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I Prioritized My Work-Life Balance And Now Run An \$8K/Month Creative Studio



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ABOUT

BUSINESS

TOOLS

SAVE



Angela Roche

Founder, **Love & Logic**

\$8K

REVENUE/MO



1

FOUNDERS

1

EMPLOYEES

Hello! Who are you and what business did you start?

Hello, I'm Angela, a creative director, designer, animator, and recovering agency owner.

I now run a solo creative studio called **Love & Logic** where I help brands & organizations with purpose capture hearts & minds.

To elaborate, I specialize in working with ethical brands, charities, local authorities, and universities to enable them to effectively communicate with their audiences in new and creative ways, primarily through the power of brand identity and motion graphics.

Since the inception of Love & Logic, I've been working a lot in the mental health space. Particularly by helping charities and university researchers to communicate mental health research to a wider audience in more accessible, less academic, jargon-free ways.

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This has been a big and welcome change for someone who spent years working with many more corporate clients, primarily delivering websites.

Working in this space has also been great for my mental well-being. This alongside the freedom of not being responsible for a team or the constant chasing of work has helped me start to build a life outside of work. Something I struggled to do before.

The studio currently averages around \$8k per month.



What's your backstory and how did you come up with the idea?

I stumbled upon graphic design whilst studying for a completely different degree at university.

It all started when I saw a nightclub flyer designed by a friend who was studying the subject. At that time I had no idea that there was a degree course where you got to design flyers instead of writing essays and taking exams!

I knew then that was the path for me!

I went back to uni, studied graphic design, and after 18 months working at a design studio in Manchester, UK, I decided to set up my agency, [Design By Day](#), with my co-founder and friend from university.

We started up with only our final paychecks and a little help from my parents, and for 6 months my business partner didn't even have a place to call home.

But. That's not the story I want to tell here. After running this largely successful agency for over a decade, I decided to close it down and start my solo creative studio.

Why? The agency was no longer working for me. My work/life balance was out of whack and my passion for delivering websites had fizzled out. [A perfect storm of events had plagued 2021](#), and a long-term internal conflict between embracing my role as an agency owner versus

being a creative came to a head.

At the start of 2022, I founded **Love & Logic** with a clear plan in mind, drawing on my previous experience and the many valuable lessons I'd learned.

This story is about going back to my roots, finding love in what I do, and making a good living from it.

Take us through the process of building the first version of your product.

If we're talking in product terms, let's call my old agency version 1.0 and my new solo studio v2.0

My passion for branding, design, and animation has always been a driving force throughout my career. Version 1.0 had resulted in me moving further and further away from this love and was becoming a legacy product! v2.0 was a reset!

When I decided to close the doors of my previous agency, I had to let go of over 90% of my client base. However, the ones that remained were exactly the type of clients I had hoped to work with, both in terms of the industries I target and the type of people I naturally connect with.

In my opinion, this approach is a surefire formula for success, as it leads to positive outcomes for my clients, my business, and my job satisfaction.



Pharmacist Support has been one of my longest-standing clients since 2013 and one of the clients I retained as Love & Logic. See their [rebrand on the Love & Logic website](#)

Having this small but mighty client base from the start meant that I've been able to channel my energies into delivering amazing projects without having to constantly hustle for new business.

