

Networks

Creative Computing Profession
COMP 07060

Creative Industry Working

- Work in the creative industries is mostly project-based and many of the available contracts are short-term
- There are more people wanting to work in the creative industries than jobs and so there is intense competition within the creative industries for the available work
- The reputation of the creative worker, based on their performance in their last job, is an essential feature of their future success

Source: Smith and McKinlay (2009), p39

Creative Industry Working

- Creative workers must be able to adapt to steady change because they will have to take on new roles according to the various projects they find themselves working on
- Work in the creative industries involves individuals working together intensely and under a lot of pressure
- Creative workers must be specialists but flexible and able to adapt to other people and a variety of situations
- A high proportion of workers in the creative industries are not employees but are freelancers or self-employed workers

Source: Bilton, C. (2008), p27

Networks and Location

- Cultural industries have traditionally clustered in particular areas e.g. film industry in Hollywood, country music in Nashville
- New communication networks should mean that location is no longer important but research on US film and music industry and internet content production suggests that the “cultural production industries” still “materialize on the landscape in the form of dense spatial agglomerations” (Scott, A., (2000) and Zook, M.A. (2000)
- Location still matters because:
 - production is increasingly project-based using freelance workers which makes control of social capital important for cultural workers to gain entrance to the cultural industries and to advance within them
 - “Parents, siblings-in-law, ex-spouses, neighbours, tennis partners – any or all of these may assist your career” or facilitate a productive alliance (Tunstall, J. (2001)
 - Networking (securing work through your contacts and putting work your contacts way) has a large social element which requires your presence at “clubs, launches, private viewings, restaurants and parties” Murdock, G (2009)

Freelance Work

- What is Freelance Working like?
 - Freelance working patterns can include periods of intense activity punctuated by periods of little activity when work is patchy
 - Freelancers tend not to turn down jobs (don't want someone else to get the business or the client) so they can have too much work on at times
 - Freelancing can be isolating and lonely especially if you are starting out and have not established a network of clients who can offer enough work to keep you occupied
 - Freelancers have to remain motivated even when work is thin on the ground and the jobs are not coming in
 - Freelancers spend a lot of their time looking for work – freelance management consultants reckon to spend over 40% of their time on the lookout for work

Source: www.freelanceuk.com

Freelance Work

- Positives of freelancing:
 - You are in charge and you make the decisions
 - Normally you will get more money than employees working on a project with you because (unlike employees) you have no job security and your contract ends when the job is completed
 - You can decide, subject to commercial imperatives, when and where you work
 - By moving around you develop a variety of skills and experience
- Not so positive:
 - No job security – you leave when the contract is complete and no paid holidays
 - Little financial security – you near completion of one contract and start looking for the next one in the expectation that something will turn up
 - You are solely responsible - you have to make and maintain contacts and establish a network to find the work, when you get work you have to do the follow-ups for repeat business, purchase equipment, deal with complaints and fix any problems and do all your own paperwork

Source: www.freelanceuk.com

Freelance Work

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Freelance Work

Tips for freelancers

- **Don't overburden yourself**

It's easy to book in too much work because you want to maximise cash flow to cover quieter months. Instead of over-booking yourself organise a more manageable workload. Don't turn work away but manage your workload more effectively. Schedule work and fit clients into your schedule.

- **Stick to normal working hours**

Avoid long working days by sticking to a regular routine. Productivity drops when you work for more than 8 hours a day. There will always be more work to do so stop and pick up tomorrow.

- **Get your work environment right**

Make sure your workspace is inviting and comfortable with lots of natural light, a window and a neat desk. Get a decent office chair.

- **Take regular breaks**

Take regular breaks away from your desk or studio space. Breaks help you to recharge and boost your productivity.

- **Never burn bridges**

In business you will have to deal with difficult people or clients so always remain positive and never burn any bridges. The creative industries can be a small pond and you may meet people again.

- **Save for your tax bill**

Save for your next tax bill every month so that at the end of the year you don't have a huge bill to face.

Source: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/culture-professionals-network/culture-professionals-blog/2011/nov/04/arts-happy-freelance-tips?INTCMP=ILCNETTXT3487>

Freelance Work

The screenshot displays the Freelance Advisor website. At the top left, the 'Freelance Advisor' logo is accompanied by the tagline 'Thrive, don't just survive!'. A pink banner for 'crunch ACCOUNTING FOR THE INTERNET' spans the top right. The main content area is titled 'Money' and features two articles. The first article, 'Are you PI insured?' by Mel Dixon, discusses Professional Indemnity insurance for freelancers and includes an image of a coffee cup. The second article, 'Ltd Company: Detailed information on the expenses you can claim' by Darren Fell, includes an image of a binder. To the right, a pink graphic reads 'WE LOVE FREELANCERS (Platonically)' with the Crunch logo. At the bottom right, a Facebook widget shows the page's name, a 'Like' button, and a list of users who like the page.

