

## Learnings from my analysis of all clients – 2014 to 2017

### LESSONS

- Everything you do should always be aimed at finding more of your IDEAL clients. You will be distracted by two things: financial insecurity, and people who seem like ideal clients – “fool’s gold”.  
*Never* choose a client just because you’re broke – it doesn’t even make sense financially to do this. And make sure all clients tick these 3 boxes (beware of “fool’s gold” clients who are only 2/3):
  - Excited to work with you / love your way of working, *after* exposure to you and your work
  - Have invested in their self-development before (e.g. workshops), *or* have no qualms about investing (i.e. pay up front)
  - Proven action-takers – you have tested to see if they’ll put your coaching to work
- The best clients have a quick turnaround time from first contact to first (free) session. As soon as you begin interacting with someone, make sure your invitation to a coaching session occurs within the first 3 interactions (all of which should be full of value for them), whether it’s email/text messaging or in-person. If they refuse, put you off, or otherwise delay, chuck them on your mailing list / slow-burn list, and move on to someone new.
- The best clients are often repeat clients. They will want maintenance sessions or even a full course of coaching again later on. They will buy your products as well as your coaching. Spend a large part of your energy continuing to serve former clients that you enjoyed working with most.
- Choose a very specific specialty topic, with a specific niche audience. Become the master of this. For example, I am a people-pleasing specialist who focus mostly on single guys in their 20s and 30s who have Nice Guy Syndrome and are ready to do something about it. These people also represent me and my own struggles most closely. Make sure everything you do is flavoured with this – don’t be afraid to exclude people outside of your niche. Don’t get distracted by demographics. Look for a niche psychological profile.
- Focus on creating opportunities to invite people to coaching in real-life, at events and activities that your target audience are likely to frequent, or at least at events where self-development enthusiasts like to go, e.g. dancing.
- Make sure everyone is regularly reminded that you’re available for coaching. Many want it but are shy to ask. Whenever you message out, assume someone is waiting to be invited.
- When it comes to creating content, use tonnes of real-life stories that people can relate to, with reminders to contact you for coaching at the end (but not obnoxiously overstated).
- Discounts come back to bite you in the longer term. Be strong with your pricing – it will help qualify your clients.

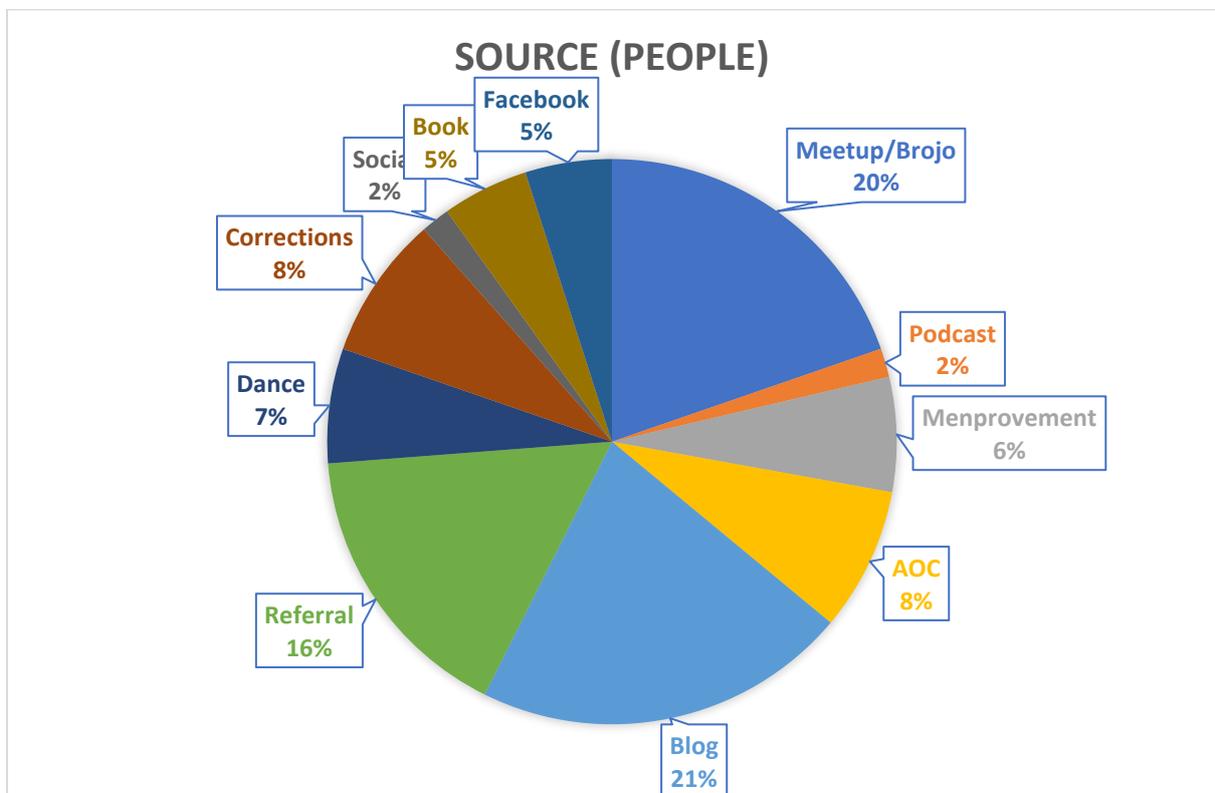
- Take time to qualify people more when they are referrals – resist the temptation to coach people who don't know anything about you. Share your content and test them according to the 3 principles of a good client. Don't get too excited just because they came to you easily.
- Create a community for your target audience. Focus on building membership in your niche community, and make sure to invite all members to coaching personally.
- Offer some coaching package with every non-coaching piece of work e.g. workshops, even if it's free coaching.
- Make sure every blog post and piece of content encourages email opt-in.
- Always offer 1:1 coaching at the end of every group session / webinar / video. You can't over-offer it as long as you're not pushing for it.
- Facebook and social media are largely unproductive. It can deceptively *feel* like it helps, and there will be plenty of lurkers who are indirectly helped by it, but as a direct source of clients it's very weak. Your time is MUCH better spent reaching out to people you're interested in on a 1:1 basis. (Yeah I know that's less comfortable).

