

Speaker 1: [00:00](#) My name is Elise Swopes and if you do not know who I am, I am a photographer, graphic designer, social media influencers, specializing in brand partnerships on Instagram. I've got about 250,000 followers and here I am making a podcast about personal stuff and business stuff and the day we're going to get into a ton of really awesome business stuff and it's basically going to be about how to really start your business from completely scratch. I'm literally having no nothing, no money, whatever. And then the next step is to becoming a freelancer when you start getting money and how to keep your money and how to make sure that you're safe as an artist and as a brand.

Speaker 1: [01:00](#) And then after that, how to negotiate for more money and had to make sure that you know your worth because that can be really difficult to navigate. And honestly, it's probably going to be a process no matter what you do because it's always on a case by case basis. And you can't necessarily always say, this is exactly what I'm gonna do because you never know what you're going through. So, um, how to start a business when you have absolutely nothing. First and foremost, I have to remind you, never give up. Um, this is something that you need to hold tight on and hold to because, um, there's going to be situations that are going to test you that are going to try you and it's going to tell you to your face that you are not ready and that you don't have what it takes.

Speaker 1: [01:58](#) Because honestly, you probably don't at this moment. And that is completely fine because what it takes is failure and lessons in the only way that you will be able to have that kind of situation is by having the tenacity in the idea in your head that you will not give up no matter what. Okay? So never give up no matter what. No matter what nose or in your face, no matter what is in your way. Never give up. And always, always, always, always follow through. Okay. So first key on starting a business. All right. So also think about the things that you need. What are some things that you need in your business? Do you need a studio? Do you need an office space? Um, and for a lot of these things, I think we all overthink these spaces. Mean honestly these days I'm looking through Pinterest and I am looking through Instagram and Twitter and I'm seeing people create studio spaces from going to hobby lobby and Michael's and just going in the aisle and taking a photograph, um, with their heads and these fake flowers.

Speaker 1: [03:17](#) You know, and I, for me, that is where I began with my creations was really starting from the bottom up where I didn't have a computer, I didn't have a nice camera. All I had was an iPhone four and I hardly ever had any really great programs any of most

of my life. Um, cause they were all really expensive. I've got most of them on limewire or like you know, those, those torrent sites. So, um, coming from a place of understanding the things that you do need, you don't necessarily need things that you think you do. Um, start small, start smart more importantly and do research for yourself. You need an office space. Start in the small corner of your room. If you need a studio space, I, some colored paper or something and tape it to the wall and you've got to, uh, set up, you know, we've got the tons of different apps for our phone these days where you can literally create eight a phone tripod for yourself in a studio and set your, your phone on it and do a timer and shoot yourself.

Speaker 1: [04:24](#) And you've got a self portrait and entire studio set up in your, in your apartment. I mean, be creative and be smart about the things that you need because you, you do not need the crazy things that you think you do. Um, and then also think of, um, really benefiting from social media, having a social media for who you are, for what you do. Do you want yourself to be an enigma? Do you want to be yourself? Do you want to be a business where in the future you know that there's going to be more people under you? You know, there's just a lot of avenues to go under depending on who you want to be and make sure that you're sharing that with people. Um, the biggest thing that we have these days is social media and also it will never necessarily top word of mouth because people will always be sharing your work more than anything through friendships and family and just and showing other people, um, your work.

Speaker 1: [05:25](#) But I think the biggest thing is making sure that people have something to share. Our business cards these days are our Instagrams, our twitters are, these are our websites, you know, so make sure that you have these things already available for people to show other people. So, um, also if you are really low on money, think about a lot of the things that you can sell. What can you sell that you don't need? Um, what do you have? What do you already have that you can use, um, to your advantage? You don't necessarily need anything new to get anything done, do the research. And then also you don't necessarily need to have a ton of money to have a website. There's tons of free websites, um, where you can create your own website. And, and this is where you can show everybody what you do. Make sure you have a website.

