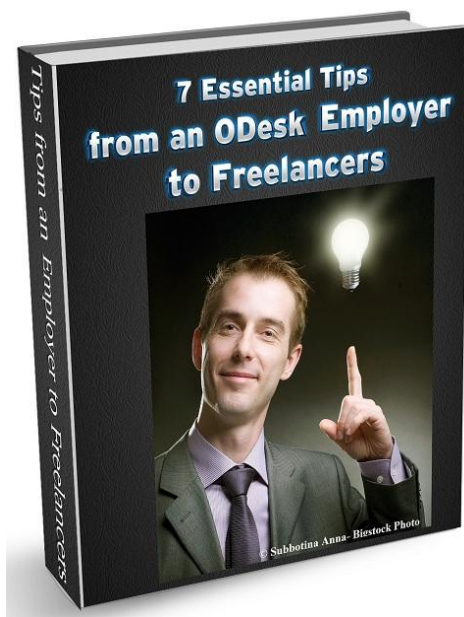


# 7 Essential Tips from an ODesk Employer to Freelancers



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# 7 Essential Tips from an ODesk Employer to Freelancers

“I've been searching work on [oDesk](#) for 1 year. Last year I've worked with an Australian client. But till then, no job.”

-- Question from [Alim](#)

## **My Answer:**

I also looked at your profile. Consider doing a series of simpler tasks (hourly tasks!) to build your profile and gain some feedback.

As an employer, I always look for, and sometimes even filter for, the amount of hours a provider has worked.

[Read more about why \*\*feedback on ODesk\*\* is of the highest importance.](#)

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“Should we ask for upfront payment for fixed priced jobs from a verified Client, when we know that this Client has spent time in oDesk for quite long time?”

**My Answer:**

Personally, I was never asked for upfront payment. On the other hand, I have never hired someone from EU or the US. If the budget of the fixed price job exceeds, say, 20\$, I would find it understandable to ask for upfront payment to reduce risks.

If it's a mini-fixed price job for 5\$, then I wouldn't bother with the applicant asking for upfront payment.

Please don't take this input negatively or personally. I'm just stating how I am doing it as an employer.

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***“Do you think we (the contractors) should know each other?”***

**My Answer:**

I think it's good for contractors to network (esp. via LinkedIn and email), but you shouldn't invest too much time discussing jobs. Especially if in the meantime you could get busy applying for projects ;)

**Tip:**

If you want to see how other contractors' profile and background information look, [check out our interviews!](#)

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***“oDesk serves me as my training gear.”***

**My Answer:**

From my experience, I have one advice:

Give it your all and focus on great quality from the very first job. Your job feedback is essential in the beginning. That's what employers look at first (and then the amount of billed hours).

Try to get a few simple jobs done with great feedback. Then focus on getting jobs with more responsibility, which naturally also pay higher wages.

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***“Your thoughts on clients that put 10-30 hours/week (or 40 hours/week) on job posts but doesn't really let you work that much once you're hired.***

***Is this a professional conduct or not?”***

-- Question from Solomon

**My Answer:**

To give someone work full time is almost a half time job for the employer, from my experience. I would give you the advice to look at the team room - if you have 5 coworkers all supposedly working full time, then it's probable that the employer cannot give you the attention you deserve.

For hiring, I feel that the time categories on ODesk are not clear. Sometimes, there are projects that need time "as needed". If I post a job for less than 10 hours a week, the provider will look for additional work elsewhere.

When I then need him full time for times of needs, I am left alone.

It's a dilemma for both sides.

If I hire someone, and have chosen the category 20 hours per week, I make sure to debrief them at the beginning of the working relationship to let them know what I meant. If I meant: 1-40 hours per week, as needed, 20 hours estimate - I'll let them know.

If your employer doesn't let you know, it is very acceptable to just ASK how long you are expected to work per week. Especially if the daily work load is significantly different than what you expected.

