



Session 1

Foundation

Austin L.
Church



What We'll Cover

- The Challenge
- The Solution
- The Process

The Challenge

Factors That Limit Your Income

Energy → Writing work requires significant creativity, focus, and energy.

Enthusiasm → The work product suffers when we're tired or bored.

Time → Writing is low leverage, non-hackable. No matter how good you get, good writing takes time. Available time inventory caps income.

Variability → Similar projects for different clients take different amounts of time and generate lower return on time (i.e., profit).

**Writing isn't
always the highest
value end product.**

Our thinking & ideas

Our research & synthesis capabilities

Our ability to make new connections & produce new insights for clients

Creative problem-solving, analysis, resourcefulness, & good judgment

Expertise (i.e., specialized knowledge combined with knowing what will and won't work in advance)

Who we are as people (i.e., clever, curious, multi-faceted)



Where does that leave most writers?

Booked solid with writing

Running the hamster on a wheel of words

Competition (millions of other freelance writers in a red ocean)

Burning down or burned out as our love of writing gets compromised

**100,000 Writers in
U.S.**

**1,000,000s
Worldwide**

Meanwhile, our clients...

Don't always know what they need most or know what's best.

Require marathon discovery sessions.

Don't always see the deeper problems or bigger opportunities.

Have eyes bigger than their budgets.

Have sticker shock at a fair, value-focused price for their full scope of needs.

Feel reluctant to go from \$0 to \$X,XXX.

The Solution



Writing

Strategy

What do you get when you sell strategy?

Deal with less competition.

Use other skills and competencies.

Have more variety and creative challenges.

Do more head work, not just hands work.

Strengthen positioning as leader and guide.

Build trust and rapport.

Solve the right problem.

What else do you get?

Get more flexibility with scheduling.

Get paid for discovery you have to do anyway.

Get paid to vet new clients.

Get paid to increase scope.

Get paid to create proposals.

Stop trading time for money.

Transition to value-based pricing.



“Execution brings far more challenges [than strategy] in client relationships and should be approached with caution.”

– David C. Baker, *The Business of Expertise*

What do clients get when you sell strategy?

Space

Clarity

Objectivity

Expertise

Confidence

Organization

Direction

Traction

The Process

**In 2015 I was supposed to
be having a blast at the
beach with my family.**





Some of my reasons...

Writing was starting to feel like a grind.

Meanwhile, my capabilities had grown. I was more than “just a writer,” had been for years.

My family’s financial needs had changed. Kids, you know. I wanted and needed to earn more.

I disliked trading time for money. I’d heard about value-based pricing and wanted to try it.

My time was precious. I couldn’t afford to do marathon discovery sessions for free.

Even more reasons...

I had done strategy in various forms for years, only I hadn't gone paid for it.

I was tired of spending hours putting together proposals for solving the wrong problem.

I was tired of potential clients using ideas from discovery sessions and proposals but not hiring me.

I was tired—and burning down.



“Burnout doesn’t come from working too hard. Burnout comes 'cause I can’t see an end in sight.”

– Grant Cardone



**“I do this thing called
‘roadmapping’....”**

– Brennan Dunn

Double Your Freelancing Podcast





Austin Church <austin@wunderbarworks.com>

to JD ▾



Tue, Apr 12, 2016, 2:44 PM



Cool. Glad to know that. I don't *have to* manage more than your brand right now, but I would like to know how my involvement will contribute to your bigger plan. I can better coordinate my own thinking and efforts that way. For example, maybe the goal is to spend more time with your family, so I wouldn't want to work on a speaking gig in Timbuktu. Or, if you want to sell everything in 5 years, then I won't be on the hunt for a sales exec or even a profitable SaaS app.

So I don't want to insinuate myself where I'm not needed, but I also want to create value however I can.

I connected with DJ over email. I haven't spoken with him on the phone yet. I postponed the April SPACE Retreat because 1) I've been traveling so much since March 16, and 2) I'm working on a sponsorship of some sort with Sage Fly Fishing.

How about next Tuesday afternoon? That will give you Monday to get back in the saddle. If that works for you, you can [use this link to book it](#). I typically charge \$500 for these 90-minute roadmapping sessions. Our goal is to develop the plan that we'll work from for the next 6-12 months.

Austin



Appointment Scheduled

for Genie [REDACTED]

What Roadmapping Session (Wunderbar LLC)

When Thursday, December 22, 2016 10:30am EST
(1 hour 30 minutes)

Thank you, your appointment has been successfully
scheduled.