## Review of Sources of Clients

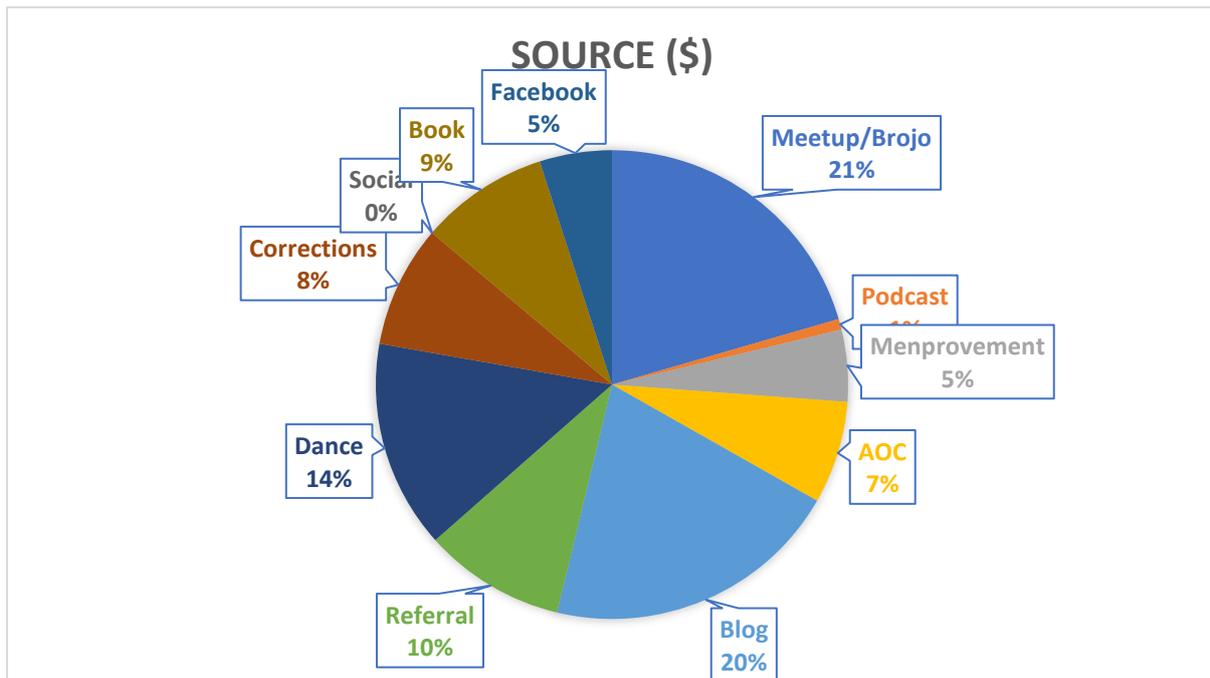
Knowing *where* your clients first found you, where they come from, is critical to knowing your audience and choosing where to focus your efforts. In the below graphs, you'll see both the number of people and the amount of money that came to me from each source:

