



Freelance toolkit

A kit of resources, advice & information to help manage a freelance life.

The TV and film industry has dramatically changed in the last 10 years. The choice between taking a staff job or going freelance just isn't there anymore. Even long term placements, traineeships and graduate placement schemes do not guarantee a full time job at the end of it. The world of being freelance offers variety and flexibility, it doesn't offer job security!

Contents

1	Working as a freelancer	2
2	Life and Skills Audit	3
3	Knowing what the jobs are.....	4
4	Thinking “bigger than broadcast”	4
5	The 3 “SELFS”	5
	Self-employment.....	5
	Self-marketing.....	11
	Self management.....	18
6	Resources.....	23
7	Finally.....	25

1 Working as a freelancer

What does being 'freelance' mean?

Being 'freelance' means being self-employed and working on a 'per job' basis.

The 'lows' of freelance life

- Working in the media is not glamorous!
- You may work for a variety of employers, with long periods spent away from home.
- Sometimes you can be really busy – at other times you might have no paid work. Regular financial, family and social commitments may be hard to manage.
- Although the daily payment rate for a freelancer is usually higher than a full-time employee, many freelancers only work for part of the year, and you have to make provision for your own pension, leave of absences, training costs etc. "Down-time" is usually spent looking for (and worrying about) the next job.
- If you're someone who can be extremely anxious about where your next paid job will come from, then freelancing may not be for you. In a highly competitive and oversubscribed market, you need to be honest about your personal strengths and weaknesses – and the skills you have in order to succeed.

The 'highs' of freelance life-and there are some 'highs!'

It can be very liberating being in control of the work you do, and having choices about this. Meeting a wide range of people, experiencing varied working environments and practices, and being motivated to learn more about the industry you work in can also be personally very satisfying.

Making the freelance life work for you

The key is to be prepared.

- Consider your personal suitability
- Look at the impact on your lifestyle
- Work out how much you need to earn to survive
- Start thinking about tax and other financial matters
- Identify what you have to offer
- Know what's out there – the jobs and the state of the industry
- Have a simple self-marketing strategy in place
- Identify the support that's out there
- Identify professional services that can help you



2 Life and Skills Audit

Answer honestly the questions below. It will help clarify aspects of your freelance life – and may help you decide if it's really right for you.

What experience, skills and training do I have?

Think what role might be most suitable to the skills you already have. You can always do something different, but it is a good place to start. Are you good at organising? Good with people? Have you worked with children? Have you organised workshops? They don't have to be media related.

Are they appropriate and relevant to the job role I aspire to?

If you do want to do something different, re training might have to be an option.

Are my skills up to date?

Don't assume because you did something 10 years ago that the training will still be relevant.

What sort of environment am I happy working in?

For example inside, outside, office-based, busy, within a team, lost in technology?

What sort of pressure can I work under?

Some roles are very high pressure, juggling a tight schedule, tight budget and dealing with key talent who may be tired and grumpy!

Can I work as a team?

Some roles work more in isolation but others like the design or lighting team are dependent on good team work.

What working hours do I want?

Are you happy to work long hours? On location roles often have to work 12 days, 6 days per week. Roles with more regular hours tend to be office based jobs and often in the periphery of production i.e. sales, transmission, scheduling.

What flexibility do I have?

Do you have childcare issues, or family responsibilities that could restrict your working day?

What personal life do I want?

How important is a work life balance?

What have you got to offer?

What is your USP? (Unique Selling Point), Do you have a specialism or unusual skill?, What could make you stand out from the crowd? What might catch the attention of a potential employer?



What are your strengths and weaknesses?

Don't just look at strengths think about weaknesses and how you can improve/minimise these. Are you ready with an answer if challenged about them?

3 Knowing what the jobs are

It's vital that you understand what the jobs are in the industry. Without this you cannot make informed choices about the role you want, or match your skills and personal attributes to a role. Your career progression could be affected.

