

FICTIONAL EXAMPLE / ALEX / PART 1 OF 3

# Turn a skill into a defined offer

## Commissioned artwork for independent cafés

Decision: Sell a clear package, price the whole commitment, and build direct clients.

### Your starting point

Alex is a fictional illustrator exploring commissioned artwork for independent cafés. The scenario includes a drawing tablet, a laptop, design software, and a home workspace. The goal is a manageable practice with repeat direct clients. Local demand and rates have not been verified.

### Recommended offer

Test one clearly scoped illustration package for an independent café. Agree the deliverable, size, usage, schedule, deposit, milestones, and revision limit before work begins. Make the offer easy to explain and the time commitment measurable.

### Who to approach first

Start with café owners whose spaces or materials could plausibly benefit from custom artwork. Prepare three relevant portfolio examples and speak with five owners about what they buy today, who makes the decision, and whether a paid trial is credible. Interest without a commitment is not a sale.

### Ways to find work

Direct introductions give control of the relationship but take sales time. A marketplace may help discovery but can introduce fees and platform dependence. Compare the whole cost of acquiring and serving a client rather than only the visible project price.

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# Know what the work actually pays

## Illustrative project model

Assume a \$600 project price, \$60 in direct costs, and 18 committed hours: 10 creating, 3 on briefing and revisions, 3 on sales, and 2 on administration. The remaining \$540 equals \$30 per committed hour before income tax, benefits, insurance, equipment replacement, and other overhead. Every input is fictional and must be checked.

## What can erode the return

Six additional unpaid revision hours reduce the same contribution to \$22.50 per hour. A hypothetical 15% marketplace fee would subtract another \$90, reducing the base 18-hour result to \$25 per hour. This fee is a scenario assumption, not a claim about a specific platform.

## A personal rate floor

At an assumed target of \$30 per committed hour, 18 hours and \$60 direct costs require a minimum \$600 direct-client price before the excluded costs. With a hypothetical 15% fee, the same contribution would require about \$706. Set a real floor using actual expenses, time, and personal income needs.

## Startup and cash-flow checks

Inventory equipment already owned and identify any essential purchases. Avoid buying ahead of a credible order. Agree deposits and milestones appropriate to the project, track when cash is due, and plan for late payments. A quoted fee is not cash in the bank.

## Protect the scope

Specify revision limits and the price of additional work. Clarify ownership and permitted uses of the artwork. Review contract, insurance, and tax questions with qualified professionals as appropriate. Do not treat this example as a ready-to-sign contract.

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# Build the first client relationships

## Days 1-30: test a focused offer

Prepare three portfolio examples, write a one-page scope, and speak with five owners. Ask about current alternatives and buying decisions. Deliverable: a tested offer, evidence log, and revised price model. Do not assume that enthusiasm establishes willingness to pay.

## Days 31-60: deliver and measure

If a paid pilot is agreed, track every committed hour and direct expense. Document scope changes and obtain permission before using client work publicly. Deliverable: a completed project, actual project economics, and a client-feedback record.

## Days 61-90: build repeatability

Ask satisfied clients about future work and appropriate introductions. Review which acquisition channel produces viable work after all time and costs. Deliverable: a repeat-client plan and a simple pipeline with next actions. Reduce dependence on a single platform or buyer where feasible.

## When to walk away

Decline work below the personal rate floor, without a clear brief, or with unlimited unpaid revisions. Reconsider the direction if delivery consistently exceeds the model or the work cannot meet income needs. Employment or a different service may be a better option.

## Your next action

Draft the first package and estimate all hours, including selling and administration. Use the five owner conversations to test both the scope and price before buying additional equipment.