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***“Engaging the clients for whom you can't work because of current jobs I have seen many successful freelancers who are currently doing 3 to 4 jobs and have various clients waiting or offering jobs to them as well.”***

***Additional Details:***

*My question is how these experienced freelancers make money out of those oDesk jobs that are offered to them but they can't work on those because of busy schedule with other ongoing oDesk jobs.*

*How you engage those clients so that they can be your clients after your current job ends?*

*Or do you recommend those clients other freelancers whom you know?*

-- Question from Nasir

**My Answer:**

Interesting. As a buyer on ODesk, I would not like the provider I am employing to be working on 10 jobs at the same time. That's also because I like to hire providers for at least 20 hours a week.

My wish as an employer would be that a provider that has more than enough projects on his plate refuses me flatly and honestly. I would respect him more for it, and possibly follow up later if I really wanted him to work on my project.



**Solomon followed up:**

***A good VA would decline job offers he could not complete in time up front.***

***As an employer, would you accept referrals from the person you would be trying to hire, e.g. a friend from that VA?***

**My Answer:**

Thanks for taking up my point. VA's looking for success should role-model your attitude.

As for your question, I most certainly would consider a personal referral from someone I trust in (or whose skills I trust in) more than anonymous applicants to my job opening.

And as a referrer, you gain more than one:

1. You don't let down the employer. A good employer will remember the favor you did him.
2. You promote a colleague/friend. Ask him to return the favor the next time you are in need

However, there is a risk:

If your friend "screws up", then this will reflect badly on you.

Not too badly, but that specific employer might not hear your recommendations again in the future.

At least that is my personal take on this.

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“I want to improve my profile to interest more good buyers”

***Additional Details:***

*My ODesk profile (new look or old look) is little old and recently I verified my account. Is there any chance to get jobs using my profile?*

*Can you give some time to my profile, please tell me my lacking.*

-- Question from Javed

**My Answer:**

I checked out your new profile, here is my opinion from the perspective of a buyer/employer.

Your photo looks great.

**You NEED more feedback and logged hours!**

Try to get some more initial work going as fast as possible. When I hire, I look especially closely at work experiences and feedback from providers. I'm sure many other employers do, too.

Consider making your bad feedback from the old job private. If it is private, as an employer I would consider that your previous employer has possibly rated you unfairly.

OK, I confess that is a bit naive. But still, this is better than to see the bad feedback.

Then, gather good feedback with some short, but hourly jobs. The more, the better.

If you want, you can then show your old feedback again - and employers will know you have either bettered yourself, or that the first job was rated unfairly by this employer.

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*What about fixed price job guys?*

***Sometime the contractor left the without paying.  
Have experienced about this?***

Question by Muhammad

Answer:

I'm sad every time I hear a story like this (I'm using ODesk as an employer). Next time you consider fixed price jobs (they are a viable option if they are fast, small and give you great feedback!), be sure to take a good, long and hard look at the employer's feedback score. If he has none or not a good one, stay away from it.

More tips to make sure this doesn't happen again:

- Ask for upfront payment, even if it's only 1% of the total pay. This way, you'll at least be able to leave a lying employer a bad feedback. Recommended for all jobs over 20\$ value. (Below, you'll find that some employers will not even bother with it and rather choose someone else to do the job without hassle)
- Ask for milestone payments, especially if it's a big job and you are able to deliver it stepwise
- Contact ODesk and let them know about it. They might be able to help you. But don't invest too much time and energy into it. You are better off finding a new, better employer.

I have been with oDesk for over a month and still no jobs. I am willing and ready to work. Any suggestions that will get my name out there?

- Question by Lynette

My answer

Dear Lynette, first of all good luck finding a job. I have several tips for you if you want to get a job faster.

### **Internet presence**

I will suggest showcasing your skills, an online portfolio or project samples with an internet presence.

Your presence on the internet, also outside of ODesk, helps you get noticed by potential employers. Just be sure to put links to your oDesk profile everywhere you can: your email signature, your blog, in social media.