The Skillset website has profiles for 100's of jobs in all areas of the creative industries. Here you can find out what each job is about - typical career routes, essential knowledge and key skills for the job, and the training and qualifications (if any) required.

Go to www.skillset.org/careers.jobs, each job profile can be downloaded.

BECTU is also useful for getting an overview of jobs in the industry. Go to www.bectu.org.uk/advice-resources

4 Thinking "bigger than broadcast"

Many people think of the creative industries as just TV and film, and the "obvious" jobs i.e. camera, sound, director, producer, editor etc.

It pays to think more widely than this, particularly when you're in the freelance world. For example:

'Corporate Production':

- IT
- Technical operations
- Creative directing
- Account managing
- Sales and marketing

'Distribution' (international programme sales):

- Sales and marketing
- Admin
- Programme finance
- Contracts and copyright
- IT

**‘Facilities’:**

- Technical operations
- Engineering
- Editing, graphics, sound
- Bookings, project management
- IT
- Admin
- Sales and marketing
- Accounts

These might not seem ‘glamorous’ or key roles in the industry, but they may be ways to get a ‘foot in the door’; they may use skills that you forgot you had; the work may keep money coming in whilst waiting for the job you really want.

5 The 3 “SELFS”

All of this is covered by 3 headings:

- SELF- EMPLOYMENT
- SELF- MARKETING
- SELF- MANAGEMENT

Self-employment

One of the most important things to do when starting out as a freelancer is to sort out your employment status.

PAYE or self-employed?

Most freelancers would prefer to be self-employed, mainly because there are more expenses you can offset against your tax bill. However, it’s not a simple matter.

For guidelines for gaining self-employed status in film & TV, go to www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/specialist.fi_guidance_notes2002.pdf



What do you do next?

Once you are self-employed you are responsible for paying your own tax and National Insurance, by law.

- **Talk to an Accountant**
It's worth talking to an accountant straight away to get general advice about self-employment, and for help over tax matters e.g. keeping your tax bill as low as possible, and whether you think you might need to register for **VAT**. You pay VAT if your annual taxable turnover exceeds £68,000, and although you may not expect to earn this amount, there might be benefits gained by registering even if you earn less.
- **Register as self-employed.**
This must be done within 3 months after the end of your first piece of self-employed work. Go to www.hmrc.gov.uk/selfemployed/register-selfemp.htm and you'll be taken through the whole registration process.
- **Arrange to pay National Insurance Contributions**
Business Link have good self-employment/sole trader advice (and a direct link to the above as well) on www.businesslink.gov.uk. Go to "Practical advice for business" as an introduction.
- Speak to your accountant about the Shed D Lorimer letter. You may be able to save yourself some tax!

Freelancers in film

HMRC operates a helpline to assist workers in film production with enquiries about the 7 day rule, expenses, dispensations, employment status and special letters (including Lorimer letters). Tel: 0191 419 8800/8813 or email a.filmproductionmailbox@hmrc.gsi.gov.uk.

TV freelancers can contact HMRC on 0161 261 3254/3255/3691

Consider getting a Financial Adviser

In a working environment where you won't be automatically getting a pension, or be paid if you're ill or injured, it's worth getting a Financial Advisor to talk you through matters like Income Protection. (See below "How to Find Professional Support" for info on how to find a suitable adviser)



Pensions

If you're leaving a job with an occupational pension, or you feel you need to start a new pension plan, a good starting point is the government's pension pages:

www.direct.gov.uk/en/Pensionsandretirementplanning/StatePension/Basicstatepension/DG_10014671 carries most of the basic info, and links to more detailed points.

www.direct.gov.uk/en/index.htm takes you to the home page

For advice on state pensions contact the Pension Service

www.pensionadvisoryservice.org.uk

BECTU also gives advice on pensions and has a Stakeholder Pension for members

www.bectu.org.uk

EQUITY offers the Equity Pension Scheme www.equity.org.uk

Or you can always seek independent advice.