[Change/Cancel Appointment](#)

[Add to iCal/Outlook Calendar](#)


[Add to Google Calendar](#)

The info below is just sent to you as the admin

Name: [REDACTED]
Phone: [REDACTED]
E-mail: [REDACTED]
Price: \$650.00
Paid Online: \$650.00

 **Austin Church** <austin@wunderbarworks.com>
to Grant ▾


Wed, Aug 2, 2017, 4:08 PM ☆ ↶ ⋮



How does Friday afternoon work for Roadmapping Session #1? If so, I'll send you the invoice, and we can pick the place.

The cost is \$1250.

You can read more about it here: <http://wunderbarworks.com/hire/>.

 **Austin L. Church** <austin@balernum.com>
to Stephen ▾

Mon, Jul 15, 2019, 11:41 AM ☆ ↶ ⋮

Hi Stephen,
Thanks again for taking time last week to catch up and talk shop. I'm honored and encouraged that you want to collaborate with me.

The word that comes to mind is "lucid." You seem lucid. You know what you're about, and you're going after that. I find that energizing and exciting. I have no doubt that you'll take action on what we discover together or rather what we help you and Tara rediscover.

Here are the goals that you stated (as I remember them):


- Finish the manuscript for The Only Work Left
- Create a content roadmap to guide writing the manuscript and content marketing
- Flesh out an Ideal Customer Profile to help you catch any content opportunities you might otherwise miss
- Lock down a small group of editors to help you edit and polish the book manuscript
- Sell out the 75 Accelerator slots
- Sell out the 100 Summit spots
- Stay sane and lucid. Ha!

Did I forget anything?


We can proceed in a couple of different ways:

1. Coaching – We'll do one or two sounding board calls each month where you bring your priorities and any knots that need unraveling. I ask open-ended questions to help you get clarity, set direction, and define next steps. We can supplement these calls as needed with homework, exercises, and deadlines and otherwise pour fuel on your fire. I usually charge \$250 per call and charge for the first 3 months up front. My recommendation would be that we do 2 calls per month for 3 months, and then reevaluate after 90 days.
2. Roadmapping – I can also guide you and Tara through a Roadmapping Session. I friggin' love Roadmapping because it results in an actionable plan. We do a 90-minute work session where we get you clarity, set direction, and define next steps. Roadmapping Sessions are typically for people who know they need help with business development or branding but aren't quite sure where to put their focus. The cost is a flat \$1,500 for the work session and deliverable, and the deliverable is a clear roadmap for moving forward with confidence. You can read more about the rationale behind Roadmapping here: <https://balernum.com/schedule-margin-and-solve-your-dwayne-johnson-problems>.

It's also worth mentioning that I have a talent at my disposal. Chris is an absolute freak when it comes to branding, design, and websites. Pretty much everything he touches turns to gold. If you and Tara do have need of anything from identity design to UI/UX, strategy to e-commerce, then Chris is your guy. What Chris and I have in common is an obsession with branding. Ha.

 **Austin L. Church** <austin@balernum.com>
to Jay ▾

Mon, Jun 8, 2020, 4:23 PM ☆ ↶ ⋮



"Duh, Austin. You have to tell him the price."


Sorry about that. We raised the price from \$1,500 to \$2,500 and added a bit to the scope, both in terms of how long we spend on discovery and how much time we put into the plan/report. The main thing that was missing was a very simple list of action items at the top of the report. To that end, let's pinpoint your best opportunities for expansion and growth to help you see 10x ROI (or \$25K) on your investment as soon as possible. Let's then force-rank those so it's easier for you to stay focused. Our goal with the reports is to make you say, "Wow."

What do you think? If that sounds good, I'm wide open tomorrow afternoon.


Austin

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 **Austin L. Church** <austin@balernum.com>
to Ryan, Ryan ▾

Thu, Dec 3, 2020, 5:42 PM ☆ ↩ ⋮



I hear you. Every time I work toward operational efficiency it's like, "Ugh, I can't afford to be doing this right now." Later, I'm like, "Here's the training. Phew! It sure is nice to delegate!"

In terms of cost, the workshop I mentioned would be \$3,500. That's Balernum's minimum engagement for projects focused on strategy/planning/consulting. We won't iron out every wrinkle, but the goal will be to deliver 10x in value. We can even frame the workshop that way: "What do we need to figure out to make this workshop and the plan worth at least \$35,000 in 2021?" Simply freeing you up an extra hour or two each week to focus more on pipeline and sales would probably do the trick.

If you'd like for me to put together a bigger proposal with an ongoing support and troubleshooting component, I'm happy to do that.

