

Books

'The Freelancer's Bible,' by Sara Horowitz

By **Ibby Caputo** February 7, 2013

THE FREELANCER'S BIBLE

Everything You Need to Know to Have the Career of Your Dreams — On Your Terms

By Sara Horowitz

Workman. 486 pp. Paperback, \$17.95

"[The Freelancer's Bible](#)," a mammoth guidebook on how to enjoy a successful freelance career, serves as an orientation for what author Sara Horowitz calls the "federation of the unaffiliated." A champion of independent workers, Horowitz writes, "It's important to realize that freelancing is its own animal, entirely different from regular paid work, with its own mindset and methods."

"The Freelancer's Bible" is a self-help book packed with useful tips and tools sure to benefit new and seasoned workers. There's advice on what terms to include in a contract, how to plan for complicated self-employment taxes, and how to negotiate intellectual property ownership. The book also includes recommendations on how to set up your work space to minimize distractions and how to network with people you already know. No aspect of a freelancer's life is insignificant to Horowitz.

A MacArthur "genius" fellow, she started the Freelancers Union, an organization that advocates for the rights of 42 million independent workers — about a third of the U.S. workforce. Despite their growing number, freelancers face serious challenges, including finding their own health insurance and adjusting to the ebb and flow of project-to-project income. "The Freelancer's Bible" breaks down these daunting issues into manageable pieces. Horowitz suggests that freelancers think of their work as though it were a financial portfolio that has to be kept diversified to regulate the ups and downs of episodic income:

"Blue chips" are clients "that you maintain and monitor carefully as sources of regular income."

"Growth investments" are "the growing edge of your business" that enriches your client base.

“New ventures” are the ideas and relationships you cultivate to create future opportunities.

“Advocacy Alert” sidebars are scattered throughout “The Freelancer’s Bible,” hinting at the guide’s advocacy agenda. One such alert talks about “the Client Scorecard,” an online tool to publicly rate companies and return some power to the independent worker. But, Horowitz adds, “what’s really needed are laws protecting freelancers from nonpayment by punishing offenders, just as employees are legally protected from employers who default on their obligation to pay.”

Horowitz’s rallying cry is inspiring, and her authority on all things freelance makes this a worthwhile reference for the independent worker. Whether by choice or necessity, more and more Americans are joining the ranks of the unaffiliated worker. In “The Freelancer’s Bible,” Horowitz lets people know they’re not alone; they’re part of a growing and potentially powerful movement.

On Saturday, Feb. 9, at 6 p.m., Sara Horowitz will be at Politics and Prose Bookstore, 5015 Connecticut Ave. NW, Washington.

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