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[00:00:00] **Heidi:** Welcome to another episode of the successful fashion freelancer podcast. And I am chatting with Sophia Luon today, who is a lingerie designer that started her own brand. And then decided that freelancing sounded like a little bit of a better path to go. And I'm super excited to share her story with you because I know so many people out there want to start their own brand and I get it.

I started my own brand too, and it can feel really inspiring and empowering and really cool to get to create something. And that is amazing. But the realities of having your own brand are very different. Then what the media portrays. Now I talk about this all the time and of course I'm just one person and, you know, I had my story, but Sophia's story is so similar to mine.

And I wanna share this conversation with you because it might just help you rethink your journey and. [00:01:00] Maybe just let you know what you're in for. So Sophia started her lingerie brand. She'd been running it for about five years now. And only in the fifth year, you guys, four years, she went without paying herself.

Finally in the fifth year, she started paying herself and she tells us a little bit about that in the conversation. She started paying herself less than minimum wage after five. That is how long it takes to actually make enough money to pay yourself. Um, and Sophia was just feeling like a little bit exhausted by this.

Uh, it wasn't the lifestyle she wanted. She was up working really late into the night. She was doing everything. She was packing and shipping orders and doing customer service and doing all this stuff that she didn't really love. And she was limited on her travel because. You know, had to be around to pack and ship orders.

And so she then discovered freelancing. She watched some of my free content and she said, I'm gonna pursue freelancing. So Sophia dove head first into freelancing and landed her first client within about seven to [00:02:00] 10 days. She's been freelancing for about six months. She is making money. She is loving her new life.

She stops working at four 30 every day because she wants to, um, she gets to travel to see her family and, and her friends whenever she wants. And I know I'm painting what sounds like a super fantasy story here, but this is the reality

of. Freelancing versus having your own brand. So Sophia's gonna share her story.

She's gonna talk about how she kickstarted her freelance career, how she has grown, um, what she has done to find clients, all that sort of stuff. And I'm super excited to share this story with you now. Full disclaimer, Sophia is one of the graduates of our freelance accelerator program. Fast. And she has used all the strategies that we teach inside of there.

But beyond that, she's gonna share some of the stuff, um, that you can take away from this podcast episode and apply to your freelance career right now. So we're gonna dive into that before we get started. If you want to kickstart your freelance career or just check out, you know, what. Some of the options might be out there, head on over to, so [00:03:00] heidi.com/freelance, we will link that up below and you can grab all my best free resources.

This includes templates and tutorials and step by step guidance on becoming a freelancer in the fashion industry. Again. So heidi.com/freelance, link it up below. And if you are curious to learn more about my premium program, freelance accelerator from surviving to thriving, I would love to share those details with you.

You can. All the details on that at so heidi.com/fast, F a S T again, we'll link that up as well. And without further ado, let's dive into my conversation with. All right. Welcome Sophia to the successful fashion freelancer podcast. Um, you emailed your story to Tara and she shared it with me and I was like, oh my gosh, we have got to chat.

So, um, I know a little bit, but before, you know, I say anything that I know, I would love for you to introduce yourself to everybody out there listening and let us know who you are and what you do in the fashion. [00:04:00]

[00:04:00] **Sofia:** Thank you, Katie. So I'm a designer and pattern maker and I specialize in land Ry and some swimwear too.

Yeah. And I have, I started my own, eh, brand around. Fiveish years ago. Uh, but the last year I really focused on freelancing, uh, around six months ago I started like taking it seriously.

[00:04:27] **Heidi:** Okay. Okay. Cool. So tell us a little bit about, okay. You have your own lingerie brand and what inspired you to pursue freelancing beyond that?

Or in addition to that,

[00:04:43] **Sofia:** because like the pandemic, of course , um, you might have care of that. But, uh, also because I was getting a bit overwhelmed with my brand because I was doing everything by myself and I was like, it was fun, [00:05:00] but it was also too mad. And I was, um, at that point where maybe I should outsource something and make things like big.

Or, but I also was very comfortable doing things in a small scale because like my brand was like my baby. So I wanted to like take care of my customers and be present and have that connection with them. And I realized that I didn't want to be like to hire somebody and to have stock. Like I started having some stockies and I, I didn't like that.

because it was like making things. I don't know, like I, I was losing that personal connection and also like I, with the pandemic, I realized that I needed a second source income. Ah, and I started freelancing.

[00:05:50] **Heidi:** Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Can you, would you be open to talking a little bit about the realities of. Of income when it comes to having your own brand and [00:06:00] even, I mean, you said you were doing everything yourself, so you were keeping your overhead low, you weren't paying other people.

Um, I mean, I'm not sure exactly what that was. I don't know. Are, were you, are you cutting and sewing everything you were? Yes. Okay. Okay. Um, but talk a little bit about the realities behind the financial side of having your own.

[00:06:21] **Sofia:** the realities are hard. like after five years I was starting to earn a salary.

Okay. so, yeah, like, uh, for the first two years, I, I wasn't paying myself because like everything I, I earn, I reinvested it into the business. Okay. And then, yeah, like, I, I wasn't making, like, even if I was paying myself a salary, it, it was, uh, below the minimum wage. Okay. So like maybe I, I I'm from Spain, but I'm living in Sweden.

