

## 153 Jenni Dubois

[00:00:00] **Heidi:** If you have ever felt stuck in your fashion freelance career, and you are struggling to find enough time to fit it in maybe alongside a full-time job or a family or just life, because life gets busy. And then this strategy session was one of my freelance accelerator. Students is going to hopefully give you some great insights on how to keep making progress and how to fit work into the tiny nooks and cracks of the day.

You don't always need to feel like I need a four hour chunk, right? It's a lot, it's surprising how much we can get done in 20, 30 minute little chunks here and there as we find them. Um, you're listening to the successful fashion freelancer podcast, and I am your host, Heidi. I really appreciate you being here and spending some time with me today and my, uh, students.

Jenny who [00:01:00] is feeling stuck and lacking a little bit of time to fit her freelancing in. So we dive in, in the strategy session, which is a feature that freelance accelerator students get the opportunity to take advantage of getting on a one-on-one call to meet call with me, to dig into whatever it is they are stuck on in their freelance career and journey.

Um, Jenny is stuck a little bit on finding time, and then also just like what to do when she's, you know, maybe sending out some emails and inquiries and not hearing back. The answer is actually surprisingly simple. So you will, you will get to hear that answer. Um, she also shares one of the emails that she sent out.

She reads it aloud, and if you're not sure what to be putting in emails for, um, informational interviews or for actual pitching, Jenny's done a great job of crafting her email. So I think you'll find a lot of value in hearing what she has put together. Um, and then what she can do to start [00:02:00] getting more replies.

We also talk about sort of, you know, what is coming next in her freelance career and what she can do when she's just got it, got a little bit of like tunnel vision and can't, and I knew, I know that feeling how, like we just kind of get in the zone and we're like, okay, I'm doing this one thing. And we don't see all the other things that are going on or all the other things that we could be working on.

Um, and so we talk a little bit about how to kind of get yourself out of that tunnel vision and seeing the bigger picture and how you can. Move forward a little bit more quickly, make progress, um, and start seeing some results. So I hope that you find a lot of value in my strategy session with Jenny. Um, she left feeling, I think with a renewed energy for her freelance career and figuring out what is, what she needs to do next.

And I hope that you can walk away with the same insights. And if you are working on building or growing your freelance career, and you need a little bit of extra support, I do offer a ton of free [00:03:00] resources beyond what you hear on the podcast. You can head on over to [sew heidi.com/freelance](http://sewheidi.com/freelance). We'll link that up in the show notes and check out my best free resources, get your name on the email list and we'll send all of them to you.

We'll also keep you in the loop on new podcast episodes, as well as the free trainings that we have going on multiple times a year to help you kick ass as a fashion freelancer. And if you are interested in joining or learning more about our freelance accelerator program fast, then that is the best way to hear about it.

Um, it only opens up a couple of times a year and I would love to share the details with you so you could see if it would be a good fit for you. And again, the best way to do that is by getting on the email list. And we'll also send you all of our free resources. So [heidi.com/freelance](http://heidi.com/freelance), [S E w H I d.com/freelance](http://SEWHID.com/freelance).

We'll link it up in the show notes. All right. My friends. Thank you again for being here. I really appreciate it. And I hope you're having a fantastic day and let's dive into my strategy session with Jenny. Here we go. [00:04:00] Let's do it. All right. So, um, do you prefer Jenny or Jennifer?

[00:04:06] **Jenni:** Jenny? I definitely, unless you're a government, I don't answer.

[00:04:12] **Heidi:** I am not the government. Gosh, no. Well, you on your form it says Jennifer, but then it's Skype here. You're Jenny. So, you know, I'm obliged to ask.

[00:04:23] **Jenni:** I don't know. I got 'em. Yeah. It long story short. I just, when I fill out forms, I always fill out my full name.

[00:04:29] **Heidi:** Yeah. Because it feels like formal or something.

Exactly. Yeah. We're not that we're not that formal here, you know that. Um, okay. So talk to me about what's going on and where you're feeling stuck.

[00:04:43] **Jenni:** Okay. So I did, um, I pulled a few brands that I found I did most of my research solely on, um, Instagram. So I, uh, reached out to a couple of brands [00:05:00] that I found there that seems, can you

[00:05:02] **Heidi:** hear me.

[00:05:05] **Jenni:** Sorry. I just, I found the cord that connects to my computer off of my headphones. Um, all right. So I found a bunch of brands, um, about, let me see here, the final count. I think I found about 22 or more brands, um, on Instagram that were in, within the niche that I'm familiar with and that I'm interested in starting this whole process with.

So, um, a little bit about my background. Um, I came to New York in 2014 and I started working in the industry and found somehow stumbled into children's wear. So for the last, since 20 14, 20 15 til now, I've been working predominantly with children's wear brands. Um, [00:06:00] Sizes newborn up to boys. Um, I think if they go up to 18 or something like that, six.

Okay. Yeah. So, um, I've been doing that. So that's what I'm familiar with and predominantly children's active and athleisure. So I've been looking at brands that fall within my purview and I've been reaching out to them. I've reached out to about maybe 10 or 15 of them. Okay. Um, I also landed a temp job since starting this.

So, cause I was really low on income, so I needed to find something that was going to pay me quickly. Um, I landed a temp job that I had been doing, which is kind of also, I've been trying to allocate my time accordingly, but not working for 18. Um, since my last temp job ended just [00:07:00] before the pandemic started.

And then this one, I'm kind of just struggling with time management in working part-time out of the house part-time from home. Um, and then also taking care of the household and finding time to do more of this freelance research. So just before landing the temp position, I reached out to about 10 brands, um, via Instagram and email.

