

Day 96: Deciding your work plan; write your fifth retainer

SUMMARY

Making a work plan. Separating urgent and important. Draft your 5th retainer agreement.

It's time for **Day 96!** Days **93** and **94** showed how your real capacity is 2-3 times the hours in a working day, by maximising your billable time and allocating resources intelligently; **Day 95** was about what you *do* in that time, with a To-Do list. Today you'll look down the other end of the telescope: how to maintain that high capacity and availability on a work day *shorter* than most wage slaves—just six hours.

The daily Tasks don't stop yet. Today you'll again add 2 cold suspects to your List, send out 3 sales letters, follow up 1 response, and make 2 Connections on LinkedIn. But **Day 96** is the last time you'll do these mandatories each day. (Beyond **Day 100** your actions cover a few small actions each week to maintain the £350,000 asset value of your **List**. The build phase is over, and you'll soon be into the maintenance phase.)

Let's start!

96.1 REVISE AND REWRITE YOUR ALTERNATES

The main task of today is the same as Days **61**, **68**, **75**, **82**, and **89**: taking a critical look at your alternates and seeing which paragraphs and sentences are delivering for you. Make sure you allocate time for this in addition to today's other work.

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96.2 WRITING TODAY'S RETAINER AGREEMENT

In between your initial and followup projects for confirmed customers, your main task today is to complete another **retainer agreement**. Make sure you allocate time for both before today's additional informational content.

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96.3 THE SIX-HOUR WORKDAY

For most of your 100 days so far, learned and repeated Tasks have divided the day into two halves. In much of the world, the working day is split similarly—into a minimum of eight hours, with a lunchhour if you're lucky. (For others, the daily toil lasts much longer.)

100 Days, 100 Grand is about work, but it's also about *life*. As a freelancer, you get to set your own schedule and make your own decisions about how much time you devote to work. So **Day 96** looks at tactics for maintaining good work/life balance. You'll find that with discipline you can fit a full working day into just *six hours*—by concentrating on what's important.

You may have sweated blood from sunrise to sunset these last 100 days; that was your investment in turning yourself into a six-figure freelancer. After **Part 10**, you'll find that investment starts paying off.

96.3.1 Turning dawn-to-dusk into defined shifts

People in salaried roles find work expands to fill the time available. This doesn't mean the work itself takes infinite time—it's just that they *don't know when to stop*. Freelancers can learn from those with bluer collars here.

When you make strict start and finish times a daily habit—like clocking in and out for an hourly-rated worker—you know both **what** you've got to fit into that time and **where** the finishing post is. And the proportion of productive hours in your day rises.

96.3.2 Two deep sessions of three hours can work . . .

So when you've made **flow** a habit (see Appendix J) look to limit your working hours to those where you're in a flow state. A common approach is two shifts of

three hours. The method is simple: Set **alarms** for the start and finish times you want to work, perhaps 10:00am to 1:00pm and 2:00pm to 5:00pm.

During those shifts you work on client projects, and *nothing else*. No music, no marketing, no social media, no snacking. (Unless those things are your job.)

Then—this is the most important part—you *stop*. Leaving time for what matters: your health, hobbies, personal development.

96.3.3 . . . if you make focussed concentration a habit

If you take the approach to extremes, don't even answer the phone or email when you're on shift. Deep work is about focussed concentration in a state of flow, and that means no interruptions.

The six-hour workday is a sane approach to your freelance life that leaves time for other activities. Because most people can only be productive two or three hours at a stretch; there are limits to concentration. So limiting your workday to those few hours, with a break in between, makes sense.

