right Starbucks. Matt sat in the corner focused on his iPad. He leaped right in, "I'm at Z-corp for six meetings a week. It's exhausting. Paolo only makes it to one a week. When he's not there, he's on the phone but the Z-corp guys ignore him."

"Paolo is perfect for Z-corp. He looks the part, speaks their language, fits their culture. But when he's not there he's simply off their radar."

Matt was wound up, "Actually this engagement is more about design than strategy. They need me more than they need him."

"Could you have landed it without Paolo, Matt?"

"No. Our last assignment set us up for this one. Z-corp's chairman was blown away. When something pleases the chairman everyone sees it as the key to success. Our Keynote is now legendary."

"No, Paolo is a must. Everyone knows the Paolo/Matt team. In fact, they don't use my firm name even though our contracts are under the Visual Strategy brand."

I think: "a little jealousy here." How to get Matt to understand the real problem. "Matt, you said: they need you more than Paolo. Why?"

"At the start it looked a lot like the last project. But this team is not well-organized - lots of politics - and their leader is just not engaged. So they go in circles."

"So, Matt, this project looked like the last one? How did it change? Does the client team have a clear goal?"

"Sure - look good to the big guy in the presentation next month."

"But what's the project goal?"

"Right, there's another wrinkle. Z-corp has hired another consulting firm to gather content. Last time Paolo collected content from the field and from Z-corp archives and edited it."

"But, Matt, it sounds like Paolo still has to organize the content so you can build the Keynote. Is that right?"

"Yes"

"And Matt, could the politics be because the Z-corp team is confused about the goals? Have you talked to Paolo about this?"

"Not enough. When we're clicking it's the best. He's smart and so good at getting them on track. I trust him completely. I wish he was taking all the meetings so I could focus on other clients. But our deal is one meeting a week and Palo resists doing more. He will, but he pushes back."

"Matt, Does Palo know that you're at risk of losing this client? That the other consultant could leap on this if given a chance. It's not the money, is it?"

"No it's not the money and Palo has no other clients, he's just busy with family stuff. His wife is about to have her first baby. I wish Palo would take over the account. I'm behind on work for other clients. I'm afraid I'm letting them down. They were my first clients and I love the brand design and retail work more than this. I'm just sooo tired of Keynote."

"Okay, Matt, then let Z-corp go and do what you want to do."

"I can't. Huge cred working with Z-corp and they're more than half my revenue. Plus the mix of strategy and design is what I do best. I think it's the politics that's getting to me."

"Matt, you've got to talk to Paolo, even though you don't think you can persuade him. Your history is important to both of you. He would never do anything to hurt you. You need to get him to help you solve this problem."

We made a do list:

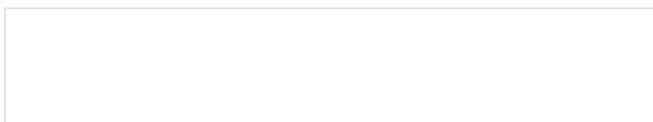
- Talk to Palo. What does he think? How can we make this work.
- Get some help. Find a couple of Keynote talents. Be clear that you're in startup mode. They'll have to do whatever is needed.
- Establish boundaries with Z-corp. Put on your best account manager persona. Manage the relationship.

Matt and I got refills and headed for the street.

Matt stopped and said, "that was great. I've got my list. I'm looking forward to talking with Palo. It all seems much clearer now. Thanks!"

The Real Issues

- Too many meetings. The project needs clarity: reaffirm and adjust the goals, establish steps for achieving them, review with the client, set specific criteria for future meetings.
- Matt is disconnected from Paolo. They need to reestablish their problem-solving relationship. They must talk about the issues, understand each others' point of view and determine how they want to go forward together, or not.
- Matt has difficulty asking clients and co-workers for what he needs to succeed. He needs coaching on how to handle difficult conversations.



Tips from the Pro: Interview Advice for Millennials

Written by Ted Leonhardt / Featured in: Column / 27.02.2014.



Don't chew gum. Don't bring your own coffee. Be on time.

Those are easy.

Here's the hard stuff. Don't talk too much. Maintain your attention. Be relaxed.

What's the difference? It's simple: we really don't need to be told to be on time, sans coffee and gum. But, it's really hard to be relaxed when you know the interview is a once in a lifetime opportunity.

Here's another. Why do people come to interviews unprepared? Is it because they think they have it nailed? Maybe sometimes. Or, is it because it is a once in a lifetime opportunity and they are scared to death? So scared that they revert to a "head in the sand" persona to avoid the fear, anxiety and resulting pain as long as possible?

That was my experience and I'm an experienced practitioner of head in the sand behavior. Take my word for it: being self-delusional works great, up to a point. And of course that point is the interview itself. The interview, where you blow the chance of a lifetime because you avoided thinking about it up to the interview itself.

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Friday, Sept. 20, 2013

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When Clients/Prospects Believe In You

by **Ted Leonhardt**

When a client or prospect asks for something, the agency -- whether a design, advertising agency or public relations firm -- has earned their respect. But will asking for something risk the relationship? No -- asking for what one ...

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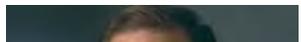
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BBDO Does Awesome Work For Gillette...Right After Losing Account

Pointing out a truism that we see repeated over and over again in the advertising business, Stephen Foster, writing in More About Advertising, points to some recent work that BBDO just did for Gillette. He makes note of the fact that the work is awesome. Funny thing, though -- and this is where the truism comes into play -- BBDO just lost the account to Grey and is serving out its last days on the account.

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My Dinner With Randy, 

Actually, now that I've thought about it a bit, maybe chewing gum, bringing my own coffee and being late are symptoms of the same delusion. As in, I'll just show them how relaxed and in charge I am by chewing gum, stopping for coffee on the way, and being fashionably late. You know, just chilling a bit. Its cool.

SEE ALSO: [Designers, Do You Know What You're Worth?](#)

What to do about those pesky feelings that take over and can ruin our opportunities?

First, recognize that feeling anxious when something important looms is normal. It happens to everyone and will happen to you. It sure happens to me and I'm a pro, been there done that. But I still get anxious. Just recognizing the anxiety is the first step in dealing with it.

Second, plan. Planning reduces the unknowns that produce anxiety. And the most important unknown for me: will they like me? If I plan what I'm going to say, study the situation, understand, to the best of my ability, what they want, then I'll begin to feel my anxiety slip away.

Third, create a list of questions that are tailored to the opportunity and are based on what you have learned through your planning process. Questions are a comfortable way to keep the interviewer talking about the position, the company, and themselves. Questions give you a chance to learn more about the stated issues and the underlying, often unstated, interests that are the real drivers.

Finally, get some major aerobic exercise and think about the opportunity while doing so. Whatever the situation, exercise is key to clear thinking and being ready for anything with a relaxed demeanor. Thinking random thoughts interspersed with reviewing my plan while on a run always results in improvements in the plan. It often results in, maybe, a bit more research or perhaps a few more conversations with my advisors. The exercise always results in increased feelings of control over myself and of the situation.

I've practiced these steps for years. But as I write this I'm remembering situations early in my career where I wasn't prepared, stuck my head in the sand, and failed miserably. I vowed to never do that again and then did it again and failed again. Eventually I wormed my way out of a destructive, delusional loop and started to have some success. You can too.

Illustration: Ted Leonhardt

Leading Story

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Author / Ted Leonhardt

Ted Leonhardt co-founded The Leonhardt Group (TLG), a brand design agency, now Fitch:Seattle in 1985, with his partner Carolyn Leonhardt. The company had 50 employees and \$10 million in annual fee sales when they sold in 1999. Ted served as Chief Creative Officer for Fitch:Worldwide, where he had creative responsibility for 570 employees in 25 offices around the world. In 2003 Ted was appointed President of Anthem Worldwide, a brand-packaging consultancy with eight offices. Ted has lectured and written on the subject of design and business for many organizations and publications. He believes that powerful design driven organizations will play a more definitive role than ever in shaping the future. As a business consultant, he is focused solely on creative services, offering a completely individualized approach to every client.

website



«Nail It ...» [Stories for Designers on Negotiating with Confidence by Ted Leonhardt – \(download his free eBook\).](#)

Ted Leonhardt was 31 when he started his own graphic design firm. He made money, but mistakes. He hired the wrong people, bungled presentations, saw no growth and worked for wages.

Years later he regrouped with a different partner and together they sorted things out, solved problems, discovered their strengths, and built a branding powerhouse. Their goal was to do celebrated creative work, to have happy healthy employees, and to make good money. They accomplished all three. They hit our stride with 40+ employees and \$10 million in fees!

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New, Free Ebook about Negotiation Strategies for Designers

Posted on [January 8, 2014](#) by [Melissa Mazzoleni](#)

Categories: [HOW Blog](#) Tags: [negotiation strategies](#), [Ted Leonhardt](#).

0

Ted Leonhardt has given some great business advice on the HOW blog before, such as [10 Negotiation Strategies for Creatives](#) and [How to Negotiate Your First Salary](#). Well, this business consultant has even more free negotiation advice for designers.

[Leonhardt](#) has released an ebook, *Nail It. Stories for Designers on Negotiating with Confidence*. And you can pick this title for free through [iTunes](#) until January 15. After this date, the book price will only jump to \$6 and the title is currently available through [Amazon](#) for \$6 as well. In other words, you'll want to get your hands on this guide pronto to learn how to make the entire negotiation process less intimidating and daunting.