And I haven't heard back from anybody. I used somewhat of a template of a. Email or message to send to them that I would modify based on who I was

speaking with. So at least the part that was like about me, what I was reaching out for that for the most part stayed the same. Sure. But then I would always change the introduction and, you know, [00:08:00] add some tidbit that I found about the brand and to make it more personal, um, kind of, um, adjust that intro introductory part, um, to the brand so that it didn't seem so robotic.

Right. Um, but I have not heard back from the 10 that I reached out to, and I know 10 is not like the biggest number I was hoping to have had a lot more, um, reaching out since starting this two by and today when I, um, agreed to. Interview, but time just has not been, I haven't been able to manage my time as much as I wanted to.

So I'm struggling there, but I'm still wanting to make this work and I don't know where I might be going wrong or if I'm just like to, if I haven't waited long enough kind of like giving [00:09:00] it time to actually work.

[00:09:01] **Heidi:** Yeah. Okay. So a couple things. Uh, well, what do you want to tackle first? Do you wanna tackle the outreach or do you want to tackle the time?

[00:09:09] **Jenni:** Um, I want to tackle the outreach first, cause I, I just want to see if maybe that's where I might be. I might need some improvement then. Um, and then I guess we could, uh, go back to the time part to just see like maybe two heads thinking together, um, how to schedule

[00:09:30] **Heidi:** your steadfast. Yeah. Okay. Perfect.

Perfect. Okay. So for the. Um, what exactly. And I didn't see this in your application, otherwise I would have had you send us an advance. So can you quickly dig out one of those messages? And I want you to read it to me. I want to hear that looking

[00:09:49] **Jenni:** for right now. Um, okay. Here's here's one. Okay. So, um, there's this one brand that I reached out to their, [00:10:00] um, uh, girls looks like athletic brand.

Okay. Okay.

[00:10:04] **Heidi:** How big is the brand ish? Do you know? Like, are they like three people or are they like a hundred people? Like how big would you estimate?

[00:10:10] **Jenni:** I have to, to be honest, I have no idea. The only information I was able to pull from their Instagram and their website is that they have 2,828 followers. And that they're located in Australia.

Doesn't have a lot of information about who the owners are or the, or the company

[00:10:34] **Heidi:** itself. I was like, it's maybe probably a little bit a smaller brand. I'm going to guess. Yeah. With 2,800 followers. And that's like the only thing we have to go by. Okay. Gotcha. All right. So what does the message say?

[00:10:45] **Jenni:** So the message says, Hey, there, I did something around and couldn't figure out who this message goes to or what your name is.

So forgive me for the generic introduction.

[00:10:56] **Heidi:** I love that.

[00:10:58] **Jenni:** Yeah. I [00:11:00] hope that you're having a great day and also that brand name is having a fantastic season. I came across your IgE page a few weeks back, and I really liked what I saw the premium active wear you're offering. Young ladies has a very timeless and classic look.

I love that. I also love, um, love you donate a portion of your proceeds to Berry street. I look at, I looked into them after seeing them on, on your, about me page and an organization like that is such a valuable, is such a valuable to any it's so valuable to any community. I'm always, I always love to see brands partnering with charitable organizations, hoping to have a true, positive impact in their community and the world.

I agree full-heartedly with your sentiment that small acts by many can bring change. Um, so here's a little bit about me and why I'm reaching out tie [00:12:00] I'm Jenny I'm a remote freelance does, um, we remote fashion design freelancer. And for the past six years, I have been working in the New York city Metro area in kids active as leisure wear market.

I'm reaching out to brands like yours to see how I can help them. Okay. Not looking for work right now. I'm just in the research phase. I'm hoping to, I'm hoping this outreach will lead to a short conversation where I can learn more about some of the trouble points your brand might be facing during the design process.

I also would love to hear about your hopes and goals and areas of design you want to improve or grow into. I'm hoping through a short chat. I can learn how to be a great asset for brands like yours. Um, and help with their trouble points and, and so help them achieve their goals. I know time is a PR [00:13:00] is precious and we never have enough to go around, but if you ever find yourself with a little time to spare, I promise not to take too much of it.

I would love to jump onto a zoom call and ask you a few questions. Anyways. I hope I get the opportunity to speak with you until then. I wish you all the best with your next season's drop and hope. It's very successful. Best of luck Tata for now.

[00:13:25] **Heidi:** It's amazing. Um, your, your outreach is amazing. It's really low.

Yeah, it's really long. Um, and here's what I think might be happening. I mean, it's so well done. Your introduction is really powerful and personal and specific. I can feel the effort and research that you put into it. Um, the section about you is actually probably the one that needs the least shortening you.

You can maybe like tighten it up a little bit, but, [00:14:00] um, uh, cause, cause what happens, I think sometimes with this type of communication is people read it and it just can feel very overwhelming just by the sheer volume. Um, and they might scan it and then they might be like, And I'm moving on or like, this just sounds like too much work, just because just based off of, like, I can imagine visually that, that chunk of text, especially in an Instagram DM, or even in an email too late, just feels like a lot.

So, um, the other thing I'll say very delicately, I will say, um, like your introduction was so strong and it was so specific and very complimentary of them and what they're doing and the charity that they're supporting and stuff. But I think that it almost maybe could come on a little bit too thick [00:15:00] based on the sheer, um, length.

Yeah. So I, and then I also think that in the closing part, um, there were there, I think there was like three sentences about how time is precious. Um, which I, I, you know, you're, you're. Your voice is very strong and very refined and very well-spoken. I just think we got to cut it down to like a little bit more skeleton, you know, um, because I think that people can start to just feel overwhelmed by, by that amount of content.

And listen, I'm very verbose to maybe you've figured this out by now. Um, so I get it, but when it comes to writing, I think that just brevity can really be valuable and it's a learned skill. Something I've been working on very hard over the years. Um, that being said, [00:16:00] you, your strategy is really, really strong, really strong.