Freelance Advisor
Thrive, don't just survive!

crunch
ACCOUNTING FOR THE INTERNET

Money

Are you PI insured?

MEL DIXON | MONEY

There are many different types of insurance available for freelancers and contractors, many of which are advisable only for specific fields of work. One form of insurance which is almost universally recommended is Professional Indemnity (PI) insurance.

After all, if you make a costly mistake at work – who ya gonna call?

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Ltd Company: Detailed information on the expenses you can claim

DARREN FELL | MONEY

If you have read our guide to the expenses freelancers can

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Mike Rob Dan John

Freelance Advisor offer advice on Jobs, Training, Working from Home, Guides and Resources for freelance workers.

Source: <http://www.freelanceadvisor.co.uk/category/money/>

Networks

- Work in the cultural industries is precarious and to combat the risks of uncertainty workers form networks
 - Oakley and Leadbeater (1999) state that entrepreneurs “work in partnerships, networks and clusters both to acquire ideas, information, contacts, resources but also for mutual support” (Oakley, K 2009)
 - In the 1970s Granovetter (1973) coined the phrase “the strength of weak ties” and this idea has been adopted by government and policy makers who argue that loose social ties to a wide range of contacts – beyond family and friends – can be more helpful in gaining access to working opportunities than more traditional routes such as job agencies and job adverts (Oakley, K 2009)
 - Networks or what you hear from your contacts via a friend of a friend can be more useful in providing access to job opportunities than job agencies or adverts
- How open are networks
 - Florida (2002) argues that the creative industries are characterised by their “openness to talent and lack of overt discrimination” (Oakley, K 2009)
 - Banks (2007) counters this analysis by saying it ignores the “protectionism, nepotism and exclusion that are key parts of networks” (Oakley, K 2009)

Networks

- Some have questioned the sociality aspect of network relationships
 - Wittel (2001) states that network relationships are “more instrumental, friendships become resources for finding work and workers become emotionally detached from others”. The emphasis is on looking after your own interests. (Oakley, K. 2009)
 - This is countered by Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2002) who state that “despite the pressures, particularly on the precariously-employed to use relationships instrumentally, in fact, people often use networks to re-establish bonds of sociality” (Oakley, K. 2009)
- Difficulties with Networks
 - A good network is essential to creative workers but what of those people who do not have a network of family and friends
 - Skillset’s 2003 survey indicated that in the media industries 28% of those surveyed had got their first job through traditional methods such as advertisements while 72% had used networks relationships such as family and friends (Oakley, K. 2009)
 - Start making friends and include them in your network

Networks

- Blair's (2001) research into networks in the UK film industry suggests that while family and friend networks are important to initially getting into the industry they are less important over time as workers develop links based on working relationships.
- When you have some experience within an industry your reputation is important both as an individual and for your group (many workers form groups). Producers will employ groups who have worked together before and so collective reputation is important. (Oakley, K. 2009)

Active Networking

- Networking
 - Important for the freelancer, and employed creative workers, to be part of a network so as to maximise work opportunities
 - Networking involves you in instigating and actively pursuing informal, personal relationships with others in the job market
 - Networks are two-way information flows:
 - As a member of a network you form and maintain relationships with those you think can provide you with information about opportunities for work or those who can directly employ you or those who can recommend you for work or refer work to you and
 - you must share any information that you have about work opportunities with other members of the network and be willing to recommend others and refer work to them
 - Networks are fluid:
 - The membership of your network will change and you will take decisions about who is of most value to you in terms of work opportunities and nurture that contact while those of less value are contacted less frequently or contact may be lost
 - Your work circumstances or those of your network contacts may change (you may be doing work in a new or different area or your contacts may) and this will dictate whether a contact remains useful

Active Networking

- Effective networks include members holding senior and junior positions in the industry:
 - in your network you should try to include members who are more senior and likely to be able to hire people as well as those who are more junior and act as providers of information
- Family members and their influence
 - if you have family members who are already in an industry then you may have access to their network of contacts or be able to use their knowledge of how networks within the industry function to maximise your chances of getting work