- Meetup/brojo = my Brojo community, in person
- Podcast = my online podcast
- Menprovement = a partnership I had with a similar company
- AOC = a podcast interview I did for the Art of Charm
- Blog = people that found my work on my website, or people I couldn't remember the source to

## Number of people from each source



## Amount of total earnings from each source



### Analysis (ranked in order of best % of total earnings):

#### 1. Meetup/brojo – 21%

Solid earner – creating a community of your ideal target audience is much more effective than finding them one at a time and trying to move them straight into coaching. With a community they can experience your value over time, you'll never need to "sell" – just invite.

Creating relationships these clients happened in a range of different ways, including upsells (many of them are also workshop attendees and all were Brojo members at some point in time), personal invites at sessions, and long-term online relationships.

It's important to regularly offer coaching invitations to your community, even to people who have heard it before. But always focus primarily on improving their lives.

#### 2. Blog – 20%

Half of these are clients from my first couple of years, so I probably approached them online somehow and just forgot exactly how I initiated, so I put them in the Blog category.

Relationships with these people were developed almost exclusively through short term email conversations.

Some of these are guys on my Nice Guy email list. They may have signed up through Facebook advertising, rather than actually visiting my blog, with a campaign to a quiz I did. This had a low conversion rate (money spent on ads was not worth it).

So, overall, my blog itself is not that powerful. But having someone on my email list is helpful. This implies two main things: long-term relationships can be built passively, and using my content to serve others helps qualify clients.

### **3. Dance – 14%**

Best value per client average, but it was a small sample size.

3 of these were ideal clients.

My theory is that lots of people are partly into dancing because they value investing in their development, and also it's a great environment for building friendship – these factors combine to create good clients.

All were personally invited during real conversations. This gives credence to the Prosperous Coach approach.

### **4. Referral – 10%**

This is deceptive. While 10% of my earnings came from this source, they made up 16% of my number of clients. Most were less than ideal clients, and many were early drop outs.

You can't force someone into coaching – they must want it.

### **5. Book – 9%**

2 of these were ideal clients. Small sample size.

Poor coaching-conversion rate with books – thousands have read my books but only 3 became clients.

However, clients from other first-contact sources have read my books too, of course. So it's a good supplementary piece of material that qualifies clients well, but not a great lead-generator, unless you heavily lean the book towards creating leads (which I didn't do for authenticity reasons).

Much of your content will work this way; it's something you give to build a relationship, but it won't do the coaching invitations and initiating for you – you'll have to sack up and do that yourself.

### **6. Corrections – 8%**

Most of these are clients from a few years ago, almost all in response to email blast outs shortly after I left the department.

The lesson here is to make sure your associates and former work colleagues know about your coaching and are considered potential clients.

## **7. AOC (a podcast I did for art of charm) – 7%**

Sometimes you just hit the mark with a piece of content. This podcast got a massive response.

A large part of my blog-source results above are also the result of a single post.

Here are my two best performing pieces of content – both have each created more than \$10,000 in clients:

<http://www.theinspirationalifestyle.com/the-art-of-charm-how-to-stop-people-pleasing/>

<http://www.theinspirationalifestyle.com/why-your-boyfriend-doesnt-initiate-sex/>

The key elements to a great piece of content:

- Personal true-life experiences and vulnerable stories
- Highly specific audience and problem
- Created from the heart, not with the intention of supporting your business
- Practical application guidance – the piece itself is all they need to make changes
- Shameless invitation to the viewer to connect with you

## **8. Menprovement – 5%**

A couple of high quality leads came from here, but very few and a low average worth for the amount of effort and support I put into Menprovement.