Okay. And maybe with the salary I was making, maybe I could be [00:07:00] able to live in a Spain. But in Sweden, like no way the cost of living is way higher, so yeah.

[00:07:08] **Heidi:** okay. But that was even only after you said you've been doing it for five years and only in the fifth year. Were you able to start taking some money out for yourself to just like live?

Yeah. Okay. Yeah.

[00:07:21] **Sofia:** Maybe I could have done. Sooner, like maybe in the fourth year, but I was afraid that if I was taking for myself, then if I had to buy, like maybe my sew machine broke, I didn't have like a, something prepared in my, for my brand. Yeah. Like for that, those kind of like big thing. Yeah. So,

[00:07:42] **Heidi:** yeah.

Okay. And so the pandemic hit and you were like, Okay. Maybe things need to change. You said in the last six months or so you've been taking freelancing seriously. So just for perspective, it's April, 2022. So it's been about two years since the pandemic. [00:08:00] So can you talk a little bit about, um, I mean, what made you think that freelancing was, was, uh, an opportunity or, or maybe a good supplemental.

source of income on the side of your, your brand, what sort of inspired you to, to take that leap into freelancing initially,

[00:08:20] **Sofia:** actually your, that, that week that you made in August?

I think. Oh yeah. That was like Lance week freelancing. Yeah. Yeah. Like that was the first, um, I don't know, the first moment that I actually like opened my eyes to the possibility of freelance yeah. Um, yeah, and then I, like, I, I did all the, like, I watch all the trainings and videos that you did, and I listened to all the stories and I read some like blog post and I listened to your podcast and I thought like, that's a possibility

Yeah. And I was really intrigued by yeah. Like doing the things that I enjoy [00:09:00] doing most are designing on the patterns I like doing. I like doing that. It's not something that I want to do eight hours a day. Yeah. And that, and, and that was a possibility, like to do the things that I enjoy the most, but for other people and get paid for that.

[00:09:19] **Heidi:** yeah. Yeah. Okay. So there's a lot of things I would love to, to hear a little bit more about first is. You said in freelancing, you're getting to design and, and do the, the things that you like to do in the fashion industry.

And of course you like sewing, but it sounds like when you were running your own brand, um, and I think you're still running it on the side.

Is that correct? Yeah. Okay. Yes. So with your own brand, um, tell us a little bit about like, what is your day to day, week to week, month to month look like, um, Because I, I mean, I know you're doing a lot of things. You're not just designing, there's a lot of other things that you have to do as a brand [00:10:00] founder.

Um, so tell us a little bit about what that role looks like, and then, you know, like you said, it sounds like you were interested in, in spending more time on other tasks. Um, so talk, talk us through that a little.

[00:10:14] **Sofia:** so like for, for me, like maybe for other people that have branches student. Yeah. But for me, like my day to day was a lot of answering emails, a lot of talking to suppliers and a lot of sewing.

Like I had eight hours a day of sewing, like most of the days. Wow. And that was really tiring and. A lot of stress too, because like, I was responsible for everything like for, for arranging. Yeah. Like the suppliers, like if the, I was sending the packets too, so I had to keep an eye on, maybe the packet is lost or maybe the rice laid and all the, and really I design, uh, one or two collections a year.

So that means that. [00:11:00] Spend like maybe one or two weeks, a year designing and another one or two weeks a year making the pattern. So, yeah.

[00:11:08] **Heidi:** Yeah. And then the rest of the year is like logistics and production.

[00:11:13] **Sofia:** yeah. The website and

[00:11:19] **Heidi:** the social media and, uh, bookkeeping, everything else. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. And so you said that you weren't, you, you kind of decided you weren't really interested in, in building a big team. You wanted to keep it small. Um, did you like look into opportunities to start outsourcing stuff so that you could spend maybe more time on design and this, and the things that you were excited about or, you know, where did you kinda.

come to the decision that, you know, I'm gonna keep it small. Was it just to keep it close to your chest and keep it really personal? Or did you like, I'm kind of

blabbering on here, but I guess, did you look into, um, outsourcing some of the tasks?[00:12:00]

[00:12:01] **Sofia:** I looked into that, but, uh, as I was living in Sweden, Uh, Sweden is not big . Yeah. And there, there wasn't like many people I could find that they specialize in lingerie. Yeah. Like for the SU like, so for me was, it takes, it took 90% of my time.

[00:12:19] **Heidi:** Okay. The actual sewing.

[00:12:20] **Sofia:** So yeah. I wanted someone to help me with that and I couldn't.

Okay. Not in Sweden. Like maybe I could have hired, I don't know, like a factory, but that's a big investment and I didn't want to do

[00:12:33] **Heidi:** that. Okay. Yeah. Okay. Gotcha. Okay. So you start thinking about freelancing. You come to freelance week. Um, what did you do next?

[00:12:45] **Sofia:** afterwards up work.

[00:12:47] **Heidi:** up work. Okay. Yeah. Yeah. Talk a little

[00:12:50] **Sofia:** bit about that.

I. So I like actually the same week we did the freelance week. Yeah. I had an interview with, um, [00:13:00] With a land company in Sweden. Yeah. Um, and I had to make a portfolio like super, super quick. Yeah. Um, and they, they ended up not hiring me, but now I'm working for them as a freelance.

