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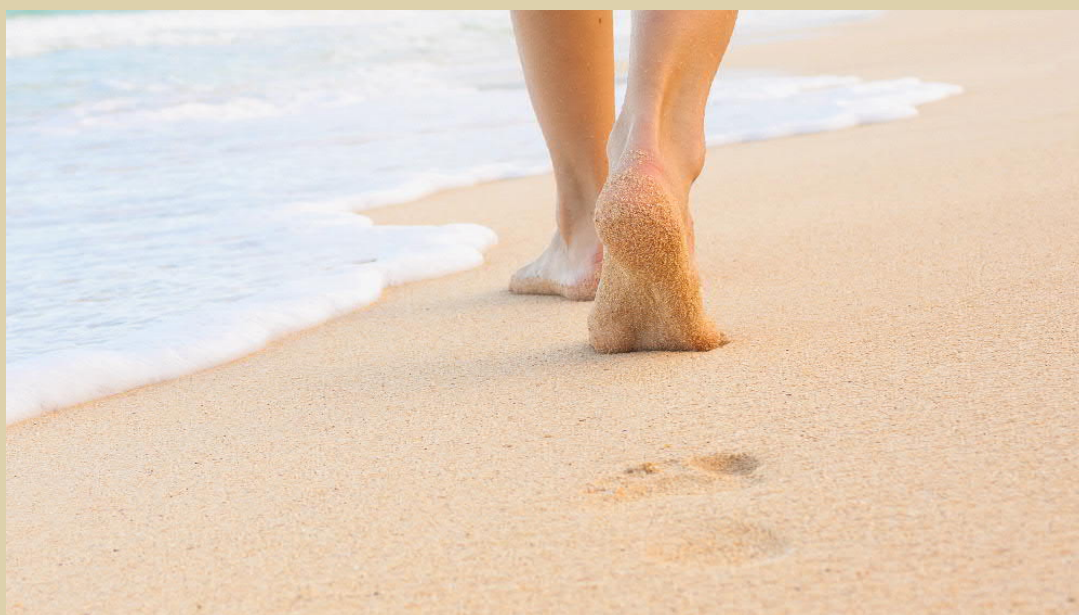
About Us

Preferment Times: *Retirement Redefined*

September 2025 Issue

The Best is Still to Come

Toes in the Sand, Mind Engaged





Coaches Corner

Finishing 2025 Strong

As we approach the final quarter of 2025, it's easy to get caught up in the rush of the year's end — holidays coming up, projects wrapping up, and the "I'll start fresh in January" mindset creeping in. But here's the truth: there's still plenty of time to make this your strongest quarter yet.

On Upwork and in freelancing, momentum is gold. Every proposal you send, every conversation you start, and every skill you sharpen now isn't just about this quarter — it's setting you up for a powerful start in 2026.

Here are a few ways to finish strong:

1. **Review and Refine** – Take a hard look at your profile and portfolio. Does it reflect the kind of work you want to attract? Small updates can make a big difference in search results and client impressions.
2. **Aim for Consistency, Not Perfection** – Commit to a set number of proposals per week. Even if you don't hear back from all of them, you're planting seeds that can grow into future contracts.
3. **Reconnect** – Reach out to past clients and remind them you're available. Many businesses plan year-end projects in Q4 and need reliable help fast.
4. **Invest in Learning** – Take an hour each week to upskill. Whether it's improving your writing, learning new tools, or understanding AI better, growth now pays off later.

The year isn't over until December 31 at midnight — and neither is your chance to make it count. Show up with focus and energy now, and you'll not only end 2025 proud, but you'll step into 2026 with real momentum.

Remember: The best time to take action was yesterday. The second-best time is right now.

— Patty & Robert



Exciting September Lineup on Our YouTube Channel!