Speaker 1: [06:25](#) Websites are so useful. People, I get so much traffic on my website all the time. Um, so you don't need, you don't need to spend a ton of money on websites. And then also, you know, budget. Well, there's tons of different apps like mint that will

tell you. And I know it's kind of hurtful. It'll see them sometimes and tell you that you're spending too much wherever you're spending too much, but listen to it. If you want your life to be better and you want to be happier, listen to it. It's really that simple. Um, and then stop spending so much and then also have some odd jobs here and there. I mean this is, these are all the things that I did when I started my business, when I had literally nothing. Um, so just do as much as you can to make sure that you're not spending a lot.

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Save, save, invest in yourself. And then also consider a loan. Maybe consider borrowing if, if that is possible for you. Some people you don't have that, that opportunity. Um, there's sites called Nav, there's also Credit Karma, um, where you can literally sign into these things and they will tell you like credit cards that you can get based on like your, your credit score. They will tell you, oh, also like loans that you can get, what percentage? Like maybe you can, you know, there's, there's a 99% chance that you'll get the loan that you apply for. Um, so these certain things I think are really, really helpful because when, when you, if you are in a position where you are, maybe I'm stuck and you just really feel like there's no way out and you just keep going in circles. You know what I'm saying? Check to check to check news feel like, what am I doing?

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I need more money. I need something. I need something to start my dream. I need a bigger, you know, I just need anything to fix what I'm going through. Right? Loans are not as scary as we as we think they are. But I think what's scary is that we, when we, what we use loans for was for all the wrong reasons was for going to school and maybe this for me and not necessarily everybody else was for going to school for the thing that wasn't going to really do anything for me. So, um, also consider trading services with a lot of your friends, people that you know, um, you know, share what you can do and share and teach yourself. Most importantly, always be teaching yourself new things. We have the Internet where you can teach yourself anything that you need to know. Google everything, youtube, everything.

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So you're a freelancer. Now you've got a website, you've got something that people are looking for, right? You've, you're selling things, um, in real life and um, you're interested in maybe really setting yourself up for, um, comfortability so that you don't need a new worries in the long run. So here are a few things I think as a freelancer that you should be doing and looking out for. And also considering. So one, I talked about having a free website earlier. Wonderful. Have a website, make

sure you have a website, um, and within this website make sure you have a facts page. And in this facts page, these are all like the facts about your website. Um, and these are basic things. I think that every website needs to look off Vishal, and you can easily do this. Google, um, basic facts page, basic privacy statement, basic return policy, basic terms, okay.

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And these things, you can easily copy all of them and then replace the basic language within those things. And sometimes they'll even have like a generator, like I'm a facts page generator or a privacy statement generator or a return policy generator or a terms generator, right? And then you can enter your brand name, your name or your business name or whatever the case may be, and it'll replace all the words in their necessary. And then you can use those words on your website. And then when people go to your website to buy or to look at your items or whatever the case may be, you feel protected. But they also feel like your website is extremely legit. So make sure you have these types of languages and these things so that people are looking at your, your website and feeling like they can trust what's going on.

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Cause I mean, it's great to have, you know, um, an Etsy page and stuff like that. But make sure people, when they're searching and they, they feel like you're authentic and realistic. Um, also contracts, contracts. People are always asking me about contracts. Contracts are extremely important. I've been telling people, if someone is telling you specifically that they do not want anything in writing, they don't want to email. They don't want a text about it, they don't want to write about it and nothing like that. I'd be worried. Make sure that you have whatever that you're communicating on the phone, um, in person, whatever the case may be, make sure that you have it in writing and that there is a list of these things. Okay, so we've got a scope of work. What are they needing from you? What are they asking from you? What are you doing for this job?

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Right? Have specifics, exactly what everyone thinks that everybody is doing, right? And then also have the timeframe, have the timeframe of this project. What, when are you, um, when are you beginning it, when are you ending it? You know, and then also most importantly, have a due date. Have a collected due dates so everyone knows when everyone is on the same page. Because if there's a timeline within this time frame, then everyone knows that the, that maybe the concepts will be due on this day and then, and then those concepts will be produced on this day. And then those concepts will be edited and whatever, whatnot. And then shared to the client on this

day. And then that next day you'll share it or it'll be out in the public or whatever, you know. So these are, these are the steps, but you'll have to need these dates for creating and conceptualizing and, you know, also considering your form of payment.