[00:13:14] **Heidi:** Oh, it was a full-time job interview.

Yeah. Okay. And so how did you turn, like you said, they didn't hire you, but now you ended up freelancing for them. How did you create that opportu?

[00:13:27] **Sofia:** so I did, I did that portfolio for them. Yeah. And then I upload the, that same portfolio, like super, super quick to app work. Okay. And I started getting some opportunities, eh, from app work.

Okay. And then I, I think it was like two months ago. I created app website for myself. Okay. Like for my freelance work. Yeah. And they found me through my website.

[00:13:51] **Heidi:** just randomly.

[00:13:53] **Sofia:** and the, the, the woman that I had spoken with in the interview, like, she, she liked me, but [00:14:00] they, they ended up not hiring anyone, like, okay.

And she like, look at my website and say, oh, like, it was that girl. We did the interview when we ended up. Oh yeah. Yeah. And she like told me if I was still interested in working for them, but as a Lance, because they, they needed a designer and a pattern maker, but they didn't hire a designer. They hire an intern in the end.

Oh, okay. But they still needed a pattern maker. Yeah. So I ended up like doing the pattern for them. Okay.

[00:14:35] **Heidi:** Okay. Um, And then something that I like we haven't touched on, but I remember from the email you originally sent to Tara, correct me if I'm wrong, you did not go to fashion school. You have no formal training, right?

[00:14:51] **Sofia:** I did like in the, at first I didn't. Okay. So. Fashion school. I, I, uh, did history of art. Okay. And a [00:15:00] master's in history of art. Okay. I'm a PhD I was doing a PhD, a PhD. Wow. Okay. And then I quit the PhD and started doing .

[00:15:09] **Heidi:** Okay. And how did you learn everything that you know about design and pattern making?

[00:15:16] **Sofia:** So internet and YouTube.

Okay. And then when I was sure that I wanted to. Do it like for a living? Yeah. That's when I quit my and did, um, it's called a vocation course in pattern making.

[00:15:32] **Heidi:** Okay. Vocational, is that what you said?

[00:15:35] **Sofia:** yes,

[00:15:35] **Heidi:** I think vocational, vocational. Yeah. We have the same thing here. Okay. So you did a vocational course on pattern making and other than sort of self-directed learning on the internet and YouTube, is that your only like formal, formal training?

Yeah. Okay. And then you obviously learned a lot through doing your own brand, um, and refine your skills that way. [00:16:00] And. Then you put together a portfolio really quickly. Talk a little bit about that. I mean, you obviously had all of the work that you had done with your own brand. Um, but it sounds like you put together maybe some different stuff for your portfolio.

Tell us a little bit about that process.

[00:16:17] **Sofia:** so I used, uh . I like, for my own brand, I don't do tech pack because I'm the one that I, yeah. Right, right. Okay. Right, right. So I invented some tech packs with the designs that I have, like I created them. Okay. And then I used some like, eh, with the vocational course.

I like, they told us how to do it's. Tech properly, but it was similar. Okay. Without dress and something like that. So I used that information to create like some like fake project. Yeah. With some like school project mixed with what I have been doing for my brand. Yeah. [00:17:00] And like, it, it, everything was. Thank

[00:17:02] **Heidi:** you.

Yeah. Okay. So just all self-directed based off of new projects or stuff that you already had from your collection. Yeah. Okay. Yeah. Okay. I always advise people to do, but for some reason, people get really nervous. Like, can I do self-directed projects? Can I have, you know, fake projects in my portfolio? And you can, you just need to show that you, you just need to put forth and show that you have those specific skills.

Um, okay. So you got the client that you had originally interviewed for. They came back and hired you as a freelancer. You said they found your website. Do you know how they found it? Did they just Google, like lingerie designer, Sweden or something?

[00:17:40] **Sofia:** I have no idea.

[00:17:41] **Heidi:** You have no idea. Okay. Yeah. But they found you.

And so you're working with them on a freelance basis. And then what happened with Upwork?

[00:17:51] **Sofia:** Uh, like for me it has been working quite well. Yeah. Actually, because I had no real experience with brands. So for me that, like [00:18:00] I did an internship and that was my only real experience. Apart from that. And, and it wasn't an internship on a, for a laundry brand.

Oh, okay. Like it was unrelated

[00:18:13] **Heidi:** okay. But still fashion design and pattern making still? Yes. How did you get that opportunity

[00:18:18] **Sofia:** through the vocation course? Like one of the, one of the teachers. Yeah. One of the teachers like recommended me.

[00:18:24] **Heidi:** Okay. Gotcha. Okay. So you did that internship, but it wasn't lingerie.

So now you're on Upwork. So keep talking a little bit about that.

[00:18:33] **Sofia:** so, yeah, like I, like for me at work has been great for like building my confidence in myself. Yeah. Because like, at first I, like I realized there are a lot of like shitty offers and like, people like there's a lot of junk garbage. Yeah, totally.

But I didn't want to start with like \$10 an hour. So I put that pretty high price. Like [00:19:00] I think I put \$60 an hour. Okay. So that way, like everyone that didn't want to pay, like they didn't like send requests and everything. Yeah. You

[00:19:10] **Heidi:** filtered out the, the cheap junk brands. Yeah.