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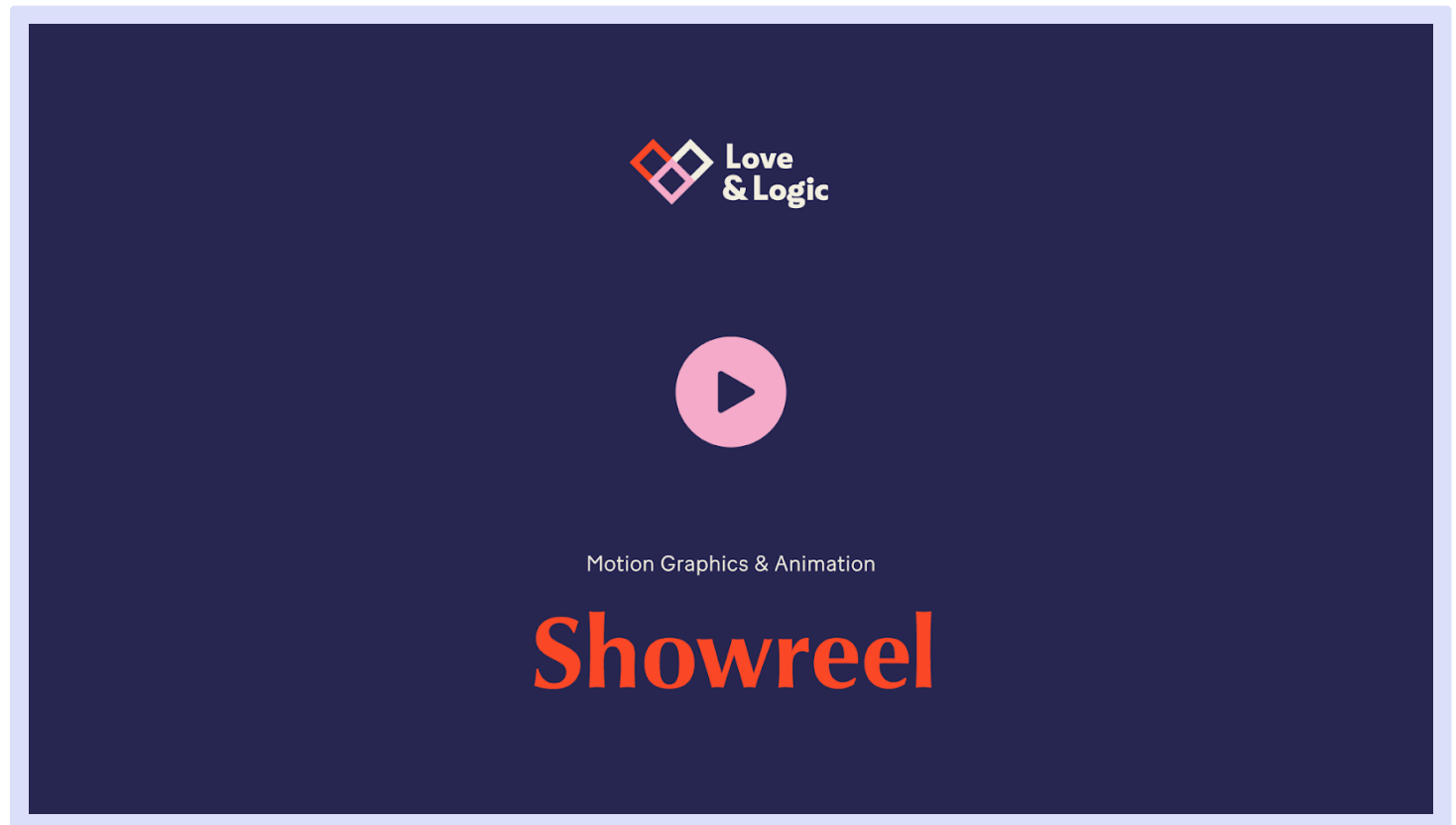
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To date approx. 85% of my business has been repeating business as well as a wealth of referrals, particularly in the mental health space.

During my agency days, we offered far too much as a small team: websites, web applications, support, animation, branding, and design.

I now concentrate solely on branding, design, and animation for targeted sectors, where I can create a genuine impact and provide valuable solutions.



Love & Logic *Motion Graphics & Animation Showreel*

Of course, starting a new business involves a lot of work. For me, one of the most time-consuming aspects was developing and launching my website, all while managing client projects.

I designed the site during the Xmas break in 2021, then hired a couple of my old teammates, who had also taken the freelance route, to build it. Since my old agency specialized in WordPress, I didn't consider any other platforms, especially since I wanted to work with the talented people I knew and trusted to build it.

