

## #CAREER

### The Future of Freelancing: Mastering the Art of Independence

Navigating the Freelance Economy in a transforming world



In an era of unprecedented technological advancement and economic shifts, freelancing is no longer a mere alternative to traditional employment. It is a sophisticated, dynamic, and highly lucrative career path. As the digital economy continues to evolve, freelancers must stay ahead of the curve, mastering emerging skills, embracing technological tools, and building resilient professional networks to ensure long-term success.

The freelance marketplace has undergone a profound transformation. With remote work becoming the norm and businesses increasingly relying on independent professionals, the demand for specialized skills has never been higher. From AI-driven content creation to cybersecurity consulting and blockchain development, niche expertise is becoming the key differentiator in a competitive digital landscape. Professionals who continuously upskill through platforms like Coursera, Udemy, and LinkedIn Learning position themselves as indispensable assets in a rapidly shifting job market.

Beyond technical expertise, a freelancer's personal brand serves as their most valuable currency. A meticulously curated online presence, spanning from professional portfolios to insightful industry commentary, can enhance credibility and visibility. Social media platforms, particularly LinkedIn and Twitter, offer powerful avenues to engage with potential clients, establish thought leadership, and cultivate meaningful professional relationships.

Technology is not just reshaping industries; it is redefining the very nature of freelance work. AI-powered tools such as ChatGPT for content generation, Jasper for marketing, and automation software for financial management allow freelancers to streamline their operations, maximize productivity, and deliver unparalleled quality. The integration of these innovations into daily workflows is no longer optional; it is essential for those aiming to stay competitive.

However, the volatility of freelancing necessitates strategic risk management.

### Kintu inee to khoob bhalo lok- Innocent Conflict

● Dr. S.G. Kabra

Calcutta 1955. I had passed my intermediate examination with a first class which, in those days, was rare and thus an achievement. I came from a traditional trader family to whom science, and thus biology, were unusual subjects. All my brothers had graduated in commerce and had begun to work soon after. As if to assert my individual identity, I chose to study medicine. In an era where there were no competitive examinations, selection into an MBBS course was on the basis of the candidate's intermediate examination marks. With my first class, I had felt I had a fair chance of securing admission in one of the four medical colleges in Calcutta. One of these was a government college while the others were private. To play it safe, I applied to all four. Apart from a few seats reserved for candidates from the state of Bengal and, in the private colleges, for donors (the donation seats), there were no reserved seats. Fortunately, since I had studied and passed my intermediate examinations in Bengal, I was considered a domicile of the state.

I did not get shortlisted for the government medical college but was by all three private colleges and soon appeared for an interview before the selection panel of the first of the three. After checking my papers, the chairman of the interviewing panel asked me, "Do you know Bengali?" I answered in the negative and noticed that he put a cross against my name, which meant that I was not selected. A few days later, I learnt that in order to be able to interact with Bengali patients, a candidate was expected to speak Bengali. In the second interview,



Theme song of R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital, centenary celebrations.

the same question was posed. "Bangla jano?" Wisely now, I cautiously replied, "Ektu ekta jani." (a bit, yes.)

One of the panel members went through my application. "Tumar anko chhilo na?" (You did not study mathematics?). Now, I did not know that "anko" meant mathematics. I thought he was asking for my domicile certificate. So, I replied, "It is there, sir."

"What is there?" the member asked, puzzled.

"My domicile certificate, sir."

There was laughter all around. Naturally, I was not selected.

In the third of the private colleges, it was the same opening question, "Bangla jano?"

This time, I was even more prepared. "Janis sir. Boojte pari. Kintu aamar practice nei, bhalo kore bolte pari na." (I know and understand it, sir, but I don't speak it too well because I lack practice.)