[00:19:13] **Sofia:** Yeah. And I make sure to only send like proposals to.

People that I, like, I had the feeling that they were serious and I, I made like a sample proposal and then I customized for everyone. Okay. Like I, yeah. And I, I made sure to be like, If they say, I want something to help me with a blue size wear brand. Like I started with hi, I love to help you with that because I think inclusivity is so important.

Like yeah, something like that. that it seems like I have written it for them. Yeah. But more or less. Yeah. Um, at first I, I think it was great for that because I didn't have anything to put on my portfolio. [00:20:00] Apart from my invented stuff. your invented stuff. Yeah. Yeah. And I, and it made me like more confident in, uh, speaking to customers and, and yeah.

Knowing what are their real problems. Yeah. And everything. Yeah. And yeah. And I think what is great to start with. Yeah. Now I, I want to get out of it because they still take 70% of how much

[00:20:26] **Heidi:** 20%. Yeah. Is 20. . Yeah, I didn't realize it was that high.

[00:20:35] **Sofia:** Wow. It changes once you have charged more than \$500 for a client.

Okay. Then they take only 10%.

[00:20:47] **Heidi:** Okay. When the total project price passes 500, it goes down to 10. Yeah. It's still really high. Yeah. Okay. So, but. [00:21:00] it helps you get started. It helped you build that confidence. Um, it helped you create a projects that now perhaps you can share in your portfolio. Yeah. Like real projects, which, you know, fake projects are, can be just as good to get started as well.

Obviously it worked for you. Um, okay. And I also,

[00:21:21] **Sofia:** it also helped me to get reviews from people. Yeah. But now I can use on my

[00:21:25] **Heidi:** website. Yes, totally. Okay. So, um, I mean, what did you feel like getting those first few projects on Upwork? How did you feel? Because you're going into it, you have zero ratings that show like Upwork shows you have zero ratings, you've earned \$0, like you are brand new.

And I think that that can feel like a really. Intimidating place to be. I know a lot of people I've heard from them. They're like, well, I can't, how am I supposed to do anything? When these other people have got all these reviews and stuff, but obviously somebody started somewhere. Everybody started at zero and you started at zero [00:22:00] recently.

Um, you know, I mean, maybe it was one thing if you started at zero, 10 years ago when it was less competitive, but you started at zero recently. So, you know,

how did you feel. it. How did you feel about the process of getting those first few clients when you were starting at zero?

[00:22:20] **Sofia:** about the process, like how it made me

[00:22:22] **Heidi:** feel.

I mean, I wanna know both. I wanna know, like how it made you feel starting when you knew that like your profile was like zero and then also, like, what was it actually like, like how many proposals did you have to send out? How many, you know, conversations did you have to have before you found that first brand that was willing to, let's be honest, take a risk on you since you didn't have any.

So emotionally and also logistic.

[00:22:50] **Sofia:** Emotionally. I was terrified because it was, yeah. Like, I, I didn't know if I, I, I didn't know. Even if my tech pack were going to [00:23:00] be like understandable by a factory, like, I, I thought they were because like, I I watch your course. Yeah. I, I have been doing some research, but you never know until

Yeah, so I was terrified because my first project was to make five tech pads for a land restaurant. Okay. Um, and it, it went great. And I think I go to after a week or 10 days of.

[00:23:29] **Heidi:** Yeah, you set up your profile and you had your first project within seven to 10 days, starting at a zero, \$0 zero. I mean, that's amazing.

Did you pitch to them or did they come to you? Do you remember? I pitched to them. You saw the job posting and you pitched to them. Mm-hmm okay. But it sounds like you used a lot of the strategies that you learned inside of freelance accelerator, as far as customizing the pitch and making them feel really good.

And then [00:24:00] getting on a conversation and asking them about, you know, their process and their challenges. Making them feel really heard. It sounds like that. Yeah. I mean, in conjunction with having your portfolio with your self-directed tech packs, um, did you go through design to development? My course, yes.

Okay. And so that's how you learned. Um, so it sounds like, you know, there's a lot of different variables, but it sounds like all of those contributed to your first project doing five tech packs at \$60 an hour. I mean,

[00:24:33] **Sofia:** no, that one was a project.

[00:24:35] **Heidi:** It was a flat rate price. Oh

[00:24:36] **Sofia:** yeah. Okay. it was, uh, I think it was five tech passport.

\$600 in total. Okay. So it's way below, a little bit on

[00:24:46] **Heidi:** the low side. Yeah, but you got started. Yeah. So in your first 10 days you land a \$600 project, you do that. Did you get a review from

[00:24:55] **Sofia:** them? Yeah. Yeah. She was like super happy. [00:25:00] yeah.

[00:25:00] **Heidi:** And so then what happened? What, when did you get your next project?

[00:25:05] **Sofia:** Uh, while I was working on that one yeah.

[00:25:09] **Heidi:** Okay. And is again, was that something that you applied to? Yes. Okay.

[00:25:14] **Sofia:** And from them, I like, I I've never been without a project. Yeah. Yeah.

[00:25:21] **Heidi:** that's amazing. So you must have built up a pretty good profile on Upwork by now. Yes. Okay. So did you actually start this? Uh, let's. a year and a half, two years ago, or you said you've gotten more serious the last six months.

