

# 5 Ingredients for self-employment success (+1)

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The recipe for success as a self-employed individual is simple. Whether you want to be a freelance writer, freelance photographer, web designer, consultant, or something else, the foundation starts with these 5 ingredients:



1. **Talent – the secret ingredient**
2. **Drive (motive) – the yeast**
3. **Ambition (desire) – mix well**
4. **Opportunity – put the bun in the oven**
5. **Time – cook time**

**Bonus (#6) – Tools – use the resources available to you**

**Talent** is the most fundamental ingredient of all – it's the secret ingredient. Your talent is what makes you unique, and should be the one thing you exploit for the sake of making a living. If you are using your talents, a sense of fulfillment and satisfaction will come to follow with each and every day. In my case, I have talents in the creative and scientific realms so I look to combine (and balance) these in unique ways to serve my clients. If you love photography and are good at it, then photography may be your calling.

***Don't try to do something that doesn't come naturally to you – you'll end up dissatisfied.***

**Drive** is the ingredient that makes the magic happen. It's like the yeast in bread dough. Without drive, passion, and motivation to succeed you'll end up fizzling out and easily distracted by other opportunities. You'll probably wonder what happened to that great idea you had, and maybe even give it another try, but if you lack the drive to make things happen, they simply won't. Drive is arguably as important as talent.

**Ambition** is what you need to try new things; to push the limits of your own talents. Ambition leads to innovation and it's fueled by a desire to progress. I've often said, if you don't have the desire to learn, you'll never learn anything. Ambition and desire are powerful forces that will propel you in the right direction.

**Opportunity** – be an opportunist! If you have the drive and ambition, you'll easily spot opportunities when they come along. But you also have to actively seek new opportunities. Often, the best opportunities come in the least expected places. Perhaps a family friend, past colleague, or random stranger may mention something that lets you know they may be interested in your services. Don't be afraid to seize the opportunity with a friendly and professional gesture, such as handing them your business card and letting them know you can help. Always carry business cards with you and be prepared to post them on the community board at your grocery store and library, hand them out to your friends and family, and keep some in your wallet for random encounters.

**Time** is important because you must realize nothing happens overnight. This is your cook time. Give yourself at least 6 months, maybe longer, to evaluate your progress and potential success in the future. Put yourself out there – create a website, start networking, let people know you are available – and wait. It can take people a long time to finally come around and ask for your help. In the meantime, be patient and work on developing a business plan and daily routine that works for you.

**Tools** – The bonus ingredient may be more of a necessity for some folks than others. In most cases, if you are marketing your talent you already have the tools on hand to perform the skill. Use what resources you have available to you in the beginning. When the money starts flowing, you can invest in new, upgraded tools. For me, I had a computer, internet connection, and a word processing program. That's all I needed to be a freelance writer. My brain is my most valuable tool (okay, maybe my hands too!). If you're into photography, you probably already have a nice camera. Many business experts will say do not expect to earn a profit until you're business is 3-4 years old. If you start a business with the resources already available to you, the start-up costs are drastically less and you can earn a profit immediately because there's no investment! How smart is that?!