



Confronting a Business Slump

Dorothee Racette, CT



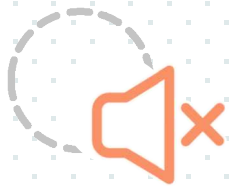
Handling Challenges Productively

AGENDA



- 1 Strategic analysis
- 2 Actions and productivity challenges
- 3 Preventing future dry spells

Business slumps and dry spells...



happen to all freelancers, people just don't talk about it



are not your fault (and don't have to do with lack of translation skills)



can be decreased with specific strategies



require action



Productivity Challenges for Freelancers



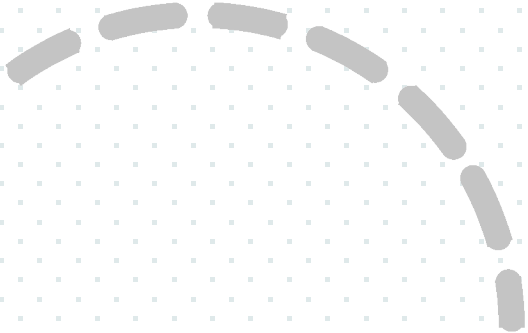
Top Ten challenges

Request your summary after the
conference!

dorothee@takebackmyday.com



1-3

- 
- Planning and Goal Setting
 - Motivation/Burnout
 - Maintaining Focus

Strategic analysis



What you know about your business:

1

Clients

(Past and present),
typical project orders.

2

Income data

Statistics from
QuickBooks or from
your own records.

3

Specialization, skills

Data by language, by
field etc.

4

Financial situation

Current debts, accounts
receivable.

5

**Inflation, exchange
rates**

Currencies, payment
methods, pricing.



Perspectives as part of productivity

- **Curiosity**
- **Reactions**
- **Expectations**
- **Stories and assumptions**

Negative perspective -> Positive view

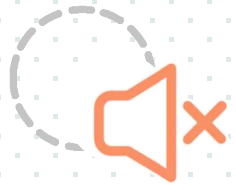
- “It’s my fault”
 - “Others do it better”
 - “I’m not qualified”
 - “No one needs translators anymore”
- “Clients change all the time”
 - “I have a strong record”
 - “I have what it takes”
 - “It is natural for markets to shift”



1

- 
- **Planning and Goal Setting**

Planning and Goal Setting



Clarity beats complexity



Smaller steps reduce resistance



Plans reflect capacity



Review with compassion

Process summary

- What you know
- How you feel about it
- What specific steps you are planning

- “Diving in” with random activities is rarely effective

Actions you can take

Review

- New subject matter/fields of the past year.
- Projects that were especially interesting, rewarding, challenging etc.
- Changes to user profiles

Nudge

- Past clients who haven't been in touch
- Upbeat message to send out.
- Search records for past client contacts and names.
- News to share

Network

- Contact your network to indicate your availability for new projects.
- Make list(s) of people you can reach out to.
- Step up your visibility in social media platforms.

Who's in your network?



Fellow linguists

past projects, online contacts,
conferences...



People in other fields

University contacts, co-workers,
relatives, former clients



Clients

Project managers, individual
clients, departments



Mentors & teachers

Source and target culture

Are you easy to find?

Technical Skills

Fine Art
 Drawing & Painting
 Portrait
 Illustration / Digital Illustration
 Video Editing
 Photography
 Storyboard

Pencil & Paper ★★★★★
 Adobe Photoshop CS5 ★★★★★
 Adobe Illustrator CS5 ★★★★★

Final Cut Pro ★★★★★
 Adobe Premiere ★★★★★
 After Effects ★★★★★

Logic Pro ★★★★★
 Adobe SoundBooth ★★★★★

Work Experience

HOW . Multimedia
 Torres Vedras, Portugal
 Full-Time Video Editor
 Mar. 2011 - Aug. 2011

Caran d'Ache (Scriptus)
 Freelancer
 Promotor & Product Demonstrator
 Jan. 2007 - Dec. 2010

Duran Castaibert Fine Art School
 Fine Art & Illustration Tutor
 Part Time & Full-Time
 Sep. 2005 - Jan. 2008

Contacts

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 Email sssmog@gmail.com
 Web <http://cargocollective.com/ssmog>
<http://vimeo.com/monicagomes>

Mónica Gomes

I'm a portuguese illustrator highly motivated and passionate about art in general. I have a fine art background that took me into illustration, which later on, with the use of technoloav also took me to work with

Attention-getters:

- Updated resume (design, color).
- Specialization
- Updated information
- Email signature
- Current profiles
- Participation in discussions

What are you known for?