When was all of this happening?

[00:25:41] **Sofia:** Uh, October of

[00:25:45] **Heidi:** last year, like, yes. Okay. So what's of last year? Yes. Of

[00:25:49] **Sofia:** eight months.

[00:25:51] **Heidi:** Yeah. Six months. Six or eight months. Okay. December?

[00:25:55] **Sofia:** Yeah. Yeah. Single

[00:25:56] **Heidi:** months. Yeah. Okay. And so now you've been freelancing for
[00:26:00] six months. How does it. uh, very good. yeah. Why?

[00:26:05] **Sofia:** Yeah, because like, I now feel that like I'm more in control
because I, I don't have that feeling with, with my brand.

Maybe I wake up one morning. I have three orders and. The next week I have
zero. Ah, and it's very, I don't know, like I, I have to be always ready for
whatever happens. Yeah. But, uh, with pre freelancing I can like schedule things
and if I have a, like, I still have very busy weeks, but I can like speak to the
customer and say, oh yeah, like, um, my timeline is whatever.

Like I, I'm more in control of my workload. Yeah. I can, I don't have. Be
working all the time. I, I can be with my boyfriend. Yeah. [00:27:00]

So yeah. I, for me, it's like freedom. Yeah. Yeah.

[00:27:02] **Heidi:** And then how does it feel or how is it different from a
financial perspective from having your own brand?

[00:27:11] **Sofia:** Oh, it must with it. Yeah. Yeah. yeah. Like. with my brand. I, I
didn't pay me. Like I didn't pay myself until a year ago. So yeah, with
freelancing, I don't have to worry to save because of, I don't know.

I have to buy a lot of supplies out once and or everything. Like I can, I know
what I, what I spend like the illustrator subscription. And, and I say like for
unexpected, Stuff, but the rest of the money is for me. Yeah. Like for like, I, I
never had that feeling.

[00:27:48] **Heidi:** yeah. Like a really nice paycheck now. Yeah. Yeah.

What other software do you pay for? How do you do your pattern drafting?
CLO CLO flow. 3d. Yeah. Okay. And so that [00:28:00] subscription is fairly
reasonable. .

[00:28:02] **Sofia:** Yeah. And actually I have a discount because I did in a
school. Oh, okay. Yeah. Okay. Gotcha. I got to hair like cut the,

the

[00:28:11] **Heidi:** bread. Okay. So CLO do you do any 3d stuff?

[00:28:16] **Sofia:** I like for linger? I'm not sure. It's like, the technology is quite there yet. Okay. I think it's interesting, but yeah, technology. The, like the, the clothes, 3d technology, uh, it's based on the avatar and you cannot customize the avatar like of the breast measurements and everything. Okay. So maybe for a general view, like you can see the style lines and everything

[00:28:44] **Heidi:** for like dress or something.

Yeah. Yes. Okay.

[00:28:48] **Sofia:** Maybe like I've seen that, uh, Aban, the, the dress form brand, like the super. Fancy dress problem, brand, whatever. Yeah. They have like [00:29:00] digitalized or three V I, their dress forms. And now you can import them to CLO, but you have to pay a, a subscription that is quite pricing. Okay. So I haven't tried them.

So they are supposed to be like with the correct measurement. So I don't know if for land is quite useful aside from yeah. Like seeing if the it's it looks nice. But for pattern making. I don't know. okay.

[00:29:26] **Heidi:** Okay. So you're doing pattern making and CLO, uh, design and illustrator. And then what are you doing?

Your tech packs in Excel. Excel. Okay. So you pay for that too. Okay. And then that's your overhead that's software, right? Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah. Okay. Um, and then talk a little bit about the workload of. , you know, the type of work you're getting to do as a freelancer versus the type of work you got to do as a brand owner.

Right? I mean, you just said 90% of your time was sewing, but [00:30:00] even if you had outsourced to a factory or you had found another Soer, I mean, it sounds like a lot of your time was spent doing logistics. Like you said, email and customer service and packing and shipping orders. And. Managing the website and inventory and all of these other things.

And I imagine promotion, right? Yeah. Um, versus a couple weeks that you're designing in a couple weeks, a year doing pattern making, which is the work that you really love. Yeah. Contrast that to how is your time spent and the freelance work?

[00:30:35] **Sofia:** I think it's much more like for me, I find it more interesting.

Like I, I get to work with different clients. I get to do what I like that is like being an illustrator, doing stuff. Yeah. And I'm close with it. And also like I have, uh, two clients right now that they are like, I have been doing work for them and now they are paying me like to, for consulting. Oh. And [00:31:00] like, they're paying me to.

I I'm amazed by

[00:31:03] **Heidi:** that. They're paying you to think. Yeah. Yeah. Why does that amaze you?

[00:31:08] **Sofia:** I don't know, because I, I didn't think I could help people. Like what I, what I like the conclusions I arrived to. Like for them, they seem like super, oh, I can't thought about that. Oh, like that is, I don't know, like so clever or so, whatever.

Yeah. But for me, it's. Logic so obvious. Yes. Yeah. Yeah. Because maybe because I've been with my brand for a long time. Yeah. And I have started like from zero to, but for them it's like, oh, that, oh, I haven't thought that, oh, like that's so new. Oh, that. and I didn't realize that what I have learned had value.