Firstly, ask a colleague in the industry if they can recommend anyone within the area of expertise you are seeking.

Otherwise, here's where you find:

- **A qualified independent financial adviser**
www.searchifa.co.uk
Also BECTU www.bectu.org.uk
- **An accountant**
www.icaewfirms.co.uk
(The Institute of Chartered Accountants)
www.taxassist.co.uk lists accountants who work with small businesses.
- **A solicitor**
Look for a firm that specialises in media law unless your requirement is more of a general nature
www.lawsociety.ork.uk/choosingandusing/commonlegalproblems.law
- **Other specialist advice**
www.lia.co.uk - Life Insurance Assoc.
www.spc.uk.com – Society of Pension Consultants



- **General business advice**
www.startinbusiness.co.uk plus a directory of local professionals
www.businesslink.gov.uk
www.adviceguide.org.uk Citizens Advice Bureau

Insurance

There are many insurance issues to consider as a freelancer:

- **Public liability**
You may not always be covered by your employer's insurance. Consider cover against the 1) possibility of causing an accident on your client's premises 2) losing/damaging equipment 3) being sued for negligence when in a public area/other people's premises.
BECTU offers its members cover for £23 a year. Once you are a member you can also get further advice and support.
Equity also offers cover if you are a member in benefit.
Most of the TV/Film Specialist Insurance companies listed in relevant trade manuals will also provide insurance at commercial rates.
- **Income Protection and Critical Illness**
As a freelancer, you risk security of income if you are ill or injured. Could you survive on state benefits?
Income Protection can give a guaranteed monthly income. It's not expensive – around £25 a month depending on your circumstances and choice of cover.
Get advice on this from your Financial Adviser.
- **Vehicle insurance**
Check your vehicle is insured for any business use e.g. driving to & from locations.
You also may need to clarify what your employer expects from you, to make sure you are fully covered, or not performing tasks beyond the extent of your insurance.

How do I know what to get paid?

Once again, BECTU is a great resource for finding out current rates in most job roles.
www.bectu.org.uk/advice-resources/rates.

www.tvfreelancers.org.uk has a database of current rates.

The Media Guardian job pages give an idea of rates for roles that may not be covered by the above. <http://jobs.guardian.co.uk/jobs/media>

If you're still not sure what to charge, talk to a trusted colleague or friend in a similar role. Above all, never undersell yourself. Always pitch for a bit more than you're happy to accept,



on the basis that payments like these are always negotiated DOWNWARDS rather than UPWARDS.

BECTU also give access to standard terms and conditions.

You have to remember that budgets have been dramatically cut over the last few years. Not all production is affected however the smaller budget productions will often pay lesser rates. This is to be expected and is perfectly reasonable. You have to decide if you want to work for a reduced rate. Some productions will offer a profit share or deferred payment model, just make sure you are fully across what the model is and that you understand when and what you will get paid.

The minimum wage

Currently the minimum wage for an adult over 22 is £5.80 an hour (as of October 2010) , which helps low-paid workers, such as runners, from being paid at ridiculous rates.

This also helps give leverage against unpaid “work experience”. The employers’ association PACT recommends that unpaid work experience should never be for more than 4 weeks, and has produced guidelines for employers.

Go to www.pact.co.uk/training/information/detail.asp?id=2665

The National Minimum Wage helpline is 0845 6000 678. In Northern Ireland 0845 6500 207.

The DTI has recently published work experience guidelines in the TV industry, co-ordinated by Skillset www.skillset.org/companies/your_staff/article_5541_1.asp
The guidelines can be downloaded from here.

The Contract

The creative industry is often pretty informal, and it’s not always easy to insist on a contract. However, to avoid misunderstandings, it’s a good idea to clarify, in writing, the details of any work that you take on, e.g. payment, hours, overtime, travel, conditions, expenses, deadlines, and reporting procedures.