The longest part of the process was adding the content! I have a newfound empathy for clients taking so long to add content to their websites, in the past this was a bit of a frustration for me!!

The website was finally up and running by Dec 2022 - however, I waited until Jan 2023 to announce it on social media and via press releases.

As you'd expect, the core setup costs for my new venture were the brand identity and the website. Here's a quick rundown:

Brand Identity

Brand Strategy (my time) \$4.3K

Visual Identity (my time) \$5K

Website

Design (my time) \$5K

Build \$6.5K

Content Population (My time) \$4.7K

I had most of the equipment I needed to perform my job from my agency. Although given that one of my core services was now animation, I splashed out on a new top-spec MacBook Pro - or should I say my parents did - so that doesn't count! (Thanks Mum & Dad!)

To figure out my pricing structure, I used something like the strategy my old accountancy agency taught me:

1. Figure out what you want to earn in a year
2. Calculate how many hours you intend to work in a week on client projects (taking into account average utilization)
3. Extrapolate that for the year (taking into account holidays)
4. Add overheads etc to the desired earnings and divide by the total time

I'm now only charging \$25 less per hour than I charged my agency. It's a win, win for myself and my clients!

The next phase of the pricing strategy is to figure out how to utilize 'Value-based' pricing over 'Time-based' pricing.

“ My vision is for my studio to be the go-to destination for brands and organizations seeking expertise in my field.

Love & Logic Showreel

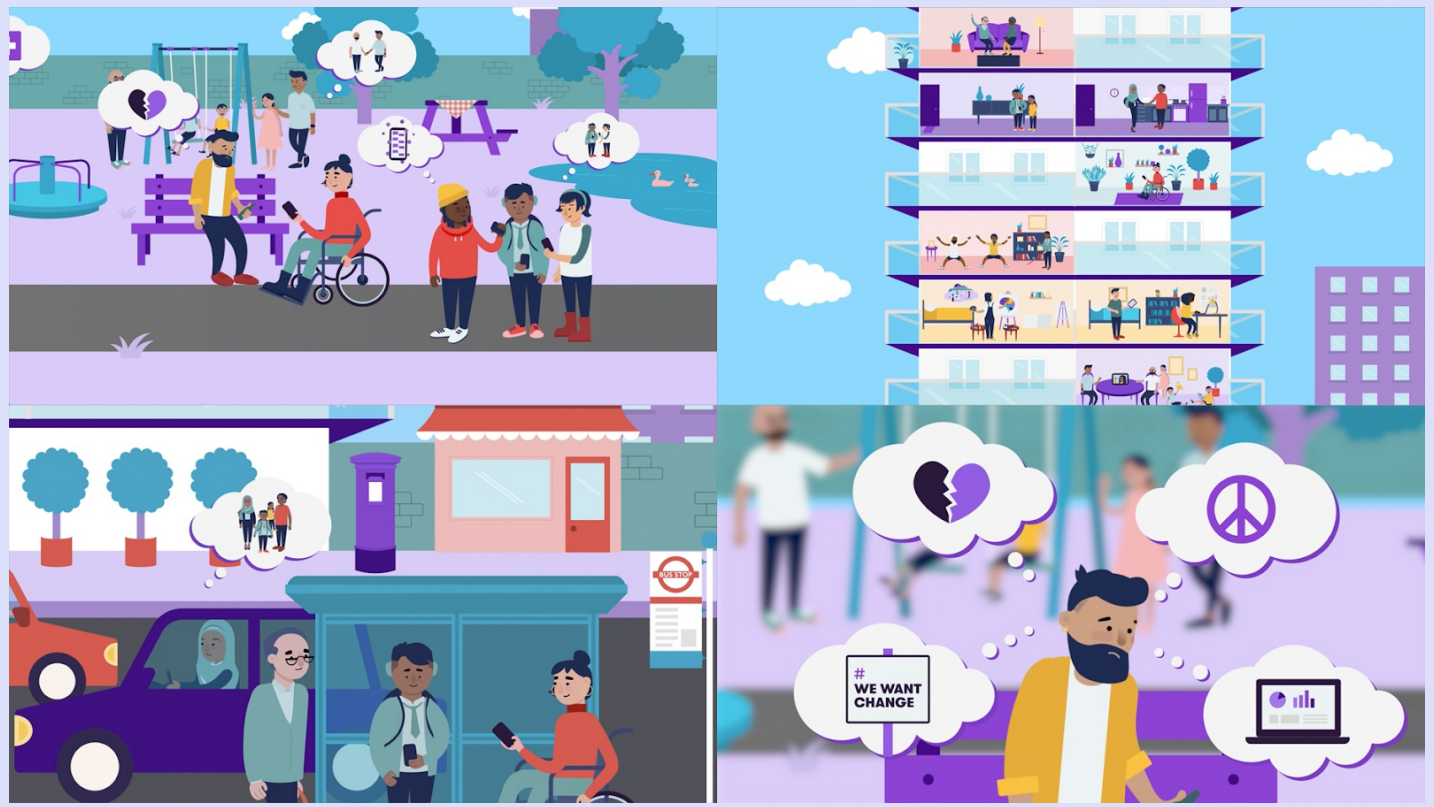
Describe the process of launching the business.