[00:31:48] **Heidi:** Yeah. Yeah. I love that you brought that up because so many people, um, I think myself included, I think everybody is like, oh, that's just common knowledge. It's not really that [00:32:00] valuable. But the thing is that that is a skill that is a piece of knowledge. That seems really obvious to you cuz you've been doing it for a while.

Um, and you're, you're really, you know, you're kind. Up to your knees in this stuff. Whereas somebody who's maybe new to the industry or new to having their own brand, um, it's really, really valuable to them. And I think that people can get really uncomfortable with the idea. I'm not sure if that's the right word, but sort of uncomfortable with the idea that oh, I'm gonna get paid to get on a phone call for an hour, versus you're not actually like creating a physical thing and like delivering a physical thing, but that hour conversation, that consulting can be so valuable to the other person.

Um, how did you start getting into that? It's a, sounds like something getting into that. It sounds like some of your existing clients just kind of started saying, Hey, let's do some [00:33:00] consulting or what did, what did that actually look.

[00:33:02] **Sofia:** yeah. It's for, for people that I made, like designs or tech backs for.

Yeah. Like then they like, they, they like me for some reason, they like propose to like, to keep the contract for hourly consulting.

[00:33:17] **Heidi:** Yeah. So basically just pay you at an hourly rate to give them advice, to get on a phone. Yeah. To tell them what to do to. Yeah. Okay. I love that. Um, and like you said, they're paying you to think which, like you said, just felt so weird to you.

Is it starting to feel a little bit more normal? Like, are you starting to see the value in that, in that offer?

[00:33:38] **Sofia:** Yeah. Now maybe

[00:33:40] **Heidi:** maybe a little, yeah.

Okay. So you're still on upward with your clients. Have you taken any of your clients off of, up Upwork to work directly and, and to alleviate that fee?

[00:33:54] **Sofia:** I have one of them, like she found me at the same time[00:34:00]

through Instagram and app. Okay. Uh, because like, you are not supposed to. Tell and poor client, like, Hey, I can work. I know. Yeah. Yeah. Like if at work knows about that, they shut you down. Yeah. But I have one that she, she found me both ways. Okay. So it's not technically still from upward. Cause she did find you on

[00:34:23] **Heidi:** Instagram also.

Okay. Yeah.

[00:34:24] **Sofia:** Yeah. Uh, yeah. And. Like I, now I, I want to find more outside work, right. Because of the 20% field.

[00:34:33] **Heidi:** Yeah. Okay. Okay. And so what's your plan to do that?

[00:34:37] **Sofia:** Start beating. Yeah. Uh that's also terrifying, but yeah, I, I have to, so yeah.

[00:34:44] **Heidi:** Why do you feel so terrified about that?

[00:34:47] **Sofia:** because I think enough work is much more easier because they have the offer.

Like they, they are looking for someone already and they, they tell you, like, I'm looking for someone that makes tech packs for [00:35:00] whatever. Yeah. Um, like sending an email, like a called th to a brand. I don't know, like I'm a very. Introverted introverted person. So for me, that's a huge step . Yeah, yeah, yeah. And, and I think the worst part is what if they reply ,

[00:35:21] **Heidi:** uh, you are not the first person I've heard that from.

I've heard that exact line before of like, I'm actually terrified if they reply and say, yes, let's talk that almo that feels scarier than it going into a black hole. Yeah. Why.

[00:35:38] **Sofia:** I don't know, because I still think that maybe with app work, uh, the people there are not so like serious, they are like starting their own brand.

They are startup most of them. Okay. So if I, I don't know, like, I feel safer, but with a [00:36:00] already existing. it's like, but maybe they already know everything. Maybe they have their own system. Maybe they look at my tech cards and see like, what is this shit? So . I feel more. I know, like intimidated. Yeah,

[00:36:16] **Heidi:** yeah.

Yeah. Well, listen, you're gonna go out there and you're gonna pitch and you're gonna learn firsthand, but I will just tell you that just because they're an established brand does not mean they have it figured out. I have seen some hot messes inside of brands. I mean, tech packs that I'm like, this is a tech pack.

Like it's a sketch with some. Some arrows pointing at it. Um, you know, not everybody has everything figured out and aside from that, you know, they might have their own system that works great, but sometimes they still just need extra help to get the work done. Like there's, you know, only so many people and so many hours in the day, and they might just need someone to actually do the work.

Um, even if they do have a system or, you know, [00:37:00] the knowledge that works for them. they still can just need the support. So I know there's a big need for you out there and, and I'm excited to hear how the pitching goes. I'm sure it's gonna go great for you. Um, oh yeah, it will. It will. For sure. I would love to know.

Can you tell us a little bit about what is a day like as a freelance lingerie designer and pattern maker? I wanna know, but a little bit about your average day, paint us the picture. What, where does it start? What do you do throughout the day? What does your average day look like?

[00:37:35] **Sofia:** So I like, I'm a fan of Google calendar, so I have all my days

Yeah. So usually I start with like answering emails and everything because like most of my I of my clients are from the us, so they write while, while I sleep. Okay. so like, I answer all the emails, like in half an hour, an hour, each morning, then I work on [00:38:00] whatever project I have. And in the afternoon I usually.