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Um, and that brings me into the payment terms where you're also thinking, um, is there a net 10, is there a net 15, is there a net 30? Is there a net 60? Is there a net 75? Is there a net 62? You know what I'm saying? Like, there's so many different nets. Um, and if you don't know what a net is, and it might sound silly at this point, but what a net is, is that it's the amount of days it's going to take to process your invoice so that you get paid. And some different agencies and some different companies, they all have completely different terms, but sometimes you can fight it and sometimes you can't. And it doesn't necessarily even mean that you might even get paid in the, in that amount of time. And, um, it just really depends on the people that you're working with.

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And sometimes people know what they're doing and sometimes people have absolutely no idea what they're doing. So also in this contract, consider the ownership of the content and what you're creating. Think about who's going to be using this content from and from what time are they going to be using it on their own channels? Are you going to be posting it? Are they going to be printing it or are they going to be sharing it on like, like where, where is this content going? And then for how long are they using it? Are they going to be using it for five years or they may be using it for a year. I they me using it for one month. You can decide every single one of these things in terms of ownership. Um, do they have rights for this photo or video or whatever you're creating or piece of art forever you can say.

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And then also think about this. Think about how many edits, how many changes, how many things they can request based on the, the things that they've given you. People aren't necessarily always going to share, um, enough information that you feel like you know, what they expect. But what I would suggest is always asking people what made them ask you to do this project? Basically I would, that's what I always ask because my style is so broad and people genuinely are searching for a type of style. So make sure that you are considering asking people exactly why they asked you. So I'm also in this contract, like I said, write down how many edits they're allowed, how many changes. And then also after that, consider the concept of termination. How and whom and what can get fired for what termination can be considered on both sides.

Speaker 1: [15:54](#) They don't necessarily always have the right to fire you. You can fire them if they breach. Maybe they've shared your idea to someone that you didn't want them to or maybe, you know, they've used it on their channel when they weren't supposed to and you've seen it and you can, you know, ask for more money in you in this termination. You can say they have to pay you a hundred, hundred 50% of, um, that payment or something because they've, you know, haven't followed by the contract. This is fit. I mean, but this is the problem is that contracts are great, but you can't make anybody do anything, you know. So, um, also within contracts, sometimes there could be some language about legal stuff. Um, like health insurance. Like do you have, um, photographers insurance? Do you have, um, worker's insurance or something like say it depends on the agency and what's going on, but always, always make sure that you're looking through all these topics.

Speaker 1: [16:57](#) You guys, because someone could really take advantage of you and also make sure that you're organizing yourself within these topics. Each thing I listed will assist you and understanding how important this project is. Um, you really have to consider how much time you're going to spend, what they're expecting, how much ownership they have, what's the length that they're using. Make sure that also, I even almost forgot this, think about too, are they asking you to say no for a certain amount of time to someone else? Do they want to do to sign something where you are exclusive, someone has to pay you to say no the next time you get an offer for something. Say for instance, and this is just an, someone has hit you up for an Adidas project, right? And you know that you've been working with Nike but Nike pays you decently.

Speaker 1: [17:58](#) But you know, Adidas might pay you more but they have to pay you more because you know, Nike might come next time so they know that and you know that. So make sure that you're deciding on those concepts. Okay. So people have asked me also like, what do you do if someone steals your content? Like if it's on Instagram, it's, it's long gone. Like, that's done. That's, that's just what it's going to be. Um, I mean you can ask them nicely. I would honestly, that's the first step to all of this stuff is ask, make sure you reach out to someone before you make a big deal about it. Don't post about it and be like, this person stole my stuff without like communicating to them first because that's just ridiculous. And that's just self centered and that's just nonsense and drama. Like make sure you're communicating with whoever has used your photo or taking it because there's more than likely, there's probably a miscommunication.