Um, I'm curious, you said you sent about 10. Did you send any follow-ups to the test?

[00:16:11] **Jenni:** That was on my to-do list for last weekend, but there was a small family emergency that I had to share. So it was on my to-do list. Yeah. It's been on my list and top of mind that I need to reach back out to them, but I also was like, well, I don't really know what else to say.

I don't know how to reach back out without sounding in my head annoying. Um, but, um, yeah, so I was like, maybe I'm thinking to my eye when I got the opportunity to speak with you. I was like, I think I need to read this out loud to her because I have a feeling there needs to be a lot of editing, but this is.

The condensed version that I was able to edit down to. [00:17:00] And I still was like, this is a lot, but I don't know what else, how else to redact so that it's not so much. And I don't want to keep sitting back on my heels to, you know, to press the go button on this. Right. So I just, you know, I just went for it and I'm like,

[00:17:21] **Heidi:** yeah.

[00:17:23] **Jenni:** So I'm just like, at that point where I'm like, I think it's too wordy. I just don't know how to, um, like what I need to maybe consolidate my focus when it's like talking about them and then how else I need to like cut it down at the very end parts. Cause I feel like I focus a lot in the very beginning and that's, and I always break it down into like, okay, Smaller chunks.

So it's not like it's going all in

[00:17:53] **Heidi:** one big, right. You've got like line breaks in there. Right, right. Okay. Which is also a really great [00:18:00] strategy. Yeah. So

[00:18:01] **Jenni:** I was like, all right. Uh, I know I can, but this introductory part, I guess I, I, I get, I get very much into learning about them, so it doesn't sound so like, I just skimmed through your stuff and I'm just really trying to get something out of this for me.

And I don't want it.

[00:18:23] **Heidi:** I, I just, yeah, no. And I can feel that in your writing, like it's very genuine and it really comes across. Um, here's what I'll say too. I think that like, if we were to look at the 80 20 rule here, like what, 80 per right. You're familiar with that world. Um, yes. I actually think it would be following up versus the brevity.

Now that I hear that you haven't done any follow-ups because here's the thing. And I use this example all the freaking time. So if you've heard it a million times, or if people listening, you've heard a million times, I'm sorry. Um, I forget to answer emails from [00:19:00] my mom and I forget to answer Instagram DMS from my closest friends, because we see them.

We're busy. We're like, yes, I'll get to that later when I have time. And then we forget. And so if you don't follow up, there's a really good chance on like at least 50% of your outreach. It wasn't because they didn't reply. They didn't want to reply. It was because. And the timing just wasn't good. And they were like, you know what?

I'll get to it later. Then they forgot. And so you're not being a pest. Um, and there's, there's some templates inside a fast for doing these follow-ups as far as like, what do you actually say? And I'll, I'll give them to you right here as well, but it says something as simple as, um, hi, again, I know you're super busy and I imagine this might've gotten missed in your [00:20:00] inbox or in your DMS, wherever you're talking.

Right. Um, so wanted to just ping you again or float it to the top if you know, and would love to hop on a call and ask you a few questions if you're not up for it. No problem as well. Um, or like no hard feelings, like whatever feels good

coming from you. So ignore. So it's basically the strategy is a little bit like threefold.

One acknowledge that they're busy and that it probably just got me. And it gives them like a little bit, it lets people off the hook and it makes them feel like not bad for replying. And then, um, two is like just giving you a friendly reminder, like something really soft and gentle and then three giving them an opportunity to like say no, cause nobody wants to feel backed into a corner that they have to apply.

And so as soon as you take your foot off the gas pedal and you say, you know what, and if it, if, if you're too busy or if this just doesn't sound right to you, [00:21:00] like no problem, I totally get that. Um, that alone can get people to reply because they instantly feel like, oh, she's not pushy. Um, it's, it's a really old, like tried and true just strategy general sales strategy, right.

For getting someone to like respond or opt in. So. I think if you were, you know, you, you do seem like, you know, you're, you're working and, and you've got life going on and family, like so many things going on and where we get really busy. So if you want to just look at the 80 20, then I would say, just take what you've done so far for these 10 brands and craft a quick follow-up and your followup can honestly be pretty cut and paste for all of them.

You don't really need to customize it since you customize that first. The initial message. If it's DM, obviously you just put it in the DM. It'll follow right after your original DM. If it's an email, make sure you reply to the original email. So the original context is below, um, [00:22:00] and. And there is I think your 80 20 then going forward.

And this is true for, I realize you're in the customer research phase, but this is, these strategies are true for pitching and customer research. Um, and I would do at least one, possibly two follow ups. I do actually recommend three touch points initially, right? Your first outreach and then two followups.

And you can do the two followups like a week apart. So, um, I'd be surprised if you didn't get any responses after those followups. And then from there, you can see where you are going forward for the introduction part, where you're, you're being specific, you're complimenting their brand, um, to make that a little bit more brief because I, that, I think that while you've done an exceptional job on it, and it does feel really genuine and amazing.

Um, I think that. The [00:23:00] amount that you're putting in there, you're actually making a little more work for yourself and doing the research. Like how long is it taking you to research the brand to be able to write that part of the pitch?

[00:23:10] **Jenni:** Um, well, when I, I, I started with a template, right. I took a little bit of what I found off of, um, the fast, um, download pages in terms of reaching out and I kind of curated something.

So once I had the template down, reaching out to each brand, I think I was able to edit the template in about five to 10 minutes based on all the research I had already done on the brand prior.

[00:23:40] **Heidi:** But, okay. So that's my question. How long did you spend doing research on.

[00:23:45] **Jenni:** Um, research on the brand. It was, I had a, I know you're going to like this.