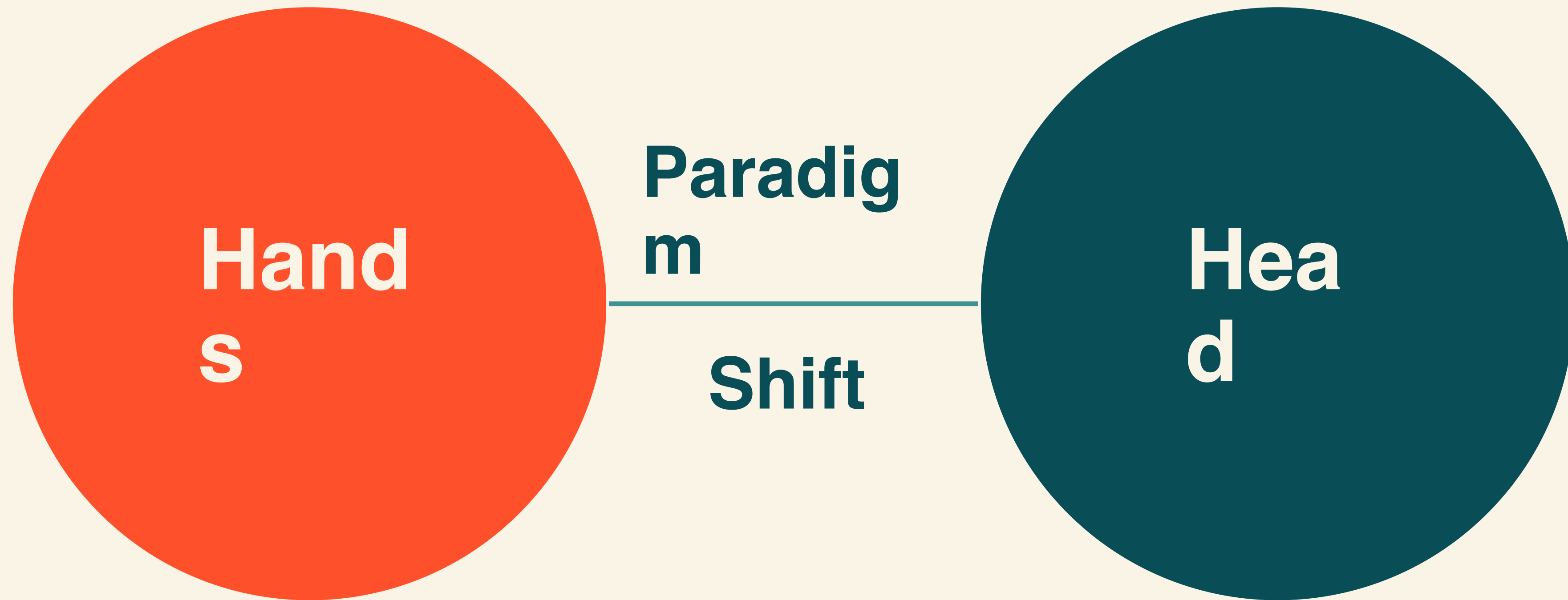
I believe that agency operations is an underutilized lever, and I'm glad you all are looking to throw your weight into it.

Think it over and let me know what questions or concerns you have.

Austin

P.S. Have you read *Build a Business Not a Job*, *Built to Sell*, *Clockwork*, *The e-Myth*, or *Traction* (Gino Wickman)?