Strengths

- What makes your translation or interpreting work **stand out**?
- What **feedback** do you get for your work?
- What **secondary skills** can you offer (e.g. communication, time management, spotting errors).



Experience

- List the **fields** you have the most experience in.
- **Projects** that greatly interested you, research you loved, articles you read.
- **Experts** you listen to, **events** you attend.

Specialist vs. generalist



Specialists:

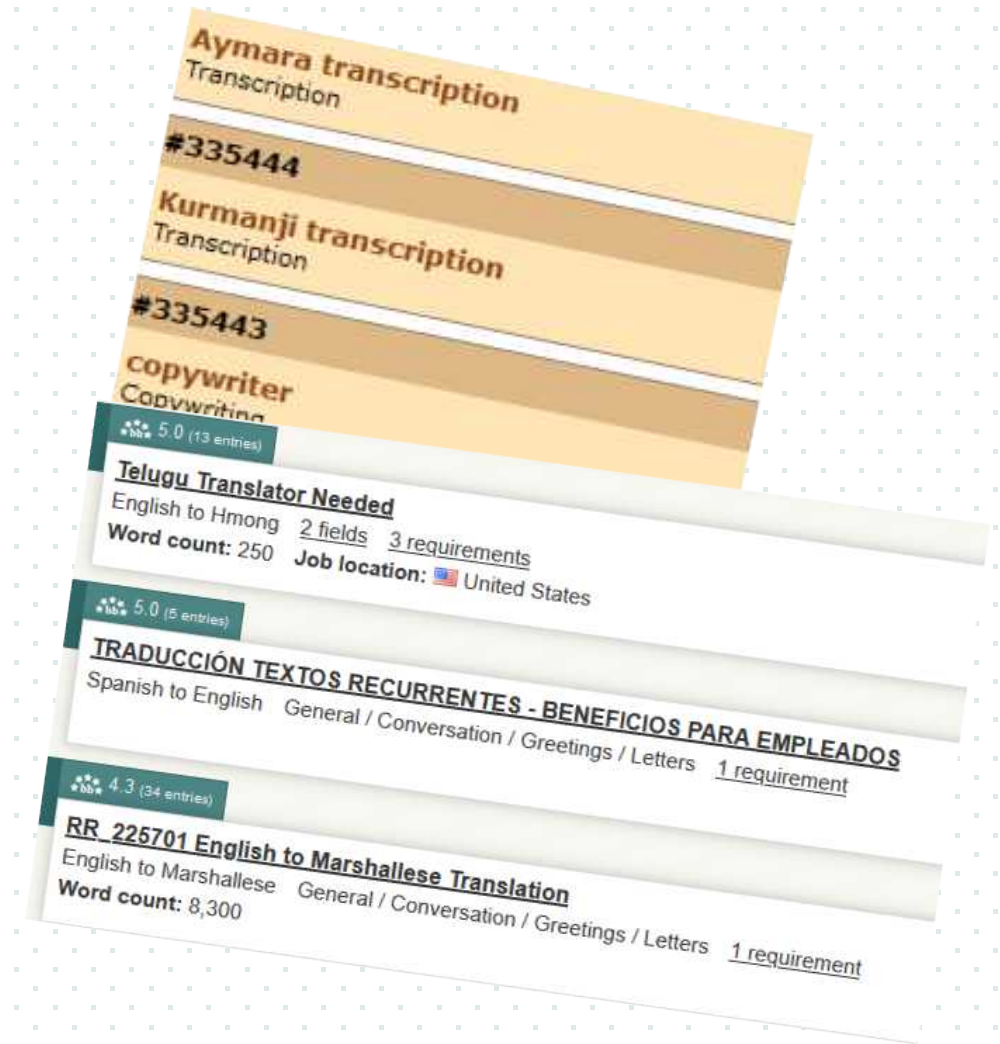
- Easier to market
- Targeted search
- Command better rates
- Easier to describe
- Inspire trust

Actions to avoid



Anything driven by desperation:

- Spending money on advertising, boosting etc.
- Buying a membership in a freelance job portal
- Frantic posting across all channels
- Catastrophizing
- “Open to work” (LinkedIn)