Speaker 1: [18:52](#) And through communication you can literally solve absolutely anything. And then also if it comes down to it, if someone is genuinely like stolen your stuff and you're like, Whoa, whoa, Whoa, Whoa, calm, calm, calm down. And they're not like, Nah, I'm straight. I'm good at this. My stuff right. You can do, and you can fill out this thing called a d m c a it's, it's short term for digital Millennium Copyright Act. Okay. And this you can find on the Internet anywhere. Just look it up. Digital Millennium Copyright Act. You can look it up and then what you can do is send it to whoever is hosting this content. Whoever is sharing this content, whoever is whatever this contact, send it to them and they will have to take it down legally. They have to take it down legally. Um, and if they don't, if they're not afraid of like a piece of paper, you're going to have to go for a lawsuit.

Speaker 1: [19:50](#) So if you're really down for it, if it really damned for it, but you know, more than that, I've never dealt with anything crazy, nothing. I've never dealt with that. Anything. Absolutely ridiculous. So just, just be aware of that. And then also, so I talked about taxes in my last podcast. Um, but in case anyone's listening, again for this new reason, um, for taxes, if you do not have an LLC or a food, you do not have a separate business from your name and your taxes and you have your, a freelancer, you are going to be charged the same taxes and you are going to have to file the same stuff you do for your personal, um, whatever you do. So I'm just, and then there's also a lot of really great cuts that you can have if you follow yourself in LLC. Granted, um, you know, it's, it'll cost you a little bit.

Speaker 1: [20:49](#) It's really not that expensive. A couple of hundred bucks to invest. You can go on websites like legal zoom, you can like do local lawyers, ask around for friends and family. People will want to assist you and help you in creating an LLC or something for your business so that you will pay less taxes and you'll be able to write off stuff for your business because you don't want to keep having to, to not write off stuff for yourself. So, um, think about, uh, you're going to be getting these 10 90 nines and the 10 99 at the end of the year in April or so. And right now I'm getting all of them in February and January and you get these 10 99 [inaudible] and then you'll have to have, um, a tax expert or somebody figured out for you. But I promise it's at, so Lee worth it. Don't be afraid of taxes. They're really not that much. Everybody hypes it up, but I really genuinely like it's not that crazy.

Speaker 1: [21:48](#) So let's get into negotiating, cause I like to keep this at like a little, maybe 30 minutes or less. I used to like get it 45 minutes, but I think I've appreciated it in a small amount because I don't

necessarily think that you have to push content. Like you don't have to like push it to the extreme. Like you can be chill about it and still talk about everything you need to. So let's, let's talk about the concept of negotiating. Negotiating for me, ha ha was definitely a difficult concept to grasp because negotiating for everybody I think is a learning process. You're never going to be perfectly perfect at it or perfectly perfect. Ha. Um, and you're never going to feel like you're like, yeah, this is what I deserve. Until you know what you deserve because you're busy as shit and everybody's asking me for the same thing.

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And you have asked for that once and you saw somebody say yes really quick and you were like, Whoa, Whoa, whoa. I'm going to ask that really quick the next time. That's how it's done. So conceptually negotiating is you have to first of all be okay with walking away. First being B. You have to know this off the bat. You have to be okay with walking away, but initially before you have to decide to walk away, you have to know what you deserve, right? So from there, how do you figure out what you deserve? Well, don't go on the Internet on, on, we'll go on the internet. Yes, because this is one I tell you after this, but don't go on Twitter where people are selling their soul for a dime because those people are desperate. Make sure that you're keeping yourself in a high standard because you know that you deserve the best.

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But also look up what people are getting for what you do because it's not necessarily at this point in your career. And this is a little bit higher up at this point because we've kind of leveled up in my conversation. We've started at the low point, starting at like very start business, right? And then we got to the second point where, you know, you're figuring out, um, how am I a freelancer? How I'm, you know, but now at this point, you're a full blown freelance and you're figuring out, you're negotiating, right? You're like Goshen with big brands and you're trying to see what's good, right? So make sure that you know what people in your field are getting, okay? And by that you need to be doing research on the Internet, but you also need to be pushing the limit on what I mean by pushing the limit is seeing how far you can go by asking somebody something.