I have showcased case studies and interviews with oDesk employers before.

- **If you are interested in featuring your skills and photos on our website, [feel free to head here!](http://www.ideal-helper.com/)**

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## **Improve your ODesk profile**

- try to pass as many tests as you can related to your profession.
- manage your portfolio.
- try writing a new cover letter every time you apply for a job.

## **Be patient!**

One thing I will add is to not let it get you down.

Do not worry.

## **Apply to as many jobs as possible**

- Make sure you have your entire application quota used up each week so that your chance of landing on that first job is higher.
- get verified to increase your job quota.

## **Check before applying**

- Check to see how long ago the job was posted (anymore than a week in my experience and it's not worth it).
- Check to see when it was last viewed by the client. If it hasn't been viewed for a while consider looking for something-else

- ALWAYS check the feedback the client has. I'm not saying don't apply to a client who is new to oDesk, just be careful.

## **Don't fall for traps out of desperation!!**

Be aware of clients who want to break ODesk policy and work outside of ODesk. They seem to target newbies or that's how I see it so far.

Be VERY careful about this type of client. If you do break the TOS of ODesk, you risk having your account suspended. Plus, these sorts of clients are likely to be looking for work and not pay for it!

## **Use the time to improve yourself for the time you find a job**

Don't sit idle for the time you don't have a job on ODesk. You have to prepare yourself for the battle. During these days what you can do

### **Organize yourself**

- Research More
- As a freelancer you must have knowledge on Marketing, otherwise you can't promote your skills in the ODesk Market place. That's because you need to stand out from your competition.
- Think outside of the box

Remember when you will start your oDesk journey by getting work, you will not have too much time to organize, prepare



and research. So it is better to learn as much as you can, and also don't forget to analyze the profiles of successive stuffs at oDesk.

### **Preparation goes a long way to get a job**

1. oDesk skill tests with real good scores - If you can make it to top 3 or atleast in the top 30%, much better. It shows you know stuff. Take tests relevant to your area of expertise. I have had more clients contact me for jobs once I was placed in the top 30% in all the tests I took.
2. Objective - Frame your objective with essential skill sets included as keywords.
3. Portfolio - Make it impressive with screen shots, short description, technologies used and url wherever applicable. If you do not have any work experience before, work on a few projects with the technology of your choice and show them off in your portfolio.

### **Application / Job Interviews**

Create simple, unique cover letters which describe why you are the best fit for the job. Justify it with your skill sets and past projects from portfolio.

Price yourself reasonably - Choose that rate which would neither hurt your living nor is ridiculously low. Often, you would be tempted to do so.

Note - For that first job, you will be tempted to underbid, but it is wiser not to do it.

In your applications, always point out exactly how you have

understood what your client needs and how you can get it to him. Nothing generic, be specific.

- **Also, always be honest about your skills and personal situation!**

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The screenshot shows a blog post titled "Our Top Tips If You Want to Become a Virtual Assistant". On the left is a sidebar menu with various links. A blue arrow points from a blue-bordered box containing the text "Please support us with a 'Like'!" to the "Like" button in the top navigation bar of the blog post. The blog post content includes a link to "My virtual assistant summarized the top 7 lessons on how to become a virtual assistant in a great post." and a photo of a smiling woman wearing a headset.

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## Our Top Tips If You Want to Become a Virtual Assistant

[My virtual assistant summarized the top 7 lessons on how to become a virtual assistant in a great post.](#)

From my real life experiences working together with virtual assistants, I can tell you that it's not as easy as it seems. You need to be honest and without holding back the best ways and

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## Contact Information:

If you have any question, do not hesitate to reach out and contact us:

<http://www.ideal-helper.com/contact-page.html>

You can also write us via twitter:

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We, both the webmaster Francis and his virtual assistant team, would be very happy to hear from you!

*Your Virtual Assistant Advisor,*

Francis

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