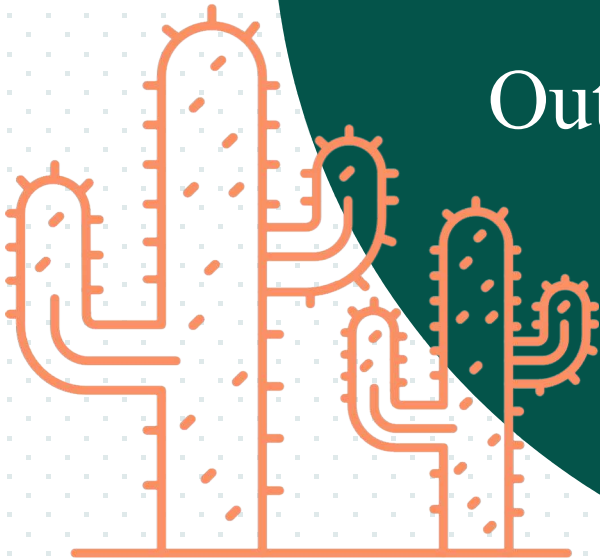
Brief discussion: Planning your own goals for increasing your business outreach

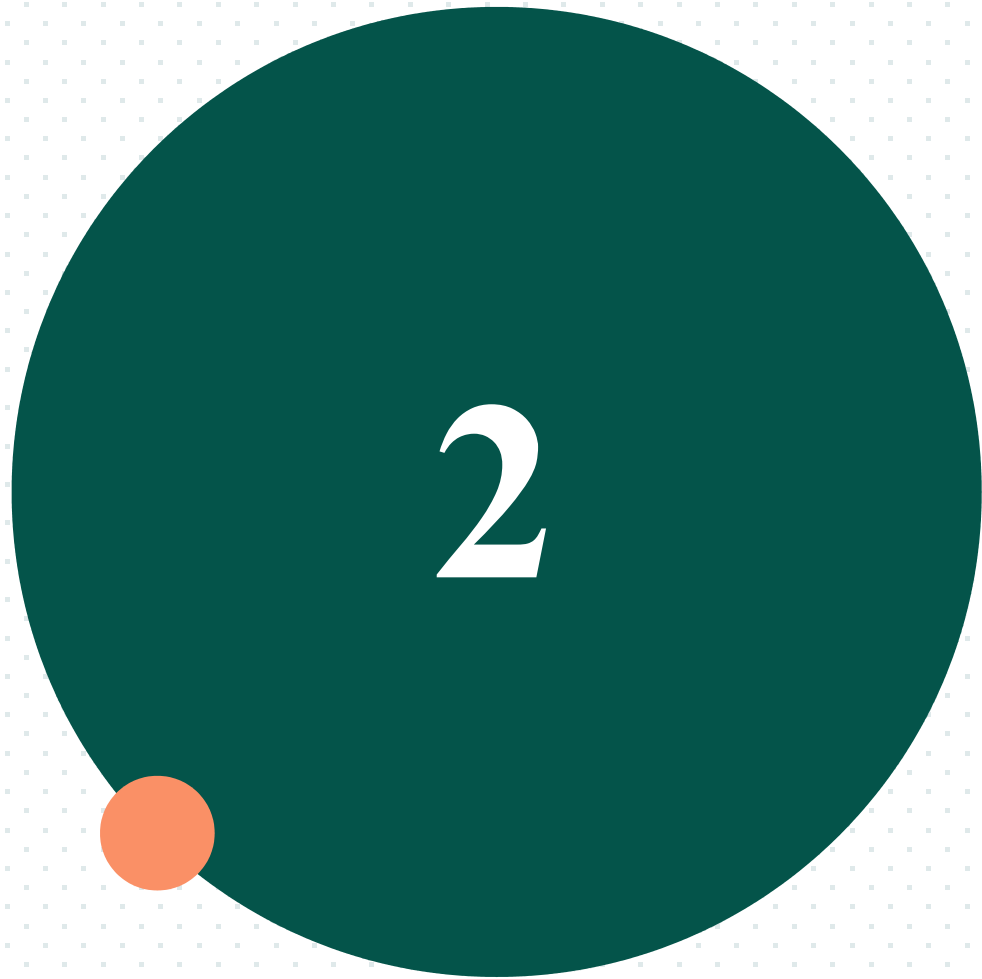
- Steps to take
- What you need to prioritize
- How a structured approach differs from taking random actions