I have like an hour to like, see what's new in app work. Yeah. And maybe like, try to write some pictures yeah. For brand and, uh, maybe work on my website too, because the website is a bit of a working progress, but I'm not too. Like, I, I, I don't really care, like the basics are there, but, but sometimes I like pick some links and some stuff.

Yeah. And then I usually work on a different project. Like I don't like to work on the same thing on the morning and the afternoon, because then I like bored. like, I, I really enjoy having different clients and, and like working in different projects. So, yeah. And then like, Half past four, I stopped working like for me that's what are you doing?

but like, I don't need to work more. Yeah. And yeah, [00:39:00] for me that's because then when I had my brand, like I had to like finish the, the, the brow, the laundry proud, the linger said that I, I had to finish and I maybe doing until. 7:00 PM or something like that. Yeah. But now, like, I, like, I communicate with my clients, like my schedule and everything.

So I don't have that. I have to work until I, I don't know until I go to sleep. Yeah. So, yeah.

[00:39:34] **Heidi:** so you mentioned earlier that something about freelancing that you have experienced has been this feeling of freedom. Um, I imagine it's

part of it is the scheduling freedom, right? Like you said, I can work on a different project in the morning and a different project in the afternoon and I can stop at four 30.

Yeah. Yeah. What are some and answer

[00:39:56] **Sofia:** some more emails too.

[00:39:57] **Heidi:** Yeah. And answer some more emails too. Of course, of course. There's always email, no matter what type of work you're doing, there's always gonna be email and correspondence. Um, what are some of the other things that you like about the freelancing life?

[00:40:11] **Sofia:** I like, like now, right now, I'm I'm in Spain visiting my parents. Okay. You're in Spain right now. Yeah. Yeah. I, I, I don't have to, like before maybe if I, the day I, I went, I got out an order. Like I was going to be like the whole week I'm away. I was going to be like, Like make it mad in my brain. Like if I arrive and next week, maybe I can make it in a day and ship it the next day.

So it doesn't get too delayed and everything. Yeah. And now, like, I, I told my clients like this week I will be away. I can answer some emails, but I'm not going to be like fully operational . Yeah. And I, I don't have [00:41:00] that pressure of yeah. it's that it's freedom. Yeah. It's, uh, being able to visit my family or take a day off or things like that.

[00:41:11] **Heidi:** Yeah. Yeah. I love that. I love that so much. Sophia you, um, you're amazing. I mean, you've done so many great things and. Like you did this without fashion school training. You figured it out online, you built your own brand, which is a feat in itself. I know, you know now, right. And then you thought, okay, this is kind of barely not totally working for me.

Maybe there's something else that can afford me a, a different arguably better lifestyle and fulfill you by getting to do the work that you actually love and get you making more money. . I mean, there's so many wins to this story. I love it so much. Um, what do you have planned for the future?

[00:41:54] **Sofia:** I want to like pitch to some brands and like, yeah.

Do [00:42:00] like maybe I, even, if it terrifies me, I would love to work with an established brand and actually see the. Like that I help create. Okay. On a store and everything, like now that I'm working with this Swedish brand, I'm super

excited because yeah. Next season, I'm going to see things made with my patent.

The stuff that

[00:42:22] **Heidi:** you did. Yeah. Okay. Gotcha.

[00:42:24] **Sofia:** Yeah. Yeah. So I, I went to do that more. Yeah. Because right now, like with all these startups, like maybe they will. I don't know in the summer, or maybe they don't even launch. I don't know. Like, yeah. And I, I'm very excited about some of them because they are doing like super exciting stuff about like, um, gender neutral and there's one brand that's doing underwear for trans people.

Cool. And. I'm very passionate about all of that. Yeah. And like sustainability, but it's like, [00:43:00] yeah, they will go home someday. Yeah. I, I, I don't see what I'm doing. The finished product.

[00:43:08] **Heidi:** Yeah. Yeah. But how cool is it that you're getting the opportunity to work on all of these really amazing projects by these people who are creating, you know, pretty exciting product, pretty exciting garments, right.

That's really, really cool to have the diversity in the exposure of like what you're doing and the people that you're getting to meet and, and the designs that you're getting to get your hands on. That seems really neat. Yeah. I love that. Yeah. Oh my gosh. I'm so excited. Um, Sophia, I'd love to ask you a question that I ask everybody at the end of the interview.

and that is what is one thing people never ask you about being a fashion freelancer that you wish they would?

[00:43:54] **Sofia:** Mm, no. that I wish they would like, [00:44:00] because it's something that is bad and nobody imagines or because something is something that is so good that nobody imagines .

[00:44:08] **Heidi:** I mean, however you wanna answer it.

[00:44:11] **Sofia:** Um, I wish they ask more about like, not as like consider it like seriously, because my parents don't understand. Like they, they want me to be employed in a company. Okay. And have, and I wish people understood that freelancing is a job. Yeah. It is a job. . Yeah. Like it's not that I'm passing the time while I'm waiting that somebody hires me.

Like, I, I like doing this. I like, I like working for different people and yeah. Yeah. And I'm having to, I don't know. Yeah. Like, like helping all kinds of companies and [00:45:00] it's not because I cannot find anything else it's because I like doing. Yeah.