If you’ve met up to discuss the job, or talked about it in detail on the phone, it might also be helpful to reiterate the brief so any misapprehensions to be corrected at the outset. You can do this by sending a quick follow-up email or fax describing the tasks, goals and time lines discussed/agreed. This is called a CONTACT REPORT. It should also contain any action points. This might seem a bit over-fussy, but taking the initiative in this way can engenders confidence for the client.



This is all part of being professional, as well as giving the other party the opportunity to come back with amendments if they have anything to add or alter.

Contracts are more likely to be offered for longer term projects. They will contain much the same information, with possible additions such as copyright, but in a more formal legal manner.

The minimum you should find about is:

- **Holiday pay**
Every worker in the UK is due 4 weeks annual holiday, which starts accruing from the first working day. But in the media industry, it's often impossible to take this during the period of employment, so you may receive payment in lieu at the end of the contract. However, this is never simple to sort out.
Go for further info and support to www.bectu.org.uk/advice-resources/legal-faqs#FAQ6
Also www.bectu.org.uk/advice-resources/get-help/statutoryholidays and from Skillset www.skillset.org
- **Insurance** – clarify what you need to cover, and review as outlined above
- **Days and hours** you will be expected to work.
Current law says you cannot work for more than 48 hours a week, but the nature of our industry makes this difficult to keep to. Many employees agree to “opt-out” of the agreement – and this needs to be included in any contract.

You also have rights to proper breaks, including 11 hours between shifts and a 20 minute rest break over 6 hours.

More info from

<http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/employment/employees/workinghoursandtimeoff/DG10029451>

The most helpful “industry-focused” information can be found within the PACT/BECTU agreement (2003) which lays down benchmarks for freelancer engagements as follows: (BECTU members can download the agreement for free):

- Methods of engagement
- Methods of payment
- Work schedules/rest periods
- Meal breaks
- Travel and working on location
- Health & Safety



- Disputes
- Insurance

Go to www.bectu.org.uk/advice-resources/agreements/pact-agreement-2003

Your right to a safe working environment

The nature of the film and TV industry means there's considerable potential for risk and accidents – for yourself, the crew and the general public.

As a freelancer you have a right to work in a safe environment. Speak out if you feel you or the public are being put at risk.

If there is no specialist Health & Safety officer working with you, the most senior member of the team is responsible for all health and safety matters.

- **Risk assessments**
From student work placements upwards, risk assessments are of key importance. Read any that are given to you and make sure they reflect your risks. If you are in charge of a shoot, you may have to initiate and complete your own assessment, and it's vital you do so.
- **Health & Safety Training**
For info on courses (some subsidised for freelancers) go to Skillset on www.skillset.org/training
The BBC also offer a range of course, and you can buy a CD-ROM www.bbctraining.com
- **St John also run a number of courses across the country.**
<http://www.sja.org.uk/sja/default.aspx>

Self-marketing

To be a successful freelancer, you need to know how to market yourself, as follows:

- **Marketing tools**
- **Marketing what you have to offer**
- **Knowing what jobs you should target**
- **Knowing where to market yourself**



Marketing tools

A CV

Northern Film & Media have a section of the website that includes a quick view CV toolkit and Christine Llewellyn Reeve's CV workshop factsheet.

<http://www.northernmedia.org/?mod=funding&pageid=103>

Showreel

- Keep it short – no more than 5 mins. Begin with the best work.
- Wherever possible, tailor the content to the client.
- Put relevant information at the beginning of the showreel – production title, date, your role, your name. This helps to put what follows into context.
- Keep it up to date.
- Check the format the client wants and don't expect it to be returned.
- Make sure it's clearly labelled.

Portfolio

- Make it relevant to the particular client where possible.
- Include sufficient recent examples to give a clear idea of your work.
- Clearly label the work.
- Avoid the "well used" look, i.e. battered files and torn paper.
- Present a professional image.
- Give the client options on how you can supply it to them.