"Tumi to khub bhalo bol chho. Banglaye uttar davo." (You are speaking it very well. Answer in Bengali!) commanded a member. I was beginning to feel my game was up. Another member asked, "Tumar anko chhilo na?" (You

obvious and it was too much for me. Seething within, I answered with controlled fury, "Sir, excuse me, but do you think if you become rich tomorrow, Bengal will become famous because of you?"

Given my precarious situation, it was an inappropriate answer, but, before I could apologize, the member with the Gandhi cap interjected, "Besh bole chho!" (Well said!)

The interview meandered on and, at the end of it, I was, to put it mildly, apprehensive. Like in the two earlier colleges, I expected to be shown the door here as well. But, surprise, surprise, my name was in the list of selected candidates. I had actually been admitted to the prestigious R. G. Kar Medical College, the oldest private college in the country! There were a large number of students from all parts of India, especially from states that did not have medical colleges of their own. There were many foreigners too. It was a happy mix. Perhaps, because I was freed from the uncertainty of the selection process and eager to settle into my new role, I found that I had no difficulty in learning Bengali. As with students everywhere, I started with cuss words. Bengali cinema's heroines greatly helped, and I was a regular moviegoer. I realized that as I grew more comfortable with the language, I began to feel more at home as well. Till I and my fellow non-Bengalis could manage a reasonable level of fluency, we experienced a sense of

allegation, the 'us and them' hostility from the Bengalis. With the passage of time, this feeling diminished as we gained greater acceptance. But, to my dismay, I found an undercurrent of resentment against Marwaris among the general public, no doubt encouraged by the Communist party constantly harping on how economic imbalances in the polity were detrimental to social progress. While I may have gained my first professional qualification in Calcutta, it was a city where I learnt these and other life-lessons. They left an indelible mark on my life.

Other life lessons? There were some wonderful ones too. Let me share one with you.

I had a Bengali friend, at whose house I was a frequent visitor. I was readily welcomed and accepted by his family, and particularly so, by my friend's 8-year-old sister who was my favourite. I called her Dear Delicatus or 'DD' for short because she was so fragile and fair, with an unbelievably angelic smile. I would tell her stories, demonstrate magic tricks and bring her favorite chocolate. One day, I was visiting my friend

with a little bit more pride than I should have.

"You appear to be pretty proud of being a Marwari. Achha bolo to Rajasthan kiser jonya famous?" (Tell us, what is Rajasthan famous for?)

It was now fairly obvious to me that, for some strange reason, I was being harassed and I resisted it. Reflexively, clenching my fist, I said, "For bravery, for valour!"

The member laughed sarcastically. "Besh! Rajasthaner bahadur loger naam bol to." (Good! Name some brave individuals from Rajasthan.)

With gusto, I started, "Prithviraj Chauhan, Raja Man Singh, Maharana Pratap, Chhatrapati Shivaji..."

I realized my mistake. "I am sorry, sir. He was a Maratha, but he is so very famous in Rajasthan that we accept him as our own."

Some of the members nodded in approval but the member (I learnt later that he was from the communist party) persisted. "Why didn't you say Rajasthan is famous for the Biras?"

The crude and derisory allusion to wealthy Marwaris was

"Are you a... Marwari?"

"Yes sir!" I answered, perhaps with a little bit more pride than I should have.

"You appear to be pretty proud of being a Marwari. Achha bolo to Rajasthan kiser jonya famous?" (Tell us, what is Rajasthan famous for?)

It was now fairly obvious to me that, for some strange reason, I was being harassed and I resisted it. Reflexively, clenching my fist, I said, "For bravery, for valour!"

The member laughed sarcastically. "Besh! Rajasthaner bahadur loger naam bol to." (Good! Name some brave individuals from Rajasthan.)

With gusto, I started, "Prithviraj Chauhan, Raja Man Singh, Maharana Pratap, Chhatrapati Shivaji..."

## #BONG-MARWARI



obvious and it was too much for me. Seething within, I answered with controlled fury, "Sir, excuse me, but do you think if you become rich tomorrow, Bengal will become famous because of you?"