Get ready for another month packed with valuable tips and insider knowledge to level up your freelance game! Join Patty & Robert on our YouTube channel as we dive into some must-know topics for online freelancers:

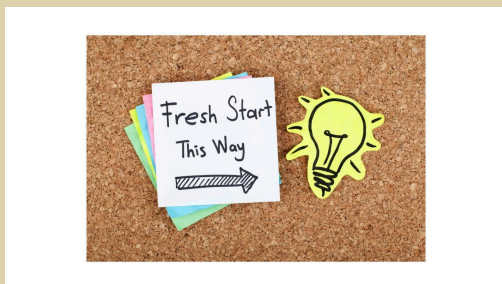
-  **Sept 1:** Patty talks about **How to Ask For & Actually Get Great Client Reviews**
-  **Sept 8:** Robert talks about **Making the Most of Downtime Between Clients**
-  **Sept 15:** Robert will talk about **How to Use the Time Tracking Tools on Upwork**
-  **Sept 22:** Patty will talk about **Creating a Freelance Routine that Works for You**
-  **Sept 29:** Patty talks about **From Hobby to Hustle: Turning your hobby into income**

It will be another busy month - with great topics - don't miss them!

Subscribe here: www.youtube.com/@RPTVirtualServices

Don't forget: Subscribe, tune in, and get ready to take your freelance game to new heights!

If there is a topic you would like us to cover: please drop us a line!



Your Fresh Start Begins Now

Why September is the perfect time to finish 2025 strong.

There's something about September that feels like a fresh start. Maybe it's a leftover from school days — new notebooks, clean calendars, and a feeling that the year's final chapter is about to begin.

For freelancers, September is the perfect time to press the reset button, refocus your energy, and make the last four months of the year your most productive yet.

On platforms like Upwork, the end of summer often brings a surge in opportunities as clients rush to complete projects before the end of the year.

Clients are back from vacations, projects are ramping up, and deadlines are looming. This is your moment to position yourself front and center.

How to harness the September momentum:

1. Do a quick "business health check."

Look at your Upwork profile, portfolio, and skills list. Are they still in line with the kind of work you want? A few strategic tweaks can make you stand out to the right clients.

2. Set specific short-term goals.

Instead of "I want more clients," try: "I'll submit five targeted proposals a week," or "I'll follow up with three past clients before month's end." Clear actions create real results.

3. Create your "September Success Plan."

Write down the top three projects or habits you want to focus on this month. Keep that list where you can see it daily. Your brain works better when it knows exactly what the priorities are.

4. Build in learning time.

Pick one skill you can improve this month that would make you more marketable. Even just 30 minutes a week can set you apart.

5. Protect your focus.

Q4 can get busy fast. Block out time for proposal writing, client work, and professional development — and guard it like a VIP appointment.

Here's the deal: September isn't just another month on the calendar. It's your opportunity to shake off the slow summer pace and build momentum that will carry you into the new year with confidence.

Remember: You don't need a whole new year to start fresh — just today. Take a breath, set your intentions, and step confidently into this season. Your best freelancing chapter of 2025 is still waiting to be written.



Scott did everything right, or so he thought. A longtime customer of a popular bank, he got a call that seemed totally legit. The person on the line was aware of his recent transactions. They said his debit card had been compromised and the bank needed to send someone to his house to collect it.

A woman actually showed up at his door. Professional. Calm. Friendly.

She took Scott's debit card, cut it in half right in front of his Ring doorbell camera, then left. Within an hour and a half, over \$20,000 vanished from Scott's account.

They hit up local ATMs at grocery stores, withdrawing cash like it was Monopoly money. Gone.

Why this scam is different

This isn't your usual sketchy email or random text with broken grammar.

These scammers:

- Spoof real Bank phone numbers.
- Know your account activity.
- Sound exactly like a fraud rep you'd trust with your taxes.
- And yes, they literally walk up to your front door like they're returning your lost dog.

By the way, this can happen with any bank. It's not limited to any one bank.

The cost can be more than money.

This scam has claimed more than cash. In Florida, 52-year-old Paul lost \$6,800 to the same scheme. He was told the bank wouldn't refund him.

His family says the stress was too much. The very next day, Paul died of a heart attack. So sad.

Here's how to protect yourself

- Never hand your card to anyone who comes to your door. Ever.
- If your card is compromised, you should cut it up yourself. On older cards, make sure you cut the magnetic strip in several places. On newer cards, make sure you cut the chip that is located under the gold-colored connectors that form a square on the card.
- Hang up if someone calls saying they're from your bank. Call the number on your card to verify. Don't be fooled by caller ID, scammers can spoof numbers.
- Urgency is a red flag. The more "immediate," the more scammy.
- Don't send money or share account details unless you initiated the transaction.