Having run an agency for more than a decade, I had built up a solid network of connections and made a reputable name for myself. This helped the move from agency owner to solo creative to be pretty smooth in terms of securing projects.

In January 2022, shortly after I started working independently, one of my longtime agency clients introduced me to [McPin](#), a mental health charity involved in a cross-disciplinary research campaign in partnership with several organizations and the [University of Oxford](#), funded by [UKRI](#). The campaign aimed to spark a conversation about the importance of mental health research.

This first project as Love & Logic included a campaign animation, marketing materials, and social creatives and was going to be the start of things to come, as the referrals from this piece of work are keeping me busy until at least August 2023!

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Screenshots from the [Mental Health Research Matters](#) campaign animation, [watch the full video on Love & Logic website](#)

Since launch, what has worked to attract and retain customers?

Despite leaving the world of website development behind, and transitioning a large portion of my client base to trusted web agencies, my remaining clients, as well as the referrals they generated, provided more than enough business for the first year of my new studio, and continue to do so.

I am now focused on collaborating with clients who share similar values. Working independently has given me the freedom to be more selective with the projects I take on, and by carefully choosing who I work with, I can maintain a high retention rate and avoid working on projects where our values, approach, and chemistry may not align.

When running my agency I used to be a little obsessive about SEO. Whilst I still see the value in it, I've now concluded that brand awareness is much more valuable for my new venture. This is where I will be focussing much of my efforts.

My vision is for my studio to be the go-to destination for brands and organizations seeking expertise in my field. I don't want to be a generic company that is easily discoverable by anyone searching for basic services.

I'm also super proud and confident about running a solo studio and am completely transparent about its size. I'm creative with a wealth of experience as well as a network of talented collaborators and have worked with big brands and local businesses alike. In 2023 this is a strength!

