

PDF GUIDE OR MANUAL

From Skill to Service

A Nigerian freelancer's guide to packaging your work, finding prospects and proposing with confidence

OBUSKKO

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SAMPLE

Introduction

Knowing how to do the work is not always the same as knowing how to sell it.

You may be able to design attractive flyers, write clear website copy, maintain a website or organise a busy person's inbox. Yet when someone asks, "What exactly do you offer, and how much does it cost?", your answer may become less confident.

Perhaps you accept whatever work comes your way, quote a price before understanding the brief, or start a project after a WhatsApp exchange that leaves important details unsettled. Later, the client asks for "one small addition", feedback arrives late, or payment takes longer than expected.

These situations do not necessarily mean you lack skill. Often, what is missing is a clear service and a repeatable way to manage the business around it.

From Skill to Service will help you build that foundation.

Who this guide is for

This guide is for Nigerian freelancers and early-career professionals who already have a skill they can use to help a client, but need a practical way to turn it into paid service work.

You might be:

- A designer creating social media graphics for small businesses.
- A writer helping organisations explain their products and services.
- A tech professional building or maintaining websites.
- A virtual assistant providing administrative support.
- An employee preparing to offer a service alongside your job, subject to your employment obligations.

You do not need an impressive website, a large following or a long list of previous clients to use this guide. You do need a skill you can deliver responsibly, a willingness to ask questions and an honest understanding of your current limits.

This is not a course in design, writing, coding or administration. It is a guide to making those skills easier for a suitable client to understand, buy and work with.

Start with a service, not a list of skills

“I do graphic design” describes an ability. It leaves the buyer to work out what they should request.

“I create a monthly pack of eight social media graphics for independent food businesses, using their approved photographs and promotional messages” describes a service.

The second statement gives the conversation a starting point. You can now discuss the formats, delivery dates, client

inputs, revision limits and price.

That is the service-first approach: choose a particular client problem, define one useful offer, and use that offer to guide your prospecting, proposals and delivery.

You are not choosing your specialisation forever. You are creating a manageable starting point that you can improve through real conversations and completed work.

The examples in this guide cover design, writing, tech and virtual assistance. Look beyond the example closest to your skill. A designer's revision boundary may help a writer explain feedback limits. A virtual assistant's approach to access permissions may be useful for someone maintaining client websites.

What you will build

By the end, you should have a practical, client-ready toolkit:

- **A defined offer:** who it helps, what it includes, what it excludes and what you need from the client.
- **A pricing worksheet:** a reasoned quote that considers your time, costs, revisions and assumptions.
- **A prospect list and outreach messages:** a focused way to approach suitable people without sending the same pitch everywhere.
- **A tailored proposal:** a clear explanation of the recommended work, timetable, responsibilities and fee.
- **A written agreement:** a record of scope, payment terms,

approvals and how changes will be handled.

- **An invoice and payment tracker:** documents for requesting, checking and following up on local or international payments.
- **Project-control tools:** simple records for feedback, additional requests, completion and handover.

These tools support clearer decisions and more professional client relationships. They cannot guarantee enquiries, accepted proposals or payment by a particular date.

How to get the most from it

Choose one service to work on as you read. If you offer several things, start with one you can deliver confidently. Building one complete offer is more useful than drafting five vague ones.

Complete the worksheets using your own situation.

Include the time you spend communicating, the data and electricity you need, and any software costs relevant to delivery. Do not copy another freelancer's price without understanding their scope.

Adapt the templates rather than sending them unchanged. Check every deliverable, deadline and payment term. A polished document is only useful if it accurately reflects what both parties have agreed.

Keep your documents together. A simple folder and spreadsheet are enough to begin. Update them as you learn

what prospects ask and where projects become unclear.

Finally, recognise when a template is not enough. Seek qualified legal advice for large, complex, cross-border or high-risk contracts, and accounting or tax advice for your circumstances.

Your aim is not to sound like a bigger business. It is to make your service clear, your commitments realistic and your working process easier to trust.

Chapter 1: Turn Your Skill into One Clear Offer

Knowing how to do useful work is not the same as making that work easy to buy.

You may be good at design, writing, website support or organising information. But when you tell a business owner, “I can help with anything you need,” you leave them to work out what to ask for, what they will receive and where the work ends.

