THE PLAYBOOK MEMBERSHIP

BUSINESS | MODULE ELEVEN

Managing Income Fluctuations

WHEN TO EXPECT SLOW MONTHS

this is an industry average

freelancer average:

Time of year	Typical demand	Why
January–March	Very busy	New budgets, new marketing plans, annual campaigns start.
April–June	Busy	Product launches, spring campaigns, businesses preparing for summer.
July–August	Often slower	Decision-makers are on holiday, especially in Europe. Fewer new client signings.
September–November	Peak	Businesses ramp up for Black Friday, holidays, Q4 targets, end-of-year budgets.
December	Mixed	Early December is busy for campaigns; after mid-month, new work usually slows until January.

Looking at 3 years of data:

Slowest: Sept-Oct
Busiest: Dec-Jan & April-May

HOW TO HANDLE THE SLOW SEASONS

planning ahead

Everything that helped me:

HAVING SET SPACES PER MONTH & NOT CLOSING DOWN YOUR BOOKS.

- Keep your books open all year round. Booking in advance is a GOOD thing.

- Book clients in for specicfic months to line up with business events/launches. E.G “I launch in November, great, lets take a deposit to secure the SMM space for September onwards.”

- You need to know how many SMM clinets you can handle at once. You need to know how many projects you can do per month. Then advertise “XYZ spaces for July”

- A waitlist. No retainer client is forever. Have a waitlist built if you’re fully booked so you have a potential client there waiting to swap out with someone who no longer wants to extend.

Everything that helped me:

YOU DO NOT SPEND EVERYTHING YOU EARN.

- Every single month without fail I put away money into my emergency fund for these slow months.

Add up your essential bills that you pay for every month and put away:
- Minimum: 3 months of essential expenses.
- Comfortable: 6 months.
- Very secure: 9 to 12 months, especially if projects are high-value but infrequent.

Everything that helped me:

YOU DON'T EARN AS MUCH AS YOU THINK YOU DO

- You earned 2k this month, congrats. It's now going on Taxes, bills, business expenses.
- Mindset change: Some people spend money to look wealthy. Others spend money to become wealthy. So ignore what you see on socials.
- Only because your income has increased. Your spending doesn't your investing does and your saving does.
- Starting focusing on Profit Margin by reducing monthly expenses. Whats better? 10K month but ony taking home 2k or 10k months and taking home 6k?

Everything that helped me:

PRE PLANNING OFFERS AND DISCOUNTS

- Summer slow? Offer a summer content bootcamp to boost income.
- Summer slow? Tease the biggest summer discount you've ever done.
- Summer slow? Launch a smaller ticket offer 1 month before hand to increase income.
- Plan all of these ahead of time. Give yourself 2 weeks to 1 month of teasing these events.

Everything that helped me:

INCREASE VISIBILITY

- Slow period means focusing on you.
- With saved money, can you invest in ads during this period?
- With the extra time, can you create more content for the coming weeks/months and create ahead to prepare for the next busy period.
- Updating website/SEO to increase your chances of being found?
- I always use this time to tweak and finetune things in my business.

P.S

Slow periods are 100% normal.

You are not failing, this is part of it.

HOW TO HANDLE INCOME FLUCTUATIONS

the stressful stuff

Everything that helped me:

STOP TRADING TIME FOR MONEY.

Set prices for set services / packages only. Do not charge hourly as that fluctuates often.
And don't have so many packages for each service. 1 or 2 is fine.

Everything that helped me:

HAVE A SET AVAILABILITY PER MONTH OR QUATER

Only have a set amount of spaces for each service per month.
For example, 2 branding projects at 4k each, thats 8k a month.

Everything that helped me:

HAVE A RETAINER OPTION

Social media management is a retainer at 3 to 6 months.
Could you also offer shoot days as a retainer?

If you're a brand designer could you:
Offer Art direction on a 3 to 6 months basis (shoot and campaign planning)
Or Content direction on a 3 to 6 month

If you're a web designer could you offer:
Website updates and maintenace on a 3 to 6 month retainer?

Or a bootcamp? coaching? membership? A service that is reoccuring for a preiod of time.

Retainer services help MASSIVELY for income fluctuations.
P.S. Take payment upfront every month.

In Stripe set clients up as a subscription!

Everything that helped me:

UPSELL OPTIONS TO EXISTING CLIENTS

For example, for my branding clients only, I offer an add on retainer service for Content Direction, essentially urging them to stay on with me.

Having add on services that are only allowed to current clients not only improves chances of getting people to sign with your original service 1st, but also keeps the income coming in for longer.

UNDERSTAND WHY FLUCTUATIONS HAPPEN

and how to measure them

NORMAL SLOW MONTH

- Fewer enquiries in August.
- Previous clients are on holiday.
- Every year looks similar.

BUSINESS PROBLEM

- Enquiries are down continously.
- Getting website traffic but not converting.
- DMS/Emails dried up.

If your business has been operating for longer than a year and you can't say the exact figure you earned November last year, there's an issue.

TRACK YOUR OWN SEASONS

- Summer is on average, slowest of our industry but for me, its more autumn.
- If there’s a pattern year on year, you know you don’t have to panic.

MEASURE YOUR PIPELINE INSTEAD OF YOUR BANK ACCOUNT

Most freelancers only look at: "I made £2k this month."