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Because sometimes I notice is that people will say, you know, here's offer. Don't jump too quick if you think it's good or if it's great, or even if it's bad, just don't jump too quick. Okay? So this is my thing. Second, second concept. Be Quiet. Don't sell yourself too much. If someone's coming to you already, that means they want you, right? That means they need what you

have. So don't sell yourself. Don't oversell yourself. Hesitate silence. We'll do a lot to a situation if you hesitate and give it a little breather room and have people thinking in their head and they're, the concept concept of thinking is in the mind is it's a problem solver, right? So when you give people too much time to think they're problem solving, what's the issue? What's happening? Are they not, you know, what's, are there? Is this not good as are they not ready?

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Right? So give people quiet space of hesitation to think over what you want them to do in this. Could be on a phone call at this can be an person. Don't speak too quick and don't sell yourself too much. Um, but also communicate well with that being said, if you're at a crossroads where you don't feel like there's like you're getting anywhere, right? You're just like, ah, like you want to do this project, then you need to ask them for help. Ask them, you know, like, what can we do? What, you know, helped me out. What do you have backstage? What's happening on your side? Get personnel, get with them, get understanding and cooperate. It's okay to cooperate. Negotiations in the moment have to get and understanding of what's happening. So ask for help, help me out. Here is a good thing, you know, help me out here man.

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You know, what can we work on? What's, you know, let's, let's do something. Um, and then also, this is the, this is very important. This is extremely important. You guys don't become too emotionally invested in the situation by yourself. You're going to get tired, you're going to get wiped out. These people are going to try to play you because they're gonna pull you to a long conversation along a long road of you fighting for what you deserve and you're going to get tired and be like, ah, forget it. I'm just gonna do it. You know? Have somebody else come in and swoop in when you feel like you are just like at a point where you're just like, oh, they're just not budging. There's not going to do anything for me. Right? You need to come to a point where you're going to say, okay, Somebody gonna somebody else is going to compensate for me.

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I don't know who that's going to be at an a, we're going to do about that, but you need to figure it out. So don't become too emotionally invested by yourself because you're going to get tired and you're going to feel like you are going to give up. And then also, uh, flip the question of someone's asking you like, you know, what can you offer us? You'd be like, well, can you offer me, you know what I'm saying? Like what are you, what do you do that? And then also if they were just like, do you have any questions? And you'll just be like, what do people normally

ask you? I like asking those things. I think it kind of just changes the dynamic a little bit. Um, so that you're not the one acting like you're being questioned and puts you in a place of power.

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And then also too don't negotiate within also like getting stipulations. Like I think a lot of people will be like, oh, I have to create a, uh, uh, something to prove to them that I should, uh, deserve this amount of money. Like, if someone's like, can you show me that you have a clip of this that we need? No, because in that point in time, you're basically working for them. If they're coming to you, they are the, they already know what you're doing. If they're coming to you, they already know that you do what you do. So don't waste your time trying to prove to people that they have to pay you. They need you. Okay? Um, but within all of this negotiating, I would really like to point out that each situation is very unique. Treat every that you're in with delicacy and understanding delicacy would treat it all delicately.

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The, the, okay, I'm done. Treat it all like it's very delicate and be kind to people. Be Understanding and be a parent almost in the negotiation concept. Uh, play both sides. Don't be too hard and don't be too soft. You know, be loving and be gracious and be good to yourself. Don't, uh, block yourself from an opportunity where you could say that it happened and you can gain experience because you're too big headed and saying that you deserve more. Um, I have had situations, plenty, plenty where I did not get paid the thing that I, that I wanted, and I negotiated as much as I could throughout all of these steps and it just, it didn't work out. So sometimes you really just have to feel out the situation and, and play it by ear and see how it works for you. So I hope these tips helped you guys and thank you so much for listening. Again, I always appreciate all of you for always sharing how much you love the podcast and I just can't wait to do the next one. And, uh, I hope you have a wonderful, Wonderful Valentine's Day and if that ain't for you, screw it because it's just a damn manmade holiday and ain't nobody trying to do, and it man, manmade stuff. All right, you guys take care.