Photo from [Shutterstock](#)

In a conversation I had with Ted, he explained that he wanted the book to be available for educators and for students. This is important to him as he highlights issues and provides advice that he feels many young designers aren't taught in school but face right away in the professional world. Based upon real world stories, Leonhardt takes a narrative approach in the book – an avenue that is newer for the business-focused writer.

The book sprung out of Leonhardt's work as a consultant and a talk he gave at the University of Washington to graduating BFA students in 2013 – he realized that many students weren't aware that they *could* negotiate salaries. And he loves helping designers realize their full potential.

Through these stories, he aims to make negotiation strategies relatable and show how the tips and advice he provides can be applied to situations. He hopes it helps some students (or young professionals) make the transition from college

for the first job, pointing out that chapter 2 “What Am I Worth” is a particularly helpful chapter. Leonhardt will also give a book talk with some hard copies available for sale on February 19 at the Maker House in Seattle.



8+

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For even more advice about design, business and other issues that matter to you, be sure to [register](#) for the HOW Design Live 2014 Conference in Boston.

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Here is the latest issue of the bi-monthly MARKETING newspaper. See [Archives](#) for past issues.

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The online edition of the 2013 ATLAS is now posted! Click on the cover to view.

Looking Or Hiring—Better Read This!

'To Imagine Is To Do'

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by MNW on 01/06/2014 · NO COMMENTS



• **Horsfall Hiatus:** Here's the unexpurgated release from David Horsfall (*back row center in blue shirt on Alki Beach below*), headlined "Copywriter retires to become a bum." To wit:

After nearly four decades in advertising, an award-winning copywriter has traded headlines for tan lines.

David Horsfall's new venture is called Alki Surf Shop, an online store featuring Genuine Alki tops for men and women.

"We had a soft launch before Christmas," David said. "It's been fun. Now we're ramping up for Spring."

The website [alkisurfshop.com](#) includes a video shot guerilla-style on smart phones, with original music performed by Stevie Ray Allen, vocal by Alyssa Zagorie and edited by Cindy Sangster.

According to Horsfall, "We had a small budget, but a lot of talented friends."

Horsfall began his career in the mail room at Ayer-Baker Advertising and was formerly a VP/partner at Seattle's largest ad agency.

His new title is Beach Bum & CEO...

Passages: Warren Payne wrote to let me know of the passing of his wife, Cathy Spencer, on Oct. 22, with whom he co-founded the PayneSpencer marketing firm in 1999.



Spencer



Blackinton

Cathy was born in Bend, OR and spent more than 30 years in marketing and PR. She began her career at the Bend Bulletin and in 1996 moved to southern California where she worked for The Newspaper Network, later moving here to open a Seattle office of TNN. She and Warren had children Cara and Sean... Jeff Blackinton, 48, was remembered at a celebration of life on Nov. 17 attended by more than 200 at Salty's on Alki. He is the son of retired Emerald City Graphics general manager Herb Blackinton and was employed at ECG as a master mechanic at the time of his unexpected death...

• **Pino Publication:** Ernesto Pino of Producciones Pino, the Spanish-language ad agency, has published a new children's book titled *¡Cocino con Mamá!* (I'm Cooking With Mom!). Little

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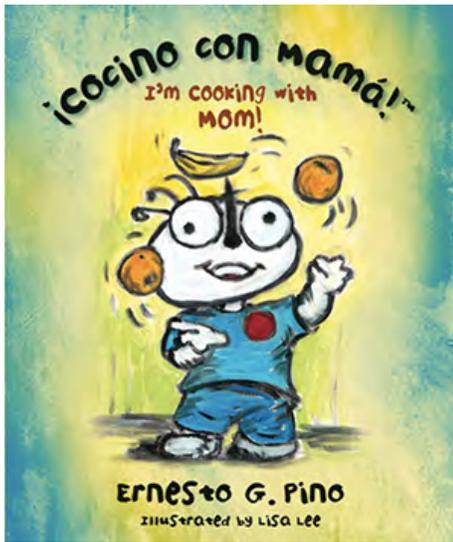
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Ricky's eagerness to help Mama fix breakfast gives young readers a snappy introduction to Spanish, using just the right measure of Spanish words to make learning easy. Translations within the richly illustrated poem and glossaries make meanings of words clear.

The recipes, in both Spanish and English, and the poem's lively tempo will send cooks young and old dancing to the kitchen and whipping up their own pancakes.

Ernie said, "The book was created two years ago when my dear friend, Lisa Lee, and I briefly brainstormed a project on which we could collaborate. Lisa is a senior manager at Apple and also an immensely

talented artist. I sat down and wrote the poem in 20 minutes. Lisa loved it and immediately began painting illustrations in acrylics on canvas to complement the story... This is homage to my parents, who insisted on raising their children in a bilingual household."

He even got a plug on the Today Show when Kathy Lee Gifford, who he had met when she visited Seattle, held up a copy and declared the book "one of her favorite things."

More Books: *Ted Leonhardt, local design exec turned consultant, has authored a book titled Nail It that he describes as "the first book to lead emerging designers to the salaries they deserve." He uses real-world stories to demystify the negotiation process. And veteran media-sales maven Sparky Taft has authored yet another book that he says "reveals many techniques I use for clients and why my clients' advertising is so uniquely successful."*

Nail
it.

Stories for Designers on
Negotiating with Confidence

by Ted Leonhardt



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December 31, 2013

"Negotiation: Logic and Emotion" by Ted Leonhardt



This is a guest post by [Ted Leonhardt](#), who helped me out with the "[Negotiation](#)" chapter of [Success by Design: The Essential Business Reference for Designers](#). Ted has a new book that just came out called [Nail It: Stories for Designers on Negotiating with Confidence](#), which takes the topic much further and extends from client interactions to salary negotiations, promotions, and job interviews. Nail It was released first this month as an e-book through [Amazon/iBooks](#) and will soon be in print, so check it out!

Logic is great for analyzing what went wrong after the event. But it's not so great for creative and emotional moment-to-moment decision-making. When you're in the heat of it all, logic is hard to hang onto. Understanding how to move from being dominated by your emotions back to your logical side is critical to success in stressful situations.

An example

You're negotiating the biggest budget of your career – up to now anyway – and your client Fred says, “we just got a bid that's half of yours.” Wham! You didn't even know that there was a competitor involved. Everything just changed!

You're surprised. All of a sudden you feel your heart beat in your ears. You're caught unawares. Maybe you're a little embarrassed, caught in front of your team who – you told you had it in the bag. You're certainly reassessing your relationship with Fred, who just blindsided you. As this is swirling around in your head, you're feeling a little queasy too.

You know from experience not to respond in the moment, but it's hard not to let your disappointment, outrage and,

perhaps fear of loosing, reduce you to your inner child. Always a bad idea.

Earlier in your career the half price claim would have completely focused you on price and how to lower it. The client's claim reframed the meeting from a high level discussion, to down and dirty market bargaining. In effect, you've just gone from attempting to achieve lofty mutual goals to haggling over a used car. That's a natural kneejerk emotional reaction to being hit by surprise. It changes everything in a heartbeat.

Instinctively you want to hit back: "What? You said we had the project, that we just needed to work out the details. What's going on?"

Or, again instinctively, the role-over reaction: "Well, I guess we could take a look at our pricing calculations."

Both reactions are completely understandable in the heat of the moment. They are like fight or flight. Both are focused on the price objection and lead to the same place: less money, less respect, or worse, the loss of the project to the half-priced competitor. Both reactions are driven by your feelings in the moment.

I always thought that with experience I'd no longer feel the tug of emotions overwhelming my rational self. That these feelings would no longer plague me when I grew up. Sadly that hasn't happened. But I have learned that when the emotions are running hot and heavy it's a signal by myself to myself that: first, what is going on is important; second, I'd better pay attention; third, I need to step back and get a little space on the subject. I may need to just take a deep breath or I may need more time. In either case it's the reminder to not react that's important.

What to do

Because emotions are so powerful you must prepare in advance to deal with them.

In my experience the most important preparation is the simple recognition that these feelings are normal and can happen at any time. I call this the "take your head out of the sand" step. I used to simply pretend that these feeling didn't exist. I'd go bravely into negotiations actively suppressing even the eventuality that I might react emotionally. The result of this maneuver was surprise and poor reactions every time my feelings did get aroused. Not good. But, by recognizing that my emotions could rage prepares me to logically examine and rationally deal with them when they do.

Second, have a list of questions prepared that are both general and specific that you can refer to in the heat of the moment. A quick glance at your list can give you the needed tip to get past the narrow issue at hand, shift the context and get back in control of yourself and the situation.

Third, remember your accomplishments and credentials. Don't forget that you were invited to the negotiations because of your skills and achievements. The client needs you to help them—you are an expert—you have high standards and always deliver as promised.

What to say

Since the half price challenge caught us by surprise maybe something has changed since we started the conversation. We could ask, "Fred, has something changed since we last spoke?"

All we know is that Fred has cited a half price competitor after indicating that we were already selected. We could say, "Fred, we've put our budget together to achieve what we understood to be your goals. What would you recommend?"

Often our opposite doesn't have the authority to move forward and does not want to reveal their hidden constraints. "Have I misunderstood something about your goals, Fred?"

Think of these neutral, non-challenging questions as the first steps in unraveling what is really going on. Think of them as a part of your investigation. Make sure Fred understands that you see dealing with his half price challenge as new information. New information that properly investigated, will lead to a mutually satisfying result.

You can always ask my favorite question, "Fred, help me understand how you'd like to move forward."

