

9

RELIABLE WAYS

FREELANCE GRAPHIC AND WEB DESIGNERS

Can Make More Money

AND ATTRACT BETTER CLIENTS

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 **SHORTSTACK**

Graphic and web designers can have a tough time finding gratifying work on freelance sites. Too often, you end up working for pennies and compromising the integrity of your brand. Thankfully, freelance sites are not the only way to go about growing a design business.

Here are nine reliable ways graphic and web designers can make more money:

1. CASH IN ON UNUSED FILES.

Not everything you design will be loved by your clients. Instead of letting those unused designs go to waste, cash in on them by selling your files on marketplace design sites. [Graphic Leftovers](#) is a place where graphic designers can sell logos, icons, illustrations and more. [ThemeForest](#) is a popular marketplace for designers who have web design templates to sell. Before you sell any of your work on the web, however, it's important to double check that the files you're selling are not under the rights of any of your current or past clients.



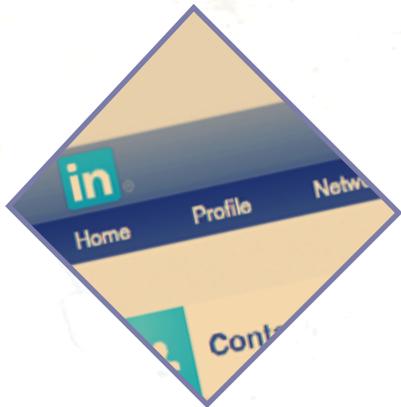
2. FIND OPPORTUNITIES ON LINKEDIN.

LinkedIn may be a lackluster online destination for creatives, but it is the online network where professionals seek out other professionals most. To land more gigs using LinkedIn, start by [sprucing up your profile](#). Next, start contributing to a few designer-focused groups.

Involvement in groups like [“Designers Talk: Freelance Graphic Design Group”](#) is an awesome way to crowdsource for answers amongst other pros in your field. Responding to group questions is a great way to share your expert insight. This is also a way to catch the attention of potential employers who are using LinkedIn groups for recruiting.

3. INVEST IN TOOLS TO GET THE MOST OUT OF THE SKILLS YOU ALREADY HAVE.

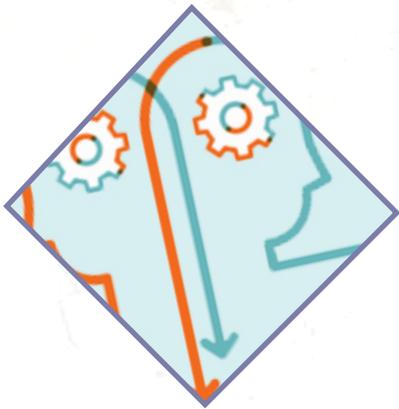
If you know Photoshop and a little bit of CSS and HTML, you’re a triple threat! Take advantage of your skills and invest in a third-party design platform, like ShortStack, that’s packaged for resale. Online tools like [ShortStack](#) allow designers to save time designing and, more important, broaden their service offerings. In addition to websites, logos, and posters you can use this tool to create custom social campaigns, including contests, opt-in landing pages and more.



4. HOST A SKILLSHARE CLASS.

You've likely heard the saying, "Those who can't do, teach." Well, that's bull! In business and design, those who teach *can* because they have the ability to do something other people do not know how to do.

[Skillshare](#) is an online community marketplace for classes. Anyone can apply to teach (and get paid to host) a class on Skillshare. There are lots of designers who contribute to the community. Some classes designers have created are: "Basics of Photoshop: Fundamentals for Beginners" and "From Zero to Hero: Learn Graphic Design." Although teaching a Skillshare class can be a great source of extra income (you get paid based on the number of online students who sign up for your class), keep in mind that you're not allowed to "sell" your services or other products to your students. Skillshare prohibits it.



5. TRY YOUR HAND AT CONSULTING.

Consultants are often experienced doers, aka highly valuable people. If you have a skill you know other people in your field want, sell consulting services that teach other freelance designers how to duplicate your successes.

A perfect example of smart creatives who have turned their design know-how into a full-fledged consulting business is the team at [Braid Creative](#). Kathleen Shannon and Tara Street, who have backgrounds in advertising and freelance designing and writing, started Braid to help creative entrepreneurs brand themselves. To do this, they offer “Braid eCourses” devoted to personal branding and “Braid Coaching” services.



6. DO SPEC WORK (BUT BE CAUTIOUS).

The approach a designer should take to spec work depends a lot on who's asking for the work. If a potential client asks you to do spec work, i.e., unpaid work, this could be a red flag. Clients who are not willing to compensate a designer for his/her work often turn out not to be the type of clients designers want to work with.

The context of spec work is much different when it's the designer who is offering to do spec work. In some cases, offering to do spec work for a well-known brand could lead to other bigger, career-changing opportunities. Take entrepreneur and social media thought leader [Gary Vaynerchuk's spec work story](#) for example: He did spec work for the New York Jets which then lead to him landing the Nets and National Hockey League as clients, too. As he puts it, doing spec work for the Jets was his "cost of entry."

In either case, designers must always be cautious sharing their spec work with potential clients. Use watermarking as a way to ensure your spec work is not misused or stolen.



7. CHARGE WHAT YOU'RE WORTH, ALWAYS.

If you've already done some spec work for a client and now they want to hire you for a job, don't be shy about charging the rate you know you're worth. Many designers, especially young ones, don't charge enough, or rather, they undervalue the price of their work. Don't do this. Charging more is also a way to help maintain a high level of quality clientele. Remember: Clients aren't just paying for your hourly time, they're paying for your expertise, experience, training and equipment. Stand by your pricing and you'll be better off for it, guaranteed.

8. POSITION YOURSELF AS A PRO THROUGH BLOGGING.

If you haven't started blogging, start now! Blogging is a lot like spec work: It costs you time, but it can pay off big. Use your blog to share design advice for businesses or publish helpful design tutorials. Having a place on the web that hosts your insights and knowledge can be incredibly valuable for positioning yourself as an expert, creating new relationships with other designers and, of course, attracting referrals.



9. GIVE AWAY FREE STUFF.

Now that you've started blogging, here's one really effective way to drive traffic back to your site: Give away free and, of course, beautifully branded downloadable resources like templates, themes and graphics.

Popular blogger and designer Bri Emery of DesignLoveFest has a segment on her blog called "[Dress Your Tech](#)" where she shares beautiful downloadable desktop and mobile wallpapers. Because people love to share awesome free stuff, this segment has created great brand exposure for DesignLoveFest. It has also opened up a lot of collaboration opportunities as Emery will often team up with another designer or artist for a "Dress your Tech" post.

This is just the tip of the iceberg. Beyond these nine ideas, there are lots more ways freelance graphic and web designers can earn more cash. You already have the skills you need to take your freelance design business to the next level. Now's the time to do what designers do best – get creative!

