

PIFS E-COMMERCE
BUSINESS TOOLKITS

**USING E-COMMERCE
TO OUTSOURCE BUSINESS
SERVICES ONLINE
IN THE PACIFIC**

A guide for Pacific businesses on
outsourcing services using online tools



CONTENTS

FOREWORD FROM PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM	4
SECTION 1: WHY MOVE ONLINE? WHY NOW?	5
SECTION 2: WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT OPTIONS TO GO ONLINE?	6
SECTION 3: WHAT COSTS SHOULD YOU CONSIDER TO TAKE YOUR BUSINESS ONLINE?	8
SECTION 4: GETTING NOTICED ONLINE.	9
SECTION 5: PAYING ONLINE.	10
SECTION 6: COMPLYING WITH LAWS & REGULATIONS.	10
INDUSTRY REFERENCE GROUP MEMBERS	11



FOREWORD FROM PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM



Over the past few years, E-commerce has become one of the focus areas for the Pacific Islands Forum. We are working hard on this space because we believe that E-commerce has real potential to help Pacific businesses overcome their structural challenges and gain a competitive advantage over their global competitors.

Our activities and those of our partners are carried out under the umbrella of the [Pacific E-commerce Initiative](#) and guided by the directions of the [Pacific Regional E-commerce Strategy and Roadmap](#).

As a regional organisation, our job is to help our members achieve their objectives by working together. In many instances, working together can help us save time and money and achieve better results. The Pacific Regional E-commerce Strategy and Roadmap requires that we work together to develop E-commerce skills for our small businesses. The preparation of business toolkits is a practical way to do so.

Based on a common methodology, which is how we work together, our toolkits have benefitted from the skills of local experts and business leaders who came together to ensure that each toolkit responds to the real needs of the target area and sector.

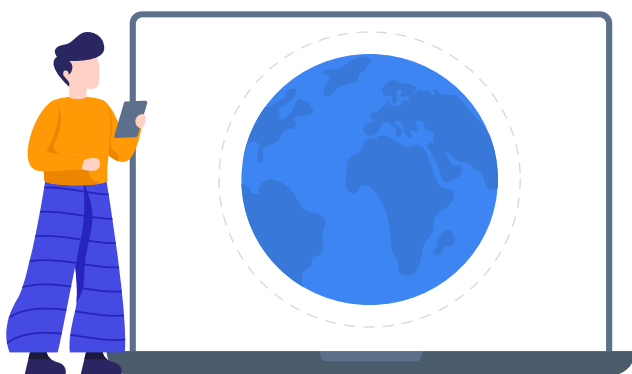
I salute this progressive public-private partnership and wish our small businesses success in their digital journey.

Zarak Khan

Director Programmes and Initiatives
Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat

SECTION 1:

WHY MOVE ONLINE? WHY NOW?

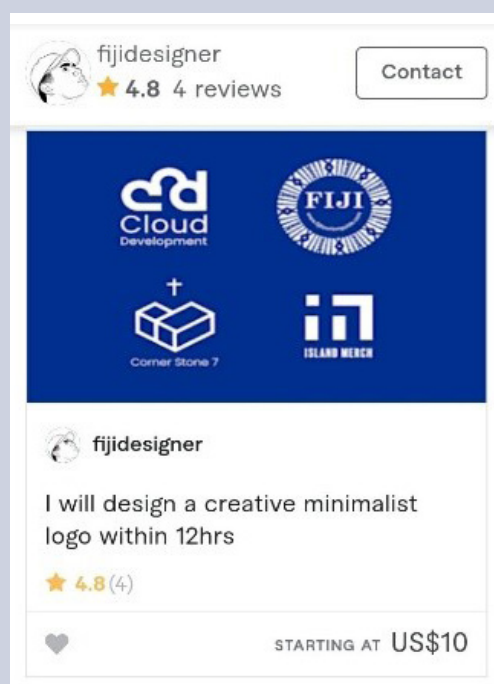


One of the advantages of moving from brick-and-mortar to e-commerce is accessing platforms offering high-quality and reasonably priced digitally enabled services. Before such platforms came into existence, certain services (ICT, design, marketing, writing & translation, finance & accounting, etc.) were difficult to find in Pacific Island Countries, often expensive, and of poor quality. The presence of platforms such as [Outsource Fiji](#), [Fiverr](#), [Upwork](#), [ClickWorker](#), and [Freelancer](#) add an essential dimension to e-commerce, particularly if your Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME) does not have easy in-country access to a suitable labour pool.

This guide helps Pacific businesses (buyers) that seek the services of regional and international freelancers. Less than a decade from today, the business landscape would have undergone such a substantial transformation toward e-commerce that using e-commerce platforms to access certain services will become a necessity rather than an option.

CASE STUDY: Advertising for a logo designer on Fiverr

Suppose your business has just been established in Tonga, and you are seeking a logo for your website. While developing the website with your website developer, you may advertise this micro-job on [Fiverr](#). You will need to create a business account and provide basic information about your business.