WHEN LOGIC & EMOTION SIT AT THE NEGOTIATION TABLE BY TED LEONHARDT

December 9, 2013 | Business, Column

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Both reactions are completely understandable in the heat of the moment. They are analogous to fight or flight. Both are focused on the price objection and lead to the same place: Less money, less respect or, worse, the loss of the project to the half-priced competitor.

SEE ALSO: [Can You Write a Story Based on These 22 Rules?](#)

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You can always ask my favorite question, "Fred, help me understand how you'd like to move forward."

And, finally

Using your natural, emotional responses to inform a rational response will serve you well at the bargaining table. It sure works for me.

Image credit: Brighton – picnic table balance by gliuoo

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BY TED LEONHARDT AUTHOR



tedleonhardt.com 13 posts

Ted Leonhardt co-founded The Leonhardt Group (TLG), a brand design agency, now Fitch:Seattle in 1985, with his partner Carolyn Leonhardt. The company had 50 employees and \$10 million in annual fee sales when they sold in 1999. Ted served as Chief Creative Officer for Fitch:Worldwide, where he had creative responsibility for 570 employees in 25 offices around the world. In 2003 Ted was appointed President of Anthem Worldwide, a brand-packaging consultancy with eight offices. Ted has lectured and written on the subject of design and

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10 Negotiation Strategies for Creatives

Posted on [November 15, 2013](#) by [Melissa Mazzoleni](#)

Categories: [Design Business Clients](#): [Communication & Management](#), [HOW Blog](#) Tags: [negotiation strategies](#), [Ted Leonhardt](#).

8+1

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Design business consultant [Ted Leonhardt](#) provides an excerpt from “The Graphic Artists Guild Handbook: Pricing & Ethical Guidelines” – the 14th edition was recently released.

These 10 negotiation strategies will help you make sure you're getting a fair deal while also remaining in control during client meetings.

1. Build your own Virtuous Cycle.

A Virtuous Cycle is a series of events that result in a favorable outcome, over and over again. For creatives, it means using your work and the insights you've gained from doing it to gain the interest and attention of future clients on a continuous basis. Their interest in you means that they've accepted you as an expert. When that has occurred, your fees become non-negotiable. A well-managed Virtuous Cycle negates the need to negotiate.

2. Behave like the expert that you are.

Experts determine how to best meet a client's needs. Experts ask questions and create plans. Experts develop lists of the deliverables required to achieve success. Experts produce the budgets and schedules necessary to create the agreed scope of work. Experts don't cut fees to meet a client's demand because only the plan created by the expert will achieve success. Cutting the fees undermines the potential for success and the power of the expert in the relationship.

3. Ask questions and really listen to their answers.

Listen, take notes, read back what you wrote and ask for clarification. Listening is a powerful tool. You'll learn what they really want, need and how it will shape their future personally and the future of their company. The more you know, the more precisely you'll be able to define your response. Being really listened to is immensely flattering and endearing. So, not only do you learn about the opportunity you also build a bond with the client.

4. Avoid talking too much.

Talking too much is a natural way to relieve nervous tension. Don't do it. It's a sign of discomfort and neediness that a trained negotiator can exploit. It's always a sign of insecurity when you're at the bargaining table.

5. Separate yourself from your services.

This is hard for creative people. We are the product. As a result, we care too much automatically. When you're at the bargaining table, you must train yourself to care but not too much. When we care too much at the bargaining table, we lose perspective and, sometimes, the insecurities that we all have rise to the surface and take over. If that happens, you must find an excuse to leave the bargaining table.

6. Don't accept the client's initial offer

In business, some attempt to negotiate the fee is expected. Clients who present an initial budget are prepared to move up some on the fee. They hold back to protect themselves. Their initial budget is never the real budget – there's always a larger budget available. They'll expect you to ask for more. If you don't ask, they'll lose some of the respect they initially had for you and your expertise. To maintain your expert position, you must define the scope required to meet the client's need. That means you must set the budget, too.

7. Do not give clients anything for free.

Always get something in return for everything you provide. In the world we live in, everything that's valuable is measured in money. If you don't get a fee for what you provide, the clients won't value it.

8. Never cut deliverables to meet the client's budget.

Cutting deliverables completely undermines your expert status. You've built the exact combination of activities and deliverables to provide the best possible solution to the client's need. Then, under the pressure of bargaining you cut services; what does that say about your expert judgment? It says you're just like everyone else — desperate for the work. Don't do it.

9. Never rush to close.

Discomfort with negotiating often causes us to close the deal hostility or cave in to the client's demands. Instead, think of the negotiating stage as part of the creative process. It is. Take all the time you need to consider every step, every detail of the process. Remember the phrase "I have all the time in the world." Rushing to close is another classic sign of weakness and insecurity. Don't do it.



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10. Never tell what you would've done it for.

Never, never, never tell. Often in a misguided attempt to connect personally with the client one feels the need to reveal more than required. You never want the client to know how you compiled your costs or what your real bottom line was. If you do, rest assured that they'll use it against you in the future. Or worse, they'll feel taken advantage of.

These strategies were adapted from Ted Leonhardt's "Ten Steps to Negotiating Success for Creatives" – Used with permission. Learn more about Leonhardt at www.tedleonhardt.com

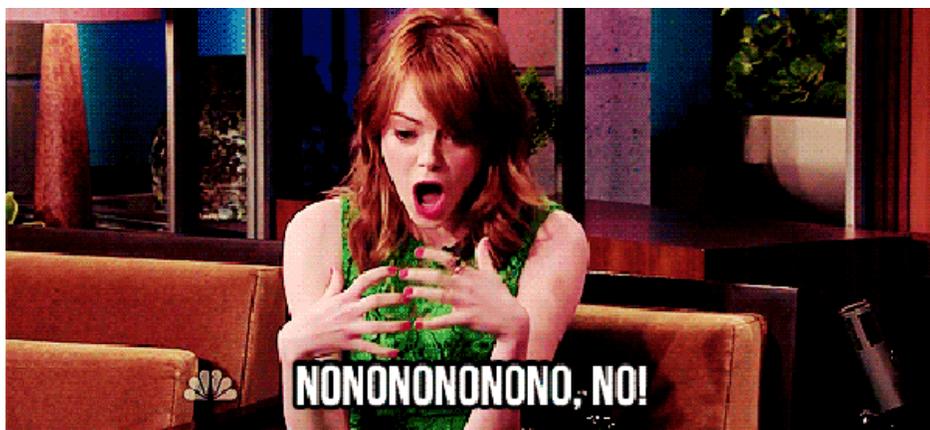
When prospects say 'no'

By Ted Leonhardt | Posted: November 7, 2013

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When a prospect says no or, worse, when they just don't get back to you—which is the slow form of “no”—it's very frustrating.

In one of my morning Skype calls, a client asked for advice on what to do in this situation. He'd had a series of proposals out to prospects and was wondering what he could do to turn them into clients.

The enemy in these uncomfortable situations is the eagerness to get past our feelings of discomfort. Nobody likes conflict and rejection. I have these feelings myself. I always thought I'd get past them with experience. I haven't, but now I deal better with them.

That's what I immediately wanted to help my client with and, if possible, help him close some new business in the process. Most of all, I sought to help him understand more clearly how his skills and experience can help his clients.

So, here we are. You've presented your case. The logic is sound, your credentials relevant. It's clear that you understand the situation and know how to help them achieve their goals, at least to this point.

Reducing your fee or asking for a lower salary (if it's employment you're seeking), cutting deliverables, or shortening the schedule are not the answer. If you do any of those, you'll undermine the value of your expertise.

The tricky part

When people say “no,” they are actually asking for help. Actually “no” is the start of the real negotiation, the beginning of the opportunity to understand their real needs.

“No” means:

- “I don't want precisely what you described”
- “I can't see any way to move forward”
- I have other issues that I haven't revealed”
- “I'm afraid to tell you what my real constraints are”

And so on.

“No” is a signal that you don't know the whole story yet. It means that you have not established a trusting, mutual problem solving relationship—at least not yet. “No” is an opportunity to extend the relationship and expand your understanding of the problem. When you hear “no” it means: Don't

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give up now, you're just getting to the good part.

So, start asking questions, in person or on Skype if a meeting is impossible. You should see them, and they you, to gain their trust. The following questions will provide new insights, but more important the questions, the more you show your interest in understanding the prospect and the situation from their point of view.

Pose questions like:

- What about this proposal is not right?
- What stands in the way?
- Is there anything else I could do to help?
- Is there something I didn't understand?
- Has something changed in the interim?
- Are there others we should consult to refine the approach?

As you approach the "no" part of the negotiation, remember that we are social animals first. We need time in each other's presence to begin to build understanding and trust. "No" just means your opposite reached a point where they don't yet see how to move forward. It's your opportunity to help them explore the possibilities.

You must demonstrate your interest in trying to uncover the potential. You don't have to have all the answers. You do have to help them think a little more deeply about what they need and are looking for.

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Every time you get a "no," consider it an opportunity to explore ways to help. With some practice you'll turn that "no" into a resounding "yes."

Ted Leonhardt has provided management consulting and negotiation training exclusively to creative businesses since 2005. To find out more, please check out [his website](#).

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by Ted Leonhardt

First, know what you stand for, and why.

The key is how the services you provide help others. It's the source of your message. It's what people remember about you. It's what makes you important to them. That's where the emotional bond originates.

Second, focus your message on what differentiates you.

Look for specifics that help you stand apart from other firms. Then using those "stand apart" items, find opportunities to dramatize your particular way of helping others succeed.