A clear offer does that thinking for them. It connects a particular client problem to a defined piece of work.

Your first task is not to package every skill you have. It is to create **one service you can explain, deliver and manage confidently**.

Move from a skill to a service

A **skill** is something you know how to do. A **service** is a defined way of using that skill to help a client.

Compare these descriptions:

Skill statement	Service offer
“I do graphic design.”	“I create a monthly pack of branded promotional graphics for independent food vendors.”

Skill statement	Service offer
"I am a writer."	"I write five-page website copy for Nigerian service businesses launching their first website."
"I work in tech."	"I provide scheduled maintenance for small WordPress business websites."
"I am a virtual assistant."	"I provide weekday inbox and appointment support for independent consultants."

The service statements help a buyer recognise whether the offer is relevant. Each points towards a client group and a recognisable need.

A useful starting formula is:

I help **a particular type of client** address **a specific problem** by providing **a defined service**.

For example:

I help independent caterers present their menus and ordering information clearly through a branded social media design pack.

Notice what this does not promise. It does not guarantee more orders, a certain number of followers or business growth. Those results depend on factors beyond the designer's control, including pricing, demand and customer service.

Promise the work you can control, not the business result you hope it supports.

Choose a client group you can realistically serve

“Small businesses in Nigeria” is a starting point, but it is too broad to guide your offer. A fashion retailer, an accounting practice and a training company may need very different support.

Choose an initial group by considering three questions.

1. Do they have a problem you understand?

Look for a recurring task, delay or frustration.

Perhaps food vendors repeatedly need menu graphics. Consultants may struggle to keep appointment requests organised. A service business preparing a website may have a developer ready but no written content.

Describe the problem without judging the client:

- Instead of “Their branding is bad,” try “Their promotional posts use inconsistent colours and ordering details.”
- Instead of “They are disorganised,” try “Appointment requests arrive across several channels and sometimes remain unanswered.”

An observable problem gives you a stronger starting point than an assumption.

2. Can you reach the person who decides?

A promising client group is less useful if you cannot find an appropriate contact.

Consider businesses where you already have a connection: former colleagues, professional associations, businesses you buy from or people in relevant communities.

Find out who approves the work. It may be the owner, practice manager, marketing lead or operations manager. Access means having a legitimate way to start a relevant conversation—not permission to send repeated unsolicited messages.

3. Can you deliver useful work at your current level?

Choose work that matches your ability, tools, available time and working conditions.

If you are still learning website maintenance, do not offer emergency support for a complex online store. If your main job limits your availability, do not promise continuous inbox monitoring.

Shortlist three client groups. For each, record:

- A problem you understand.
- How you could reach a decision-maker.
- Evidence that you can deliver the required work.

Choose the group with the clearest combination. This is a starting focus, not a permanent restriction.

Give your offer clear boundaries

Before approaching prospects, define these five parts.

Deliverables

State exactly what the client receives: quantity, format and relevant limits.

“Social media support” is vague. “Eight static Instagram graphics supplied as PNG files” is clearer.

Exclusions

Name likely requests that are not covered. These might include photography, posting content, website development, paid advertising or weekend availability.

Exclusions prevent different assumptions from becoming unpaid work.

Turnaround time

Explain both the delivery period and what starts the clock.

For example:

First drafts are delivered within five working days after written approval to begin, receipt of the agreed initial payment and receipt of all required materials.

If client feedback is late, confirm a revised delivery date rather than assuming the original deadline still applies.

Required client inputs

List what you need: approved text, brand files, product information, access permissions or an approval contact.

A missing logo or unanswered question can delay delivery just as much as a technical problem.

Feedback and completion

Define how feedback works and what counts as finished.

For example:

One revision round means one consolidated list of changes to the agreed direction. A new campaign, additional page or different design direction requires a separate quote.

Completion should depend on agreed work being supplied and checked—not on whether the client later achieves a sales target.

Four practical service examples

The following are illustrative packages. Adjust the quantities and timings to work you can reasonably deliver.

Social media design pack for a food vendor

Client problem: An Abuja lunch vendor needs consistent graphics showing meals, prices and ordering instructions.

Offer: Eight static Instagram graphics for one monthly promotion cycle.

