



6-FIGURE **D.E.S.I.G.N.** **BUSINESS** BLUEPRINT™

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE FOR BUILDING A PROFITABLE
FREELANCE WEB, BRANDING, AND GRAPHIC DESIGN BUSINESS



A 6-STEP ROADMAP TO TURN YOUR DESIGN
SKILLS INTO A 6-FIGURE BUSINESS

MAT CASNER
FREELANCE  CEO

Hi! My name is Mat.

Thank you for downloading *The 6-Figure D.E.S.I.G.N. Business Blueprint*.

I'm Mat Casner, and I started my freelance design business nearly 20 years ago.

I created this resource for you because I was lost and confused in the beginning. Truth be told, I did not know what I was doing. I learned as I went. This resource shares the best of what I've learned in 20 years which you can use as a guide to help you become the CEO of your own business.

In 2007, I started my design business while my wife managed a busy house full of 4 young children. (I know, not an ideal time to leave my full-time job to start a design business!)

I was ambitious and determined to succeed. But there was a lot riding on my efforts.

While I was able to find clients to keep us afloat, I was working long weeks and weekends. I longed for more freedom, but I was stuck?

I learned quickly and within my first couple of years, I cracked the 6-figure revenue mark, but I was still...

- Tired and burned out.
- Struggling to charge what I knew I was worth.
- Longing for freedom and more flexibility.

As the years rolled on, I didn't give up. Those years of struggle formed me into the designer, entrepreneur, and CEO I am today. Now, my life mission is to help others achieve their business dreams.

This is the beginning.

Whenever you're ready, here are 3 more ways I can help you grow a stress-free, profitable design business:

(1) Learn from my person business successes (and failures) with the Freelance CEO Podcast. [Listen Now](#).

(2) Join dozens other business-building enthusiasts in my free group, [Freelance CEO Community](#).

(3) Get access to my private coaching membership with monthly coaching calls, tips, strategies and support to grow your business faster inside the [IGNITE Business Accelerator](#) for only (\$57/mo).

To your success!



You have what it takes to:

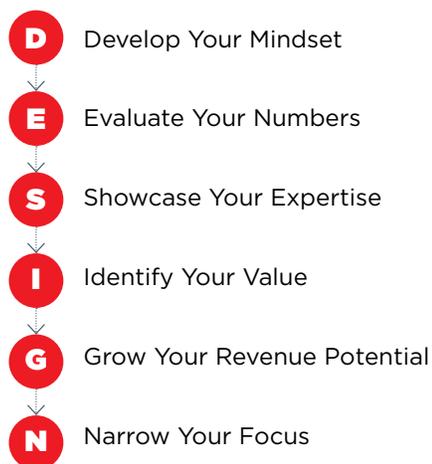
- Build a 6-figure design business without a team
- Pay off credit card debt
- Provide a full-time income for your family
- Spend less time working
- Spend more time on things that matter most to you
- Enjoy stable, long-term client relationships
- Provide longterm value to perfect-fit clients

Are You Ready To Scale Your Design Business To 6-Figures?

If you follow the D.E.S.I.G.N. Business Blueprint, you'll find the freedom and flexibility you've been looking for in your life and business. What would your life look like if you could:

- Make money by doing what you love?
- Only work with your ideal clients?
- Work where you wanted to work?
- Build a business for yourself?

How do I know that these 6 steps will help you reach 6 figures? These are the 6 steps that I followed that not only helped me reach a 6-figure design business but ultimately helped to fulfill my purpose of who I was created to be. More than anything, I want to help you discover your unique skills and gifts and use them to grow your business.





Develop Your Mindset

By shifting from a limited mindset to a growth mindset

Your professional growth is contingent on your personal growth. Strong, supportive beliefs regarding success and financial stability are essential for achieving the life you want. Unfortunately, many individuals have limiting, fear-based beliefs that stifle their progress and hinder their potential. Both conscious and unconscious limiting beliefs exist, impacting us and our businesses.

The first step towards growth is recognizing these beliefs and confronting them.

Have you said or thought of any of these statements?