Third, live what you say, stay true to yourself, be real.

Great brands are built on trust and authenticity supported by years of delivering the goods. Great brands build on and accentuate the genuine elements from their history that support their story. They make sure that what they do really does live up to what they say.

Fourth, tell the world

Use your brand as the overarching guide for everything you say. Decide how to reach those who need your help and begin the conversation. Telling your story consistently increases the believability of your message. Make sure that everything you say supports helping others. And you will build a respected, long-lasting design firm brand.

Ted Leonhardt

Ted Leonhardt has provided management consulting and negotiation training exclusively to creative businesses since 2005. His mission is to help them get full value for their work. He cofounded The Leonhardt Group, a brand design firm in 1985 and sold it in 1999. In 2001 and 2002 Ted was Chief Creative Officer for Fitch Worldwide, London. In 2003 through early 2005 Ted was president of Anthem Worldwide, a brand packaging design group.

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TEN STRATEGIES FOR NEGOTIATING SUCCESS FOR CREATIVES

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Ten Strategies for Negotiating Success for Creatives

Oct 24, 2013 10:00 am | by Ted Leonhardt

1. Build your own Virtuous Cycle

A Virtuous Cycle is a series of events that result in a favorable outcome, over and over again. For creatives it means using your work and the insights you've gained from doing it to gain the interest and attention of future clients on a continuous basis. Their interest in you means that they have accepted you as an expert. When that has occurred your fees become non-negotiable. A well-managed Virtuous Cycle negates the need to negotiate.

2. Behave like the expert that you are

Experts determine how to best meet a client's needs. Experts ask questions and create plans. Experts develop lists of the deliverables required to achieve success. Experts produce the budgets and schedules necessary to create the agreed scope of work. Experts don't cut fees to meet a client's demand because only the plan created by the expert will achieve success. Cutting the fees undermines the potential for success and the power of the expert in the relationship.

3. Ask questions and really listen to their answers

Listen, take notes, read back what you wrote and ask for clarification. Listening is a powerful tool. You'll learn what they really want, need and how it will shape their future personally and the future of their company. The more you know, the more precisely you'll be able to define your response. Being really listened to is immensely

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7 phrases to help you keep your cool in stressful meetings

Meetings with higher-ups or departments who don't understand your work can be stressful. Here are some ways to keep such meetings productive and pain free.

By Ted Leonhardt | Posted: August 2, 2013

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Presenting yourself as a creative professional comes with a special kind of pressure. You represent not only yourself, but your work. Not only will people examine your appearance and performance, but the things you create with your hands, heart and mind.

This aspect of being a creative professional comes with a heady combination of highs and lows. The thrills that come from the creation

process come with a big dose of anxiety and vulnerability. How will others receive our work?

[RELATED: Ragan's new distance-learning site houses the most comprehensive video training library for corporate communicators.]

Sometimes during a stressful pitch or negotiation, we feel overwhelmed. These meetings are important; they are critical for our future. But in extreme circumstances you may find that your vision narrows, ears pound, stomach gets upset or any number of other sensations. You might even find yourself with nothing to say. These feelings can happen to anyone.

Continuing the meeting and trying to suppress the feelings won't work. The discomfort will likely return.

What works is taking direct action. If you need a minute to get your thoughts together, take a break from the discussion and say something like:

1. **"I'll just take a moment to think about this. I'll be back in a minute."** Rise from your chair and leave the room.
2. **"I need just a moment to compose myself."** This might get the other person to rethink his approach.
3. **"Could we pause for a few minutes? I need a break."** This is always an option.

Know that you can excuse yourself. When you're in the room and feel pressed, recognize that these anxious feelings are a signal to take action. If you're not aware of this option and aren't prepared to take it, the anxiety could take over and reduce your ability to deal with the situation, or worse, cause a breakdown.

Remember that to do your best for yourself, your client or potential employer, you must be *at your best*. In fact, taking a break honors the importance of the meeting. You're doing it in the spirit of doing your best.

Once you are heading for the restroom, you'll feel much better. The simple fact that you took action to regain control will make you feel better.

As your confidence returns, think of a few questions to use once you're back at the table. Questions are another way to maintain your confidence. Questions will help you gain more control of the situation and demonstrate your interest. The break gives you a chance to rest and regain control

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situation and demonstrate your interest. The break gives you a chance to restart and regain control of the encounter.

When you return to the meeting, you need to restart the conversation. You could say:

4. "I was surprised to hear you say _____. Could you explain further?"

5. "Is there a way we can work together to solve this?" With this one, you can enlist the other person's help to get past the situation.

6. "Help me understand why it creates difficulty for you." This is one of my favorite statements.

7. "Let's try to think of ways to meet both our needs."

All these questions use neutral language and are, obviously, in a spirit of mutuality. You will show your collaborative spirit. All of these questions are in the best interest of you and the other person. Best of all, they put you back in control. You'll feel stronger, better and worthy of the other person's consideration.

Have you been in a situation like this?

Ted Leonhardt is the owner/founder of TedLeonhardt.com, LLC. A version of this article originally appeared [TalentZoo.com](#).

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flattering and endearing. So, not only do you learn about the opportunity you also build a bond with the client.

4. Avoid talking too much

Talking too much is a natural way to relieve nervous tension. Don't do it. It's a sign of discomfort and neediness that a trained negotiator can exploit. It's always a sign of insecurity when you're at the bargaining table.

5. Separate yourself from your services

This is hard for creative people. We are the product. As a result we care too much automatically. When you're at the bargaining table you must train yourself to care, but not too much. When we care too much at the bargaining table, we lose perspective and sometimes the insecurities that we all have rise to the surface and take over. If that happens you must find an excuse to leave the bargaining table.

6. Don't accept the client's initial offer

In business, some attempt to negotiate the fee is expected. Clients who present an initial budget are prepared to move up some on the fee. They hold back to protect themselves. Their initial budget is never the real budget – there is always a larger budget available. They'll expect you to ask for more. If you don't ask, they will lose some of the respect they initially had for you and your expertise. To maintain your expert position you must define the scope required to meet the client's need. That means you must set the budget, too.

7. Do not give clients anything for free

Always get something in return for everything you provide. In the world we live in everything that's valuable is measured in money. If you don't get a fee for what you provide, the clients will not value it.

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Cutting deliverables completely undermines your expert status. You have built the exact combination of activities and deliverables to provide the best possible solution to the client's need. Then, under the pressure of bargaining you cut services; what does that say about your expert judgment? It says you're just like everyone else — desperate for the work. Don't do it.

9. Never rush to close

Discomfort with negotiating often causes us to close the deal hostility cave in to the client's demands. Instead, think of the negotiating stage as part of the creative process. It is. Take all the time you need to consider every step, every detail of the process. Remember the phrase "I have all the time in the world." Rushing to close is another classic sign of weakness and insecurity. Don't do it.

10. Never tell what you would have done it for

Never, never, never tell. Often in a misguided attempt to connect personally with the client one feels the need to reveal more than required. You never want the client to know how you compiled your costs or what your real bottom line was. If you do, rest assured that they will use it against you in the future. Or worse, they will feel taken advantage of.

These strategies were adapted from Ted Leonhardt's "Ten Steps to Negotiating Success for Creatives," 2012. Excerpt from: *The Graphic Artists Guild Handbook of Pricing and Ethical Guidelines*

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When Clients/Prospects Believe In You

by Ted Leonhardt, Friday, September 20, 2013 8:06 AM

When a client or prospect asks for something, the agency -- whether a design, advertising agency or public relations firm -- has earned their respect. Such requests provide an opportunity for the agency to ask for something in return.

But will asking for something risk the relationship? No -- asking for what one needs to succeed demands the client/prospect's respect, if it is clearly in their best interest. And with their respect comes an opportunity to serve them better.

Feeling powerless?

An example may illuminate: Late Saturday night, the "final" changes on the PowerPoint for the "C" suite executives' annual shareholder meeting were completed. The rehearsal is Tuesday morning, the big event the next day.

For a week there has been round after round of changes, night and day. It's clear that they respect the work -- but you, the designer, felt powerless in the interactions. Now it's midnight, and the decks must be reviewed by the C team and ready for any last-minute adjustments early Monday.

What can you do to ensure that the C team is ready with their final input on time?

Call the executive assistant Sunday morning to remind her about the timing. Ask how she can ensure that the final changes arrive Monday morning. Trust in the knowledge that this is in their best interests -- and in their need to perform before their shareholders.

When they call you

Another example: you get the call you've long been waiting for, the prospect sends the RFP and then says they're reviewing three firms.

What can you do to ensure that the client gets what they need to succeed?

After reviewing the RFP, and doing some investigative work, you inform them that the scope of work description is too restrictive. It's simply not in their best interests, or yours, to respond to the RFP. Experience demonstrates that meeting their goals will require a collaborative approach -- an approach that will reveal a successful path. To that end, propose a half or full-day planning session, with a fee, that will provide a road map for moving forward, whether your firm is involved or not.

The invitation

Finally, you enter their conference room, which is adorned with materials for the project: research reports, strategy documents, competitive documents, etc. You have prepared a portfolio presentation, but seeing this display you think, "maybe they are going to give me the assignment."

Then you remember that one of your best clients referred this company. On the spot you decide to skip the planned presentation. On one hand, you'd put a lot of work into it and wanted to show it off. On the other hand, if you move directly into project questioning mode maybe you'll land the assignment.

What can you do to win the project?