[00:45:06] **Heidi:** Why do you think your parents see it as like, oh, you're just passing the time until you hopefully air quote, hopefully get like air quote again, a real job.

[00:45:19] **Sofia:** I think because they're mentality, maybe they're more traditional or like in their generation, everyone, like went to school to university, got a job and they pretty much stayed in that job. Yeah. And bought a house. And have to learn. Yeah. And retire. Yeah. But in our generation, like it's way more difficult and we cannot buy a house at the age that they bought a house.

Yeah. So this kind of jobs like freelancing for them, they wear an option. I don't even think in Spain that existed. yeah. [00:46:00] I, I. They were freelancer, but I don't know if they really could earn a living. So maybe for them it's yeah. Like what is she doing? She doesn't have stability. Yeah. And yeah. But right now you don't have stability, even if you work in a company like yeah.

During COVID a lot of companies closed and you were left with nothing. So. yeah, at least now I'm having fun.

[00:46:28] **Heidi:** yeah. And you have multiple clients, so of course you can lose some and yeah. Keep some others. And in my opinion, it's a lot easier to find new clients than it is to find a whole new job.

[00:46:41] **Sofia:** Yeah. And also, because in a job you tend to specialize in something.

Yeah. And then if the company closes and the other companies don't need anyone that is specialized in that thing, you don't know what to do. Yeah. But now I, I specialize in linger, but I can work with, um, [00:47:00] variety of brands. Yeah. So I can do a lot of things. Like I can do tech packs. I can do designs. I can do designs for like a specific niche, but it's like, for me it would, I think it would be.

Yeah. Like if I suddenly lost all my clients now tomorrow. Yeah. I think it would be easier to start building them up again than if I were employed and suddenly I was fired. Yeah. Like,

[00:47:29] **Heidi:** yeah, I agree. I totally agree. And you know, when the pandemic hit, we saw a lot of, um, a lot of people around the world, obviously in various jobs, lost their employment.

Um, a fashion industry was hit. Specifically hard and all the freelancers inside of Lance accelerator? Um, not all of them, but a lot of them, I know, saw an initial dip in work. Of course, things went down, projects got canceled and then they, they slowly, but pretty quickly within the next couple months picked right [00:48:00] back up and people looking for jobs were not finding new success that quickly.

So, um, I think that it's more stable, but that's up for debate. And for some people, a full-time job is a really good fit. So yeah. Amazing Sophia. Um, where can everybody connect with you? I know you have your website, you've got your Instagram, um, what's the best way for people to see all the amazing work you're doing to reach out to you.

Maybe if they need some help with their lingerie brand or just to say.

[00:48:32] **Sofia:** um, my website probably. Yeah, my I'm Instagram. I'm pretty present on both, so yeah. Yeah. What is what's? What are the handles? My website is, uh, atelier, uh, the Sophia, um, what's that dash. Okay. Yeah. Yeah. luon.com.

[00:48:51] **Heidi:** Okay. And we'll link all this in the show notes.

[00:48:54] **Sofia:** Yeah, yeah, yeah, please. Yeah. and the Instagram is
[00:49:00] Sophia luon. That's

[00:49:01] **Heidi:** totally it. Okay. So, gotcha. Okay, perfect. We'll link all that in the show notes, but I'm like, even

[00:49:06] **Sofia:** with just my name, like, uh, Sophia it's my, my brand website. Okay. So you can,

[00:49:13] **Heidi:** yeah. Okay. Sophia was on . Yeah. Okay. Perfect. Amazing. Thank you so much for joining me on the podcast.

It was really, really exciting to hear your story. And, um, I hope everybody out there listening, found it really inspiring. I'm sure that they will. Yeah,

[00:49:28] **Sofia:** I hope so. thank you so much for having me, like, I was super excited to meet you, Heidi. .

[00:49:36] **Heidi:** Thank you so much for listening to my conversation with Sophia and tuning into this episode of the successful fashion freelancer podcast.

If you liked what you heard, please subscribe and follow on YouTube or on apple podcast, wherever you were tuning in. And I would also like to give a big shout out and thank you to my two right hand people behind the scenes who make the show possible. That is my husband, mark, who does all the tech and the editing as well as my right [00:50:00] hand, kick ass unicorn of everything, Tara, um, just so much to make the show.

Full. So thank you so much. And again, thank you to you for watching the show would not be here if it were not for you. So I really appreciate your time. I hope you're having an awesome day, whatever it is you are doing. And again, if you want to get more information on becoming a fashion freelancer, you can grab all my best stuff for free my freelance success pack by heading over to so heidi.com/freelance, we will link that up below as well as you can check out all the.

On becoming a part of our freelance accelerator program. That is the program that Sophia is in. And that is what she used to kickstart her freelance career. If you need more guidance than what the free tutorials and templates offered to you, then I would love to have you inside a freelance accelerator.

You can check that out at so heidi.com/fast, F a St. And again, we'll link that up below. Um, and if you enjoy what you hear, then definitely give us a follow on, uh, apple podcast or subscribe here on YouTube, wherever you are listening. Thank you so much. And I'll talk to you the next [00:51:00] episode. Bye.