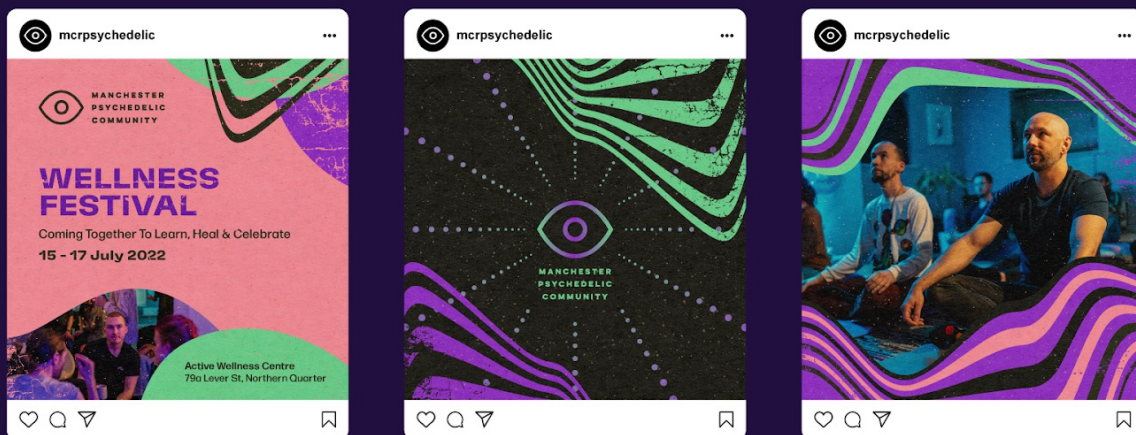
I'm not a person that deals in 'cold, hard business' and I've ensured that my brand is positioned as such. The central message of my brand is 'Imagination with Heart' which appeals to a

as such. The central message of my brand is imagination with heart, which appeals to a specific type of individual or organization. If this message doesn't resonate with someone, likely, we won't be a good fit. Ultimately, the key to a successful partnership is the right chemistry.

Additionally, I have a clearly defined **Manifesto** that aims to attract organizations that share similar values and, at the same time, enables others to identify whether we're a good match.

I target my efforts towards **charities, universities, education, local authorities as well as ethical brands and organizations.**

The term "ethical brands and organizations" encompasses a wide range of clients. For instance, I collaborate with an innovative gamified simulation company with a global presence, as well as a local community-based organization called **Manchester Psychedelic Community**.



Manchester Psychedelic Community branding and social creatives

How are you doing today and what does the future look like?

Closing down my agency at the end of 2021 meant making people that I give an s--t about redundant, which did not feel great at all. It also meant paying out a considerable sum in redundancy pay.

During 2022, I focused a significant portion of my time and effort on creating a strong brand identity for Love & Logic and investing in the development of a new website.

Despite this time & investment – Love & Logic is profitable, and I've now got everything in place to make a big success in 2023!

Financially my goal was to turnover \$90,000 in my first year! Done!

But more importantly, having the freedom to be selective with the work I take on and working towards achieving a healthy work-life balance have been the biggest measure of success!

Towards achieving a healthy work-life balance have been the biggest measure of success!

As it stands now I have no intention to fire up an agency again... but never say never, right?

Through starting the business, have you learned anything particularly helpful or advantageous?

A big one for me is: listen to your gut!

Especially if you're running a service business. Not all business that comes your way is good. Saying 'NO' to the wrong type of prospect might well be the best thing you do for your company, your team, and your bottom line!

Don't forget you!

It's taken me a long time (and I'm still working on this) but I'm now trying to focus more on myself and what I want out of the business and my life as a whole.

Running a small agency meant that there were so many things to think about and people to look after, and I found myself wearing so many hats on a day-to-day basis: I was a Founder, Creative Director, Business Development Manager, HR person, and Project Manager. It was hard to focus 'on the business' as I found myself always working 'in the business'.

I must admit that I'm a long way off from achieving the perfect work-life balance, but I can say with certainty that I am in a much better position now than when I was running my agency. I'm also a much happier person and partner!

Don't go it alone!

I do miss having a team. And I was lucky enough to work with some amazing and talented human beings. However, I do have a great network of freelancer friends all piled into a WhatsApp group – a safe space where we share advice, wins, and frustrations daily. We can also often be found in Manchester bars together!

Quality over quantity

As mentioned, when I ran my agency, we were very focused on SEO, which brought in a lot of work over the years. Some of it was not-so-great, and there was a lot of prospect qualifying to do.

These days however, I'm more focused on reputation and referral work – I find this way I'm already starting from a good place with new clients, as well as having that all-important trust factor in place from the start.

I'm also no longer focused on just posting pretty pictures of project work on Instagram. I find LinkedIn a good place to create a more meaningful network by posting useful and strategic content that speaks to experience and leadership.