Engage the prospect team in a lively discussion with: questions, observations, possibilities, and all the followup you can muster. Watch their reactions -- do they see I get it? After neatly an hour you have a good sense of what's required, so you summarize the project and ask how they view that approach. After some back-and-forth, and agreement on the scope, you propose a budget and delivery dates and they accept. In just one hour, you depart with a great project.

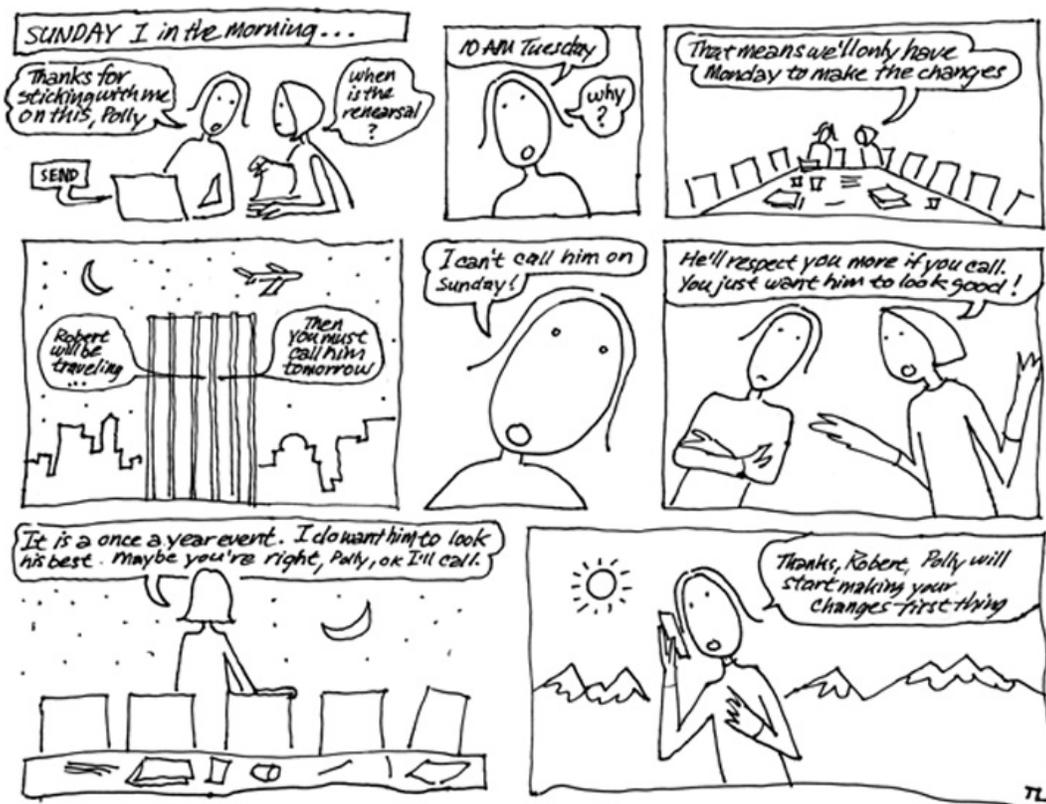
They believe in you

When they ask you, it means that *they believe* that you can help them. When they believe in you to the extent of your ability to help them, they expect you to ask for what you need to be successful. So get out there and just do it.

Respect, PowerPoint and the C-Suite [by Ted Leonhardt](#)

• August 5, 2013

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When a client, prospect or potential employer asks you for something, or to do something, you have their respect. They wouldn't ask if they didn't respect your ability to fulfill their request. In that moment, you have their attention and respect, and their request provides you with the opportunity to ask for something in return.

You may think that asking is risky. You may think that asking could cause you to lose the opportunity. You may think that asking will disrupt the positive atmosphere within the discussion. However, you're wrong.

Asking for what you need at that moment—at that very instant—demands their respect, as long as what you ask for is clearly in their best interest. By inquiring in a direct, clear and completely neutral manner, you end up gaining that respect.

One of my client's young designers, **Polly**, was assembling PowerPoint presentations for a group of C-suite executives on site at a F50 client. The day of the big show was rapidly approaching and tension was running high. The work was all consuming. A typical day started early and often ended after midnight.

This demanding schedule had gone on for a week. Polly was exhausted and almost at her wits' end when she finished the last changes for **Robert** and **Beth**'s (the CTO and his assistant, respectively) presentation early Sunday morning. Beth was new, just six weeks into the position, and was clearly afraid of what would happen if she let Robert down. Indeed, he had gone through several assistants and had a reputation for being demanding.

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At 1 AM, Beth emailed the completed show to Robert and said, "thank god, that's it for now. You can get some sleep. Polly, thanks for sticking with me on this."

This was Polly's second year working on this show and she'd had similar experiences with C-suite executives in the past. So she asked Beth, "When is

Robert’s rehearsal scheduled? Is it Tuesday when the others are?” “Yes, he’s set for 10:00 a.m., Tuesday.”

“That means we’ll only have Monday to make any changes,” Polly noted, “and I’ll be jammed most of Monday revising the rest of the C-team’s decks.”

“Well,” Beth responded, “Robert will be traveling with the tech team Monday. I don’t think he’ll have much time to work on this.”

“Then, you need to call him tomorrow morning and ask him to closely review the deck. We need to get his comments as early as possible on Monday in order for him to look good for the rest of the team at Tuesday morning’s rehearsal,” Polly replied.

“I can’t call him tomorrow. It’s Sunday. A Sunday morning. He’ll go nuts. He’s expecting me to handle this.”

Then, Polly, in a calm voice said, “Beth, he’ll respect you more if you just carefully explain what’s at stake here. He wants to look good. He wants to perform well on Tuesday like the others. I know that you’ve done your best in assembling this deck. In fact, it looks and sounds just right to me. But, I know that he will want some changes. It’s impossible for you to know exactly what he’s thinking, what he wants to say. So, your call is in his best interest. It’s a thoughtful heads up that will help him prepare for a demanding week.”

Beth began to feel better about calling Robert and responded, “It is a once-in-a-year event and he needs to be at his best. I’ll call him at 10 a.m. Thanks for pressing me on this, Polly, it’s definitely the right thing to do.”

“Call me after you’ve talked, Beth, I’d like to know how it went.” Polly felt like she’d made a friend and a significant contribution to the effort. Most importantly, Polly felt respected for the contribution (beyond the application of her design skills) that she had made. She’d become trusted as Beth’s equal by asking for what she needed, in a manner that was clearly in Beth’s best interest.

What can we learn from Polly’s experience?

- >She drew on her exhaustion to overcome her anxiety.
- >She asked for what she needed and waited for Beth’s response.
- >She calmly explained why her request was in everyone’s self-interest.
- >She helped Beth overcome her own anxieties.
- >She gained Beth’s respect in the process.
- >She felt much more in control of the situation as a result.
- >She will be much more confident in future difficult situations.

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[BY Ted Leonhardt](#)

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Ted Leonhardt co-founded The Leonhardt Group (TLG), a brand design agency, now Fitch:Seattle in 1985, with his partner Carolyn Leonhardt. The company had 50 employees and \$10 million in annual fee sales when they sold in 1999. Ted served as Chief Creative Officer for Fitch:Worldwide, where he had creative responsibility for 570 employees in 25 offices around the world. In 2003 Ted was appointed President of Anthem Worldwide, a brand-packaging consultancy with eight offices. Ted has lectured and written on the subject of design and business for many organizations and publications. He believes that powerful design driven organizations will play a more definitive role than ever in shaping the future. As a business consultant, he is focused solely on creative services, offering a completely individualized approach to every client.

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CAREER HOW TO

How to take the stress out of meetings

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What happens if you feel overwhelmed in a meeting? Ted Leonhardt, a consultant specialising in the creative industries, has some advice for you.

Presenting yourself as a creative professional comes with a special kind of pressure. You are representing, not only yourself, but yourself plus the work you've done. Not only is your appearance and performance examined, but things that you create with your hands, heart and mind are judged as well.

▶ This aspect of being a creative professional comes with a heady combination of highs and lows. The thrills that come from the process of creation come with a big dose of anxiety over how our work will be received. We creatives undoubtedly get into this business because of the thrill of doing the work and getting

recognized for it. The flip side is the vulnerability that we experience over how our work is received.

We don't like to admit it, but sometimes the pressure gets too much. In which case, what can you do?

In this article, I'll try to offer some honest advice based on my own experience. But first, let's look at *why* we feel overwhelmed...

01. Reasons for stress

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BY SIMON STRATFORD



Sometimes during a stressful interview, negotiation or presentation, we feel overwhelmed. And although it's not something we tend to talk about, but it's not really surprising that it happens.

These meetings are important. They are critical for our future. In extreme circumstances you may find your vision narrowing, a pounding sensation in your ears, stomach upset or any number of sensations. These 'out of balance' feelings can happen to anyone. Or you might find yourself with nothing to say, and that's bad enough. It's happened to me.

Continuing the meeting - trying to suppress the feelings - it's likely that the discomfort will return. And simply 'getting past it' just doesn't work. At least, in my experience it never did.

02. Taking action



What works in my experience is taking direct action. The easiest action is to take a break from the discussion.

You may feel awkward about this, so here are three examples of things you can say to facilitate the break:

- "I'll just take a moment to think about this." Rise from your chair and leave the room. "I'll be back in a minute." Don't allow your opposite to stop you.
- "I need just a moment to compose myself." This just might get the other party to rethink their approach.
- "Could we pause for a few minutes? I need a break."