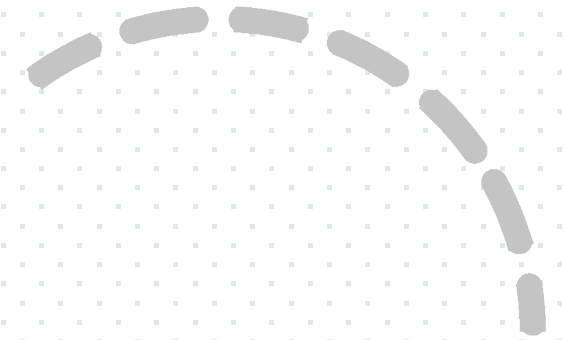
II. Minimizing future dry spells

Outreach is part of business

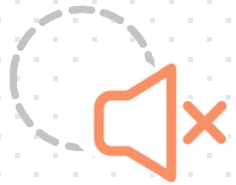




- **Handling motivation and burnout**



Motivation and Burnout



Sustainability beats urgency



Systems matter more than mood



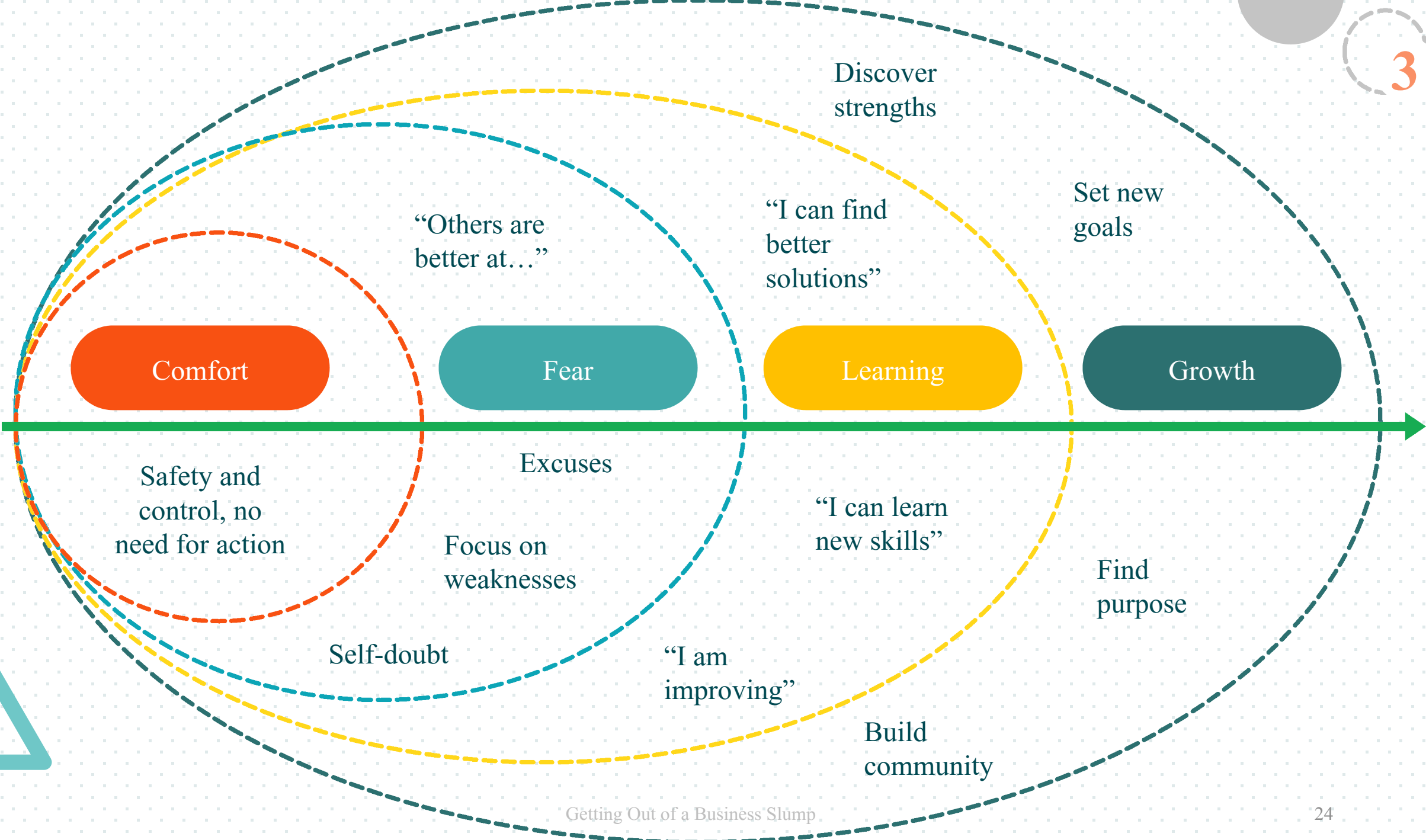
Motivation is never constant



Simplify before pushing harder

Process summary

- Consistency = planning for lower motivation
- Structured systems are the foundation of habits
- Warning signs of burnout



“Marketing” is not what you do in a panic when your inbox is empty

Continuous outreach reminds people of your services

- Collect testimonials
- Keep communicating with clients
- Share positive learning experiences



What you need to know about referrals

Referrals are a two-way street

- The best assignments in the industry are never posted anywhere
- Trust matters



Make it your business to refer colleagues

- When a job is not a good fit for you
- When clients are looking for different language combinations
- When there is an opportunity to educate clients

How NMTIA can help

Find your crowd:

- Local groups
- Forum discussions
- Opportunity to build a (positive!) reputation
- Learning events

Get involved:

- Even a small role means exposure and new contacts
- Micro-volunteering makes you part of the conversation

Ask!