What platform/tools do you use for your business?

When I ran my agency we used tonnes of work and productivity tools. These days I like to keep

it lean and clean.

I use [Adobe Creative Cloud](#) for creative work, [Harvest](#) & [Harvest Forecast](#) for project planning and time tracking, and [Boords](#) for sharing animation storyboards with clients.

Slack used to be a core tool in our agency, however, I've hardly touched [Slack](#) in the past 12 months.

That said, I am always dabbling in new / existing creative products. Recently I've been delving into [Spline](#) – 3D software for the web. Nope, I'm not going back into web design/development – but I do have my website, so [watch this space!](#)

You can't talk about tools in 2023 without mentioning AI. Of course, I've been dabbling with [MidJourney](#) and [ChatGPT](#) and have integrated them to a certain extent into my workflow.

Oh, and I've also been using good, old-fashioned email a lot more! Although I'm on the lookout for a good project management tool to replace [Teamwork](#) now that I'm a freelancer – so far [Puzzl](#) is looking like a great contender!

What have been the most influential books, podcasts, or other resources?

[Zag](#) – [Marty Neumeier](#)

– If you want your brand to be distinct (and yes you should) read this book every night!

[Start with Why](#) – [Simon Sinek](#)

– Why not? But seriously, all leaders should make themselves very well acquainted with Simon Sinek and start with this book!

[Agencynomics](#) – [Spencer Gallagher](#) and [Peter Hoole](#)

– Got a design or digital agency and want to understand the money situation? This is the road map.

[Obsessed](#) – [Emilay Hayward](#)

– Co-founder of the incredible agency [Red Antler](#). If you want to understand how to build a brand that people love – this is your new religious text.

Advice for other entrepreneurs who want to get started or are just starting out?

Stay true to yourself, your values, and your vision. There will always be a whole bunch of demands from different people – your customers, your employees, and your stakeholders. By all means, take their opinions on board – but be aware that trying to please everyone often pleases no one, especially yourself.

Surround yourself with good people. Even if you've not made any hires yet. Connect with those in similar roles, especially those with more experience than yourself. Good people are often willing to help others, and when you find yourself in a similar position in the future, you will

likely want to do the same.


Are you looking to hire for certain positions right now?

Nope, it's not for me right now. One of the pulls to going solo was to try and be as free as I possibly can. At this point, it means not having an employer and having no employees.


These days I prefer to collaborate with other designers, copywriters, strategists, and animators. That way I can work with the right people for the right project at the right time, and up/downscale my workload to suit my lifestyle.

Where can we go to learn more?

- [Website](#)
- [Instagram](#)
- [LinkedIn](#)



Angela Roche, Founder of Love & Logic




Pat Walls, Founder of Starter Story

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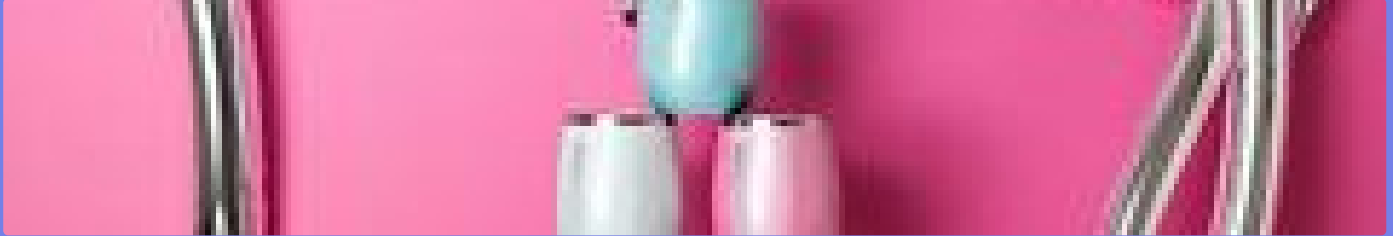
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Drinkware brand

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Scott
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Chad
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Michael
\$600K/YEAR



Michael
\$264K/YEAR



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