



A personal message

Hello, I'm Ian Patterson. Thank you for enrolling in *IT Contracting Bootcamp*.

I've been an IT professional for twenty-two years now, and a contractor for the last twelve. I was inspired to put together *IT Contracting Bootcamp* by being asked the same questions that likely prompted you to enroll:

How do I get into IT contracting? Do I need any special qualifications? How risky is it? I realized that the overwhelming amount of information available on the subject can be very confusing at times, and what people actually want is simple, clear guidance from someone who has been there and done it.

When I started my first contract in 2004, the contracting world was a lot simpler than it is today. There were considerably less contractors back then, and companies engaged them as the exception, rather than the rule. Today the reverse is true. As "permanent" jobs continue to be moved offshore, or disappear altogether, contracting roles are growing in number. With this growth however there seems to be, perhaps inevitably, a corresponding rise in the number of 'hoops' contractors must jump through just to earn their daily crust.

One such example is the tax legislation known as IR35. As this course was being put together, the UK Government began a consultation to see how they could make IR35 even more egregious, unpopular and unworkable than it already is – this time specifically for contractors who work in the public sector. In addition, outside factors such as Brexit have created uncertainty in the overall job market, and are being cited by many industry analysts as the reason for a corresponding slowdown in the contracting market. However, on the other hand, the chancellor has recently announced plans to reduce corporation tax to 15% - great news for contractors who operate through a limited company. Sunshine and rain, laughter and pain.

Add to this mix the day-to-day practicalities of running a limited company, sourcing contracts, dealing with agents and negotiating daily rates – let alone doing the contract work itself - it's little wonder that some people can be put off contracting.



But the good news is *very* good news. Contracting remains a very worthwhile and highly-paid activity, especially when doing so through a limited company, and seems likely to remain that way for a number of years yet. But nothing is guaranteed – so if you're serious about it, the time to act is *now*.

It would be impossible for *IT Contracting Bootcamp* to cover even a fraction of the topics mentioned here in great detail. Instead, I designed the course to give you a solid understanding of the basics, and enough information and tips to get you into your first contract - and the ones that follow.

This said, some subjects are given a lot more attention than others. Sites such as Jobserve will play a key role in helping you get your first contract, so there is a lengthy lecture on how you can use it to your best advantage. In contrast, things like the *Agency Worker Regulations*, which do not have an impact on the vast majority of contractors who work through a limited company, receive less attention. Nevertheless, links to information sources and fact sheets are still provided within the course.

Even though subjects like IR35 and VAT aren't exactly rock and roll, I've tried to make them as entertaining as possible; and the quizzes, links to external resources and downloads in the course are designed to reinforce what you've learned - so please do give them a go, and introduce yourself and ask questions using the discussion boards – no matter how simple or difficult you think they are. My aim here is to help you get the most out of the course, as well as get you into contracting.

Please shout out if you think anything can be improved, you don't understand something or you want to point out anything that you've particular enjoyed or found informative. I ask that if you *do* have a problem with any part of this course, please tell me before you leave a review, and I'll try to sort it out. I sincerely hope that you find the course entertaining and useful, and that it inspires you to get out there, and get contracting!

Ian Patterson

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