Given my precarious situation, it was an inappropriate answer, but, before I could apologize, the member with the Gandhi cap interjected, "Besh bole chho!" (Well said!)

The interview meandered on and, at the end of it, I was, to put it mildly, apprehensive. Like in the two earlier colleges, I expected to be shown the door here as well. But, surprise, surprise, my name was in the list of selected candidates. I had actually been admitted to the prestigious R. G. Kar Medical College, the oldest private college in the country! There were a large number of students from all parts of India, especially from states that did not have medical colleges of their own. There were many foreigners too. It was a happy mix. Perhaps, because I was freed from the uncertainty of the selection process and eager to settle into my new role, I found that I had no difficulty in learning Bengali. As with students everywhere, I started with cuss words. Bengali cinema's heroines greatly helped, and I was a regular moviegoer. I realized that as I grew more comfortable with the language, I began to feel more at home as well. Till I and my fellow non-Bengalis could manage a reasonable level of fluency, we experienced a sense of

allegation, the 'us and them' hostility from the Bengalis. With the passage of time, this feeling diminished as we gained greater acceptance. But, to my dismay, I found an undercurrent of resentment against Marwaris among the general public, no doubt encouraged by the Communist party constantly harping on how economic imbalances in the polity were detrimental to social progress. While I may have gained my first professional qualification in Calcutta, it was a city where I learnt these and other life-lessons. They left an indelible mark on my life.

Other life lessons? There were some wonderful ones too. Let me share one with you.

I had a Bengali friend, at whose house I was a frequent visitor. I was readily welcomed and accepted by his family, and particularly so, by my friend's 8-year-old sister who was my favourite. I called her Dear Delicatus or 'DD' for short because she was so fragile and fair, with an unbelievably angelic smile. I would tell her stories, demonstrate magic tricks and bring her favorite chocolate. One day, I was visiting my friend

with a little bit more pride than I should have.

"You appear to be pretty proud of being a Marwari. Achha bolo to Rajasthan kiser jonya famous?" (Tell us, what is Rajasthan famous for?)

It was now fairly obvious to me that, for some strange reason, I was being harassed and I resisted it. Reflexively, clenching my fist, I said, "For bravery, for valour!"

The member laughed sarcastically. "Besh! Rajasthaner bahadur loger naam bol to." (Good! Name some brave individuals from Rajasthan.)

With gusto, I started, "Prithviraj Chauhan, Raja Man Singh, Maharana Pratap, Chhatrapati Shivaji..."

I realized my mistake. "I am sorry, sir. He was a Maratha, but he is so very famous in Rajasthan that we accept him as our own."

Some of the members nodded in approval but the member (I learnt later that he was from the communist party) persisted. "Why didn't you say Rajasthan is famous for the Biras?"

The crude and derisory allusion to wealthy Marwaris was



## Pistol Patent Day

Pistol Patent Day is a lively celebration that honours a significant milestone in firearm history. This day commemorates the moment when Samuel Colt received his patent for the first revolver. The invention revolutionized the world of firearms, allowing multiple shots to be fired without reloading each time. This breakthrough not only changed the mechanics of guns but also had a lasting impact on both the military and civilian sectors. So, rent a pistol and practice your aim. You might discover a hidden talent. Remember to brush up on gun safety rules before firing away.



when she returned from school. She dropped her school bag and rushed to me to collect a hug and, of course, her chocolate. While munching it, she suddenly asked her brother, "Dada, Kabra da ki Marwari?" (Dada, is Kabra da a Marwari?)

Somewhat taken aback, my friend answered, "Yes, but why do you ask?"

"Kintu inee to khoob bhalo lok" (But he is a very fine person), she said, with all the serious logic of childhood.

My friend turned red with embarrassment but recovered quickly. He teased her, "Keno tomake chocolate deya se jonai he bhalo lok?" (Is he a nice person just because he brings chocolates for you?)