I have a, an, uh, what's it called numbers or Excel page. So, um, have the brand name, you [00:24:00] know, I modified, you know, what their Instagram handles are, um, uh, copied and paste, what their IgE following was. If they had a website, what was the web address of if they had an email? What was that email? I, in my notes section here, I just kinda copied and paste whatever they had in their bio or on their, about me page for the website.

And then I have, you know, a date log for when I reached out to them first and then PR planning forward on like how many times, um, I reached out to them following that, you know, So, um, with all of that, I mean, like I was able to just go through my notes, um, and then I would scroll through their IgE pages again.

Um, and then if they didn't have a lot to offer in terms of information, just scroll through their IgE pages and just like, oh, you know, I've noticed this about your [00:25:00] brand. You have this underlying, um, aesthetic or, um, you know, you have really great, um, power quotes for little girls that you put on your graphic tees.

Um, that kind of stuff. I would either, I think this one that I pulled, which was the first, um, message that popped up on my DMS is maybe the longest of the

mall, but they're all pretty, they're all pretty about, they're about the same chunk of.

[00:25:33] **Heidi:** Yeah. I mean, I think that you could probably just like distill that first part down to like two to three sentences. And so, you know, for this example, which I think is going to make your research about the brand a little bit quicker, it's going to make writing it quicker. And so in the same amount of time that you were able to send out 10, I think you could probably send out 20.

Um, I think you could cut your time at least in half. And so, you [00:26:00] know, from what I can remember, uh, from, uh, what you wrote on this one, I think it might be something like, um, You know, I recently discovered your brand. Great. Um, I really love what you're doing with the girls at leisure and how you're partnering with the Barry foundation as a charity.

It's so great to see brands giving back and supporting their local communities. And maybe that first part where you're where you said something about, um, the girls athlete, leisure, maybe that's something a little more, you could make that a little more specific. I don't remember. Like maybe they've got, oh, that great floral print you've got or that great ditzzy dot print or like whatever.

And maybe you're not print designer. So that might not be the thing to focus on, but like that. Triangle color black legging, or like naming a specific style, um, instead of just like generic girls S F leisure. Right. But then we, we cut it down so much. And so we've hit [00:27:00] on two specific things of a specific style that we're like, that's so cute.

And I can totally see like little girls in that. Or like, maybe I could see my niece in that, or I don't know if you have a niece, but like, whatever, if you have something personal, you can like thread into that. I think that that offers just a lot of, a lot of realness. Right? Like it makes it, like you said earlier, it makes it not robotic.

Yeah. Um, and so don't be afraid to like thread a little bit of like your personal life into there. If it makes sense, obviously you don't force that. And then, and then, and then, and it's also so cool here partnering with the Barry foundation. Um, it's really awesome to see when, when brands give back to the local communities, like, I think you could just, that, that that's more than enough.

Um, And then the about you section was fine. And then the section at the bottom, which was talking about, you know, time being precious, which is

definitely a great, um, you know, you're acknowledging the fact that they're busy and that you won't take too much time. I think you really just can distill it down to one sentence, um, of like, you know, I realize time is precious and I promise not to take too much [00:28:00] of it.

Would you be, um, able, I'd be so grateful if you would be up for hopping on a 10 minute call. So I could ask you a few questions, let me know, would that work for you? That's so that's really it, right? We're, we're basically saying the same thing, but it's a lot easier for, for them to digest. So you're not gonna adjust anything on the ones you've already sent out.

Obviously they're already out there in the inbox. Right. Um, but I, I, so that your quickest return on investment here is, is following up to those. Okay. Okay. Um, and honestly, I think you could probably do that. 2030 minutes. Um, right. And then I think, you know, see where that goes. The other thing I want to ask you though, is you have experience in this industry.

Do you have any contacts in people that, you know, in this industry and in your niche, are there people that, you know, from past roles or coworkers, or just friends [00:29:00] who you could chat with, or like get an introduction to somebody, um, and go like a warm route instead of this cold outreach to get some of your initial customer research done?

[00:29:11] **Jenni:** I have that, that's where I guess maybe I'm confused in terms of, I do have context. I do have former coworkers that I still have contact with. Um, not all of them are, are still in the industry. Um, but the ones that I could reach out to, I'm just not really sure what that would look like in terms of.

Customer research for myself and where I'm hoping to gauge, um, my freelance career, because for the most part, everybody is with large corporate companies. Um, and I'm hoping to be able to get out of that just because I've, I mean, currently temping with [00:30:00] one, and I don't know, in the New York area, if any of these larger corporations would be interested in working with somebody like myself as a remote freelancer without the, um, without the holding that they have when you're quote unquote freelancing

[00:30:20] **Heidi:** for them.

Yeah. It's a lot harder with those large established brands, especially right in New York city, because they have access to so much talent that's willing to do the full-time freelance role. So, um, Okay, so totally fair that, yeah, that those

are not your actual target customer and that the customer is very different and has very different needs of a small brand is going to have very different needs than these New York brands.

So, totally fair. Um, here's what I'll say. Cause I know in your, in your, um, strategy session application, you had put, you know, that you liked didn't want to just get stuck here and I don't want you to get stuck here either. So here's what I'll say. I want you to [00:31:00] follow up to these 10 brands. Okay. 20, 30 minutes.

Um, I want you to send out five more only because I want you to practice refining that brevity in your right. Because this is going to come into real, as soon as they going to be an asset for you when it comes time to pitching. So I want you to use this customer research phase as an opportunity to strengthen that muscle.

Okay. So I want you to write five more and send those out and whether you'd send them on Instagram or, or email doesn't matter. Um, and then after a week, I want you to follow up to those, to whatever you do or don't get out of those 15 pieces of outreach with follow-up at least one, I'd encourage you to do a second one.

