

The Accommodating Client	The Resigned Client	The Job	The Long-Suffering Freelancer	The Proactive Freelancer
<p>Good communication is the key to the entire process.</p> <p>Respect the freelancer’s work and skills. (I want to have a good relationship with you: if we work well together, working with you can be one of the best parts of a project!)</p> <p>Try to provide all the necessary materials and information.</p> <p>Stay abreast of the project, even if you’re working with a wunder-freelancer—though that can be difficult.</p>	<p>Remember that I’m busy and may forget things; check in regularly and remind me if a date goes by or something you expected hasn’t arrived.</p> <p>I’ve been on both sides of the desk, and one of the hardest things to remember when you’re a freelancer is that the in-house editor is usually juggling 7–8 projects, plus many interruptions.</p>	<p>General Assumptions</p>	<p>Remember that in addition to your project, I have to work on other projects, look for more work, keep my books up to date, and try to have a life.</p> <p>Give me the benefit of the doubt—I want to do a good job (if only to work for you again!).</p> <p>If I’m late meeting your deadlines, there’s a good reason... really!</p>	<p>Good communication is the key to the entire process.</p> <p>It’s business—it’s not personal.</p> <p>Things flow more smoothly when you take responsibility for making the project work on your client’s terms (and don’t resent it).</p> <p>Remember that the client gave you the work so that they could work on something else. It is your job to do the work, not theirs.</p> <p>A positive client–freelancer relationship often trumps skill level (provided you do have the required skills).</p> <p>Be honest, genuine, and polite.</p>
<p>Walk potential freelancers through your recruitment process.</p> <p>Explain how you share freelancers within the department, or explain where else to apply within the company if the freelancer has the necessary skills.</p>	<p>We’re always looking for excellent editors—but please remember that I get an average of 3–4 inquiries a week. And why would I hire you to copy edit if you have typos in your resumé?</p>	<p>Finding a Job</p>	<p>Who do I talk to about getting work?</p> <p>Do clients share their freelancer lists in-house?</p> <p>If I want to branch out into other types of editing for that organization, who do I talk to?</p>	<p>Ask your client how long the planning schedule is for their organization; contact them that far in advance.</p> <p>Ask your client who you should send job inquiries to.</p>
<p>Book the freelancer as far ahead of the start date as possible, and be honest about the likelihood of the work starting on schedule.</p> <p>Provide as much information about the job as possible.</p> <p>If the project runs late or (horrors) is cancelled, let the freelancer know immediately, and have your co-workers scramble to find the freelancer other work.</p>	<p>Be clear about your availability: warn me if you can’t start immediately—especially if this is a rush job or if I booked you two months ago.</p> <p>I know you need to plan ahead (your rent</p>	<p>Accepting a Job</p>	<p>It’s frustrating when the job is delayed or advanced without warning, or when the schedule is changed in mid-project.</p> <p>It’s hard to commit to a project when the terms of work change with every</p>	<p>Know what you’re good at (e.g., proofreading, copy editing) and play to your strengths.</p> <p>Will the job fit into your schedule? Can you accommodate slippage around the start/end dates?</p> <p>Are you comfortable with the subject matter?</p> <p>If you get a good offer after committing to a</p>

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	may depend on it), but please understand that I can't be exact about dates or fee weeks in advance.		conversation.	project that may overlap, call the client to see if they can work with that.
<p>If you can't set a fee when you first book the freelancer (usually because you don't have the full ms.), specify when you can set one—and ballpark one if necessary.</p> <p>Explain your rates, expectations of pages edited or proofed per hour, and how a particular fee was determined.</p> <p>Advise the freelancer of payment options, like interim billing on a big job (the freelancer's groceries/latte fix may depend on it). Explain your invoicing and payment process.</p>	<p>Understand that I have budget constraints. Do negotiate the fee at the start if necessary, but, once we've agreed on a fee, please watch your hours and let me know promptly if work is getting out of hand.</p> <p>Don't ask me for extra money afterwards.</p>	Establishing the Fee	<p>I don't know what the going rate for the service is for this client/type of work...</p> <p>I can't estimate how long a project will take with the given information.</p> <p>Do you offer kill fees?</p>	<p>Know how fast you work and how much you want to be paid, and work out the math for yourself.</p> <p>Keep track of industry guidelines for fees.</p> <p>Ask up front to change the fee. Unless something unusual happens in the middle of the project, it's usually not appropriate to ask for changes later.</p>
<p>Provide enough information when you transmit the project to cover all your expectations: what you expect the freelancer to do, and when you need it.</p> <p>Assure the freelancer that they can contact you at any time with queries.</p> <p>Check in with the freelancer a couple of days into the job. Welcome start-up questions. Review the first chapter or two and provide feedback (especially if the freelancer is doing more work than you really want).</p>	<p>Ask exactly what I want if in any doubt (but please read the written material I've sent first to see if you can answer some of your own questions).</p> <p>Please ask me how I prefer to handle queries from you. (Could you send me a few comprehensive emails instead of cluttering up my mailbox with individual queries?)</p>	Getting Oriented	<p>Clients don't build time for this into the schedule.</p> <p>What exactly are my areas of responsibility? (When do I start crossing the line between being helpful and being officious?)</p>	<p>Take the time to read any and all information about the project you receive (e.g., launch documents, style guides, copies of correspondence, schedules). This is as important as having enough red pens.</p> <p>Don't start work until the entire project is clear in your mind.</p>
Share your knowledge of the author to help the freelancer deal with them. Warn the freelancer if either the job or the author is likely to be unusually demanding.	Once you know I'm taking the situation seriously, don't complain to me	Handling Difficult Jobs	<p>You're not paying me enough to do [insert complaint here].</p> <p>It's the freelancer who</p>	<p>Keep your client up to date on your work. Send regular progress reports.</p> <p>Report any significant challenges ASAP.</p>