"Na! inee khoob bhalo lok" (No, he is a very fine person), she said emphatically.

"Ki kore janii?" (How do you know?) "Aami jani, aami cheente pari, inee khoob bhalo lok" (I know, I can make out that he is a very fine person), she asserted as if that was reason enough. My friend was troubled. "Tuma ke ke bo'lo Marwari bhalo lok hoy na?"

to change her clothes and get ready for her school bag and Sixty years later, I still remember that encounter and sigh with nostalgia for that unadulterated gust of childhood innocence. How I loved that assertion, "Aami jani, aami cheente pari, inee khoob bhalo lok" (I know, I can make out that he is a very fine person), she asserted. "I know, I can make out that he is a very fine person!"

In the mid-sixties, I moved to Udaipur city which had a sizable Bengali population. Because of my eleven years in Calcutta and my fluency in Bengali, I mingled easily with the city's Bengali community. I was gainfully employed and time sped by. And then, one day, I received a wedding invitation. Who was the bride? My Dear Delicatus! She was to be married in Udaipur to a local Bengali boy. There she was, at the reception, resplendent in bridal finery, sari, bangles, mangal sutra, sindoor and all. Yet, to me, she was still the lovely, fragile and innocent little girl, I knew in Calcutta, years ago.

As I moved with the line of visitors waiting to congratulate the young couple, I wondered whether she would remember me. When, at last, I stood before her, I asked softly, "Ki re, Marwari dada mone aachhe? Cheente paachhish?" (Do you remember Marwari dada? Are you able to recognize him?)

She narrowed her eyes and peered at me. Slowly, the signs of recognition appeared, followed by the smile that the years had refused to change. She looked me straight in the eye. Finally, with a hopelessly implausible air of detachment, she said, "Ki kore cheenbo, hathe je chocolate nai." (How could I recognize you? There is no chocolate in your hand.)

slowly, the signs of recognition appeared, followed by the smile that the years had refused to change. She looked me straight in the eye. Finally, with a hopelessly implausible air of detachment, she said, "Ki kore cheenbo, hathe je chocolate nai." (How could I recognize you? There is no chocolate in your hand.)

(Who told you Marwaris are not good people?)

"Class teacher's memory me amar sone podhe, shay ee." (My class teacher's daughter, who is my classmate, told me.)

"Kabra da ke bolo'r joney o chocolate ene debe" (Ask Kabra da to bring chocolates for her too), said my friend, firmly ending the conversation and packing her off

slowly, the signs of recognition appeared, followed by the smile that the years had refused to change. She looked me straight in the eye. Finally, with a hopelessly implausible air of detachment, she said, "Ki kore cheenbo, hathe je chocolate nai." (How could I recognize you? There is no chocolate in your hand.)

(Who told you Marwaris are not good people?)

"Class teacher's memory me amar sone podhe, shay ee." (My class teacher's daughter, who is my classmate, told me.)

"Kabra da ke bolo'r joney o chocolate ene debe" (Ask Kabra da to bring chocolates for her too), said my friend, firmly ending the conversation and packing her off

slowly, the signs of recognition appeared, followed by the smile that the years had refused to change. She looked me straight in the eye. Finally, with a hopelessly implausible air of detachment, she said, "Ki kore cheenbo, hathe je chocolate nai." (How could I recognize you? There is no chocolate in your hand.)

(Who told you Marwaris are not good people?)