Take care with partnerships to ensure there is equal investment. A few times I've given blood, sweat and tears to support other coaches and companies, but few could reciprocate equally. I have learned to quickly move on when things are imbalanced, and to regularly explore new options.

## **9. Facebook/social media – 5%**

Lots of energy for little output.

Facebook looks like it should work but it does not directly bring in leads. There are some clients where my Facebook posting has contributed to them learning about my work, but there are MUCH better ways to build relationships, and they certainly do not require Facebook.

Social media posting is easy, and highly validating to lose yourself in, so be wary to carefully track all paying clients to accurately measure how influential your social media actually is on your bank account.

## Keystone Action That Helped Create the Coaching Relationship

When analysing my clients, I looked through conversation threads and feedback to ascertain exactly what part of our relationship-building was the keystone to creating a client relationship – what particular actions were the most effective. While I did a range of things with everyone, I identified the MAIN thing that seemed to create a coaching connection with each of them.

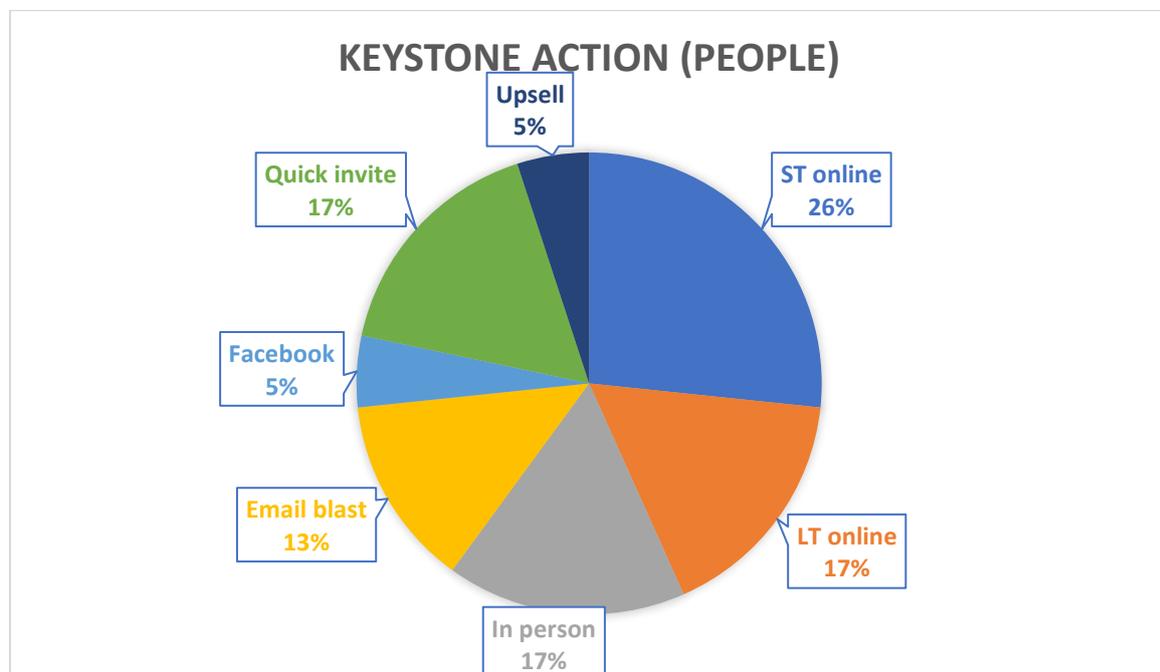
Note that with everyone I coach, I have a process.

1. The first session is free, because I don't know if we are right for each other yet. I coach them as if they're a full paying client, without any attachment to seeing them again.
2. I then put them to the test: they are given actions to complete over the course of the next week.
3. If they complete those actions, I offer a follow-up review session. During this session I invite them to paid coaching, if we both feel it's a good fit.