Business stationery

- Have this professionally designed if possible.
- Make sure your letterhead and business card show clearly who you are, what you do and how you may be contacted.
- Make sure the graphic style is appropriate to your role.
- Always carry a stock of business cards with you.
- If you work across more than one grade, you could have different business cards.

Website

- Good to optimise your website so call it your name or at something easy to find.
- It is good to have your website professionally designed by someone whose work you respect
- Brief the designer on the key things you want to get across.
- Keep it simple.
- Make it quick and easy to navigate.



<http://sixrevisions.com> has useful info for web developers and designers.

There are however free options now and www.wix.com is a good option.

Online sites

Employers and freelancers make good use of these, for recruitment and offering services. Some are free, others charge a fee.

(Refer to useful sites at the end of this document)

Other ways to market yourself

Networking

Do not under estimate the need to network. Attend events and go to conferences. Make an effort to make contact and use the list of delegates.

- Keep networking & socialising
- Northern Film & Media have regular events, an e-letter and access via TWITTER that keeps you fully informed www.northernmedia.org.com. They also have a fact sheet called the 'Black art of Networking'
<http://www.northernmedia.org/?mod=funding&pageid=103>
- The Royal Television Society has centres in each region, and also runs regular events which are free to non-members www.rts.org and click on your region.
- <http://mediaindustries.net/> is a very active networking group

For the rest of the UK you might want to focus on your specialism, for example if you're a documentary film maker, look at:

- www.dfglondon.com

How can you meet more people outside events?

Join internet communities, get newsletters from organisations and trade associations.

Blogs, Twitter etc.

Make use of free online web-logging services like www.blogger.com/start or <http://wordpress.com>

Or use Twitter <http://twitter.com> to keep a group of 'followers' up to date with your career and plans.



Facebook has several useful groups you could join <http://www.facebook.com/>
Linkedin is also very popular <http://www.linkedin.com/>

Managing your contacts list

Keep on top of your contacts book and know what people are up to. Keep in touch in a friendly manner, not necessarily to talk about getting work and when you see them you can easily start a conversation.

It is vital to build up and extend your contacts, it will give you greater access to people, ideas, information and opportunities. Most people have about 500 contacts – business, family and social. These 500 contacts will in turn have another 500 contacts! There's going to be at least ONE of these who can help you with your career!

By now you've started building up some contacts and creating a contact list, a simple collection of useful people/companies/organisations.
It doesn't need to be complicated or created on expensive database software.
A simple card file, Excel or Word document will do.

The following information should be included:

- Contact name & job title
- Company name & address
- Phone & fax numbers
- Email & website addresses
- What they do & skills they hire
- When you last contacted them
- What was said
- When you'll next contact them

You must across what is going on in the industry so you can show interest and knowledge.

- Use industry research/intelligence reports and websites such as www.crimsonuk.com for advance production news (includes a searchable database).
- Keep in touch with local/regional production news and developments via your Regional Screen Agency.
- Keep an eye on industry publications: e.g. Broadcast; Regional Film and Video; Screen International; Creation; Televisual; Production Solutions; Creative Review; British

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Journal of Photography. See www.4rfv.co.uk for a list of film/video/TV related publications. Some offer free trial period subscriptions, or special deals for longer periods.

- Use directories to help identify your market: e.g. www.4rfv.co.uk; PACT; Production Guide; The Knowledge; Kemps; Film Bang, AOP.
- Join unions, associations and guilds to help keep informed of industry trends and attend networking events: e.g. BECTU; Directors Guild; Production Managers Association; WFTV; NPA (New Producers Alliance); IVCA; PACT; APA (Advertising Producers Association); Writers Guild of Great Britain; NUJ; AOP; BIPP.

Job hunting

Making speculative approaches by email/letter

To make the best impression you need to show that:

- You have done your research
- You know about their business
- You know where it fits into the media marketplace.

This needs to be shown whenever you make contact – by email, letter or phone.