03. Dealing with anxiety



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Whatever course of action you take, the important thing is to be aware in advance that you *can* excuse yourself. That's important because when you're in the room and feeling pressed you must recognize that these anxious feelings are a signal to take action. If you're not aware of this option and are prepared to take it, the anxiety could take over and reduce your ability to deal with the situation, or worse a breakdown.

It's important to remember that to do your best for yourself, and your client or potential employer, you must be at your best. In fact, taking a break honours the importance of the meeting. You're doing it in the spirit of doing your best.

04. Regaining control

Once you are heading for the restroom, you'll feel much better. The simple fact that you took action to regain control will make you feel better. With your confidence returning, think of a few questions to use once you're back at the table.

Questions are another method of maintaining your confidence. Questions will help you gain more control of the situation and demonstrate your interest. The break gives you a chance to restart and regain control of the encounter.

05. Rejoining the meeting



Returning to the meeting you need to restart the conversation. So what's a good way to do so?

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- You could say, "I was surprised to hear you say _____. Could you explain further?"
- You can enlist their help in getting past the situation with: "Is there a way we can work together to solve this?"
- Try one of my all-time favourite sentences: "Help me to understand why it creates difficulty for you."
- Or "Let's try to think of ways to meet both our needs."

Importantly, all these questions use neutral language and are used in a spirit of mutuality. You are showing your spirit of collaboration. All are in the best interest of you and your opposite.

Best of all they put you back in control. With control, you'll feel stronger, better and worthy of the consideration of your opposite.

Words: [Ted Leonhardt](#)

Ted Leonhardt cofounded The Leonhardt Group, a brand design firm in 1985. In 2001 and 2002 he was chief creative officer for Fitch Worldwide, London, then in 2003 became president of Anthem Worldwide. He's been providing management consulting and negotiation training exclusively to creative businesses since 2005.

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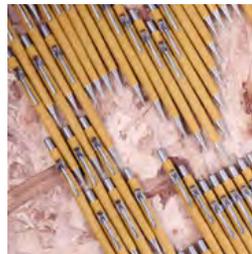
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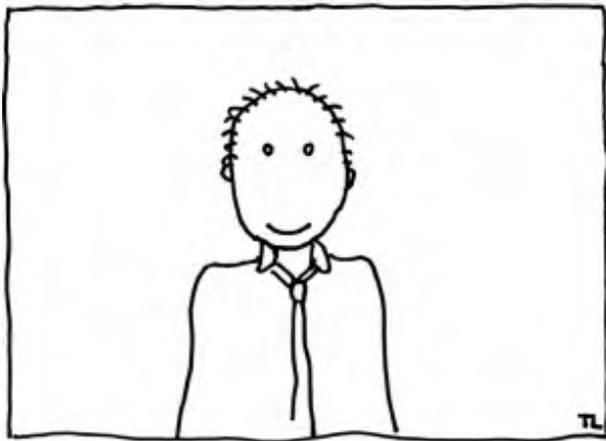
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Becoming a Design Professional

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2



After graduation in graphic design, the placement office set up three job interviews for Carson: a position in a PR firm's in-house design group; an art director

position with a local ad agency; and a design/illustrator position at a small design boutique.

Carson met with the ad agency and the PR office, but it was the boutique agency that caught his imagination. He knew immediately that this was the place for him. He chuckled as he was telling me the story as he remembered the creative director's almost total pursuit of creative awards. "Awards. acclaim. I'll be

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After a second interview with the owner they offered Carson a

position at twenty-six dollars an hour, he quickly did the math and discovered to his delight that it worked out to over fifty thousand a year. This was riches for Carson who had been making twenty-five to thirty thousand a year waiting tables, while going to school. Carson felt somehow more alive, he was so happy.

After his buzz wore off Carson remembered that they had only signed him up for three months. They'd sort of passed over that point quickly during the discussion. It gave him a moment of discomfort, but after reflection it seemed fair, they didn't know him after all. He thought: "well, I'll work hard and do the kind of award-winning work they want and I'll be in long-term."

He didn't bring up the subject of the three-month trial on the first day. He just wanted to get to work and show what he could do. And, he sort of didn't want to do anything that would spoil the good feelings.

The three months passed in a blur of happiness. Those first months were thrilling. Carson supported the creative director with the design, and illustration that he loved to do. Plus he got to work directly with clients and even supervise the work of the freelance illustrators and designers that the agency used. Carson did notice that the agency paid the freelancers the same twenty-six bucks an hour that he was getting.

When the three months were up the owner called Carson into her office and with a big smile said, "Carson, we love you and your work. You've been doing a great job; frankly you've exceeded all our expectations. We'd like to offer you fulltime employment."

Carson thought, "great, she's going to offer me a raise." Then she said "you're starting salary will be twenty-eight thousand a year."

Carson remembers feeling his chest tighten and his stomach churn. "What? Twenty-eight thousand? That's half what I'm making now. That's less than I was making waiting tables. You said that my work was great."

"But, Carson, that was our freelance rate. We've been paying you as a freelancer, no benefits, no vacation, no insurance. Now you'll have all that and you've got a full-time position. The twenty-eight thousand is for a fulltime position, it's more secure than freelance."

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He was stunned. Or maybe crushed would be a better word to describe it. Maybe, he thought, "I'm not as good as I thought." He wanted this uncomfortable moment to be over.

He didn't want to leave, to start all over again looking for a job. He could actually make more money waiting tables. He'd made thirty grand working part-time. But the boss had been a jerk, always hitting on the women and cheating on the tips whenever he could. And he loved it here. The work was great, the people terrific, but now it didn't feel quite as good.

He thought about going freelance, a quarter of his class were freelancing and some of them weren't doing too badly, but that would cut him off from the clients and he liked the feedback he got from client connections. Plus the little boutique was well positioned with California's housing industry. The clients were the biggest homebuilders and developers in the state and they were all booming. The work was fun; the clients great to work with and the budgets seemed unlimited.

Carson felt hooked. So he asked to be reviewed every three months with the potential for a raise if he did well and accepted the offer.

He stayed three years, learned a ton and gradually raised his salary to thirty-eight thousand. One of the client's had moved to a large wine and spirits marketing company and he recruited Carson to fill a fifty thousand dollar position in their brand design and promotions group. When he gave notice the creative director told Carson that he wasn't making 50k and he was distraught at losing Carson.

Today, Carson runs his own design consultancy and routinely produces six figure branding programs.

What can we learn from Carson's experience:

- His drive and desire to get started kept him from seeing that he was being hired as a freelancer.
- He could have asked more questions in his early interviews and that may have prepared him for dealing with the freelance to salary issue.
- When he was in that awful meeting feeling anxious and sick, he could have excused himself and taken a walk. Or,

better yet asked to reschedule the meeting for another day after he'd had time to organize his thoughts and get his emotions under control.

- He could have explored staying freelance, there was plenty of business and they were keeping several freelancers busy.
- He could have asked for a couple of thousand more when they offered him the twenty-eight thousand or more vacation.
- But, on the other hand, that little boutique was a great start to what's become a very rewarding career.



avatar



About [TedLeonhardt](#)

Ted Leonhardt has provided management consulting and negotiation training exclusively to creative businesses since 2005. His mission is to help them get full value for their work. He cofounded The Leonhardt Group, a brand design firm in 1985 and sold it in 1999. In 2001 and 2002 Ted was Chief Creative Officer for Fitch Worldwide, London. In 2003 through early 2005 Ted was president of Anthem Worldwide, a brand packaging design group.

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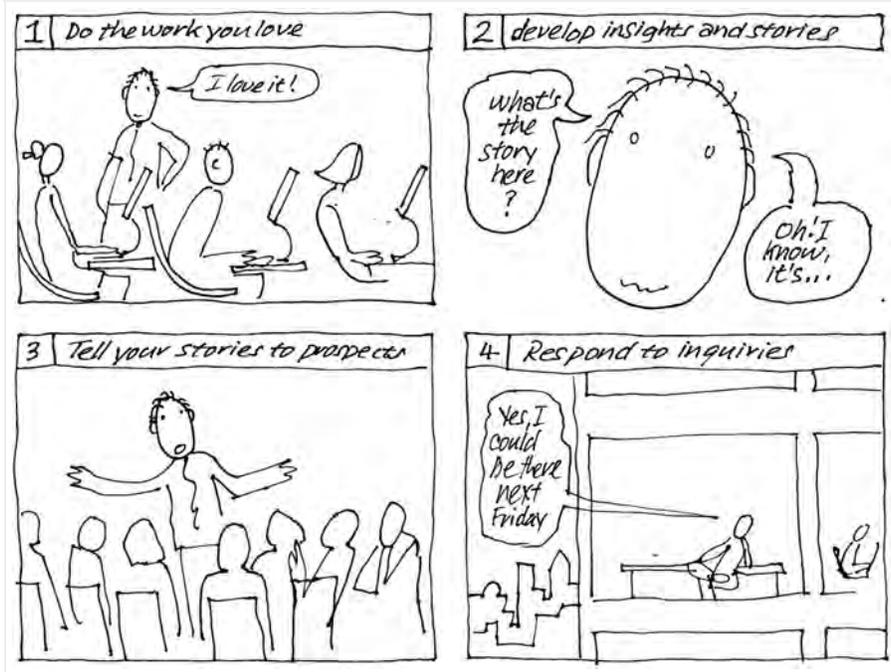
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The question: how to get work and, more importantly, how to gain a continuous supply of work with acceptable fees? Better yet, at more than acceptable fees?

If you've done a few projects that have some similarities, the work makes you happy. But if from time to time you find yourself between projects and without enough to keep you gainfully occupied, you need to create your own personal version of a virtuous cycle.