- If I raise my prices, I'll scare away clients.
- I know people who are doing what I want to do.
- I feel bad charging a lot for my work.
- I'm not sure I'm good enough.
- The market is too saturated.
- I'm not sure I can support myself.
- There is so much competition.
- I'm afraid I don't know enough.
- I don't want to get sued.
- I know people doing this who are better than me.
- No one will buy from me.
- Making a lot of money makes me feel guilty.

Here's an amazing truth. Mindsets can change. Which means you can learn new, healthy mindsets. Your positive mindset will be your greatest tool for growing your business. Yes, business strategies are important, and you need them, but only a positive mindset will keep you moving forward and keep you from falling back into self-sabotaging habits.

MENTAL BLOCKS

- Overwhelm
- Lack of Clients
- Imposter Syndrome
- Self-Doubt
- Lack of Experience
- Fear of failure/rejection

TECHNOLOGY

- Too much to learn
- Tools/equipment expense

PRICING

- What should I charge?
- Charge too much/not enough
- Profitability
- What are my services worth?

GROWTH PHILOSOPHY

- Hobby
- Side-Hustle
- Full-Time
- CEO

Develop Your Mindset

Shift From a Negative to a Positive Mindset

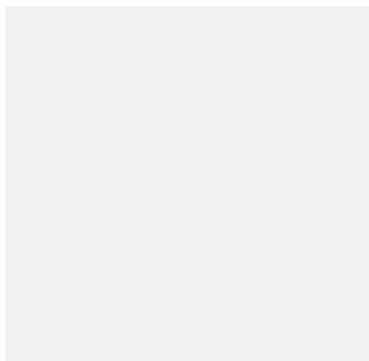
What mindset issues are you running into?

We may, or may not, fully understand the mindsets that are keeping us from moving forward. Good or bad, mindsets either enable us or prohibit us from reaching our goals. Since some are subconscious, here are some questions to help you get started are below.

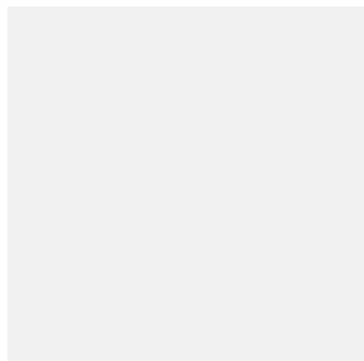
- Do you believe that you are worth more money for the work you do?
- Are your attitudes about money good or bad?
- Do you have a hard time describing what you do to others?
- Do you doubt that you can earn more without working more?
- Do you think charging a lot for your services is unfair or greedy?

Use these questions to discover the negative thinking that is holding you back. On the left side of the page, write a negative mindset that is block you from moving forward. On the left side of the page, write a positive mindset statement to combat it. By spending some time writing them down, you'll be able to confront your mindset head-on.

Negative



Positive





Evaluate Your Numbers

By knowing where you are and where you want to go

I get it, you're a designer, not an accountant.

Depositing checks is a thrill, but figuring out how to manage money can be a huge headache. If you don't acknowledge your finances, you'll be held back and won't be able to approach your business like a CEO. Once you change your mindset about money and growth, you'll realize that it's an essential part of being a successful business owner. After all, you are on your way to becoming the CEO of your business. And what CEO doesn't know their numbers?

This will be an essential step in building a profit in your pricing. Your business success depends on it.

Sales, then, become the lifeblood of your business, giving you what you need to scale, help more people, and have the finances to fuel the lifestyle that you want. By evaluating where you are with your finances, you'll have a clear idea of the goals you need to be setting. If sales freaks you out, it could be that you don't have a process set in place for your conversations. Once you figure out your system, you won't feel like a fish out of water.

One of the best things you can do to improve your sales skills is to surround yourself with other success-oriented people. These people are masters at managing objections and building trust with their prospects. And that's what sales is all about, a transfer of trust. Then, your job is to ensure your prospect that you can solve their problems and help them succeed.

Know Where You Are

Q: How much are you currently making?

YOUR NUMBERS

- Budget
- Expenses
- Owner Payment
- Profit
- Insurance
- Retirement
- Savings

METRICS TO MEASURE

- Lifetime Customer Value (LCV)
- Retention Rate
- Cost per lead
- Engagement methods

Evaluate Your Numbers

Q: How much would you like to make a year (with profit)?

Q: In order to reach that annual goal, how much would you need to make a quarter?

Q: In order to make that amount a quarter, how much do you need to make a month?

