

Marcel Cutts

[Follow](#)

140 Followers

[About](#)

Empathy for London's junior contractors

[Marcel Cutts](#) Mar 14, 2018 · 2 min read

Let's pretend you're in your early twenties. You've been working as a software engineer at London BigCo for a year or so. The job has its ups and downs. You get paid what you thought was a lot because any number is bigger than the zero you get for being a student, but you're realising it doesn't actually carry you all that far in London. You share a house with three other people. They're OK. One doesn't do the washing as often as he should.

You've been promised a pay review and maybe a promotion "in the next cycle", which is 10 months away. Normally the raises are small and you notice senior engineers spend all their time in meetings anyway, so you wonder if it's even worth hoping to be given a fancier title.

Like every large London company in need of tech — which is to say all of them — your teams are buffeted by a revolving door of contractors to help you hit your likely unrealistic timelines.

One day you look on a contracting site and realise how much these people are paid. Over £500 a day, to do the work you do, to do the work you *teach* them to do. To do the work you already feel you do *better*. Yet they're taking home three times what you are?

It continues to nag on your conscience, and it stewes. You begin to notice contractors carry more weight in meetings, despite often being less familiar with the technology or the domain. You realise they get to escape much of the mandatory company ceremonies that make all but the most senior management roll their eyes. You can't help but feel they're treated with innately greater respect by the business than you are.

You're sure there's a big scary step to being a contractor. Some tax thing, maybe a license? You hang out with a contractor you respect and ask her, "Is this hard to do?". She laughs. For a while. "It's easy.", she states with confidence. She says she'll recommend you for a gig without a problem, since opportunities are a never ending tsunami.

You think about being able to finally live on your own. You think about not having to tacitly endure that toxic part of the culture at your current work. You think about visible day rates and the freedom from dismissive promotion cycles. You think about not having to explain every expense. You think about how you could take time off between gigs to finally go diving in Australia.

You resign the next day. You're a contractor now.

Startup

Software

Pay



[About](#) [Help](#) [Legal](#)

Get the Medium app