Step one, do the work

A virtuous cycle is a series of events that result in a favorable outcome, time and again. For creative professionals it means using your work, and the insights gained from your experience to attract the attention of future clients. The first step in the virtuous cycle is doing the work. Remember, the work you do and the perspective you bring to the work is what differentiates you from your competitors. You are unique; therefore your work is unique.

Step two, develop insights and stories

Each creative project adds to your personal knowledge base and provides the opportunity to form insights that will help future clients succeed while furthering your differentiation from other design firms. Those insights can form the base for stories that share your perspective with prospective clients. Remember, these stories must be about how your work helped your client succeed. They are about you only as reflected by your clients' success.

Step three; get the stories in front of prospects

Email campaigns, public speaking, article placement, new business pitches are all places to tell your stories.

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Step four, respond to inquiries

Inbound calls and emails, are proof that your virtuous cycle is working. They mean that the caller accepts you as an expert, at least to the extent that they want to know if you can help them. They have read a story, seen you speak, or been referred to you. What they know about you aligns with a need that they have. That inbound call means that as an expert fees become 'non-negotiable'. Remember, if you do respond to pressure to reduce fees you will lose some of your power in the relationship.

Behave like an expert

Throughout this process you must maintain and advance your expert status. Expert behavior is characterized by:

- Determining how to meet client needs.
- Asking questions and creating plans.
- Developing lists of deliverables required to achieve success.
- Developing budgets required to accomplish the scope of work.
- Writing contracts, not proposals

Why the Virtuous Cycle is important

- Learning to think of your work as only the first step in the process of gaining influence and opportunity is critical to achieving success.
 - No matter whether you work for yourself or someone else the four steps of the virtuous cycle will attract the opportunities that fit just you, furthering your unique expert status.
 - Obviously, you'll have a much more satisfying career if you are in demand.
 - I've written this column to help you, but please note: it's just a continuation of my own virtuous cycle.
-

A well-managed Virtuous Cycle, combined with real expertise, negates the need to negotiate.

About the Author:

Ted Leonhardt has provided management consulting and negotiation training exclusively to creative businesses since 2005. His mission is to help them get full value for their work. He cofounded The Leonhardt Group, a brand design firm in 1985 and sold it in 1999. In 2001 and 2002 Ted was Chief Creative Officer for Fitch Worldwide, London. In 2003 through early 2005 Ted was president of Anthem Worldwide, a brand packaging design group.

For more on Ted, visit: <http://tedleonhardt.com>

Lessons for Landing a Job and Negotiating Salary

Posted on June 16, 2013 by TedLeonhardt — No Comments ↓

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Shortly after graduation, Chuck began to gather background on the firm whose creative director had lectured to his advanced UI/UX class about cognitive research as a guide to messaging

architecture. Chuck found it thrilling and was sold.

Chuck studied the site, downloaded its book, read and reread it. He did the usual Google and LinkedIn searches, followed the firm on Twitter and studied the sites and interfaces it had created. Then, through a friend, Chuck landed an invite to a party in company's offices — a celebration of a recent client product launch.

Chuck found the offices in a redeveloped, light-manufacturing area near the Bay. The building had floor-to-ceiling windows on the north side, where Chuck found the guests chatting.

Chuck had prepared a series of questions, but asked just one, "How

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are your competitors responding?” The speaker turned toward Chuck and answered in some detail. Later, one of the senior developers complimented Chuck on his question and asked about his background. Chuck explained his interest in the firm and asked if they had any openings.

The conversation led to an interview and a freelance UI planning assignment. Chuck spent the summer freelancing for the firm and mountain biking. He was in heaven.

Just after Thanksgiving, the practice leader told Chuck that budget was available to offer him a full-time position starting the first of the year. Over Christmas week, he shared the news with his family and asked how to negotiate the next steps. He was particularly concerned about time off as he loved mountain biking.

Chuck’s mom pointed out that his hourly freelance pay (\$50) was likely higher than what they’d offer in salary. She said freelance rates were higher because the firm did not provide healthcare, vacations or other benefits. Mom also noted that freelancers commanded higher rates because they risked periods of unemployment.

“Pay rates often become an issue when a firm hires a former freelancer,” said his mom. “Management finds itself constrained by the existing salary structure, so they have to offer substantially less on an hourly basis. Also, Chuck, forget about the lengthy time off for mountain biking and snow boarding. They’ll expect you to be on the job every day.”

Chuck hadn’t thought this through. He was just doing the work and enjoying himself, but he still loved the firm and wanted that full-time position.

His older sister had just negotiated her salary with a large consulting firm. Her advice was to think of the \$40,000 he’d been paid so far as a baseline and to mention the annualized \$100,000 as a friendly, but throw-away request. Mentioning “hundred” sets the top of the range — with the bottom being \$40,000 — and it lets the other party know you are valuable but reasonable. She thought Chuck should ask for \$80,000 but be willing to accept \$60,000, which would leave a good margin for them.

Chuck’s appointment with the practice leader was on January 3. He arrived early thinking: “I shouldn’t have had the second cup of coffee. I’m probably too alert.” Sally, the practice leader, smiled and said, “Chuck, I’m so happy that we can offer you this position.”

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“Thanks, Sally, I’m really looking forward to being here full time.” Then he went ahead: “Sally, I did the math and discovered that if I stayed busy as freelancer I’d make a \$100,000 this year.” Then he paused, feeling anxiety sweep over and hoping that he wasn’t blushing.

Sally’s smile disappeared. “You know, Chuck, freelance rates are much higher than the salaries we pay.”

Chuck interrupted, remembering that his sister had said to establish his anchor before Sally had a chance to establish a number. “Sally, I understand, so I thought \$80,000 would be appropriate. He paused, feeling better. Sally didn’t seem angry; everything seemed okay.

“Chuck, your work has been terrific, but we have pay scales based on job categories, and I can’t pay you higher than others. It wouldn’t be fair.”

Chuck remained silent as his sister had instructed.

Sally went on, still friendly but in a more serious tone. “Chuck, we’re able to pay you \$70,000 plus a full benefits package with healthcare and two weeks vacation, after a year.”

Chuck thought, “Wow, 10 grand higher than expected, but a year without vacation? I can’t do that.” And he said, “You mean I can’t take



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“Not paid vacation,” Sally replied.

Chuck pulled out his iPhone and did the math. He said: “That’s \$1,400 a week. Could I take unpaid vacation?”

“I guess you could,” Sally replied. “That would be up to the demands of the project and your team members.”

That felt better. He wanted the job. He wanted to say yes, but sis had been insistent. She had said, “No matter what they offer, think about it overnight.” So he thanked Sally warmly and asked her permission to think about it.

The next day Chuck called Sally, said yes enthusiastically and confirmed the details.

What can we learn from Chuck’s experience?

- Being intensely interested is a big advantage. Let your feelings show if you “fall in love” with an opportunity. Genuine interest is

immensely appealing.

- Thoughtful questions demonstrate sincere interest.
- Freelancing often leads to well-paying positions because it allows the client to see the candidate's skills in action and allows the candidate to see if the position feels right.
- The party that throws out the first number establishes the range. In Chuck's case, he effectively moved the range up by starting high.
- Chuck was nervous, but he had a plan. Clear, easy-to-remember plans are a proven way to relieve anxiety.
- Chuck used his advisors effectively. In effect, they acted as his negotiating team and while they were not in the room on the big day, he knew they were with him.



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Karen negotiates for a salary in a design position at a design firm

by TED LEONHARDT



Design management consultant Ted Leonhardt, formerly global head of Anthem, has penned a series of columns dealing with business issues facing emerging designers. This is the third of the series of five pieces, which explore: How to land a brand design assignment, learning to negotiate, getting a job at the firm of your choice, and taking control of salary negotiations....

On one of those blue-sky days when everything is going your way, Karen, who had just graduated in industrial design, landed an internship with a small firm with great work and a wonderful studio overlooking the bay and the mountains beyond. On their site was the kind of work that Karen had dreamed of doing for years. Better yet, they'd given her a three-month internship. Naturally it was unpaid, and she knew she'd be doing grunt work, but it was an opportunity to work with real designers for "real clients."



The firm had less than twenty employees, but that was exactly what Karen wanted: a place where she could get to know everyone and learn to become a professional designer.

After a few days, Karen discovered that the firm's work had completely changed from what was showcased on their website and she was heart broken. Current clients were in financial services and insurance, not the cool product design they had been doing for startups. She rationalized, "Oh well, it's only three months and I'll learn something." So she stayed.

She quickly became aware that the product development director was in a passive aggressive war with the owner over the quality of the clients' and the work. More seriously, the staff lined up in support of one or the other of the leaders. Karen, "being junior" uncomfortably found herself jumping from side to side just to survive. It was the longest three months of her life.

In the final week of her internship one of the biggest projects was completed and the owner fired the director and the six staff designers. who had been at war with the owner.

Two days later the owner offered Karen a full-time position at twenty- five thousand dollars a year. Their meeting felt weird, especially in light of the office drama and the

Perhaps the interview didn't go as well as I thought. Maybe I should have talked less, showed more work, asked more questions.



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owner made the offer sound like charity, saying, *"that's a lot of money for an inexperienced student."* Karen felt deflated and insulted, especially since the offer was below her living expenses. What to do: she restrained herself from reacting on the spot and said, *"I'd like to think about it overnight."*

Karen did think about it overnight, talked to her dad and a couple of friends and got over feeling insulted. She didn't have any other opportunities, but her portfolio site was drawing increasing interest. So, she decided to pass on the *"charity offer"* and start actively looking. Surely something will turn up.