Source: Blair, H. (2009), p125

Active Networking

- TeenComedy - Case Study in the UK Film Industry
 - Researchers observed the production crew of TeenComedy working on the film production process for 18 months from pre-production to distribution
 - Feature of the UK Film Industry is that workers work as freelancers on short-term projects and regularly come onto the job market
 - They rely almost entirely on their personal network of contacts for information on work and jobs and what's happening in the industry.
 - Members of the Teencomedy crew spoke of the need:
 - to initiate contact with those who can offer work,
 - to ingratiate yourself with those who can give you a job
 - to be able to get on with people
 - to include in your network people who can directly influence those selected for jobs
 - Researchers reported that in film production there were a number of different network structures

Source: Blair, H. (2009), p130

Active Networking

- TeenComedy Case Study - Network structures in the UK Film Industry
 - “Semi-permanent work group Model”
 - a group of people who work together on a nearly permanent basis
 - normally go from one job to the next with the membership of the group remaining the same
 - contacts exist between group members but contacts also include the senior people in an organisation who can offer jobs
 - semi-permanent work groups tend to be stable with members leaving to take up more senior roles
 - Job-to-Job Workers Model
 - Job-to-job workers are freelancers moving from job-to-job and dependent on contacts for securing work
 - freelancers will have a wide network of contacts who they rely on for information and job openings
 - contacts may be able to offer jobs themselves, make a recommendation or negotiate with those who have the jobs

Active Networking

- Network structures in the UK Film Industry
 - “Mixture of loosely configured workgroups and individual work Model”
 - some workers move between working groups and freelance work
 - their groups tend to be more loose arrangements than semi-permanent workgroups and working in the group is interspersed with periods of freelance work
 - these workers have contacts within their group and they have individual contacts
 - they move between jobs in situations where they know the person hiring personally to jobs where contacts have recommended or referred them

Source: Blair, H. (2009), p131/2

Networking Effectively

- Effective Networking
 - Your network is going to be made up of people who you can look to for work, advice and help so think about what you need to know and who is likely to be able to help
 - Existing contacts - friends, relatives, colleagues - may be able to get your network started through their own contacts
 - People you know a little/know about - people from your social network who you know in passing but can contact easily and people in companies in your creative area who you don't know personally but who you know about and can contact reasonably easily
 - People you don't know - people holding positions in companies who you don't know personally but who you think it would be useful to contact because they can offer work or influence who gets work e.g. producers
 - Maintain your personal contacts and keep actively networking even when you are not trying to get work. Keep up-to-date on your contacts' current and future projects and be prepared to help other people in your network and share information with them. If you are working in a company read in-house newsletters, e-bulletins, blogs etc to find out about what's happening in the business and new projects that are being proposed.

Source: www.skillset.org/careers

Networking Effectively

- Go to industry events, meetings and openings
 - Prepare in advance – find out who is going to be at the meeting or event and if you want to target a particular organisation do your homework about it and about who you want to speak to from the organisation
 - Be prepared to introduce yourself to people, ask about them/their organisation and talk to them about yourself/your work and get their contact details
 - Follow up on the contacts you think are worth pursuing and remain in touch with them
 - Make up a database of contacts (contact's name, job title, company details, where you met them, their current/future projects and any ideas discussed with them for new projects etc.) and keep it current so that your information is accurate

Source: www.skillset.org/careers

Networking Effectively



skillset
The Sector Skills Council for Creative Media

Media careers hints & tips

Marketing Yourself as a freelancer

Skillset have advice on how to market yourself as a freelancer.

1. Research the market

Marketing is about raising awareness or creating the desire for something – in this case your services, skills and experience. To market yourself effectively you need to develop a strategy. Your goal is to identify potential employers and match your skills and experience to their needs. Thorough research is essential.

Potential employers

- Read the relevant trade journal, national and local press, and directories. Photocopy articles and make a note of any useful names. Bear in mind that directory entries may not be up-to-date, so always check contact details before approaching anyone.
- There are various production intelligence/research publications on the market which identify projects in the early stages of development. Subscription rates are high, so it's worth checking with publishers for any free trial-period offers. Two examples are PCR (Production and Casting Report) listing film, TV and theatre projects, and Programme News, which is a guide for advance radio and television broadcast planning.
- When working for a company, look out for in-house publications or staff bulletins. This is a useful way of finding out about up-and-coming productions, projects and business development plans.

Source: http://www.skillset.org/uploads/pdf/asset_4808.pdf?7

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