

# The Elite Freelancing Method

---

KILLER STRATEGIES FOR FREELANCE WEB DESIGNERS\

**FREE SAMPLE CHAPTER**

By Daniel Vivarelli

[www.EliteFreelancing.com](http://www.EliteFreelancing.com)

## Chapter 2: Create a Killer Portfolio



*Featured trademarks are copyright of their respective owners.*

No one will care all that much if you've developed a website for Gertrude's Homemade Candles or designed banners for Joe's Landscaping. What's more impressive is if you've created work for Ford, Motorola, Sprint, Burger King, and so on.

Client's are like moths to a flame when it comes to portfolios. As a freelance designer, you compete in an industry where a picture is worth a helluva lot more than a thousand words.

The first key in the Elite Freelancing Method is this:

**Key 1: Make sure your portfolio is nothing short of killer.  
And if it isn't, buff it up using brand studies.**

Now, if you have a lot of good quality work to populate your portfolio, you're off to a great start. If you don't, here's what you can do to buff up your 'folio and create yourself a client magnet.

## USE BRAND STUDIES TO ATTRACT ATTENTION

Artists use the term "study" when they explore different subjects and techniques. For example, a painter might use a photograph of a forest and practice their skills by painting a work entitled "Study of Pine Trees."

The Elite Freelancer uses a similar technique. Use brand studies to practice your craft and get people interested in your portfolio. Here's how:

1. **Pick a handful of multinational brands** to use as studies, such as Nike, American Airlines, Dell, Coca-cola, etc. These are simply suggestions; pick whichever high profile brands you like.
2. **Next up, select one of your chosen brands** and draft yourself a creative brief for your study. The brief can be anything you want. Here are some examples to get you thinking:  
  
"Magazine Ad for Adidas DLX Running Shoe"  
"Web Banner Campaign for Dell Winter Laptop Promotion"  
"Email Newsletter Design for Coca-Cola 'My Coke Rewards' Give-away"
3. **Execute the brief.** Go ahead and create the work! You want a finished piece worthy of your portfolio.
4. **Add the new brand study to your portfolio** with a caption, like "Study of Web Banner Ad Campaign for Dell Winter Laptop Promotion," or whatever is relevant to your piece. Remember to place the mandatory, "All trademarks are copyright of their respective owners" somewhere relevant.
5. **Enjoy the benefits** of practicing your craft and slipstreaming behind all kinds of powerful brand names.

## WHY BRAND STUDIES ROCK

Here's why brand studies are awesome:

- **Brand Awareness:** Multinational brands have spent billions of dollars in advertising their company's names. We all associate immediately with these brands, including your potential clients.
- **Social Proof:** Having these items in your portfolio not only showcases your style and skill, it significantly reduces concerns that new clients might have about hiring you.
- **Ahead of the Pack:** While your competitors are showing 'folios full of work for unknown clients, your portfolio is buffed by the presence of legendary brands.
- **Practicing Ups Your Game:** Yup, practice makes perfect, and in creating these studies, you've improved your skill set that much more.

By marking each of these new portfolio items as a "study," you are clearly stating your intent for each piece. On the plus side, many potential customers will simply assume you created the work for the client.

Not a single client ever questioned me about my studies of Pepsi, Mobil, Honda and Levis, yet each of these studies helped me land more and more work for many years. If anyone would have bothered to inquire about them, I would have responded that the study items are a product of me exploring and practicing my craft, like artists and designers do the world over.

## KEEP YOUR PORTFOLIO SIMPLE & ACCESSIBLE

Assume your potential clients are busy people and execute the design of your portfolio accordingly by making it

1. Fast loading
2. Super easy to access and browse
3. Easy to reference in conversation

Potential clients come to your site for two primary reasons: 1) Check out your work and 2) Make contact with you if they dig your stuff.

Consider using your home page as your portfolio to make it that much faster for them to screen you. Many designers use this technique. It's a smart strategy because it lets visitors to your site accomplish what they came to do, faster.

Remember, keep things clean and simple; and for now, forget about writing persuasive marketing copy for your business. Instead, focus on executing a killer 'folio that shows rather tells people what you are capable of doing.

OK, so your website and portfolio are in place. Now it's time to start expanding your client base.

## Section Summary

---

- ✓ Get a killer portfolio online
- ✓ Make your portfolio the focus of your website
- ✓ Use Brand Studies to buff up your 'folio and generate customer confidence

**This is a free sample chapter from the Elite Freelancing Method.**

Get the full version of The Elite Freelancing Method at  
[www.EliteFreelancing.com](http://www.EliteFreelancing.com).