- **Deliverables:** Eight square graphics supplied as PNG files, using one agreed visual direction.
- **Included feedback:** One consolidated revision round.
- **Turnaround:** First drafts within five working days after start conditions are met; revisions within two working days of receiving consolidated feedback.
- **Client inputs:** Logo, brand colours if available, usable food photographs, approved menu details, prices and contact information.
- **Exclusions:** Photography, caption writing, posting, advertising and editable source files unless separately agreed.

Plain-language explanation:

“You provide your approved meal details and photographs. I turn them into eight consistent promotional graphics ready for you to post.”

The deliverable is a usable design pack, not guaranteed orders.

Website copy for a service business

Client problem: An Ibadan cleaning company is building a website but has no clear explanation of its services or booking process.

Offer: Copy for five agreed pages: Home, About, Services, Frequently Asked Questions and Contact.

- **Deliverables:** Up to 2,000 words in an editable document, organised by page.
- **Included feedback:** One consolidated revision round.
- **Turnaround:** First draft within seven working days after the information interview and receipt of required materials.
- **Client inputs:** Service descriptions, locations covered, booking steps, verified business facts and permission to use any supplied testimonials.
- **Exclusions:** Website design, uploading content, legal policies and additional pages.

The page list and total word limit work together. Five pages should not quietly become five extensive service guides.

Explain the value as clearer information for prospective customers—not guaranteed search rankings or enquiries.

Website maintenance for a small business

Client problem: A Lagos consultancy has a WordPress website but no one responsible for routine checks and updates.

Offer: Scheduled monthly maintenance for one agreed WordPress website, subject to an initial review.

- **Deliverables:** One scheduled monthly check, a backup before agreed updates, compatible software updates and a brief maintenance report.
- **Included boundary:** Up to one hour of minor text or

image changes each month; unused time does not roll over.

- **Timing:** Maintenance takes place in an agreed monthly window. Requests are acknowledged within two working days.
- **Client inputs:** Authorised access, hosting details, relevant licences and an approval contact.
- **Exclusions:** Redesigns, new features, malware removal, hosting fees and round-the-clock emergency support.

Use individual accounts and appropriate permissions where possible. Agree how backups and access credentials will be protected.

Routine maintenance can reduce avoidable problems, but it cannot guarantee uninterrupted service or complete security.

Virtual administrative support for a consultant

Client problem: An independent consultant in Port Harcourt struggles to keep routine emails and appointment requests organised.

Offer: Ten hours of administrative support per month, delivered during agreed weekday windows.

- **Deliverables:** Inbox organisation, draft replies using approved guidance, calendar updates and a weekly task summary.
- **Timing:** Two scheduled support sessions each week; no continuous monitoring.

- **Client inputs:** Delegated access, response templates, scheduling rules and an escalation contact.
- **Exclusions:** Making payments, signing documents, giving professional advice or committing the client to purchases.
- **Capacity rule:** Additional hours require written approval before work continues.

Here, hours define capacity. The task list defines what that capacity can be used for. Both are necessary.

Agree confidentiality and access arrangements before handling client information.

Check whether your offer is easy to understand

Read your offer aloud to someone unfamiliar with your work. Then ask:

1. Who would buy this?
2. What would they receive?
3. What would they need to provide?
4. What is not included?
5. When would the work be ready?

If they cannot answer, simplify the wording. Replace phrases such as “complete digital solutions” with actual tasks and outputs.

You do not need a clever package name. You need a buyer to recognise a relevant service with clear boundaries.

Exercise

Complete this one-page offer worksheet. Keep each answer brief enough to fit on one printed page.

Offer question	Your answer
Who is this for? Name one client group.	
What problem do they have? Describe one observable difficulty.	
How could I reach a decision-maker? Identify a realistic contact route.	
Why can I deliver this? Note relevant skills, experience or samples.	
What is the service called? Use a plain, descriptive name.	
What is included? List deliverables, quantities and formats.	
What is excluded? Name likely extras.	
What must the client provide? List materials, information and access.	
What starts the delivery period? Record the start conditions.	
What is the turnaround? Include draft and revision timing.	
How does feedback work? Define revision rounds and approval arrangements.	
What counts as complete? Describe the agreed handover.	

Finish with this sentence:

I help _____ address _____ by providing _____.

Share the completed sheet with someone who understands your intended client group. Ask what is unclear or missing. Revise it until the service is easy to explain without making promises you cannot control.