Instead track:
Number of enquiries
Proposal conversion rate
Projects booked
Revenue booked for future months

Sometimes income is low because you're delivering old work.
Sometimes income is low because your pipeline is empty.
Those are two completely different problems.

MINDSET SHIFT: CELEBRATE BOOKED REVENUE, NOT JUST PAID

Example:
Today your bank account has:
£2,000

But you've already booked:
- £5k for next month
- £4k for October
- £3k retainer

You're actually in a much stronger position than someone with £10k today and nothing booked for next month.

CLIENT CONCENTRATION RISK

A.K.A, Don’t put all your eggs in one basket.

If one client is 60% of your income, you don't have stable income.
You have one job.

Never rely on one client to pay all your bills.

YOUR PLAYBOOK PRACTICE

Action Task

YOUR PLAYBOOK PRACTICE

Take 10–15 minutes to practice:

Build your Income Safety Net!

1. Add up your essential monthly expenses (rent, bills, food, insurance, etc.).
2. Multiply by 6. (6 MONTHS worth of savings)
3. Check how much you currently have saved so you can see how much more you need to save to get to your goal.
4. Set a non-negotiable rule: Every payment that lands in your account, 10% goes straight into your emergency fund before you spend a penny.

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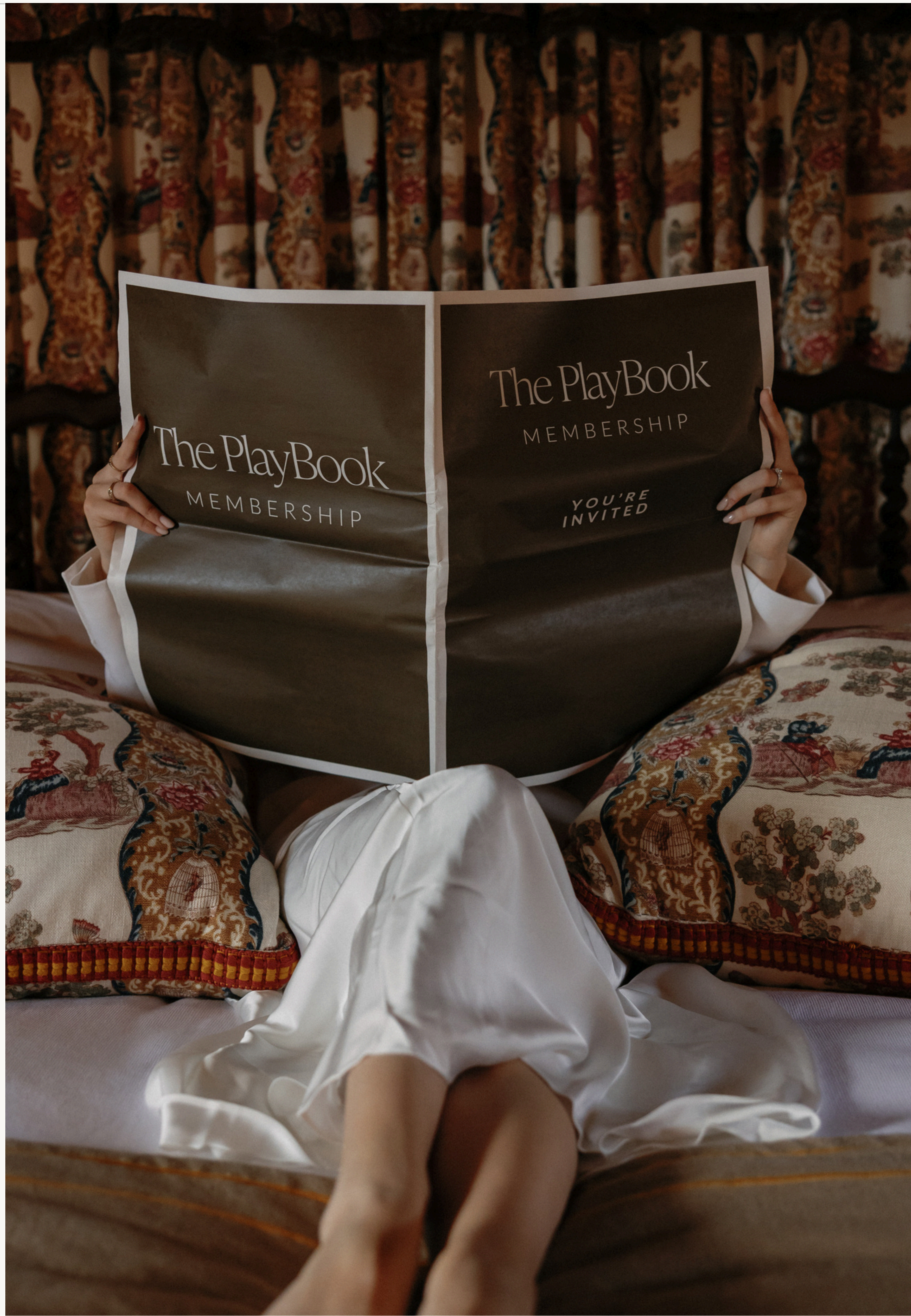

TURN THE PAIGE

and follow The PlayBook

NEXT UP:DECISION-MAKING AS A BUSINESS OWNER