Know Where You Want Go

Q: How much would you need to charge per project to meet your monthly goal?

Q: How many clients or projects a year would you need to have to reach your annual goal?

Q: How do you feel about selling your services? If you don't like sales, why?

Q: What are some common objections you hear? How can you help answer that objection?

Q: What are you doing currently to increase your sales skills?



Showcase Your Expertise

By clarifying the problem you solve and the people you help

Your profitability and success lies in your specific and unique expertise. Understanding your unique expertise will help guide you to your perfect client. If you want more leads than you are getting, you need to get a laser focus on two things:

- The problems you solve
- The problems you can help

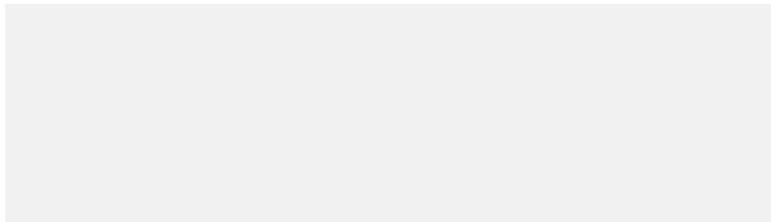
Unfortunately, you cannot help everyone and you will hurt yourself by trying. By far, the best thing I did in my business was niche and narrow my focus to web design, specifically WordPress.

Once my core expertise came into focus, my perceived value for my perfect client increased. There was a direct increase in both:

- New client referrals
- Winning proposals at higher price points

Now, I had many more skills than just web design. I simply incorporated these additional skills as upsells, cross-sells, and down-sells to my core expertise. It allowed me to keep a narrow focus on my main business while giving me an opportunity to provide an ever-growing menu of related and complimentary services to my clients.

Q: What are some different ways you can niche? If you are struggling with this, think about some of your favorite clients, and identify the common threads.



YOU THE EXPERT

- Your expert positioning statement
- Your Skills, Talents, Gifts
- Your Values
- Your Philosophy

MARKETING STAGES

- Attraction
- Conversation
- Retention

MARKETING TOOLS

- Website/Blog
- Social Media
- Email/Newsletters
- Video
- Search Engines
- Offline Media
- Grass roots

Showcase Your Expertise

Q: What is the one specific problem that you solve as it relates to your niche?

Q: How are the people that need this problem solved?



Identify Your Value

By utilizing Value-Based Pricing

“How much do I charge for my services?”

Now this is the million-dollar question, isn't it? With various perspectives out there, I will present the most common options, but point you to the one that will help you reach your 6-figure goal.

HOURLY BILLING

Hourly billing is where most of us start. The problem with this model is that there are only so many hours in the day to sell. It's a limited resource and therefore not possible to scale.

Hourly billing also:

- Punishes you for being efficient
- Positions you as an order taker
- Creates unknowns and sameness for clients—your service becomes a commodity

FLAT RATES

Flat rates or fixed fees are usually the next step for most designers. This is a step in the right direction. Usually, this price is based on an (internal hourly rate) X (amount of hours you think the project will take). You charge each client the same price.

While scaling is possible, it's difficult because you have to increase the time you spend and your volume output. This leads to being overworked and burned out.

So, what's the best answer?

VALUE-BASED PRICING

Value-Based Pricing is a pricing strategy where you price your services based on the value your deliverable brings to the client.

PRICING MODELS

- Time based
- Value based
- Fee Schedule
- Retainer

SIGNATURE PRODUCT

- Your Services
- Your Products
- Your Expertise

CLIENT RELATIONSHIP

- List Building
- Communication
- Onboarding
- Retention

Identify Your Value

While it's also a fixed fee, the difference is that the price is based on output instead of your input. The price has nothing to do with the amount of time you put into the project. It's a strategy that makes selling easier by presenting yourself as an investment rather than an expense. It also helps you focus on the right solutions for your client instead of the client prescribing the solution.

A designer focused on solving problems will produce better results and be able to charge higher rates. Pricing your services this way is not only a strategy but a mindset shift where you position yourself as the expert and a partner in business.

Determine Your VBP

In order to determine what you're going to charge, you need to stop asking questions like, "How long is this going to take me?" or "What is my hourly rate?" and start asking questions like:

- What does success look like to you?
- Why should I take this project?
- Is it better for me to leave it alone?
- What kind of value am I providing to my client?