The next day, Karen gave the owner her decision, packed her things and left quickly. But she thought, *"I will miss that view."* It was her only regret.

The next months were slow and her funds dwindled. She picked up an engaging freelance assignment, but it wasn't enough to build a career. Karen knew that she wanted to be part of a group of experienced professionals. She needed the interaction and the opportunity to compare her skills with others.

That fall a retailer, who was designing a line of small products, interviewed Karen. The interview, with the head of the newly formed industrial design group, went very well. Karen was excited. Cool products and a great group. *"I'll be starting about the same time as everyone else, on the ground floor."*

A month went by without a call. Karen had sent a thank you, then a follow-up note but still nothing. *"Perhaps the interview didn't go as well as I thought. Maybe I should have talked less, showed more work, asked more questions."* She felt sick.

Fortunately, another call and an interview, this time with a software company with a large in-house industrial design group. They were creating devices for consumers and business. Feeling stronger, (now that she had another offer), Karen called the director she'd interviewed with at the retailer. To her surprise he got right back to her. *"Karen, sorry this has taken so long. I'd like to have you interview with a few other designers here next week."*

The next two weeks were a blur of interviews with both companies. The software company offered her fifty thousand to start. She mentioned the offer to the retailer and amazingly they offered her fifty-two. Now she had something to think about.

Karen proudly shared the news with her dad and best friends. The advice was the same from all of them: take time, feel appreciative, ask as many questions as appropriate, think about what you want, think about which place feels best, think about which offers the best opportunity to grow.

Karen decided on the software company, but she mentioned the retailer's offer, not so much to get more money, but because she felt proud to be in demand. To her delight they offered her fifty-four. She took it.

I interviewed Karen after she'd been on the job for four months. She was learning quickly, loved her group and was very happy and proud. And, I was surprised to hear that she didn't feel that she'd negotiated anything.

What can we learn from Karen's experience?

- Keep your commitments. Even though three months may feel like eternity, being known for keeping your bargains is important.
- Think about any significant offer at least overnight. Take the time you need.
- Resist the urge to react immediately. That's always a powerful feeling. Resisting makes you more powerful.
- Expect your emotions to run wild. You are human after all.
- Always talk about major opportunities with someone you trust. Their insights provide perspective.

Sometimes negotiating is as simple as mentioning your other opportunities. It's a less confrontational way of asking for what you need.

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Six Tips For Avoiding The Commodity Nightmare

by Ted Leonhardt, Friday, May 24, 2013 8 AM

Designers, writers, creative planners and strategists are *not* commodities. They spend their lives developing their creative skills because they love the work. Creative firms are made up of groups of such individuals.

Every creative group has an individual and idiosyncratic offer. That is the source of the magic that helps clients succeed -- the singular difference that differentiates one firm from its competitors. That magic is the reason that clients choose to work with them, sometimes making billions in the process.

There we have it -- talented people throwing their heart and soul into projects that enrich their clients -- while in return the clients ask for RFIs, RFPs, work on spec, reduced fees, fast(er) turnaround and late payments.

Worse, creative firms tend to commoditize themselves. They describe themselves in ways that sound alike, use case studies that emulate their competitors and publish processes that are almost an "industry standard" because they are all so uniform.

It's no surprise that by the time they arrive at the bargaining table they have given away much of the magic that got them there in the first place.

But there is another way. It's simple, logical, and anyone can do it. Firms with valuable offers are demonstratively *not* commodities. They just have to refrain from commoditizing themselves. Here's how.

Tip 1

Never respond to a Request For Information (RFI). The questions commoditize you. Explain that the questions are too narrow. They make it impossible to explain the benefit of your specific experience. RFIs are simply too limiting. Ask the client why they are interested in working with you. Their answer will give you a clearer picture of why you were included and whether or not the opportunity is worth the effort.

Tip 2

Do not respond to a Request for Proposal (RFP). RFPs are designed to put all responders into the same commoditized context so the client can compare, contrast and learn enough to work the finalists on price. Read the RFP carefully -- and if the opportunity seems like a fit, consider how your experience will help them. Determine how you would help them exceed their expectations. Then call and tell them that although you will not respond to their RFP because it limits *their* opportunity to succeed, you will be happy to show how you can help them achieve their goals.

Tip 3

Never do spec work. It's demeaning, unfair to your paying clients, and proves that you are desperate. Just say no.

Tip 4

Stop using a standard multi-step process. Describe how you actually do your work and how it helps to achieve success. Show how you look for and find the insights and observations that produce results.

Tip 5

Never use the term “case study.” Instead, think about the story behind how you and your team came to understand what the real problem was and how you addressed it. Then write *that* story. At the end of the story, list the challenges and accomplishments -- and above all, explain how your work helped the client’s business.

Tip 6

Think about why you do the work you do. Describe when you first realized what it was that you wanted to do. Explain how you have refined it over time. And finally, how it helps others. Then go tell your story to those who will be helped most. Continue to modify and evolve your story as you learn and grow.

Following these tips will move your firm out of the commodity trap, will help you get back to loving your work, and increase your profitability. And you will have more time for the rest of your life.



Taking Control When You're Feeling Weak

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Ted Leonhardt

tags: confidence in business, design business, design business consultant, taking control, Ted Leonhardt



Design business consultant Ted Leonhardt explains how and why to take control in situations where you may not feel confident.

Fred is the owner of a small design firm. His work has recently become recognized for using design thinking to build brands through social media. A result of the media attention is an invitation to pitch one of the world's largest

corporations, headquartered in the UK. It's a career making opportunity for Fred and his firm. But he is new to this level and knows that he must deal with his own anxieties to be successful.

Fred is thrilled and terrified at the same time as he steps off the plane in London with his team. He knows that he has one advantage over his competitors: He's been included in this competition late in the process (always a good sign). So late in fact, that some players were eliminated before his firm was included. The field is now down to his firm and three finalists. All three are global players and much more experienced with international competitions than Fred.

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The next day Fred and team are ushered into the client's reception area to discover their competitors so waiting. Fred feels his vision narrow as he and shakes hands with everyone. He mumbles banter but confesses later that he can't remember what he said to whom. To Fred they all seem smarter, better dressed and better looking than his little team as he feels the perspiration under the newly pressed shirt and thinks, "I hope I don't smell like fear."

Each team is individually ushered into the conference room to emerge after an hour. With each departure Fred can hear in the tone of their voices the reduction in tension that he'd sensed in the reception area. The feelings of relief are almost physical. Feeling slightly light-headed, Fred and his group are finally escorted into the conference room. Once in the room, feeling a bit better, he makes small talk with their hosts while his team sets up their laptop, speakers and projector.

Then, his creative director whispers, "Fred, there's no power in this room." "What? No outlets? How did the others present?" Then to the client: "There seems to be no electrical outlets." The client responds: "That's right. All the outlets are beyond that movable wall. Unfortunately, the other meeting rooms and the other half of this room are in use. The other teams just used their laptops to present. Let's do that."

Fred feels his stomach react, but with that churning feeling realizes that this provides a chance to take charge. "I'm sorry, we can't do that. We've prepared a response to your position using sound, film and interactive to demonstrate how to reach, engage and predict your interest groups' behavior."

The client pushed back with: "Our online presence is all through mobile devices and computer screens. That's the medium. So you should be able to show us through a laptop."

But you are a group of eight. To get the full benefit of our insights you need to experience the presentation simultaneously. Only by experiencing it together will you understand our offer and collectively evaluate how our approach will help you." Throughout this exchange Fred felt his strength and resolve return. He knew he was taking the right approach.

With that, they sent for an extension cord. Now Fred's team was able to relax and interact with the client team with talk of the city, the weather, challenges the company faced and issues surrounding the rapidly changing world of social media, while gazing over the Thames and that dramatic London skyline. It was a pleasant fifteen minutes.

The cord arrived. Fred and team presented and ultimately won the assignment.

What did Fred and team learn from this experience?

Use feelings of anxiety as a signal that the issue is important – that you need to consider your next steps carefully.

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ed could have given into those feelings. He could have just said, “sure, no problem, gather around my top.” That’s called rolling over and in moments of distress it’s easy to give in and just give the client what they asked for.

Taking control in a way that is clearly in the client’s best interest reinforces your status as an expert by sending a message that you will manage the project with a high degree of professional confidence.

It’s very important that everything you do is in the client’s best interest. All that effort you put into preparing, the thinking, the writing, the film and Keynote are all about showing the client the solution to their problem. To not present it in the best light is to do the client a disservice.

It’s not about the power cord, it’s about power.

Being no one is very powerful. It gets people attention. It gets everyone to rethink their assumptions. Clients want their highly paid consultants to be powerful and confident.

The confidence that comes from professional expertise is what clients expect. That confidence will serve your client well as you interact with others on the client team. Your client’s judgment will be respected and reputation enhanced because he/she selected a professional, confident team.

When all is said and done, taking control when you are feeling weak makes you strong.

Ted Leonhardt has provided management consulting and negotiation training exclusively to creative businesses since 2005. He co-founded the The Leonhardt Group, a brand design firm in 1985 and sold it in 1999. In 2001 and 2002, Ted served as chief creative officer for Fitch Worldwide, out of London. From 2003 through early 2005, Ted was president of Anthem Worldwide, a brand packaging design group.

Ready to put this advice to work? Or to learn more about the design business? Join us at [HOW Design Live this June](#).



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