Usually your aim is to set up an introductory interview or meeting, and to alert them to your CV, so they can see your relevant skills and experience.

Scattergunning "standard" versions is not a good idea.

It is important that the recipient feels special, and that you make them feel the communication has been especially written to them, and is not just one of 100's run off and sent out.

Some tips:

- Find out the right person to contact. Check the company's website, if they have one, and then ring to double-check who you should be contacting.
- Keep everything brief and to the point.
- Don't repeat what you've put in your CV.
- Find out something relevant about their company/current work/current production and put this in the email/letter
- Focus on the needs of the employer, not YOUR needs and wants.



Your email/letter should be in 3 parts:

1. **The reason for writing.....**
For example -
"I was very interested in the article in this week's Broadcast about your new series.....and your plans for undercover filming"
2. **The selling point.....**
For example -
"You will see from my CV that I have a great deal of experience in researching and shooting material on DVCAM....."
3. **The prompt for some further action.....**
"I'd welcome the opportunity to meet you and discuss how my experience could be of benefit to you....."

Following up emails/letters

It's important to follow up email/letters, and it's perfectly acceptable to do so as long as you don't appear to be 'stalking' anyone.

A good technique is to make contact about a week after sending an email/letter to check it has arrived safely, and gone to the right person. This also gives an opportunity to check the circumstances at the place you are targeting e.g. have job opportunities changed or is there perhaps a new commission?

If you've made a good contact, keep in touch, updating your own circumstances and your continued interest in their company – doing so once a month.

Filling in application forms

Some tips:

- Read the form all the way through first
- Take some time to think about what is being asked. Some Q's are not just about facts, but designed to find out about your character, attitudes etc.
- Do a rough draft of your answers beforehand
- Match your application to what you know about the company etc.
- Check spelling, grammar etc.
- Get a friend or colleague to read it and comment
- If unsuccessful, ask for feedback
- Review, amend and update accordingly



If this reveals a gap in your experience, skills or qualifications, you may need to consider some sort of action, perhaps some training.

Cold calling on the phone

Another way to make contact is using the phone. Often it's a case of "cold-calling" which can be pretty unnerving.

Some tips:

- Prepare as much as you can. Find out about the company, its size, its speciality, and particularly the production you are wanting to join
- Write down points you want to make. Don't rely on your memory - you may well get put off by the person on the other end of the phone!
- Check who you are talking to. Are they the right person to be approaching?
- Briefly introduce yourself
- Briefly explain why you are ringing
- Find out as much as you can about the job situation and possibilities
- Find a way to follow up the call - ideally within a meeting or at least to send a CV and to keep in touch
- If they can't offer any of the above, ask them if they can suggest anyone else who might be able to.

Cold calling **can** work. Even if it's not a route into a job, it's a way of making contact for future work.

Meeting potential employers at an interview or meeting

The whole media industry is pretty informal. But informality doesn't mean sloppiness.

Presentation is important

- Dress comfortably but smartly.

Research is again the key

- Ring up and ask some basic questions. No one minds you doing this.
- Make sure you know WHO you are seeing
- What is their role within the company? And possibly, what is their role within the production you're hoping to join?
- Make sure you have some positive things ready to say about the company and its work



Check practicalities

- Double-check where the meeting or interview is taking place
- Check how to get there
- Arrive in plenty of time

Bring your paperwork, DVD, portfolio

- You may want to refer to it, or hand it to the person at the meeting if they haven't got one with them. Or maybe it's been updated since you sent it in, and you want to give them another one.
- Take your portfolio, DVD or anything relevant.

Make notes beforehand

- If it helps, make some notes on any points YOU want to make - and questions you want to ask.
- Think about how you will be an asset to their company or production, and how you can communicate this verbally.

Practise what you want say.

For example, you're bound to be asked "Why do you want to work with us?"

Don't say "Because I think the job/production sounds interesting"

Do say "I think I could work well within your team - the skills and experience I gained on BLAH, BLAH, BLAH - which you'll see in my CV - are similar to your production style" etc. etc

Be positive about what you have to offer. Remember the strengths we identified earlier.