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<p>If the job turns into a nightmare, for whatever reason, take the problem seriously and try to find a solution (more time, more money, doing less).</p> <p>Commiserate. Let the freelancer vent to you (you are probably the only person who really understands!).</p>	<p>endlessly about poor writing or a difficult author. I can't control that and I'm suffering too. You are being paid to help solve the problems, not add to them.</p>		<p>always gets the short end of the stick.</p> <p>My author/contact is really difficult to work with.</p>	<p>Report on successes too.</p> <p>Establish good working relations with your author/client/subcontractors.</p> <p>If you find that the ms. is messy or authors are difficult, report quickly and professionally.</p> <p>Expect to be an equal partner in arriving at a solution. Feel entitled to vent within reason, but don't take all your frustrations out on the client when they may be suffering too.</p>
<p>Keep the freelancer informed about changes in the project.</p> <p>If the work has become more time-consuming than anticipated, watch for tasks that the formatter/indexer/proofreader/intern can do.</p>	<p>Pace yourself: that's part of what I'm paying for. Keep an eye on the calendar and let me know about any slippages (yours or the author's) right away.</p> <p>Freelancers need to keep in touch: progress reports reassure me and keep both of us honest.</p>	Project Management	<p>There's too much to do in the time available.</p> <p>How can I keep track of all these elements?</p> <p>Isn't this the formatter's/indexer's/p roof-reader's job?</p>	<p>Don't procrastinate.</p> <p>Control slippage.</p> <p>Always know where you are in a project and what still has to be done. Ignorance is not bliss—and often not a defence.</p> <p>If material coming to you is overdue, ask the client/author immediately.</p>
<p>Be as available as possible: respond to queries from the freelancer promptly (while juggling your 7 or 8 other projects, plus interruptions).</p> <p>Encourage freelancers to report problems, and deal with them as quickly as you can.</p>	<p>Please respond to my calls/emails within 24 hours (preferably the same day). However, don't email several times a day about minor issues and expect immediate replies.</p> <p>Don't send in a ms. covered with queries (which I then have to spend an unplanned extra day dealing</p>	Basic Work Habits	<p>I freelance because I don't want to be chained to my office—I edit best in my garden/at my favourite coffee shop/at 2:00 a.m.</p> <p>Is this too trivial to phone about? Will my client think I'm a substandard editor if I ask this?</p> <p>That time-management</p>	<p>Notify your client of your general availability (e.g., you're available for phone calls during the morning only, or you only get online in the evenings). On some projects your availability may be crucial, so some accommodation will have to be made.</p> <p>Have the supplies/references you need for the project at the outset.</p> <p>Don't ask a question if you can figure it out for yourself (don't be lazy).</p> <p>Maintain your skills.</p> <p>Expand your skills.</p>

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	<p>with).</p> <p>If you encounter a repetitive problem or error, please don't correct/mark it on 300 pages without asking me first.</p>		<p>article I read says I should make all my phone calls/respond to all my emails once per day. That works for me, it should work for my client, too.</p>	
<p>If author delays or other problems make the deadline unrealistic, talk over options with the freelancer (and with the production dept.): perhaps submitting in batches will help.</p> <p>Let the freelancer know if you can't work on the project the day you originally wanted it, so that they don't pull an all-nighter or rush the last chapter unnecessarily.</p>	<p>If you realize you may not make the deadline, please tell me right away, not at noon the day the job is due. Be realistic about when you can finish.</p> <p>Please assume that I want all project materials back—or ask me.</p>	Delivering the Job	<p>I don't think it's reasonable for me to pay to send the project back.</p> <p>I don't think the client factors delivery times (e.g., overnight couriers) into the project schedule and it's not fair.</p>	<p>Organize the material so that the client can easily find what they need.</p> <p>Remind the client of any outstanding tasks (you should have warned them of this earlier, as well). On a copy edit, consider sending a few notes for the proofreader.</p> <p>Develop your schedule so that the project arrives on the scheduled due dates. If you can't make the deadline, warn the client as early as possible.</p> <p>Return all materials unless told not to.</p> <p>Bill promptly; check on payment schedule, and report late payments.</p>
<p>Treat the freelancer the way you want to be treated.</p> <p>If the worst happens to the freelancer—serious illness or death, marital breakdown—express your concern for them as a person. Assure them that it's not in your interest for them to take the job, or attempt to continue with it, while distraught, and that they'll have another chance to work for you. The hardest thing for many freelancers to do is give up. If necessary, help them to let go of the job.</p>	<p>If minor life difficulties interfere with your work (e.g., noisy neighbours; short-term renovations; email problems), consider that your problem. If, despite your best efforts, such difficulties throw you off schedule, report proactively.</p> <p>Don't go silent on me.</p>	Professionalism	<p>I don't ever get consulted, just told what to do. Shouldn't I have been copied on that email?</p>	<p>Treat the client the way you want to be treated.</p> <p>Return phone calls/emails promptly.</p> <p>Answer all questions completely and succinctly.</p> <p>Don't waste their time or yours.</p>

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Don't avoid difficult conversations. Thank the freelancer whenever appropriate. Maintain your sense of humour. Or get one. Relish good work, and tell the freelancer what a pleasure it was.	If I offer constructive criticism (which means I'm probably going to hire you again), please don't keep me on the phone for 20 minutes—or send me a multi-screen email—defending what you did.	Client Relations	I'm afraid to answer my phone or open my email in case my client is trying to talk to me.	Don't avoid difficult conversations. Thank the client whenever appropriate. Maintain your sense of humour. Or get one.