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Key Mindset Shifts

~~Writer~~ **Strategist & Writer**

~~Words~~ **Clarity, Confidence,
Direction**

~~Commodity~~ **Expert Guide**

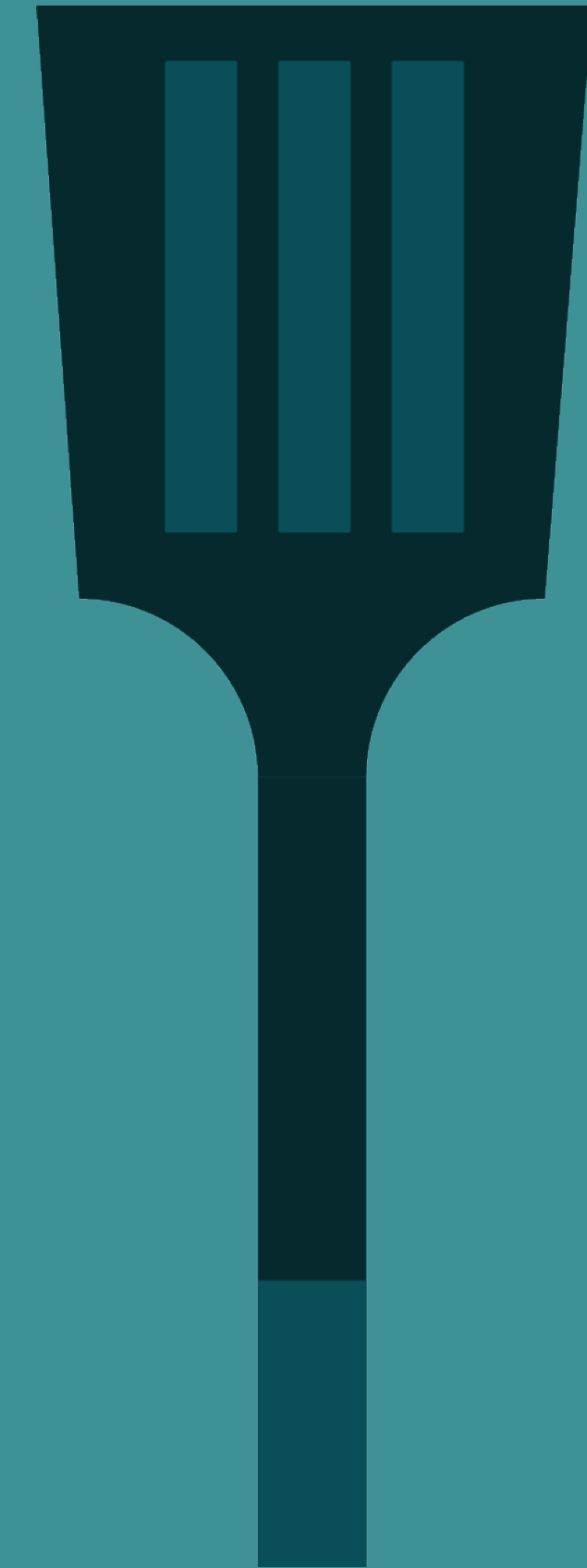
~~Order Taker~~ **Problem Solver**

~~Vendor~~ **Partner**

~~Make Happy~~ **Bring Clarity**

“If a man does not know to what port he is steering, no wind is favorable to him.”

– Seneca the Younger, Roman Stoic philosopher



9 Flavors of Strategy You Can Sell

Discovery / Project Roadmapping

Brand

Content & Copy (incl. web, social media, email)

Web / Conversion / Funnel

Launch / Go-to-Market

Marketing / Growth

Product Strategy

Customer Journey / Experience

Ideation / Brainstorming

Business (incl. goal setting, prioritization,
planning)

What do clients get when you sell strategy?

Space

Clarity

Objectivity

Expertise

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What You Need

What the heck is “strategy”?

Strategy is the collection of decisions you plan to make to get from where you are to where you want to be.



What does “offer” mean?

An offer is a service or group of services you package up as desired outcome or transformation with a fixed price, fixed scope, clear benefits, and delivery date.







7 Parts of a Juicy Offer

1. **Promise**
2. Value
3. Risks
4. Outcomes
5. Process
6. Price
7. Proof

What You Need to Sell Strategy

Juicy strategy offer

Logical upsells based on your value ladder

Benefit-focused messaging

Value-based pricing

Marketing materials (e.g., web page or sales deck)

Workshop needs (incl. structure, questionnaire, agenda, questions, etc.)

Report template

Delivery + client experience

Engagement Steps + Flow

1. Share the offer and get the yes.
2. Send the invoice and questionnaire.
3. Once the client pays the invoice, you schedule the session.
4. Facilitate the session.
5. Ask open-ended questions to define the problems and available solutions.
6. Take notes and repeat back what you have heard—often.
7. Turn your notes into a report and actionable plan, and deliver it within 2-3 days.

Optional – If you like the client, include 2-3 options for ongoing collaboration in your report—i.e., the next step up on your value ladder.

Engagement Parts + Flow

Pick a day that works for both parties.

Client pays the invoice.

I send you the pre-work questionnaire.

We pick 1 or 2 top priorities or outcomes in the Kickoff Call.

I structure the 1-Day Sprint around those outcomes.

I deliver any support materials beforehand.

We do the 1-Day Sprint—in person* or on Zoom.

I deliver your actionable brand strategy.

I check in periodically.

**We'll take it one
step at a time.**

Let these ideas marinate for a while.

You offer more than words and always have.

It's time to reframe the value you create.

You only need enough confidence to get started.

Then, confidence comes with doing a few.

What Upcoming Sessions Cover

Session 2 – Creating Your Juicy Offers + Strategy Engagement Flavors 1-4

Session 3 – Strategy Engagement Flavors 5-9

Session 4 – Marketing & Selling Your Strategy Engagements

Session 5 – Leading Effective Strategy Sessions with Clients

Session 6 – Common Pitfalls & How to Avoid Them + Dialing Things In + How to Get Started

Session 1

Assignment

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1. **Look backward.** Reflect back on your 5-10 most profitable and satisfying projects. What did they involve? And what made the experience satisfying—e.g., the money, the relationship, the work itself, the timeline or some combination?
2. **Look forward.** How and when have you already sold strategy in the form of clarity, problem-solving, brainstorming, or discovery? Jot down 3-5 ideas of how you could turn those experiences into a standalone strategy offer.