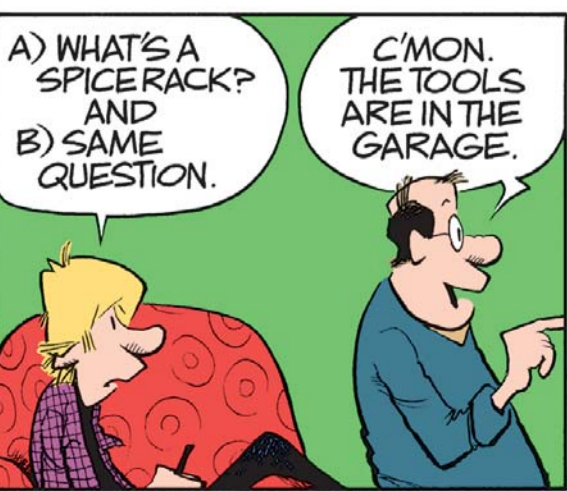
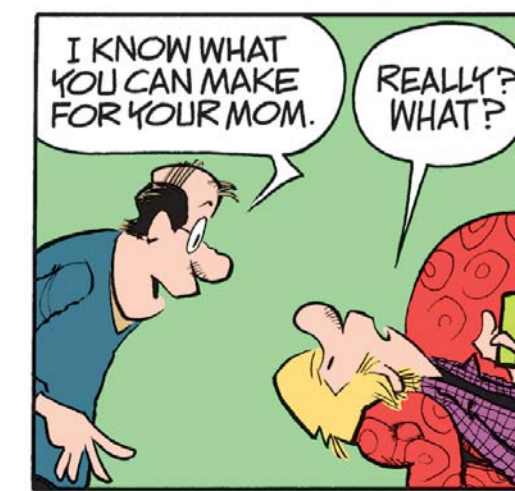
"Class teacher's memory me amar sone podhe, shay ee." (My class teacher's daughter, who is my classmate, told me.)

"Kabra da ke bolo'r joney o chocolate ene debe" (Ask Kabra da to bring chocolates for her too), said my friend, firmly ending the conversation and packing her off

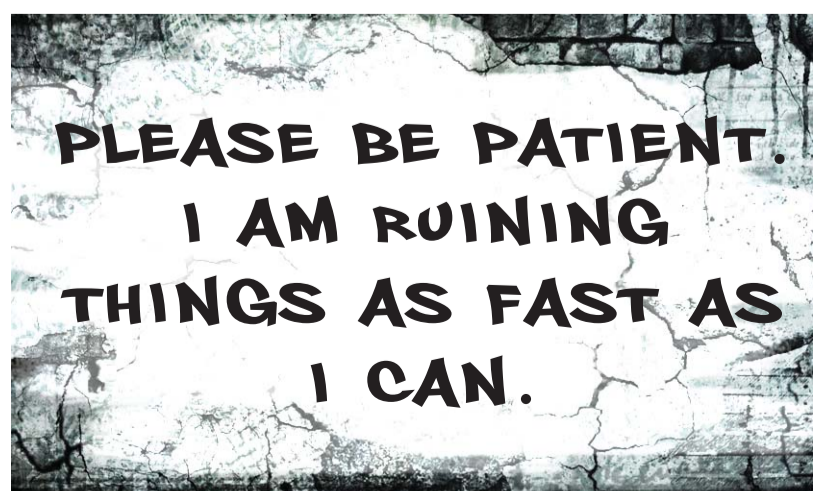


By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

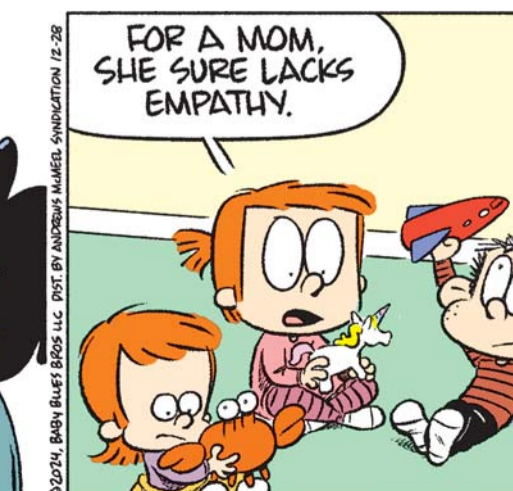
## ZITS



## THE WALL



## BABY BLUES



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman

