



Painstorming

VIRTUAL HOT SEAT

Painstorming is the cornerstone skill of Sales Safari and the 30x500 system. Now that you've learned how to DO it, learn how to check your work and see how you did.

*Study the Painstorming practice work done by other students — newbies, just like you! — and pay attention to the coaching we gave that helped **them** improve.*

See if you spot what we spot. Then take what you've learned and apply it to your own work!

Maximize your skills!

by learning along with your peers... virtually!

Learn how to level up by comparing your work to these students — who are newbies, just like you! — and the questions & feedback they received firsthand from us, just like we were all in the same workshop together.

Test yourself to see what we see. Ask the hard questions. Then take what you learn and apply it to your own work!

Here's how:

1. Read the following 2 *real* students' Safari notes
2. Compare both students' Safari notes to your own notes from the exercise
3. Use our Hot Seat questions to learn through critique.
4. Finally: Use the Hot Seat Cheat Sheet for your own Safari notes (today, and in future painstorming!)

safari Notes **Craig**

1

Source: <http://bit.ly/30x500-safari-2>

Doubts

- new to freelancing
- Worried about time spending non-billable time
- Curious - wants to know about how much time other people in the industry spend on paid work
- Wary of bringing more people on (too much time to manage)
- stress of over working
- how do i know that i am doing enough paid work? (what is "enough"?)
- Hourly rate high enough?
- Not working as many hours as others in the post

Work

- task switching - loss of productivity when changing gears every 15-20 min
- Paid discovery
- Seed planting - looking for new work

Suggestions

- Looking for a balance to schedule
- Bill for meetings/maintenance
- Bill for any work that adds value
- Get clients on maintenance plans (rollover hours?)

- Time tracking app - keep running tab of client time
- Have clients log tickets in redmine
- Hold firm in your price - find the right client

Themes

- Too much time spent on admin (emails, calls, chat, managing contractor)
- No time to spend on non-billable things (dishes, personal website, etc)
- Growing pains of having to manage employee
- work-life balance is important
- Exercise/getting up is important

Safari Notes: Jonah

1

Source: <http://bit.ly/30x500-safari-2>

OP is a new freelancer.

Nervous about how much non-billable stuff he/she is always doing

Seeking reassurance that that's okay, or that it won't always be this way, or that there's some way to fix it. Am I doing it right? How do I live this way?

OP spends recurring non-billable time on (at least):

- * dishes
- * exercise
- * finding new clients
- * improving website

First commenter doesn't have time for any of those! Spends recurring non-billable time on:

- * responding to emails
- * answering calls
- * Skype/GChat
- * writing proposals
- * managing a contractor

Second commenter: bill for that stuff. Get clients on "maintenance" plans.

Use a time tracker that makes it easy to keep track of time per client

Pain: juggling lots of different clients on any given day

Idea: call figuring out what to do "client discovery", bill for it

Pain: sitting in a chair all day. "Picked wrong career" in a way. Wishes he could be on his feet more. Being in an office all day every day, he didn't like himself. Worse in winter (less daylight).

Pain: tired of looking at the damn screen for hours on end

I know that seed-planting pays off in the future, but am I doing enough paid work right now?

Idea: migrate between coffee shops. Willing to pay \$20 every day for the change of scenery.

VIRTUAL HOT SEAT

put your best thinking cap on!

- A** What are the 3 big differences between Craig's notes and Jonah's?
- B** Imagine 30 days from now, sitting down to do something with this data — write a blog post, say, or design a product — whose notes would be more actionable? Why?
- C** What's the difference between **organizing** and **synthesizing**? Which should you stick to while on Safari? Why?

Real answers from real students:

A What are the 3 big difference between Craig's notes and Jonah's?

Jonah has far more specific detail

"swimming in unbilled work" captures emotion

Craig analyzed underlying themes

Craig recorded the suggestions from the thread, Jonah wrote down his own "ideas"

Jonah: Craig organized his findings, I just went linearly down the page and wrote as I noticed

TEACHER DISCUSSION

A

One data source, two students — and **two totally** different sets of Safari notes. That's why skill & practice matter. Here are the 3 biggest differences between the two, in order of importance:

1. Jonah took note of specific (crispy) detail from the actual source data. He wrote down *direct quotes along with supporting details*. Craig paraphrased, editorialized, and noted his *interpretations* instead.
2. Craig reported the recommendations other people in the thread offered to the original poster -- he repeated only what was said, data from the source. Jonah started fantasizing about ideas immediately, noting them along with the pains he synthesized.
3. Jonah wrote his notes from top to bottom as he read the page from top to bottom. Craig organized pains and other Safari observations into categories.

Real answers from real students:

- B** Imagine 30 days from now, sitting down to do something with this data — write a blog post, say, or design a product — whose notes would be more actionable? Why?

Craig's suggestions [direct from the safari source] could all be blog topics

*"how to find time to do the dishes" is more inspiring to write from than
"the stress of overworking"*

TEACHER DISCUSSION

B Imagine 30 days from now... whose notes would be more actionable?

This was a trick question: the answer is “*Both sets of notes, together.*” Not that they’re ideal, even together — but they’re stronger than apart.

Here’s a set of rules for making writing blog posts (and later, designing products) as easy as it *can* be:

1. Use specific language from your audience – crispy descriptions and jargon – so your audience will know you’re talking to them.
2. Hard data and examples make your descriptions unquestionable.
3. Exact quotes are much more persuasive than clever phrasing and prose.
4. Describe how it feels by channeling the emotions of people you observe.

Analysis, synthesizing, interpretation, thematic elements... all are super useful.

But not if they’re done too early! Which leads to our last question.

Real answers from real students:

C What's the difference between **organizing** and **synthesizing**? Which should you stick to on Safari? Why?

synthesizing = adding your own material + background

organizing is restructuring what was posted, and synthesizing is getting to the bottom of it

re. synthesizing - be careful of doing it too soon - there's pain in them thar quotes

Jonah: I felt like the value of the exercise, for me, was mindfully NOT rephrasing or changing what I was seeing. I was imagining talking to those people and trying to say back to them what I was hearing

TEACHER DISCUSSION

C Organizing vs synthesizing? Which should you stick to, on Safari? Why?

This question has an easy answer: **Stick to organizing.**

Real data is better than any speculation. You want real data, nothing but, and *lots* of it. That means real quotes — straight from the mouth's (and keyboards) of your audience. Save their exact words: complaints, suggestions, thoughts, opinions, industry terminology.

The best thing about Safari is this: Once you gather a huge pile of real data, the themes and patterns will start to scream at you. You won't need to hypothesize. They will make themselves known.

But if you start synthesizing too early, you will lose out on the actual data that would reveal those trends. And you'll end up trying to serve a customer that only exists in your imagination.

You'll learn how to synthesize *without fantasizing* later in class!

Safari Notes: Amy & Alex

1

Source: <http://bit.ly/30x500-safari-2>

- new freelancer
- constantly fretting
- worried about time spent doing things that don't actually pay bills
 - doing dishes
 - exercising
 - searching for clients
 - improving website
- "how many hours a day do you spend on paid work for clients?"
 - and what kind of freelance work do you do?

"Holy crap! You guys are working a lot more hours than I am. Glad I asked!"

- "far too much time spent..."
- "I love helping people out but I'm just not all that motivated to sit in a chair all day. I picked the wrong career in a way."
- managing full time contractor, pushing work to him
- growing pains thing
- wary of employing too many people too early

- "Things like dishes, exercising, improving my website, etc. are pretty much last on the totem pole."

- Recommendations:

- "You've gotta bill for that stuff if you are going to survive."
 - billing for meetings (includes emails, calls, etc)
 - billing for maintenance (bug fixing)
- "I call it client discovery. Finding out what the client ACTUALLY wants takes time, on their dime."

ANALYZE YOUR OWN WORK

how do your safari notes compare?

- A** What was in the Safari examples (Craig's, Jonah's, and ours) but **missing from your notes**?
What was in your Safari notes but **not in the examples**?
- B** If you knew you'd need to write a helpful blog post in the future using **ONLY** your notes, nothing else... would you have **enough detail** to write from?
- C** Did you start to **organize** your notes into groupings that are related? Or did you start to draw conclusions too early, and **synthesize** into themes and ideas?

You have a new ability!

And you'll never be able to look at online discussions again without seeing pain everywhere.

By Painstorming more threads, and gathering more evidence, you'll start to notice patterns in what people say and do. And that's just from day 1! You've got lots more Safari skills to learn from the rest of 30x500... and lots more structured practice, too.

In the mean time, any time you read a thread is a good time to Safari. The only way to get better is to keep practicing. You might feel like "I suck at this!" for quite a long while. Don't let that stop you — **this feeling is normal**. Safari is a totally new kind of skill for almost everyone, and that makes it hard. So keep at it!

We put together a cheat sheet to help you evaluate your Painstorming process while you practice. If you start feeling lost or unsure if you're doing it right, you can use this cheat sheet to know where you can improve, or if you just need to keep at it!

1 Painstorming Cheat Sheet

Try practicing Painstorming in 30-60 minute chunks. After each session, use this checklist to review your work.

Did you remember to:

- Include **SPECIFIC examples** of your audience members' pains problems, concerns, questions, etc?
- Include **direct quotes**, with supporting details?
- Stick to the present facts — to **avoid** jumping to conclusions? **Avoid** idea quicksand? **Avoid** prescribing your own solutions?
- Spend just a tiny amount of time at the end, if any time at all, **grouping together notes** that say similar, or related things?