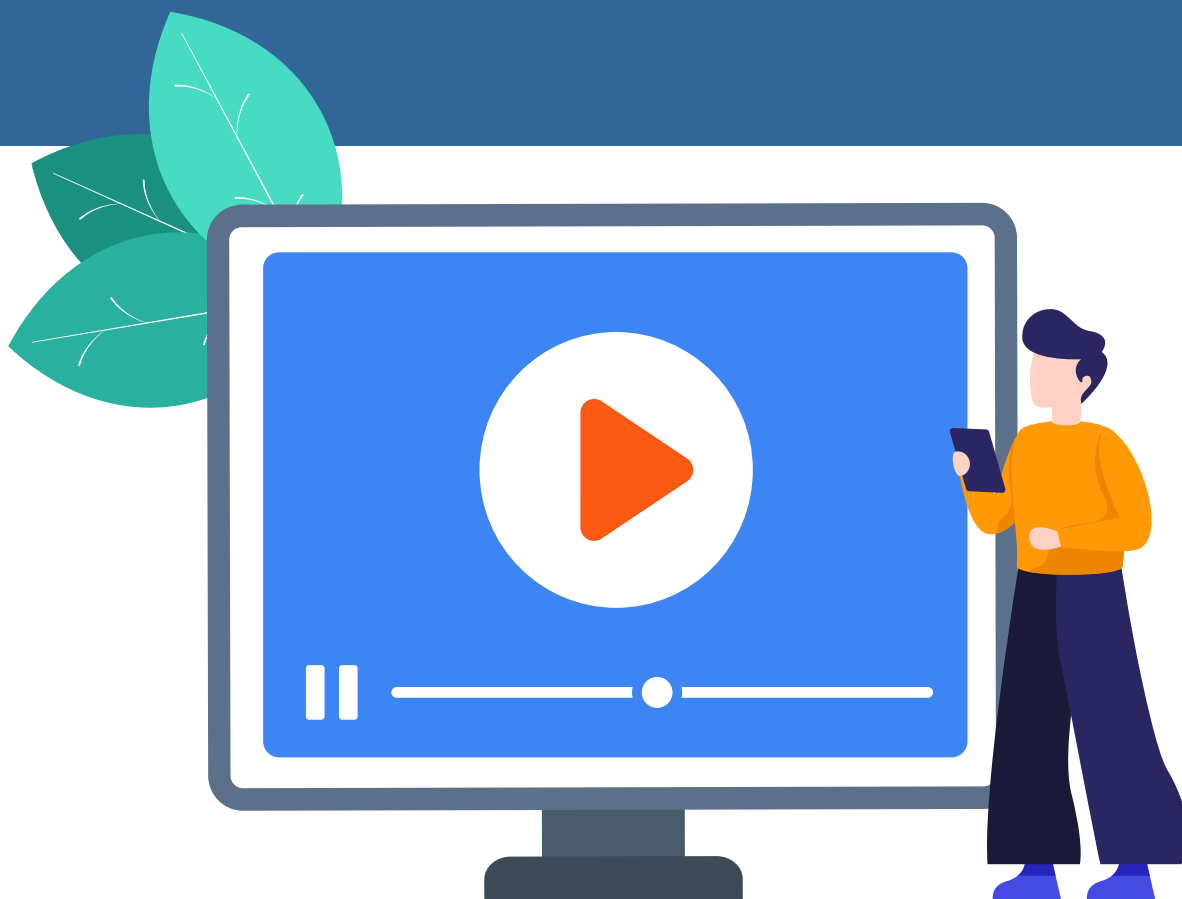


SECTION 2:

WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT OPTIONS TO GO ONLINE?

There are several options to consider when exploring which platform to use when seeking digitally enabled services. Some examples are provided below.

Main pros	
<u>Business Link Pacific</u>	A private sector development programme funded by the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT). Based in Auckland and supported by in-country partners in Vanuatu, Fiji, Samoa, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, and the Cook Islands. It provides business advisory support for MSMEs in the Pacific. It also provides support to access SME loans and grants.
<u>ClickWorker</u>	Businesses can pay for tasks that include correcting texts, processing data, proofreading, testing apps, etc. They will need to register as a customer on the portal.
<u>Fiverr</u>	Work done fast; easy to use; excellent buyer protection; easy to test; all level sellers.
<u>Freelancer</u>	Post a project or contest for what you need to be done and receive competitive bids from freelancers within minutes. Browse freelancer profiles. Chat in realtime. Compare proposals and select the best one. Award your project, and your freelancer will commence work.
<u>Outsource Fiji</u>	A platform for hiring Fijian companies that offer Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) services.
<u>Upwork</u>	Provides access to skilled professionals in 180+ countries. Receive within minutes potential talent matches based on micro-job specifications. Businesses can verify and pay for actual work done with inbuilt software capturing snapshots of actual work done during billed hours.