VBP requires intentional listening to your potential client in order to understand and uncover the value to them. By understanding their "Why," you will understand the importance of their project. You can quote a price based on the value to the business' overall success.

If you aren't sure of this already, you as the designer make companies more successful by delivering results that increase the value of the business. You are worthy and deserving of being paid in proportion to the success that you help your client achieve.

IDEAL CLIENT

- Characteristics
- Where to find them
- How to reach them
- Business Problems
- Internal Struggles
- External Struggles

OPPORTUNITIES

- Short term opportunities
- Long term opportunities
- Referral opportunities
- Contract opportunities
- Retainer opportunities

Identify Your Value

Q: Summarize value-based pricing in your own words.

Q: How is it different than other pricing models?

Q: How can you more fully step into your expert role with clients?



Grow Your Revenue Potential

By offering passive and recurring income products

Diversifying and bringing some additional income can be a game changer in your business. Passive income takes upfront work (be prepared!) but can have amazing long-term (and possibly residual) results in your business.

Here are some of my favorites services that you can offer as a designer:

- Website Hosting
- Website Maintenance
- Productized services in your business
- Selling pdfs/digital templates
- Pre-made branding suites
- Website templates
- E-book or physical book
- Upcycle unused design concepts
- Font creation and sales
- Art licensing
- Print on Demand products
- Photoshop brushes/textures
- Affiliate sales
- Trainings/Courses
- Coaching
- Webinars

Q: What are some other revenue streams you want to create in your business?

Grow Your Revenue Potential

Q: What services do you do on a regular basis that could be repackaged into a monthly offer?

Q: How can you get started with passive income without creating something new?

Q: Map out a launch plan for your passive income product:



Narrow Your Focus

By buliding systems and outsourcing tasks

Time is your most valuable and limited resource as a designer. As your design business grows, there will be a point where wearing all the hats will leave you feeling drained, unproductive, and not in your genius zone. It will feel like you need to have your hands in everything. Don't fall for that trap! Here are two powerful and effective ways that will allow you to always work out of your genius zone while you scale.

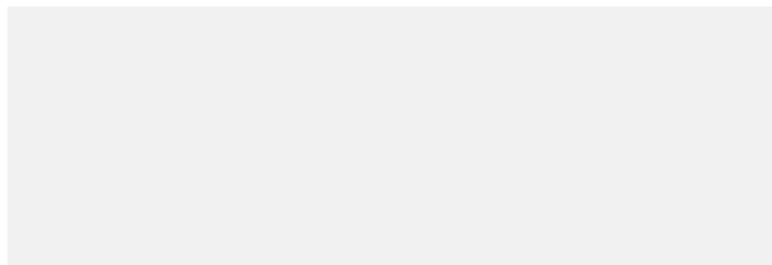
Create Systems & Processes

You can save hours per week and weeks per year by learning to create systems and automation in your business. You'll also reap the benefits of increase efficiency, fewer errors and less fatigue.

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Simply, identify a task (or series of tasks) that you do frequently and find a way to create a system or automation for them.

Q: What are some tasks you do repeatedly that could be wrapped up into a system or process?



Outsource Work to Others

Beginning to outsource in your business will free up your time to focus on revenue-generating activities or to invest in other areas in your life of high value and importance.

SYSTEMS & PROCESSES

- Marketing
- Communication
- Project Management
- Accounting

OUTSOURCING

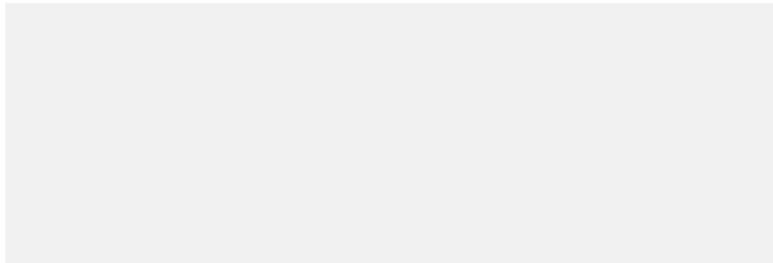
- Marketing
- Communication
- Project Management
- Accounting
- Copywriting
- Virtual Assistant