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96.4 WRITING A WORK PLAN

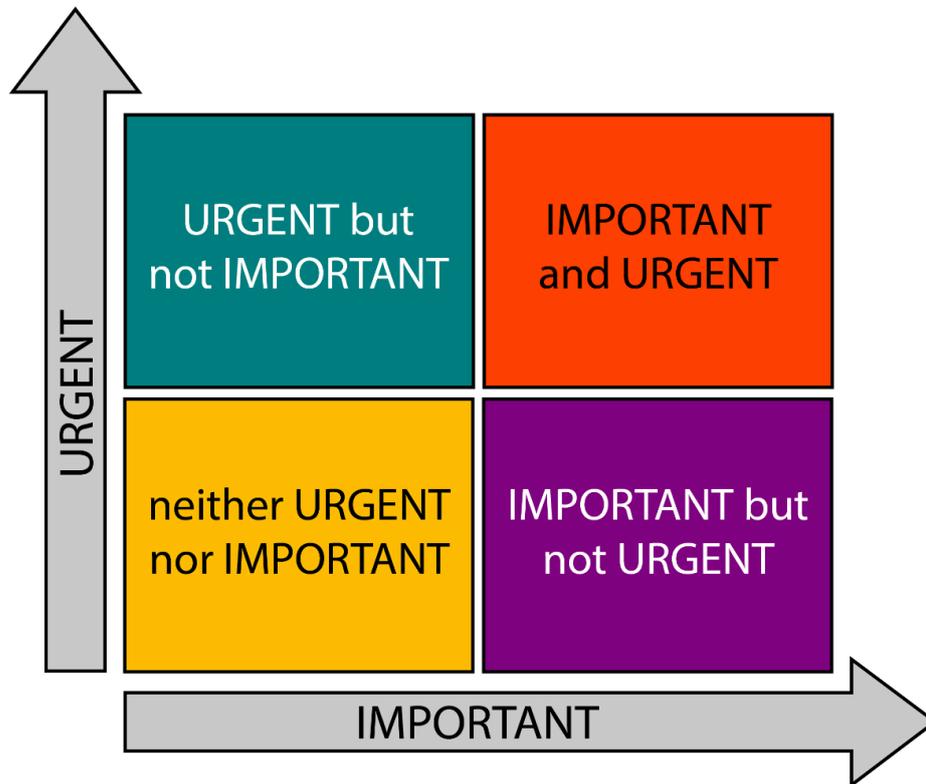
So how do you prioritise? With a daily **work plan**. It's simply your To-Do list from **Day 95** sorted with another four-box matrix. Use it to separate what's truly important from daily busywork, and you can cut your day down to size.

96.4.1 The difference between important and urgent

It's common to start an important task—a project plan, a client proposal—only to get sidetracked by easy-to-deal-with but time-consuming busywork. (Answering email, dealing with paperwork.)

Since these tasks feel like quick wins, they give you a brief buzz. And in search of more buzz, this busywork can take over . . . diverting your focus from the deep work you *need* to do.

So if you have trouble deciding what to do during your shifts, turn your To-Do list into a simple **work plan**—with this diagram.



96.4.1.1 Important and urgent

Tasks needing both critical thinking and deliberate action on a deadline are both important and urgent. They're your client projects, pivotal decisions to make, milestones to attain.

If you get paid for doing it, or your offer to the market describes it, mark it important and urgent. These are the tasks that form the core of your six-hour workday.

96.4.1.2 Important but non-urgent

Every day—and every To-Do list—contains actions your business needs, but which don't have a deadline. Your daily **List** and **Letter** activities are in this category—you need to do them regularly, but can leave them for the end of each day, or batch them once a week. Same with learning goals: professional development matters, but you can schedule in two days a month for it.

So give important but non-urgent tasks their own workday, perhaps the same day each month so you develop a habit. Don't let them get in the way of paid work for clients.

96.4.1.3 Urgent but not important

In this quadrant are most phone calls, emails, bill payments, the everyday paperwork of your business. Make sure you do it, but don't let it detract from your client work. Nothing is worse for deep work than email or social media.

96.4.1.4 Neither important nor urgent

Look *very* critically at tasks that neither further your business goals nor demand immediate action. And ask: **why are you doing them?**

Much of the time, you can delete these tasks from your To-Do list. Every freelancer has demands on his or her attention that have nothing to do with work; make sure they don't intrude into your six hours.

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96.5 PRIORITISING TURNS YOUR TO-DO INTO A WORK PLAN

So your six hours should focus first what's **important and urgent**, second on what's important and **non-urgent**. Urgent but not important can be listed for later. And non-urgent *and* non-important tasks? Delete them or scribble them into personal time outside the workday.

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Limiting your working day to a strict six hours changes your whole outlook on work—with a positive effect on your life. On that upbeat note, on to the Tasks.

TASKS: DAY 96

TASK 96.1: COMPLETE YOUR DAILY MANDATORIES

Add today's targets for Connections on LinkedIn and prospects to your spreadsheet. (Remember Connections can also be prospects, and the same company may be a source of both Connections and prospects.)

TASK 96.1.1: Make 2 Connections on LinkedIn

Using the methods from Days 1, 8, 74, 85, 86, 87, and 88, find and invite 2 people to join your network on LinkedIn.

TASK 96.1.2: Find 2 prospects for your List

Using the methods from Days 2 and 8, add 2 individuals as prospects on your spreadsheet.

TASK 96.1.3: Score prospects on your descriptor criteria

Score each of today's 2 prospects for your 27 descriptor criteria.

TASK 96.2: SEND OUT 3 SALES LETTERS

Using the methods from Part 7, print, sign, seal, and stamp 3 sales letters to the cold suspects you found today, saving a PDF copy of the flight. If you're using PURLs, add them to your sales website using the methods from Day 50.

TASK 96.3: FOLLOW UP RECENT RESPONSES TO SALES LETTERS

Using the methods from Day 57, follow up your next 1 or so responses from your Campaign. It's likely this 1 came from flight Campaign 40 on Day 89.

TASK 96.4: WORK ON CLIENT BUSINESS

Continue working on your projects, organising your time to give all clients equal attention and complete each on the agreed timescale.