This scam is slick, believable, and it's spreading.



The Upwork logo, featuring the word "upwork" in white lowercase letters on a green square background.

**Check back next
month for any news!**



Tech Corner

Smart Tools, Smarter Work: How AI-Powered Research Can Save You Hours

One of the biggest drains on a freelancer's time is research. Whether you're writing a blog post for a client, scouting competitors for a marketing project, or gathering background data for a proposal, hours can vanish in the black hole of Google searches and endless tabs.

The good news? New AI-powered research tools are stepping up — and they're far more than "just another chatbot." These platforms can summarize dense reports, compare sources side by side, and tailor information to your client's industry. The result? More billable hours for you, less unpaid time chasing facts.

Here are four tools making waves right now that can help you research faster, work smarter, and boost your bottom line.

1. Perplexity AI – The Researcher in Your Pocket

Perplexity AI blends the conversational style of ChatGPT with the sourcing ability of a traditional search engine. Ask a question — say, "What's the latest on remote work tax laws in Florida?" — and it delivers an organized answer *with clickable sources* you can verify.

For freelancers, this means you can:

- Back up reports with credible links.
- Save time on fact-checking.
- Gather diverse perspectives without juggling 10 open tabs.

2. Claude 3 – The Long-Form Summarizing Powerhouse

Ever dread being sent a 60-page whitepaper or research study? Claude 3 (by Anthropic) can read and summarize massive documents in minutes. You can upload PDFs and get:

- A concise summary.
- Key bullet points.
- Highlighted direct quotes for citations.

For content writers or virtual assistants, this can turn a half-day slog into a 15-minute task.

3. SciSpace – Ideal for Technical or Niche Topics

If your freelancing niche involves science, health, or tech writing, SciSpace can break down complex concepts into plain language. It also offers built-in citation tools, so your final product is polished and client-ready. No more sweating over medical jargon or tricky technical diagrams.

4. ChatGPT with Web Access – Real-Time Data on Tap

If you're using the paid version of ChatGPT, you can enable web browsing to get current, verified information. This is especially useful for:

- Checking the latest industry stats.
- Finding trending topics.
- Staying ahead of your client's competition.

Pro tip: Always fact-check — AI is powerful, but even the best tools can make mistakes.

Why This Matters for Freelancers

Clients hire freelancers for their skills *and* efficiency. When you can deliver high-quality, well-researched work faster, you:

- Increase your effective hourly rate.
- Have time to take on more projects (or enjoy your life).
- Position yourself as a go-to expert who's ahead of the curve in using technology.

Remember: it's not about replacing your skills with AI — it's about *supercharging* them. These tools act like a virtual research assistant who works 24/7 and never asks for a coffee break.

Your Next Step

Pick just *one* of these tools and use it on your next project. Track how much time you save — you might be surprised how quickly you see a return on investment, both in money and sanity.

In freelancing, success often comes down to working *smarter*, not harder. Staying up to date with these tools isn't just "nice to have" — it's becoming the difference between a busy freelancer and a booked-out one.



Coming in October: A Special Client Spotlight You Won't Want to Miss!

This October, Robert and Patty are excited to share a heartfelt interview with one of Patty's amazing clients who made a big life change this

year — moving from North Carolina to beautiful Coronado, Panama!

As independent certified coaches with Barefoot Consultants, Patty and/or Robert have had the privilege of meeting incredible people at the annual International Living events — including the Panama event, which Patty attends every February. This client chose to work with Patty specifically because she lives here full-time, and Patty has been honored to help her navigate the exciting (and sometimes challenging!) transition to living and freelancing in Panama.

Be sure to catch her inspiring story in next month's newsletter — it's filled with insights, real experiences, and useful tips for anyone considering a move like hers.

Stay tuned — you won't want to miss it!



Hope you have a very Happy and Successful September 2025!
Patty & Robert



RPT Virtual Services, LLC

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