Um, and this, the second, the second one can just [00:32:00] say, Hey, I really, you know, I know the, and this might be something that you want to use your own words for, like what feels good, but something like I might say would be like, Definitely not over here trying to be a pest, but I have learned in life that the squeaky wheel does get the grease.

I wanted to ping you one last time to see if you'd be up for a call. If not, don't worry about it. And I won't reach out again, no hard feelings and best of luck with your. Right. That would feel very on brand for me, what you could swipe that directly if you want, or use your own words. Um, but again, it's the same kind of strategy, like acknowledging and, and kind of owning it, like kind of how you owned.

Um, and these strategies go for customer research. They also all go for pitching too. So kind of how you own the fact that there was no, you couldn't figure out the name of the person. You're also owning the fact that, like I realized a third time might be a little bit pessary, but I, you know, I'm, I'm a go getter and I'm [00:33:00] going to jump at this and I'm going to jump my, my strongest and my

hardest and my highest, um, which I think is an attribute that a lot of people ultimately wind up finding very attractive.

And then also letting them know, you know, no hard feelings and I will not bother you again. So you, you kind of are like, given. The reprieve of like, okay, she's not going to reach out again. Or, you know what, Hey, Jenny, I'm so glad you reached out again. I just been swamped and I, and I would love to chat with you.

I guarantee you're going to get some replies back. Um, so once you've done that, so 20 to 30 minutes following up to the 10, sending out five more and then following up to those, um, then what I want to tell you is inside of fast, I just added some new videos in the past month or so, um, about moving forward beyond the customer research stage.

Even if you like, didn't maybe [00:34:00] get all the things that I kind of told you you needed to get. So, um, I, I think that I have been really harsh on like, you cannot move forward until you have talked to five people, voice to voice and. This is a challenging stage to kickstart. I totally get that. And I, we were seeing a lot of people getting stuck.

And so, um, and we're seeing a lot of people jumped past it just on their own, right. And, and still getting success and you can't get success. And so using the strategies inside of fast that using the pitching strategies inside of fast alone, are going to get you a hundred times more success than what most freelancers send out, trying to get work, whether or not you do customer research.

So I want to, I want you to take a look at those new videos that we added about you kind of moving beyond customer research. Um, even if you haven't gotten like those five phone calls, um, And giving yourself permission to, [00:35:00] to get to the pitching stage, because like I said again, using the templates and using the strategies and you clearly understood.

I mean, I can tell from what you wrote to this, what you read to me that you wrote to this brand, just for the customer research stage, your pitches are going to be amazing. I just know it. And so even if you filter in some sort of air quotes, um, just generalized pain points and frustrations into your pitches, which, um, once you get into that module, if you're not there yet, you'll, you'll understand what I'm talking about.

And you kind of look at some of the templates, you'll get that. Um, you'll still see success. So, you know, this is, um, as painful as customer research could be as a challenging. You are strengthening your muscle in terms of writing these pitches and what they actually look like, because they're very similar to pitches that actually ask for work.

And so you're, it's a little bit of a warmup phase, as much as it for yourself, as much as it's a research and learning phase. Right. That being said, [00:36:00] I don't want you to stuck here for 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 months. So, you know, you, you work that muscle a little bit. You see what you get, you give it an a plus college try, and then you, you can move on to actually pitching and landing work.

Um, you know, I think on some levels I'm like, gosh, and I liked that mean teacher. That's like, yeah, you have to do this before you do this. And listen at the end of the day, you're in control. You can do what you want. You don't have to listen to me. Um, so, so for now for, for immediate. Follow up the 10 and write five more only to strengthen that muscle for writing for brevity and then, and then move on.

So, first of all, I want to know, how does that feel to you to like have maybe the next stage is mapped out?

[00:36:55] **Jenni:** Um, it gives me a better, um, because I feel like I [00:37:00] have a map. I feel like I got, I was on, I don't know if this analogy is going to work, but I feel like I'm at that point where I'm on that one game on, I don't know, candy crush and I can't seem see pass it, but I, the math, but I don't know what's coming up next because I'm still stuck on this one level.

So I feel like I I'm at that point where I know what's coming up next, I have an idea. Um, if I could just ask you just one to re repeat the, of part where you, um, Gave a followup to the followup,

[00:37:35] **Heidi:** the third followup.

[00:37:37] **Jenni:** Yeah. You, you gave, you gave a really great, um, paraphrase there, but I I'm, I'm not as fast with my handwriting as I would like, so

[00:37:47] **Heidi:** yeah.

Yeah. I totally want you to get this down. So you, so you have it and you walk away, you know what to say? Yeah. I would say something like this, um, don't

want to be a pest, [00:38:00] but I know that sometimes the squeaky wheel gets the grease. I mean, it's a cheesy cliché, but, and that feels very on brand for me. So you can adjust that we're verbiage, but you're basically, you're acknowledging the fact that like, you might be on the edge of annoying them, but Hey, sometimes that's how shit gets done.

And you know that like you have to follow up, follow up, follow up. Right. So that's first then, um, if you'd be up for it, I'd love to hop on a call and ask you a few questions. He said, there's your clear ask again, and then giving them an out and telling them that you're not going to contact them again. So, so basically, um, and if you're, you're not up for it, no problem.

I won't contact you. No hard feelings. I won't contact you again. And then, you know, you might sign off with something like, um, I truly wish you the best of luck with your brand. You're doing awesome things. Keep it up, right. Like a really nice compliment at the end, I think can go far. And that's it. Yeah. So, [00:39:00] um, and, and you can use again, you can use that same kind of followup when you send out your pitches, because most people don't get replies on the very first one, most of the first contact, the first point of contact, the first message you send a follow-up and a followup.

And so these are the same exact strategies that you would use for following up to your. Um, actually, you know, pitching yourself for freelance work. So, um, so that's what I think you can do in the immediate future. Now I know that, um, you're working and time is definitely a challenge and I, I fully respect and get that.