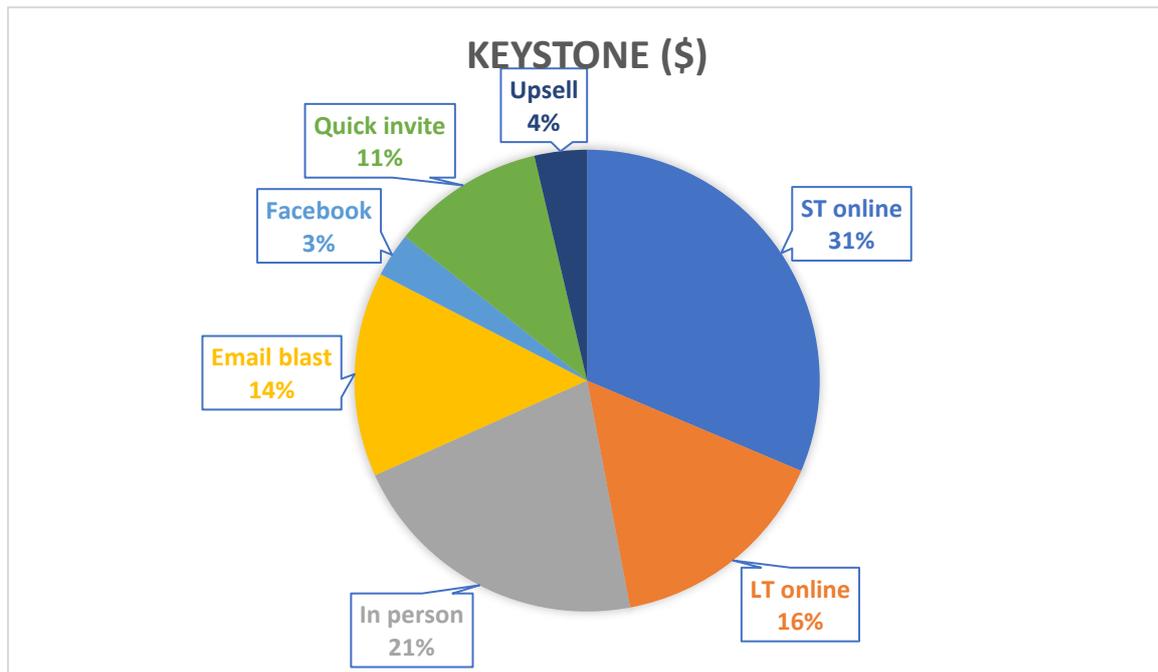
Note that these keystone actions are about what happens *before* that first free session:

- ST Online = short term online conversation.
- LT Online = online relationship that lasts months or years before coaching begins.
- In person = invited straight to coaching following a real-life conversation.
- Email blast = they responded to me after I emailed an invitation to my whole list.
- Facebook = they approached me in response to a post or invitation on social media.
- Quick invite = my first contact with them was to invite to a session.
- Upsell = I offered coaching as an upgrade to a workshop or product.

## Number of people that responded most to each keystone action



### Amount of money earned from each type of keystone action



Note the difference between the first chart (effort and quantity of people) and the second chart (financially how much these people were worth to my business). The best approaches will have a smaller number on the first chart than on the second, while the worst approaches will be the other way around.

## **Keystone breakdown – ranked on financial worth being greater than quantity of people/effort**

### **1. ST ONLINE**

Short-term online conversation that quickly led to a coaching session invitation.

This approach has the best effort:outcomes ratio. With just a few emails – usually sending through helpful links to my content, to answer a question of theirs – I can quickly transition to inviting to a free session.

I've noticed anecdotally that the longer someone takes to accept a free session, the harder they are to convert overall.

3 ideal clients came from this approach, with plenty more almost ideals.

### **2. IN PERSON**

Invitation made in-person after dancing, Brojo or other social discussion.

High percentage of high quality leads in this group – this approach is correlated with the highest client lifetime value. That means it's the best approach.

These were a mixture of Brojo members, dance-peers and friends. Many also did workshops, or became repeat clients. Overall, anything that supports this approach is the best place to put effort into.

Aim to meet your target audience, in person, doing what you both love.

### **3. LT ONLINE**

Slowly built up a relationship over time online – longer term.

Some of these clients took months, others even took years. Many showed initial interest, then died away unexpectedly, then came back and were keen.

This is a slightly bigger effort for a lesser reward, but still a staple of my business. There were a mixture of ideal clients and bad-fit clients – overall the quality was lower than other methods.

Learn to recognise when someone is not worth the long-term effort, as well as when someone is.

### **4. EMAIL BLAST OUT**

Responded to an email I've sent to my general list.

A majority of these are Corrections peers from 2014 (my first year), so this might not be worth considering as relevant information.

However, it does show that directly offering coaching via email has worked. It just doesn't work very often – I've tried it many times and the most likely response is an unsubscribe. They need value first.

