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FASHIONSUPPORTSUCCESS

**3 ESSENTIAL  
INGREDIENTS TO  
BECOMING A SUCCESSFUL  
FREELANCER**

**IN ASSOCIATION WITH**

**DR. BOBBY HOFFMAN/AUTHOR OF  
"HACK YOUR MOTIVATION"**

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## What are the three essential ingredients to becoming a successful freelancer?

Without these traits you will struggle.

by Dr. Bobby Hoffman/Author of "[Hack Your Motivation](#)"

Let's face it, not everyone is cut out to work independently. Some of us need the structure, routine, and predictability of a regular gig. Individuals who devote their day-to-efforts toiling in traditional 9-5 employee-employer jobs often thrive in stable working conditions. They prefer receiving direction from a leader, getting support and comradery from co-workers, and the presumed security of a regular paycheck.

Others wouldn't consider working for a traditional company because they prefer control of their destiny, loathe bosses, enjoy job flexibility, like diverse responsibilities and crave the ability to switch gears at a moment's notice. Which lifestyle works best for *you* depends on your motives, combined with certain traits, dispositions, and essential qualities you bring to the career table. One lifestyle is not necessarily better than another, but just as you should be compatible with your partner or your mate, surely you want to make career choices that align with your talents and leverage your strengths.

So how do you know if you will prosper as an independent? Let's start by calculating if you are in the right ballpark. Look at the two lists of traits, qualities, and descriptions below. Score yourself one point for every attribute on the list that describes you. Give yourself another point if most people who know you well would also describe you using the same term. This means for every word on the list you will score yourself zero, one, or two points. When you finish the ratings, add the total for each column and see where you stand on the freelance continuum of skills, traits, and dispositions.

Column A

Column B

Quality/Trait	Self-Rating	Friend/ Family Rating	Quality/Trait	Self-Rating	Friend/ Family Rating
Creative			Structured		
Progressive			Conservative		
Dramatic			Logical		
Flexible			Level-headed		
Spontaneous			Predictable		
Adventurous			Shy		
Eccentric			Conventional		
Impulsive			Cautious		
Extroverted			Introverted		
Entrepreneurial			Industrious		
Seeks attention			Blends in		
Resourceful			Capable		
Visionary			Practical		
<b>Total</b>			<b>Total</b>		

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If your totals for Column B exceed the totals for Column A, then get out the newspaper or start reviewing the job postings on your favorite job site to find yourself a traditional job. However, if you scored higher in the list of Column A attributes, you have the foundation for a career working independently and should keep on reading to see if you have the three key ingredients to thrive in the unpredictable world of independent consulting.

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### **What makes you feel valued?**

Each of us have things that make us feel valued and important. Value is self-determined; it is based on a combination of self-perception and how we think we are seen and judged by others. When we assess our values, we look at our dominant attributes - the qualities that define us as individuals - otherwise known as how we assess our personal "*competence*." Many different qualities can

Competence does not mean what skills you have, or what you think you do well. Instead we define competence as the qualities we believe are important for success (regardless of how you personally define success). For some, competence *may* mean being highly knowledgeable in a certain field, but for others the extent of work-related knowledge may take a back seat to qualities such as honesty, friendliness, empathy, or creativity.

We all need to feel competent in one way or another. Getting that feeling is a primary motivation; when we feel competent, we are energized by our assessments of our values and abilities. To feel competent, we must believe that we have what it takes to be successful. It's no secret that to be successful as an entrepreneur or consultant you need to tolerate ambiguity, take risks, be a jack-of-all trades, work long hours, and most of all, endure frustration. If your definition of competence is different than what I just described, you might be better off in more traditional roles where

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### **A diminished need for comradery**

The definition of competence for many people has a social component. Each one of us, whether we admit it or not, considers social success at least a part of their overall self-evaluation. For some people (like my daughter Rebecca), success in life and feeling valued is all about having friends and socializing. In other words, the ability to forge relationships, connect with others, and be part of a group are important needs for Rebecca to satisfy—so she chose a career in event management—constantly socializing with prospective clients and customers.

It's no surprise that working freelance means enduring solitude and even loneliness. One of the most basic needs for humans is the need for affiliation - otherwise known as having close contact with similar others. Thus, the ability to work alone takes a special breed of individual—someone who doesn't mind that there may be a lack of fulfillment of social needs due to the reduced contact with other people. The independent entrepreneur often will contemplate the challenge of becoming successful in isolation, a situation that can be anxiety provoking and highly stressful for the unprepared or naive individual.

Considering the prospect of social isolation, a freelancer should also have less of a need for feedback and validation from others. Much of personal success becomes a subjective evaluation because unlike traditional work environments, you are your own boss and co-worker. You may not receive criticism, but you will also likely experience a positive feedback gap. No one will tell you how you can be better or what strategies you might have used to achieve a more favorable outcome.

## **An independent and autonomous obsession**

The third key attribute for independent success is the ability to feel like you are in control, while simultaneously embracing your autonomy. To be successful as an entrepreneur you must be comfortable in knowing that you and only you are responsible for both your success and failures. Being comfortable with autonomy means that you crave flexibility in what you do, such that you don't need anyone to tell you how to get the job done or when it must be completed. Autonomous individuals have the confidence to make decisions, even in the shadow of potential mistakes, because regardless of the outcome they *take accountability for results*.

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Autonomy goes hand in hand with a firm self-belief that you can control your own destiny. Yes, we are all subject to the whims of economic conditions, taxation, and governmental regulations. However, if you embrace autonomy you know all obstacles are temporary, and none are insurmountable. You should firmly believe that when you are investing effort in a task - eventually you will be successful.

Effort reaps rewards because you know that you have the power to reach your objectives despite the roadblocks you may encounter along the way.

### **So, do you have what it takes to go independent?**

- Are you willing to tolerate temporary setbacks and stake your reputation on individual effort?
- Can you endure the psychological stress of the inevitable lulls in motivation that occur on the long road to success?

If so, you can call yourself a freelancer.

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If you aren't sure and need some help making the indie decision, pick up a copy of

["Hack Your Motivation: Over 50 Science-Based Strategies to Improve Performance."](#)

This book is a great resource for anyone striving for success, especially people who realize that better times are only a few small steps away. You can also follow Dr. Bobby on Twitter [@ifoundmo](#) for daily original content on motivation, learning and leadership.

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