

Sample

Outsourcing Your Jobs

How to Use Elance to Get
Other People to Do Your Work

by Gihan Perera

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Introduction

E lance, at www.elance.com, puts you in touch with providers in a number of categories, as you can see here:

Website Development

[Ecommerce Website](#) · [Flash Animation](#) · [Online forms & Database Integration](#) · [Search Engine Optimization](#) · [Simple Website](#) · [Web Design & Development](#) · [Web Programming](#) · [More...](#)

Software & Technology

[Application Development](#) · [Database Development](#) · [Handhelds & PDAs](#) · [Linux](#) · [Scripts & Utilities](#) · [Wireless](#) · [More...](#)

Writing & Translation

[Copy Writing](#) · [Creative Writing](#) · [Editing & Proofreading](#) · [Newsletters](#) · [Technical Writing](#) · [Translation](#) · [Web Content](#) · [More...](#)

Management & Finance

[Accounting & Bookkeeping](#) · [Billing & Collections](#) · [Business Plans](#) · [Competitive Analysis](#) · [Management Consulting](#) · [More...](#)

Sales & Marketing

[Advertising](#) · [Branding](#) · [Email & Direct Marketing](#) · [Lead Generation](#) · [Search & Online Marketing](#) · [Telemarketing](#) · [More...](#)

Graphic Design & Art

[Banner Ads](#) · [Brochures](#) · [Corporate Identity Package](#) · [Graphic Design](#) · [Illustration](#) · [Logos](#) · [Print Ads](#) · [Printing & Fulfillment](#) · [More...](#)

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Administrative Support

[Data Entry](#) · [Mailing List Development](#) · [Transcription Research](#) · [Personal Assistance](#) · [More...](#)

Architecture & Engineering

[Architecture](#) · [CAD](#) · [Civil & Structural](#) · [Electrical](#) · [Industrial Design](#) · [More...](#)

Legal

[Contracts](#) · [Patent, Copyright and Trademarks](#) · [Wills, Trusts & Estates](#) · [More...](#)

Audio, Video & Multimedia

[Animation](#) · [Film & Television](#) · [Music](#) · [Streaming Audio](#) · [Streaming Media](#) · [More...](#)

This guide will help you get the most out of Elance, an on-line network that connects service providers with clients. This guide is written for you as a client who is looking to buy services.

Elance is a fairly easy system to use, but some people feel daunted when using it for the first time. That's why this guide gives you step-by-step processes for using Elance.

Personally, I've used Elance for:

- ⇒ Writing software
- ⇒ Transcribing audio recordings into written form
- ⇒ Converting transcripts into books
- ⇒ Laying out the internal design of books
- ⇒ Writing complete e-books on a given subject
- ⇒ Designing book covers
- ⇒ Designing icons and graphics

How it works

Broadly, this is how it works:

- ⇒ You advertise your job requirements on Elance.
- ⇒ A number of providers will bid on your project.
- ⇒ You choose one of the providers.

⇒ They complete the project for you, and you pay them the agreed amount.

The whole process is very easy to use, and very cost-effective. You don't have to pay for advertising your project, and you only pay the agreed price. Elance gets its money by taking a commission from the seller.

You're also not obliged to accept any of the bids you receive. If none of them seem suitable, simply ignore them all.

Why should you use Elance?

Assuming that you're planning to outsource projects rather than doing them yourself, why should you use Elance rather than a local provider?

Here are some of the benefits:

- ⇒ **Price:** You can often get work done for a fraction of the price of local providers. This doesn't mean that you have to deal with amateurs, either; many of the Elance sellers run professional businesses.
- ⇒ **Skills:** Elance providers come from all over the world, so you have a better chance of finding people with the specific skills you require.
- ⇒ **Range:** You'll often get a range of providers bidding on your job, and you can choose the provider that most closely matches what you require.
- ⇒ **Speed:** If your local provider is unavailable or has a long waiting list, it's sometimes quicker to find somebody on Elance to do a particular project.

On the other hand, there might be reasons why you would choose a local provider instead, such as:

- ⇒ **Reputation:** If you've worked with somebody before, it might be risky to switch to an Elance provider, especially if they are on the other side of the world.
- ⇒ **Convenience:** Some jobs might require you to work with your provider face to face; most Elance providers deal with you by e-mail. Similarly, if you choose an Elance provider in a different time zone, it might be less convenient to work with them.
- ⇒ **Speed:** In my experience, some Elance providers don't keep to deadlines. This can be true of other providers as well, of course, but it can be harder to "put the squeeze" on an Elance provider on the other side of the world.
- ⇒ **Language:** Elance providers are all around the world, so you have to be careful whom you choose for certain projects. For example, if they are writing content, make sure they have good written English skills.