## **5. FACEBOOK**

Responded to me posting on Facebook.

Small sample size. Poor effort:worth ratio.

More evidence that posting on Facebook is not worth the effort, given how many different ways I've tried to use Facebook to support my business. I've tried everything: personal page posting, groups, pages, videos, heartfelt long posts, photos, testimonials, memes, short posts, links, discount offers... everything. Even the viral posts with huge likes and comments didn't contribute to money in the bank.

## **6. QUICK INVITE**

Straight to session invitation in first contact (usually because of referral or application).

Most of these were referrals. Referrals are proving to be a poor source of quality for clients, for me. Many of them quit early or were a bad fit. I think this is because I assume a referral will be awesome. But essentially, they are just a random person. They need to be qualified heavily.

## **7. UPSELL**

Escalating series of up-selling.

Marketing experts swear by this, but it hasn't eventuated strongly for me. This may be simply due to lack of effort – I find it distasteful to do this because focusing on it is needy – totally prioritises money. This may be a limiting belief. I must learn to upsell when I believe it will serve someone.

## **Analysis of *Ideal* Clients**

Ultimately, you want to work with your IDEAL CLIENTS.

When doing analysis, I ranked all clients out of 10 for how much I enjoyed working with them. I then filtered these down to the ones who also invested more than \$4K in me, and ended up with about 16% of my total client base. These are ideal clients – fun and profitable, people who get as much value working with me as I do with them.

Here's what I noticed about them:

- 50% are repeat clients – they love working with me
- Range of sources and keystone methods, no real trends
- 90% were primarily coming to me with Nice Guy / people-pleaser issues. When I focus on my niche speciality, I find great clients.
- 70% were exposed to just a few significant pieces of my people pleasing content before meeting with me, the others were in-person invitations, so exposed to me in real life. This means nearly all my ideal clients were served powerfully by my specific expertise.

When I expand it to all great fit clients who paid less than \$4k (increases to 31% of total client base), I notice:

- 84% are Nice Guys in psych profile, nearly all were single when I worked with them. My niche is clear.
- Range of employment – no obvious trends in careers (mix of professionals, tradies, office workers, IT, entrepreneurs)
- All were exposed to either a large amount of my work, or a single key piece on Nice Guy-ness. Nothing in between – even the short-term relationships came after they read my book.
- No distinguishing trends in source or keystone method
- Ultimately, the only thing they really have strongly in common is the Nice Guy syndrome and being exposed my Nice guy related content – even the 2 women in my ideal client group came to me for issues relating to people-pleasing

## Some Key Behaviours That Clients Had in Common

- Payment plans: 26%

I give payments plans to clients I feel I can trust and who genuinely cannot make the full payment upfront without serious financial hardship. At first this did not work out reliably for me, but as I got more specific on my niche and better at coaching, I'm now in a position to safely offer this with 100% reliability rate.

Case by case basis.

- Entrepreneurs: 22%

A few of my entrepreneur clients were great fit clients. Overall new entrepreneurs struggle financially, so have less Lifetime value, but are fun to work with.

- Repeat/maintenance clients: 14%

High percentage of ideal clients are also repeat clients. Don't be afraid to work more with your favourites.

- Workshop: 16%

Many good fit clients do both my coaching and attend workshops. Workshops are great sources and qualifiers of good clients. Coaching mostly came for in-person invitations during the workshops, or as part of the workshop package.

- Students: 9%

I used to be scared of working with students, for the financial aspect. But I've been proven wrong. Only one required a payment plan, the rest got their parents to help them. They're young, open-minded, and ready for action. Sometimes exams get in the way.

- Coaches in training: 4%

Sample size too low to measure accurately. But there's plenty of other evidence out there that wannabe coaches are a strong source of income. For integrity's sake, I would advise against coaching other coaches until you've established full time income with "normal" clients.

### Notes:

- *Some repeat client had many months in between their repeats, ongoing connection helped make sure I was available when they needed me*
- *All students had their parents help pay without a problem, did not require payment plans*
- *All couples started as a female working with me individually, they then bought in their partners*
- *I've had about 10% of my clients be what I'd call "bad fit" clients – hard to work with, unreliable, didn't take action, low paying etc. It's as valuable to learn from these mistakes as it is to learn from successes. I signed up nearly all them when I was desperate for money – it was never worth it.*