1. If you've won new projects or customers today, send them an acceptance note with your Terms and Conditions.
2. If you've sent project proposals 1, 3, or 7 days ago without an answer, chase a response.
3. If you've had any client meetings, phone calls, or conferences where actions were agreed, send contact reports.
4. If you've completed projects today, send success notes.
5. For any completed initial projects, invoice with a discount.

TASK 96.5: UPDATE YOUR SALES FUNNEL

For every letter sent, response received, and conversation started, move the prospect one stage further down your sales funnel. Do the same for proposals

accepted, projects completed, and retainers agreed.

TASK 96.6: WRITE YOUR FIFTH RETAINER AGREEMENT

Using the methods from **Day 92**, issue one retainer agreement proposal to a confirmed customer you've worked with on more than one project, checking you've included all the information described in Days **92-95**.

TASK 96.7: DIVIDE RETAINER INTO CONTRACT AND NON-CONTRACT

Using the methods from **Day 92**, split your list of deliverables into **contract**—those you expect to perform for the client each month—and **non-contract** (examples of work not covered by the agreement, but which you expect your client to need or ask for) for each client you've written a retainer agreement for so far. Remove non-contract tasks from the contract.

TASK 96.8: CHECK YOUR RETAINER AGREEMENT

Reread your retainer agreement and make sure you've divided it into clear contract and non-contract lists. In addition, look at the hours or part-days you've allocated to each task, and see if there are opportunities for batching any tasks with similar tasks on other retainer agreements.

TASK 96.9: ALLOCATE RESOURCES TO YOUR RETAINER

Using the methods from **Day 94**, add your fees to today's retainer agreement.

TASK 96.10: ISSUE YOUR COMPLETED RETAINER AGREEMENT

Check and issue today's retainer proposal to your client, checking you've included all the information described in Days **92-95**.

TASK 96.11: REVISE AND REWRITE ALTERNATES

Using the model letter from **Day 36** and the content plan from **Day 37**, apply your critical learnings to each alternate on your Letter for which you have an idea or insight. (From today this becomes a Task each Friday.)

TASK 96.11.1: Review and revise your Attention paragraphs

Look at your Attention alternates on worksheet PURDUE for all selectors used in your headline and first two paragraphs.

TASK 96.11.2: Review and revise your Interest paragraphs

Look at your alternates for all XP and DC selectors in your Interest paragraphs and its subhead.

TASK 96.11.3: Review and revise your Desire paragraphs

Look at your alternates for the XP and DC selectors relating to your Desire paragraphs.

TASK 96.11.4 Review and revise your Action paragraphs

Look at your alternates for the XP and DC selectors in your last two paragraphs, signature block, and postscript.

TASK 96.12: COMPLETE YOUR DAILY TIMESHEET

Add today's hours worked to your timesheet using the principles from **Day 89**.

1. Go to worksheet TIMESHEET.
2. Add any new clients to the next blank column.
3. For each client on your roster (columns B, C, D and so on) on the next dated row, note the number of hours you worked today in decimal time.

TASK 96.12: WRITE YOUR NEXT TO-DO LIST

Look at your **To-Do list** for today. Cross off completed items and ask yourself what stopped you completing others.

Write a short and simple To-Do list for your work tomorrow. Highlight major tasks, group related items, and add estimated time for each.

TASK 96.13: SORT IMPORTANT FROM URGENT

Look at your **To-Do list** for tomorrow. On the Important vs Urgent diagram from **Day 96**, plot each item according to its urgency and importance. Rewrite your To-Do list to include what matters.



That's all for **Day 96**. On **Day 97** you'll continue leveraging your 1.0 FTE of resource with a **resource library**.

CHECKLIST: DAY 96	
DO YOU UNDERSTAND:	
The difference between urgent and important	
How deep work and flow enable a six-hour workday	
HAVE YOU COMPLETED:	
20 mins	Plotted your To-Do list on the Urgent versus Important diagram and rescheduled your work
30 mins	Made 2 connections on LinkedIn
30 mins	Added 2 prospects to your List
10 mins	Scored today's prospects for descriptor criteria
10 mins	Sent 3 Letters
15 mins	Followed up 1 hot prospect
15 mins	Sent out any acceptance notes, T's & C's, contact reports, success notes, and invoices
15 mins	Updated your sales funnel
1 hr	Reviewed and revised your Letter
4 hrs	Worked on your tenth project
1 hr	Written, costed, and split your fifth retainer agreement into contract and non-contract deliverables; issued retainer agreement to client
2 hrs	Worked on other client business
TAKEOUTS:	
5th retainer agreement. Work plan. Campaign047.	
TOTALS:	
Connections made	346
People listed	996
Letters sent	996
FUNNEL:	
Cold suspects	0
Warm leads	899
Hot prospects	66
Qualified buyers	21
Confirmed customers	6
Repeat clients	3