Um, what do you, do you want to, let's talk a little bit about where and how you might be able to fit this workload into your, your current schedule. Tell me a little bit about where you're struggling with this and what, you know, what you're working on and how we can maybe fix this.

[00:39:57] **Jenni:** Yeah. Okay. So I'm an [00:40:00] average day when I'm working in office is, you know, I wake up, I'm out the door.

I catch the bus to the train, train into the city. Um, cause I'm not in New York anymore. I'm in Jersey now, but, um, Thankfully the train station I exit on is literally above, underneath the building that I'm working in. Well, um, go to work, uh, and then I come back home and then, you know, unwind cooked dinner, and then I'm like white, totally physically.

Um, and on a day, like today where I'm working remote, um, you know, I'm able to wake up a little later. I'm on the computer for the most of the day of, until about 6, 6 30, um, try and make dinner. And then honestly I've been so forgetful. I think that's where, um, my time gets lost is [00:41:00] that I'll forget that I have my, my things that I need to do.

I feel I focused on all the work and the. At the time end of the day's done, I have the TV on and there goes the last three hours of the day that I could have been doing something for me and what I'm trying to do for myself, but I just veg out in front of the TV. So I, I need to figure out a way to, at least on, especially on days that I'm remote, carve out like an hour or two to just like, you know, watch a fast course, uh, work on, um, work on something, you know, the templates for the continuing outreaches or that, you know, that thing I just, I need to remember.

I think also my add is just astronomically worse mix. So I get that. I'm trying to get myself to a point where it's like [00:42:00] focus and get this done. Yeah. So I guess what I really need in terms of scheduling something is more of an accountability partner or, um, not to say that has to be you. Um, but just something to that that will help me hold myself accountable for.

So I was hoping to also mentally get that out of this conversation just to be like strategize into like help myself hold myself

[00:42:30] **Heidi:** accountable. Totally. So I have a million ideas and, and you can kind of pick which one you think feels the most, um, like it's going to have the best impact for you. And then also here's what I'll say too.

I get it like the end of the day is hard and I've a job for three hours in front of the TV too. Like I think that it's unrealistic for. Us. And I think we actually put the most pressure on ourselves or at least I know that that's how I can be. I kind of sense. [00:43:00] Maybe you as well, we put the most pressure on ourselves that like, oh, that's, you know, that's bad.

I should be doing something productive, but like, no, the reality is like, life is challenging and the pandemic has not helped with sanity or like feeling good about ourselves or getting like, you know, emotional scoops into our bucket. Like by like hanging out with friends or like, you know, doing various things.

So, you know, life is tough and I don't want you to discount the fact that you do need time to just like wind down and veg out. And however you do that. Great.

Do that. And for me, I do watch TV. Awesome. I love it. So don't feel bad about any of that. Um, a couple of things that came to mind right away is what are you doing on the bus and the train.

And is there opportunity to do a little bit of work there on a laptop or a tablet, or maybe even your phone, whatever feels the most accessible, um, because that could give you [00:44:00] at least the good commute in the morning, maybe where your, your brain's a little bit more fresh, um, and, or on their way home. I don't know, depending on how you feel, um, that might give you even 30 minutes a day or 30 minutes each way.

I don't know how long it is, but would that be an opportunity to squeeze a little bit of work in?

[00:44:20] **Jenni:** Oh yeah. I don't know why. I never thought of that.

[00:44:23] **Heidi:** Yeah. I mean,

[00:44:26] **Jenni:** I'm like, I'm like on Tik TOK or watching or playing games, listening to NPR. Yeah. On the way into work

[00:44:34] **Heidi:** and, and those are great activities too, right?

Like sometimes we do just need to vege. I'm like, I can't be productive. I need to just scroll Instagram. Right. Like I get that as well. But even if you could replace that a couple times a week with like a 20, 30, 45 minute chunk, I think that could really get you, um, a good amount of time that, you know, you've got your headphones in.

And so maybe you put on music or I dunno [00:45:00] if you can work with MPR in the background. That sounds insane to me. But, um, you know, I think there is one great opportunity, um, beyond that. I do think that the accountability for people is huge. And so while yes, I'm not quite available to be everyone's accountability partner.

You do have access to the student group, the private student group inside of fast. And I know that there are other people out there who are in a very similar situation that would love to partner with someone. And maybe you guys text on a daily basis and you're like, okay, this is what I'm working in. And you check

in, or maybe you just have a thread on the F on the group, or however you care to do it doesn't really matter.

Um, but reach out and find someone. You when you said that I'm like, yeah, brilliant. That strategy works for a lot of people. So find someone in the group, you've got hundreds of [00:46:00] people in that group to access. Um, so take advantage of that. So those are like my two immediate ideas. Um, what do you like, what do you think about either of those?

And do you think that that would set you up for some success in like the coming weeks to maybe get into a group?

[00:46:20] **Jenni:** Yeah, I think so. I'm spending time on the bus or on the train, um, would definitely be, is definitely, uh, a chunk of time that I haven't thought of utilizing. So I'm definitely going to try. And like you said, you know, as many days as I feel up to it, you know, utilize that time to, um, focus on editing this.

Outreach message and sending, you know, prepping to send to people once I'm, you know, back, um, with internet. Um, so [00:47:00] yeah. Um, I guess my question to you now is what outside of condensing this message down for the following, um, submits and, um, reaching out to the ones that I already did. And I am, I pretty much just in this, um, phase of waiting to see who gets back to me, um, for the, I guess, in, for lack of a better term foreseeable future, or at what point should I be?

Like, I need to move on to something else. And then what was that something else look like?