- People choose association membership because they value their profession and want to promote it
- Program managers and association leaders are happy to answer your questions
- Resources are generated with you in mind

**BUILDING A REPUTATION IS NOT
AN INSTANTANEOUS PROCESS**

Show me the money



Business finances

- Project payments are not your salary
- Build a financial cushion to prepare for slow times
- Know your annual cash cycle
- Find effective ways to anticipate expenses

Networking continued

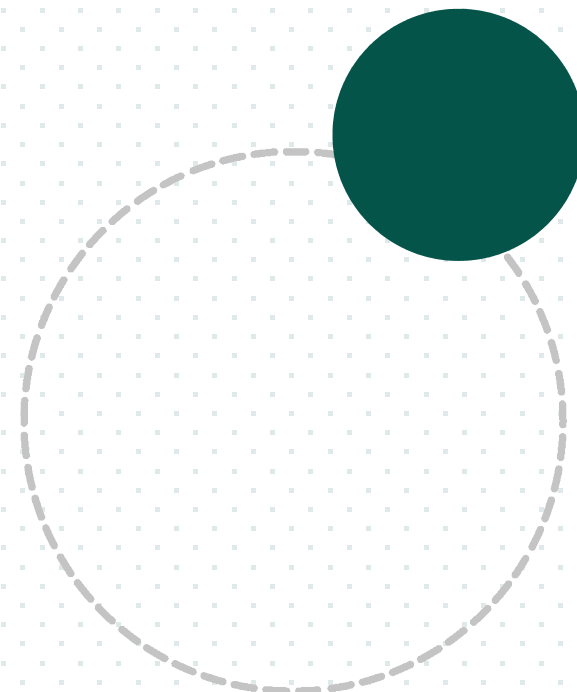
A few insights learned over the years:

- Numbers are less relevant than true connection
- Reach across language pairs, professions, industries
- Understand what your clients do
- “Take my contact info with you”
- Follow-up with event attendees



ASK QUESTIONS

A changing industry landscape



Telling stories about others

- They are doing great
- I am the only person who isn't finding enough work
- There must be something wrong with the way I work
- Others are having an easy time networking
- Everyone seems to know each other
- I don't even know what to say

Opportunities and trends (in %)

	2022	2023	2024	2025
Translation	75	80	60	50
Academic editing	5	10	25	25
Interpreting	20	10	0	0
Copywriting	0	0	15	25



Continuous improvement

New applications for language skills

- Audiovisual translation as an example
- Need for good writing and dialog
- Emerging fields

Mentoring

- Opportunities to work one on one to explore a specific topic
- Opportunities and learning are perspectives of growth

Learning

- Professionals stay engaged in their field
- Openness to learning = growth



Small wins

High-stake areas

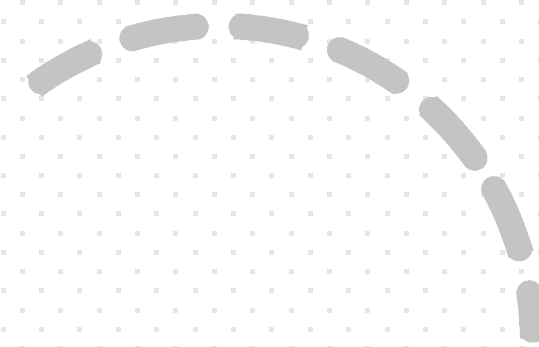
- Legal
- Medical
- Regulatory
- Contracts
- Consent forms

Nuanced materials

- Marketing
- Creative localization
- Culturally sensitive topics
- Brand voice

Interpersonal areas

- Direct communication
- Advocacy



- **Maintaining focus**

Maintaining Focus



Structured environment beats willpower



One clear focus is more effective than many



Reduce cognitive load



Leave a “restart note”

Process summary

- Prioritizing = ability to function at all speeds
- Planning should anticipate periods of low capacity

Conclusion

Dry spells are unpleasant and scary, but they also provide the necessary incentive to reenergize your outreach efforts and to be more purposeful in your learning.



3

Business doesn't just happen – it reflects the energy you invest.




Questions?

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“Wisdom is not a product of schooling but of the lifelong attempt to acquire it.”

A. Einstein