CASE STUDY: **Business Link** **Pacific (BLP)**

Mr. Stuart Gow, Managing Director of Resort Support, is one of the Pacific businesses which have taken advantage of BLP's services and provided a positive review of his experience.

"Excellent support for SME businesses in the South Pacific. Direct assistance to help grow the SME Private Sector, direct support from partners in-country."

SECTION 3:

WHAT COSTS SHOULD YOU CONSIDER TO TAKE YOUR BUSINESS ONLINE?



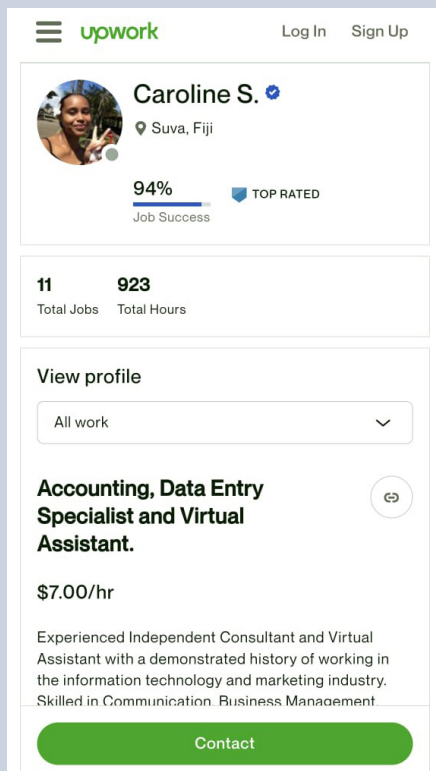
Most online platforms for ICT-enabled services offer free registration for buyers, plus a fee for each purchase.

Micro-jobs Platform for Buyers	Estimated Costs
<u>Business Link Pacific</u>	Free to register as a buyer.
<u>ClickWorker</u>	There are three categories: • Free (US\$0 monthly license fee + costs per order). • IT Pros (US\$0 monthly license fee + costs per order). • Enterprises (customised project setups)
<u>Fiverr</u>	• No subscription or sign-up fee. • US\$2 only for every purchase whose price is US\$40 or below. • 5% on every purchase that is more than US\$40.
<u>Freelancer</u>	• For fixed price projects, a fee of 3% or USD 3.00 (whichever is greater). • For hourly projects, a fee of 3% is levied on each payment that you make to the freelancer.
<u>Outsource Fiji</u>	• For fixed price projects, a fee of 3% or USD 3.00 (whichever is greater). • For hourly projects, a fee of 3% is levied on each payment that you make to the freelancer. • Subject to individual business requests. Request a free quote.
<u>Upwork</u> (see case study below)	• Free to register. • 5% on all payments.

SECTION 4:

GETTING NOTICED ONLINE.

1. A strong headline is the first thing that workers see. Be concise (no more than 100 characters). Ensure that the keywords which your target workers will likely type are included.
2. Study similar job posts that are getting noticed. How do they write their job posts? What keywords do they use? How much are they offering per hour? What payment methods do they use?
3. The job requirements must be specific and clear. No grey areas.
4. Boost your credibility as an employer. If you have negative and positive client reviews, put them on your company page profile.



CASE STUDY: Upwork

Many individuals and businesses from the Pacific have signed up as service providers on this platform. Freelancers such as Caroline have already completed 11 verified paid jobs with an excellent rating of 4.85/5 at the rate of US\$7 per hour. Upwork is a good option for Pacific businesses wishing to hire regional freelancers.

SECTION 5:

PAYING ONLINE.

The payment methods will depend on the options provided by the freelancing platforms.

For most platforms, as a business client, there are three common billing methods available:

1. Credit Card
2. A PayPal account acts as an interface for the business's bank account so that confidential information is not required when making payments.
3. Bank transfer or wire transfer

To avoid any account disruption in the event of a transaction failure, consider adding more than one billing method to your account.



SECTION 6:



COMPLYING WITH LAWS & REGULATIONS.

Ensure that you understand and comply with the terms and conditions of the contract, not only with the service provider (freelancer) but also with the e-commerce platform. It would help if you went through the platforms' terms and conditions, including the following areas:

1. Terms of Use and Terms of Services
2. Digital Signature
3. Escrow instructions
4. Release and delivery of amounts in Escrow
5. Making a bonus or expense payments
6. Refunds and cancellations
7. Payroll services
8. Privacy Policy
9. Optional Service contract terms



INDUSTRY REFERENCE GROUP MEMBERS:

The leveraging of ICT-enabled services is still nascent in the Pacific. The Industry Reference Group (IRG) below provides valuable sources of information for beginners in ICT-enabled services for online businesses in the region.

- Business Link Pacific
<https://businesslinkpacific.com/>
- Outsource Fiji
<https://outsourcefiji.com/>
- Bula Outsourcing
<https://bulaoutsourcing.com.au/>
- BPO Fiji
<https://bulaoutsourcing.com.au/>