

Freelance AV Technicians: How to Get Steady Work



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In today's increasingly digital world, communication is key. What's more, communication is continuously growing and evolving. The demand for high-quality, engaging audiovisual solutions is increasing across all professional industries. This is good news for freelance AV technicians, whose innovation, flexibility, and efficiency are prized along with their specialized skillsets.

When people think of audiovisual services, what comes to mind might not cover the entire scope of what AV technicians actually do. AV solutions are integral to corporate environments, institutional settings, government operations, and more. To stay relevant and gain an edge in a competitive economy, all types of companies readily acknowledge the need for innovative communication and engaging branding. This means there's a significant demand for updated AV equipment, high-quality installation and maintenance services, and reliable, skilled freelance technicians.

So life should be good for technicians in the AV field, right? Yes—however, audiovisual technicians face particular professional challenges when working freelance.

Understanding the Challenges for AV Freelancers

There are many benefits to working freelance, for both project managers and technicians. Flexibility and scalability are highly valuable in today's work culture, while freedom, autonomy, and variety are desirable assets to freelancers.

On the other hand, freelancing, especially for AV techs, presents some unique challenges too. The ultimate (and at times difficult) goal of securing steady work is not the only issue to overcome. Some other challenges include:



Getting started if you're new to the industry

Since it's based heavily on reputation and positive references, breaking into the AV industry can be a tall order for a new AV technician. Project managers must get to know you first.



Showcasing skills and certifications

After managing to break in, AV technicians then spend their careers building up portfolios of certifications, specialized skills, and valuable references. However, they often have no efficient and accessible way to showcase this information to project managers.



Administration, invoicing, and receiving timely payment

It's a common lament for freelancers: Chasing down payment is stressful. After the tedious process of generating and submitting invoices along with other administrative tasks, freelancers are still not guaranteed timely payments—especially without a proper work order or contract in place.



Development and access to affordable training

Freelancers need to continually update their skills and certifications if they want to attract and be hired by desirable companies. However, access to the proper training, development programs, and tools is not always easy or affordable.



Not being provided with the proper tools to complete a job

It can be difficult to complete a job as a freelancer if you are not provided with all of the right documentation (such as flow drawings or a scope of the work expected). This can put freelancers at a considerable risk and jeopardize the job at hand.



Receiving blame for poor job performance

Due to many factors, oftentimes out of the freelancer's control, a company with poor practices might blame the technician for bad execution or workmanship. These instances can greatly affect a freelancer's ability to maintain a good reputation and steady work.

It's important to understand the cause and effect of the challenges mentioned above if you want to pursue a successful career as a freelance AV technician with steady work. After all, being unsure of when your next job will come in can be stressful and even distracting. It will definitely heighten every other potential challenge. The peace of mind that comes along with steady work is priceless in and of itself.

Overcoming the Challenges for AV Freelancers

Though there are challenges to securing steady work as an AV freelancer, it is also an incredibly rewarding and lucrative career choice. Understanding the impediments is the first step toward overcoming them and achieving your goals. Here are some tips to help you along the way.



Be Prepared

If you're new to the audiovisual industry, new to freelancing, or both, it's important to ensure you're adequately informed. Making the leap can be frightening and difficult for those who are unprepared or have unrealistic expectations. Do a bit of research and make connections with other individuals who are freelancing in the AV industry—they might be willing to offer some guidance and share best practices.

When getting your start in AV freelancing, one way to ensure you secure steady work is to be prepared for unsteady work—at least initially. Arrange your life and your finances to accommodate a potential slow start. Alleviating some of that burden will also allow you to select your jobs accordingly. The desperation of being new to the industry can lead budding AV freelancers to take jobs with companies with poor reputations for unprofessionalism and poor business practices. You run the risk of being paid late (if at all) and racking up negative reviews and feedback. This can end your freelance career before it's even gotten off the ground.

Investing time and resources into a little preparation right out of the gate can help you get a steady flow of work later on.



Know Where to Look

As an AV technician, you need to know where to access relevant job postings if you want to acquire steady work. Making use of more standard employment tools and conducting your search on general job boards might occasionally turn up relevant results—but they'll be few and far between. You must be more efficient.

Focus your job search on websites and online marketplaces that cater specifically to global AV companies and independent AV contractors (freelance technicians, programmers, design engineers, drafters, IT). This is the most effective way to access relevant job postings from top companies.



Showcase Your Best Assets

The AV industry can be competitive. You want to put your best foot forward and showcase your unique skills, certifications, and positive recommendations to be noticed and set yourself apart from the rest. After all, your hard-earned certifications are often difficult and time consuming—so show them off! If you don't, it might be even more difficult to secure steady contracts. Finding a way to put your best assets on display is essential—especially for newer freelancers who haven't yet built steady relationships with AV project managers.

Do some research and find an online platform for AV professionals. After signing up, create a profile page to highlight your experience, qualities, and expertise. This is a great way for beginners to make an impression in the industry. Often you can upload certifications directly to the platform, and as contracts start rolling in, you will accumulate feedback, ratings, and references that will make it infinitely easier to secure steady work going forward. Project managers will quickly recognize your dedication and competence.



Manage Invoicing

It can be difficult for some professionals to lose the security of regular paycheques or fixed salaries when transitioning to freelance. It can be challenging to adjust to being responsible for generating accurate, timely invoices and managing extra administrative responsibilities associated with receiving payment for your labour. Unfortunately, many freelancers across all industries have struggled with receiving timely payments at one point or another, and fail to secure proper work orders and contracts.

It's important to create a system for yourself so you don't lose track of what you're owed or forget to manage any administrative tasks associated with payment. Even individuals who prefer managing tasks on paper should consider transitioning to a more organized and effective tech solution. Try using an app to generate your invoices to ensure no mistakes are made and that all the necessary information is included. There are also online solutions that facilitate the hiring and managing of freelance resources and ensure payments to freelancers are made accurately and on time.

And it cannot be stated enough: Ensure that the AV company you're working for provides a work order! If you want to maintain a flow of steady work, you must maintain a high level of professionalism—that means protecting your payments by making smart partnerships and managing your invoicing and administrative duties properly.

JOIN AV JUNCTION

Whether you're an AV technician, programmer, design engineer, or drafter, not knowing where your next job will be can be stressful. You're a skilled worker, but breaking into AV industry and building a strong reputation is challenging.

The AV Junction is where AV companies and independent AV freelancers connect. Find more work and enjoy the freedom to choose projects. Showcase your skills and gain a stellar reputation in the industry. Get paid faster and more securely. Join AV Junction for free today.

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