And anything you feel you might lack, don't highlight. Often it's a piece of knowledge you might lack, like basic Health & Safety, that you could learn quickly.

Self management

As a freelancer you will be responsible for many aspects of self-management, and if you're new to the freelance world, they may be areas that you have never considered before.

These include budgeting, financial planning, cash flow, record keeping, and developing and maintaining good working relationships with clients.

You will feel happier about being a freelancer if you are realistic in your financial planning, and rigorous in your record keeping.



Budgeting

When budgeting and planning your finances you will need to think about:

- All your day to day, and future expenses.
- The income you need to support them.
- How you can relate this to your own personal finances or possible/planned business finances.

Expenditure:

Estimate your personal budget in terms of Expenditure for the first year of freelancing.

List:

- Essential monthly/quarterly/yearly commitments
- Tax and National Insurance and Vat if applicable
- Additional requirements – e.g. clothes, holidays, leisure, etc.
- Contingency

Income:

Estimate your Income for the first year.

List:

- Redundancy package (if applicable)
- Pension (if applicable)
- Private investments (if applicable)
- Confirmed future work – paid income

Most banks have a free: 'Starting a Business or Balancing Your Books as a Self-Employed Person package/ information pack', which usually carries a model Budgeting and Cash Flow Scheme. Microsoft Office has a financial planning package also.

Cash flow

Working this out will enable you to plan more effectively.

Be realistic:

- Work out income and expenditure on a monthly, quarterly, 6 monthly, yearly basis
- Income can be both earned and unearned (investment, redundancy, pension, etc.)
- Allow for dead periods (no work) or late receipt of payments
- Factor in payments of regular bills to be paid with dates due
- Negotiate spread payments on expenses (e.g. regular direct debits) if that helps
- Identify what expenses can be cut out or delayed if necessary

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- Build in contingency for emergencies
- Build in time off for holiday/leisure requirement
- Negotiate stage payments, if possible, on long jobs
- Invoice clients promptly and accurately, including bank details if they pay electronically
- Do your tax returns on time to avoid penalties
- Pay your National Insurance Contributions Class 2 on time
- Put away an amount for tax and National Insurance Contributions Class 4 (in a separate bank account) on a regular basis, so that when the tax demand comes in, you are able to pay it.

Record keeping

Keep records of all your business income and expenditure. These will help you fill in your tax return. You need to keep records for at least five years from the latest date of sending back your tax return.

Keep copies of:

- All bills and receipts
- All payment and invoices
- Written records of transactions
- All correspondence

Plus:

- Use a diary to record details of jobs, events, problems, agreements
- Keep full contact details for marketing purposes.

You might find it helps to have a ledger for simple accounts

Below are some useful websites to help track, store and manage your tasks.

www.gtdify.com

www.evernote.com

www.rememberthemilk.com

www.collabtive.o-dyn.de/

<http://1daylab.com>

Legitimate business expenses

These are costs incurred in running your own business e.g.

- Allowances related to running an office in your home i.e. a proportion of bills for home telephone, heating, lighting

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- Office consumables – stationery, postage, repairs etc
- Work consumables – batteries, make-up brushes etc
- Business share of running a car
- Mobile phone bill
- Business insurance
- Subscriptions to relevant magazines, satellite TV
- Advertising/promotional costs
- Training and career development
- Professional fees
- Business bank charges

Claiming for capital items e.g. a car, computer or other piece of equipment, needs to be discussed with your accountant to check if it is appropriate.

Keep a copy of everything spent as proof of purchase.

Invoicing

Invoice clients promptly and accurately, including your bank details (BACS) if they pay electronically.

Presentation is important. Include:

- your letterhead or full address/contact details
- details of the job in question and the dates
- a reference number of some kind, in case you need to refer to it later.

Attach any timesheets and any expenses receipts, if required.