Narrow Your Focus

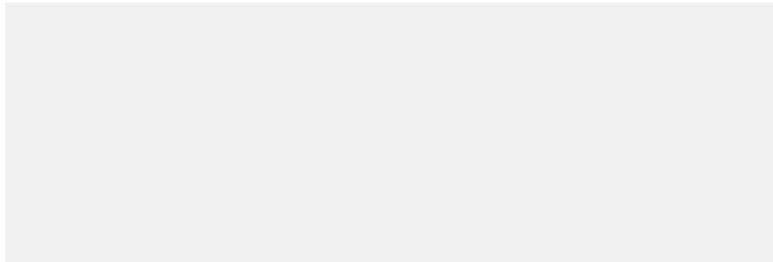
Consider outsourcing work to:

- Accountants
- Jr. Designers
- Developers
- Project Managers
- Virtual Assistants
- Copywriters

Q: What task within your weekly schedule is outside your genius zone and leaves you drained?



Q: Who could you hire to do tasks which would help you narrow your focus?



Recommended Books, Tools & Resources

Mindset & Strategy

- [STEP Into Purpose Framework](#)
- [Defeating Imposter Syndrome](#)

Finding Clients

- [Client Snowball Framework™](#)
- [Book Yourself Solid](#)
- [\\$1K in 3 Day Challenge](#)

Branding & Marketing

- [Mailerlite](#)
- [ConvertKit](#)
- [ActiveCampaign.com](#)
- [Metricool](#)
- [ThriveCart](#)

Pricing & Services

- [The Win Without Pitching Manifesto](#)
- [Value Based Pricing](#)

Finance & Legal

- [QuickBooks Online](#)
- [Legal Shield](#)
- [Wave](#)

Systems & Processes

- [TidyCal](#)
- [The E-Myth Revisited](#)
- [Dubsado](#)
- [Book Like A Boss](#)

Creative

- [Adobe Creative Cloud](#)
- [Canva.com](#)
- [Unsplash.com](#)
- [Pexels.com](#)
- [Mpix.com](#)

WordPress-eCommerce-Courses

- [Divi WordPress Page Designer](#)
- [WP Engine \(WordPress hosting\)](#)
- [SiteGround \(WordPress hosting\)](#)
- [Google.com/domains \(domains\)](#)
- [Searchie.io](#)
- [Kajabi](#)

Quit Flying Solo and Join Freelance CEO

It's easy to get lost in the details of your design business.

- Where do I find clients?
- What should I charge for my services?
- How do I write proposals and contracts?
- How much do I need to set aside for taxes?
- Do I need to form an LLC?
- How do I market myself and stand out?

What if you found not only a step-by-step guide that turned your design skills into a 6-figure business, but could grow within a network of like-minded designers?

When I started out as a freelancer, there was no blueprint to follow. That's why I founded Freelance CEO - a community of premiere designers who are committed to their unique craft, serving their clients, and creating a 6-figure income.

What makes Freelance CEO unique is that it follows the 6-Pillar Business Framework.



This blueprint, alongside the Freelance CEO community is your roadmap to building the design business you've been dreaming of.

Are you ready to connect with others in your freelancing journey?
Are you ready to find the direction to a profitable future?
Are you ready to navigate all the details with confidence?

[JOIN THE FREELANCE CEO COMMUNITY](#)

Meet Mat Casner



JOIN THE FREELANCE CEO
COMMUNITY

CONGRATULATIONS!

You now have complete access to my blueprint that can help guide you toward 6-figures in your own business.

Where do you go from here? Unlike my rocky, loney start as a business owner, you have some fantastic choices available to you.

You can continue to struggle and learn how to build a profitable and sustainable business the hard way, or you can leverage the knowledge and wisdom of a trusted guide to help you make faster progress in your business.

I have created a variety of resources and help for you at every level.

When you're ready, here are 3 simple ways I can help you grow your stress-free, profitable business:

(1) Learn from my person business successes (and failures) with the Freelance CEO Podcast. [Listen Now](#).

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- Branding & Marketing
- Finding Clients
- Legal & Accounting
- Branding & Marketing
- Pricing & Services
- Mindset & Strategy
- Systems & Processes