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Start networking if you want your first steps to succeed



James Caan

Dear James.

I've been in B2C and B2B marketing for seven years now and I'd like to slowly build up a freelance copywriting business. I'm qualified with right degrees and diplomas and know the marketing techniques but what advice would you give me considering I've never run or built my own business before?

Riz

You're in a competitive area and you will need some true grit to start generating and sustaining your income. But if you take it slowly you can build momentum at a manageable pace. If you want to get up and running quickly, you can set up as a sole trader. It keeps paperwork to a minimum. The downside is you would be liable for any debts your company incurs.

If you grow the business then you can set up a limited company later on, but either way you need register for VAT if you expect turnover to exceed £73,000 in a 12-month period. No matter how small your business, you should write a plan as to how you are going to start and move the business forward. In your line of business the key to building your client base from scratch is tapping into your network. Go out there and make a name for yourself. Be bold and approach people you used to work with. Get on LinkedIn and announce what you are doing and that you're looking for business.

You need to be assertive. When it comes to payment, clients will try to wriggle out of it.