How to Use This Guide

I've written this guide with step-by-step instructions for each stage of operating an Elance project, including:

- ⇒ **Signing Up:** Brief instructions on how to register with Elance.
- ⇒ **Planning Your Project:** How to plan your project to get the best value from your Elance provider.
- ⇒ **Posting Your Project:** How to actually post your project on Elance.

- ⇒ Checking Bids: How to monitor bids as they come in.
- ⇒ Choosing a Bidder: What to look for in your Elance providers, so that you can make an informed choice.
- ⇒ Running the Project: What to do while the Elance provider is working on your project.
- ⇒ Completing the Project: How to complete the project.

Posting Your Project

In this section, I'm going to take you step by step through the process of posting your project.

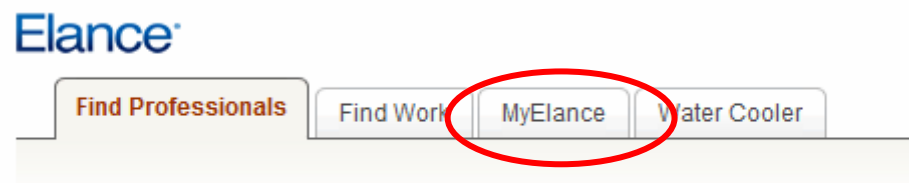
If you haven't already gone through the planning steps I mentioned earlier, I highly recommend that you do so now – before you post your project on Elance.

But assuming you're ready, here's what to do ...

(In this section, and indeed for the rest of the guide, I'm going to assume that the project is the software project I mentioned above)

Log in

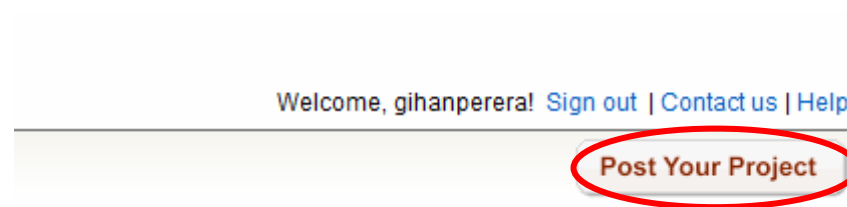
Go to the home page and click the My Elance link:



Log in and you will see a summary page of your activity.

Start a new project

Click the “Post Your Project” link:



Choose your category

You will submit your project in a certain category, depending on the type of work. This makes it easy for bidders to find your project, because they have registered interest in projects within certain categories.

Start by looking through the main categories:

1 Describe What You Need

2 Choose Your Posting Type

3 Preview Your Posting

Describe What You Need

Posting Title:

Category:

Subcategory:

- Select Category -
- Admin Support
- Design & Multimedia
- Engineering & Manufacturing
- Finance & Management
- Legal
- Sales & Marketing
- Web & Programming**
- Writing & Translation

Work Description:

For my project, it was Web & Programming, and then the appropriate sub-category.

Fill in the project description

Fill in a brief title, and a brief description (which you will have prepared earlier). In my case, I'm going to attach a more detailed project brief, so for now I'm just keeping this to two paragraphs.

Attach files


I have a project brief, so I look for it and click Attach File:

Files (Optional):


Attach up to 10 files no more than 3MB in size each.

Set your budget

If you're not sure, or you'd rather keep it to yourself, you can do so:


Budget Range: 
Providers cannot bid lower than USD \$50. [More Info](#)

However, for the reasons I've given already, it is better to specify a budget:

Budget Range: 
Providers cannot bid lower than USD \$50. [More Info](#)

Set timing

Set the time limit for bids:

Response Deadline: 

Select or Basic?

On the next page, Elance allows you to make yours a “Featured” listing, for an additional fee:

Choose Your Posting Type

Select how you want your project to display in search results.

- Standard (no additional fee)
- Featured (\$15 posting fee)

Why feature your post?

- Get noticed! Featured postings



This is optional, but could be useful if you've got a high priority project, or if you'd like to attract the best bidders.

Your project is ready

After you confirm, your project is then posted in the marketplace. Elance also sends you an e-mail confirmation, which you can ignore.

Now sit back and wait for the bids to come rolling in.

Last Words

OK, that's it! We've come to the end of this Quick Steps guide.

I hope this has helped you to get confidence using Elance, especially for your first few projects. Once you get over this initial hurdle, you'll be amazed at the range of expertise available "on tap" at Elance, and you will rapidly accelerate your business growth.

Find out more

If you'd like to know more about what else we do, feel free to visit my Web site at www.GihanPerera.com and get in touch with me.

Good luck!

Gihan



About Gihan Perera

Gihan Perera is a business consultant, speaker, author and entrepreneur – with clients throughout Australia, and in New Zealand, South Africa, Singapore, the U.K. and Canada. He works with professional speakers and trainers, consultants, business owners, CEOs and strategic leadership teams to improve their marketing, sales and persuasion skills in one-on-one meetings, group presentations and on the Internet.

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