[00:47:43] **Heidi:** Okay. So, um, Let's just say for timeline purposes, you send your followups, your first round of follow-ups this week and you send your next round of followups next week. So there's like a week in between roughly [00:48:00] right?

Then if you have some, some informational interviews set up and you can get on the phone with those people then great. If not, then you're like, okay, I'm gonna move on to the pitching phase. And before you move on to the pitching phase, watch the videos that talks through moving onto pitching, you know, kind of skipping past the customer research phase before he even got a pity.

So, cause there's some very specific strategies that I talk about that you're going to want to implement, um, for pitching that will make your pitches a lot more

effective since assuming you maybe didn't. What you, what would be ideal out of the customer research phase? Um, and then, so that would be kind of like option one.

I'm going to say, like in a week or two, you're ready to like, okay, move on to the next thing. Now, if you good schedule some calls and, and there's not like a perfect cut and dry timeline [00:49:00] to this, either Jenny lake, you know, you can start sending these outreach, started sending these ups and maybe you send these five additional outreaches.

Um, and then maybe while you're waiting for those, you start watching some of the videos on how, like, on. Jumping past the customer research phase, or if it didn't go as planned or you didn't get the information you wanted or needed, what do you do? And here's the great thing that you can, the, all the videos inside of faster downloadable.

So you can download all of those and you can watch them on the train. Right. That's another great activity to do, right?

[00:49:39] **Jenni:** Yeah. I didn't

[00:49:40] **Heidi:** realize that they were downloaded. They're all downloadable, so you can get them offline. Um, we were very strategic to make sure that was implemented inside the course. So, um, so you can download those and watch those.

And I think that just watching those will give you a clear view of like, what's coming next. And then let's say you, um, which is going to it, which is going to be [00:50:00] pitching. Um, so let, and your, your, your muscle will be a little bit strengthened from all this work that you've done on the customer research front.

Even if you don't wind up getting the call. Or any information, okay. You have still gone through this. It has still built a foundation for you to move on to the next stage. So it is not, you know, pointless on any level. Um, and then if you, you know, so, so first option, right? You have the 10 that you've already said that you do some followups in a week or two, you're moving on to the next thing.

So, you know, start watching those videos in the background while you're you're on the train and commuting. And then if you send the other five, which I highly

suggest that you do, and then, you know, maybe that's another week to like write those and get those out the door, um, or another two weeks. And. And then as you're sending the follow ups to those, I [00:51:00] don't think you're in a position where you have to just like sit there and wait for someone to reply.

What I would like to see you do then is while you are sitting there and waiting for someone to reply, jump into the next videos and see what's coming up and then start working on that and just keep moving forward, because here's the thing at the end of the day, I want you to get the value out of each of the stages of the process.

And I want you to complete the action steps, but I also don't, like I said earlier, I don't want to see you getting stuck here for an extended amount of time, like waiting for something to happen. Because a lot of the times when it comes down to freelancing and honestly, anything in life, we just have to keep taking action and learning and adjusting and taking action and learning and adjusting, right.

It's this continual cycle, but I want you to keep moving. Okay. Um, even if it's not perfect, it doesn't matter. The entire thing is a learning process. But what [00:52:00] I have found after, you know, uh, hundreds of students inside of fast and, you know, doing these strategy sessions and talking with everybody and seeing where they're getting stuck, the students that see the most success are the ones that just keep moving forward and.

And adjusting as you move forward, as you learn, you're like, okay, I'm not getting replies. All right. What do I do? And there's tons of videos inside of the program to troubleshoot. Like, what do I do if I'm not getting replies to buy pitches? Okay, well, here's some troubleshooting things that could be going wrong and then you can analyze it and then guess what?

You try something different and you keep moving. But just the point is to just keep doing something. And when it's not working to make some adjustments and test and iterate and, and try something else, right. Um, you keep doing the same thing over and over and it doesn't and expecting a different result.

That's like the classic definition of insanity. Yeah. Right, right, right. So, but we can easily get stuck in that own loop inside of our own lives [00:53:00] very easily and like, not realize it. Yeah. Um, so you didn't hear back from these first

10. So the definition of sanity would have been to just send another 10 that are identical.

And expect a different result. So that's not what we're going to do. Right. What we're going to do, we're going to follow up. Okay. So there are some, you're trying something different and then we follow up again and then guess what? You try something different with five more, which is making your pitch a little bit more brief, and then you follow up and you follow up and then I'm sure you're going to get a little something out of that.

Um, and you learn and you watch the videos inside of fast and you learn what's coming next and how to move on to pitching whether or not you got all this great information out of your customer research phase and you, and then you apply the same strategies and you pitch and you go and you adjust and you, you know, yup.

I really sink. And I don't know, like your [00:54:00] exact allotment of time based on your commute time and stuff, but I really think with some. You know, if you can stick to, um, like three to five, if you could fit in three to five hours a week, which that might be asking too much. And if it is, then you do something that feels really good for you.

Um, and, and move forward. Like, um, you know, one of the things as an entrepreneur and as a freelancer and as someone who's out there, like trying to DIY you know, their career and their life and a business and not, you know, working in a, in a job you want to fail and you want to fail fast. So just keep move like quick, actually don't overthink things, get it to the 80 20.

It's good enough. Push it out the door, learn, move on to the next thing, fail and fail fast. Um, so I think that you, you have the capacity to do that. [00:55:00] Um, what I want to see is. You know, you figure out what time alignment works for you week to week and your time on the train, and then maybe finding an accountability partner in the group.

Um, but I want you, if you feel like you're kind of spinning your wheels and you're feeling stuck in a certain spot again, try to recognize that and snap out of, and you know, it's easier said than done and like just a snap out of it. Um, but be cognizant of that. And maybe it just means, you know what, I'm just going to watch a few more videos inside that are coming up next, just to maybe see what's coming next.

