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## Ways to **Get Paid** for Your Advice





Freelancers are accustomed to selling their creative skills—“hands” work. But we can also sell our expertise, perspective and guidance—“head” work.

There’s a good chance you’ve already helped prospects and clients in some of the ways listed below, but you may not have charged for the value you created.

Hopefully, this list and specific examples will spark ideas and point you to new possibilities. If one or two ideas appeal to you, don’t be afraid to combine them.

The timing for these ideas couldn’t be better. AI is not a fad. It’s here to stay and is getting better by the day. And the economic slowdown is very real.

So if you want to survive and thrive in the coming years, you must move up the value ladder. A big part of that is doing more “head” work for clients ... for a fee.

Here’s to getting paid for thinking, not just doing!

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## Brainstorming

- 1 **Content ideas:** generate themes, topics, and article (or post) ideas for the next quarter.
- 2 **Strategy and planning for long-form content:** help clients come up with the best ideas, content strategy, and specific applications for long-form pieces. For example, you might recommend that one client interview their thought leaders, and another use their proprietary data to publish an industry report.
- 3 **Content repurposing:** analyze existing content, identify top-performing pieces, and decide how they can/should be repurposed for other formats and channels.
- 4 **“Idea Bounce” or “Firestarter” session:** create space for clients to generate ideas, explore new possibilities, weigh their merit and get clarity around next steps.
- 5 **Sounding board:** ask thoughtful questions and help a client talk through their processes, problems or opportunities aloud, look at various paths or solutions, and discuss the benefits and drawbacks of each one, before making decisions.
- 6 **Thought partnering:** “rent my brain” sessions where you provide needed expertise and objectivity to help clients see problems and opportunities through a fresh perspective and make more informed decisions.



## Audits

- 7 **Website or landing page teardown:** use your checklist of best practices to evaluate strengths and weaknesses, as well as meaningful changes or improvements they should make to improve effectiveness.
- 8 **Sales funnel assessment:** analyze a client’s funnel and offer specific ideas for new things to try or ways to optimize for better results.
- 9 **Content strategy:** evaluate a client’s existing content strategy and provide recommendations for improvement; could be combined with content brainstorming in the above section.



- 10 **Content plan or content creation process assessment:** help clients see what they're doing well, what could be improved, and how they can generate better content, faster.



## Advisory

- 11 **Project roadmapping or paid discovery:** help the client better define the existing challenge, set priorities, set goals, identify key outcomes, and provide specific recommendations and an actionable plan for solving that challenge. (Why not get paid to help define the project scope and budget instead of doing it for free?)
- 12 **White paper plan:** this is a flavor of project roadmapping where you work with a white paper client to define the project's goals, scope, outline and key success factors. Essentially, the white paper plan becomes the project's constitution – the core guide that keeps all stakeholders on the same page.
- 13 **Strategy session:** guide the client through a process similar to project roadmapping with more open-ended brainstorming that may touch on other parts of the business, such as marketing strategy or operations.
- 14 **Content creation plan:** use the client's existing content strategy and help them create a detailed content plan, playbook and/or editorial calendar for the coming quarter.
- 15 **Marketing strategy + plan:** help a client develop a more effective marketing strategy, along with the plan for implementing that strategy.
- 16 **Lead generation strategy + plan:** evaluate the existing plan, if it exists, and help the client decide what to test or improve to get better results.
- 17 **Thought leadership strategy + plan:** audit the client's thought leadership efforts (for example, writing on LinkedIn), introduce more experiments and best practices, and create an updated plan together.



## Workshops

- 18 **Positioning workshop:** walk your client through your positioning framework and work with them to articulate the position they occupy in the market. From there, help them



identify key pieces of messaging they need to create or update (e.g., unique selling proposition)

- 19 **Messaging workshop:** help the client define *what* they're going to say (e.g., what their key differentiators are) and decide *how* they're going to say it with effective copy and content across their marketing and sales communications.
- 20 **Brand sprint:** walk the client through a brand development process in a compressed period of time—for example, a half or full day. (Note: Austin has been selling his own version of [this 3-Hour Brand Sprint from Google Ventures](#) since 2018.)
- 21 **Training / teaching strategy or writing skills:** teach your client's staff writers or other communications staffers how to improve their writing or copywriting skills; or, teach a sales team how to craft more effective prospecting or follow-up emails.



## Coaching / Mentoring

- 22 **Guiding a person or team through a process:** help your client apply for an important grant or award; or help your client define their brand's style guide and editorial guidelines; or help your client do keyword research and coach them through writing optimized blog posts.
- 23 **Leading a client through an important challenge:** walk with your client through the rollout of a new brand; or help them use their new positioning to create new collateral for an upcoming trade show.



## Facilitation

- 24 **Bringing teams together:** help sales and marketing teams combine their insights for a new Voice of Customer project; or guide a VP of marketing and a staff writer through the research and drafting process for a new white paper.





## Leadership

- 25 **Fractional CMO:** become the part-time marketing leader for a smaller company and give them access to expertise, strategy and decision-making without having to invest in a full-time marketing executive.
- 26 **Content creation oversight:** help a client ensure that their team sticks to the strategy and plan. Then provide advice, critique, and course corrections as needed.