And, and that I think can help you be like, okay, you know what, I'm going to move past this one thing, or I'm going to try this, or I don't know. I feel like that just might be able to give you a little spark, um, And maybe your [00:56:00] accountability partner too, whether that's one person or you're doing it, you know, with a group inside of the private student community.

Um, I think collectively, you know, using each other's momentum to just keep moving forward.

[00:56:19] **Jenni:** Okay. Yeah.

[00:56:20] **Heidi:** How does that all feel?

[00:56:23] **Jenni:** Um, challenging, but not something that I can't

[00:56:26] **Heidi:** do. Yeah. I agree. I know you can do it. Um, I, like I said earlier, you know, you, we had a call back right after you joined fast and we're having this call now and you're like, I'm back for my second time.

I got chosen again. And I was like, you did get chosen again. And because you put yourself out there in a very, um, ambitious way, and I see that in you, and I know you, um, you can do it and it's going to feel hard of course, but I know you have.

[00:56:56] **Jenni:** Yeah. Yeah, I got this. I [00:57:00] just, you know, I, um, I know that I'm somebody who needs to sometimes take a minute and reassess, and I always welcome outside perspective because I know in the, when I'm in the middle of something, I'm so tunnel vision that I can't see other, other possibilities, other viewpoints to be like, that makes more sense.

That sounds like it could work. Let me give that a try.

[00:57:26] **Heidi:** Yeah. And so that's where I feel like it's hard to see the forest for the trees, right? Yeah. I think that's, um, it's really great that you know that about yourself. And so I think what you maybe can do with that, and again, easier said than done, but like when you feel like you're like just in the tunnel, um, W, you know, thinking about ways you can kind of step back, like, how would you evaluate this as an outside person?

And maybe even watching some, some upcoming videos or rewatching, some videos inside of fast, or maybe even listening to some podcasts with [00:58:00]

some other, um, some of the other episodes where, you know, we're talking through like how someone else has done something, it might just give you a different perspective and be like, oh right, okay.

I need to like refocus on that. Or like pivot or adjust this, or, you know, it just can give you a different perspective to get that little light bulb moment of like, okay, wait, no, now I knew I didn't need to do okay. Yeah. Yeah. Um, you're doing amazing. And honestly, your, your written messages and outreach are going to turn into beautiful pitches and it's going to turn into amazing clients.

I can like foresee the future for you. Um, I know it might not feel that quick and easy for you. Yeah, but it's there, you're on a, you're on a great path. Um,

[00:58:48] **Jenni:** your lips to the divine, yours.

[00:58:53] **Heidi:** I love that. I love that. So amazing. I'm really glad to have gotten to chat with you and keep [00:59:00] you, um, moving along with this. Um, what, what I would love for you to do is to go into the student group and share some of your big takeaways from our calls together, share, you know, where you were kind of stuck what we talked through and what some of your next action steps are, because I think that that can offer, um, a certain level of accountability for yourself and also offer value to the other students.

Is that something you can do? Yeah, definitely. I can do that. Okay. Awesome. And then at the same time, I think you can use that as an opportunity to maybe reach out for someone. If they're looking for an accountability partner,

[00:59:41] **Jenni:** Yes. I was just thinking that,

[00:59:43] **Heidi:** yeah. Beautiful. I love it, Jenny. You're doing amazing.

Um, keep moving along, you got this on so many levels and, um, I look forward to hearing some updates soon.

[00:59:57] **Jenni:** All right, sounds great. Thank you so much. [01:00:00]

[01:00:02] **Heidi:** All right, you guys, these strategy sessions are so much fun to talk through and really dig into, you know, what's going on and where people are getting stuck and in figuring out how to get them unstuck, it's so much fun.

The transformation that happens over these calls is really, really powerful and really, really inspiring. And I hope that you were able to get some great value from my conversation with Jenny, that you can apply to your specific freelancing situation. Um, so thank you so much for listening and being here with me today.

Also a big shout out and thank you to mark my husband, who does all the tech and editing and audio behind the scenes to make sure that. Podcasts sound good in your earbuds as well as Tara, my right hand of everything inside the business. She's an extension. And like half of my being, um, she really helps on so many levels inside of the business, but specifically on the podcast, coordinating the guest.

Getting everything [01:01:00] scheduled and out to all the platforms, it takes a bit of work and there's a lot of moving pieces and I couldn't do it without her. So thank you so much, Tara. And again, thank you for you to you, for, to you for listening. Um, if you want some more support with your freelance career, I have a ton of free resources.

We also host multiple live training events throughout the year that I would love to share with you. You can get all of the information, um, on those as well as my best free resources that you can get started with right now, by heading over to [sew heidi.com/freelance](http://sewheidi.com/freelance) [S E W H I D.com/freelance](http://SEWHID.com/freelance). We will hook you up with all the best stuff.

We'll link to that in the show notes, you can get directly there. And if you would be interested in learning more about freelance accelerator, our program, Um, and what you get inside of that program. And one thing is the opportunity to get on a live strategy session with me. But beyond that, it's everything you need.

Step-by-step to become a successful fashion, [01:02:00] freelancer, um, all the strategies, insights, tips, um, business templates, everything you need to kickstart and grow your freelance career. Um, we do share about that on the email list, when it opens, it only opens a couple of times a year, and I would love to tell you about that.

If it's something that you would be interested in. So head on over to, so [heidi.com/freelance](http://heidi.com/freelance) for all the free resources, the, um, all the details on when we hold free live workshops throughout the year, as well as information on our flagship program, freelance accelerator. All right, you guys, thank you so much again, if you enjoy the successful fashion freelancer podcast, make sure you

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And I really appreciate you being here. I hope you have an awesome day and we'll talk to you next episode. Bye.