Keep a hard copy and an electronic copy.

Sign your invoice to prove that it is bona fide. You might also want to put some payment terms on the invoice, especially if they have been agreed beforehand.

When payments are received, attach the payment slip to the invoice for use when filing your accounts.

E-mail Invoices

These should contain the same information as any other invoice, and a hard copy should also be retained.



A SAMPLE INVOICE FOLLOWS:

Headed Notepaper
or
Name, address, email, w telephone numbers etc.

To:
Person in Charge
Big Films Inc
Big Films Street.
Big City
WW1 1AA

INVOICE No: 0001/1

DATE	DETAILS	AMOUNT
8 April-7 May 2010	Consultation, planning & advice on BIG FILMS PROJECT 1	£1500
	Expenses for meeting in London (receipts attached)	£ 125
	TOTAL	£1625

NAME:
(Sign name).....

TAX no:
VAT NUMBER (if applicable):

BANK DETAILS FOR BACS PAYMENT IF REQUIRED

TERMS: Payment due within of invoice date



The need for a continuing personal review

The creative media industry as a whole demands continual reviewing and updating of skills.

The people who stay employed and progress most in their careers are those who realise this and act accordingly.

This means keeping up with:

- new technology and how to use it
- new products and innovations
- changes in the way people view and use the creative media
- industry trends
- productions of all kinds, and any innovative creative style and ideas within them
- business matters

You need to keep reading the industry press and networking as much as you can. See the RESOURCES lists at the end of this Toolkit and also go to the Skillset website on www.skillset.org/careers/further_resources

The Skillset information is very wide-ranging and covers all sectors of the industry.

You also need to keep your skills up to date, so consider refreshing your skills and getting training to keep you ahead of the game.

Your Regional Screen Agency runs regular courses and workshops for freelancers, and can offer funding for specialist training or development. Go to www.northernmedia.org

Skillset has a TV Freelance Fund to assist freelancers with training. Go to <http://courses.skillset.org>. You'll also find list of training courses (some subsidised) throughout the UK.

6 Resources

One of the best places to access 100's of pages of useful resources is the Skillset website, which doesn't only focus on TV and film but every sector in the creative media industries.

You can search by **sector** www.skillset.org/careers/further_resources/sector_links/

You can find links about:

NORTHERN FILM + MEDIA

investing in people and ideas

- **Guilds, Unions and Trade Associations**
www.skillset.org/careers/further_resources/article_1910_1.asp
- **Trade Directories e.g. The Knowledge, and Pact directory online**
www.skillset.org/careers/further_resources/article_4144_1.asp
- **Funding & Development Bodies**
www.skillset.org/careers/further_resources/article_2623_1.asp
- **Industry & Networking Links**
www.skillset.org/careers/further_resources/article_4177_1.asp
- **Recruitment links inc. Mandy, Production Base, Shooting People, Totallydigital UK**
www.skillset.org/careers/further_resources/article_4178_1.asp
- **Publications**
www.skillset.org/careers/further_resources/article_4145_1.asp
- **Careers & Training**
www.skillset.org/careers/further_resources/article_4179_1.asp

These should cover EVERY area of the industry you've ever thought of, but just in case here's a further list of places which we think are particularly useful, with a bit more information about what they can supply.

Regionally

Northern Film & Media www.northernmedia.org

Sign up for newsletter and Twitter

News archive for various schemes e.g. Stingers and Capture

Careers and training factsheets

NFM Production Services hosts and manages an online crew/facilities database called NORTHERN EXPOSURE <http://northern-exposure.info/home/html>

covering 3 northern Regional Screen Agencies for crew and facilities. You can search for a crew or facility, or without a specific project add 'just looking' into the selection box, and you'll get access for 3 months before you need to renew registration. Register yourself in the relevant crew grade with credits to support this or register as a new entrant.

This is now on Facebook www.facebook.com/nfmproductionservice

TELLYNET <http://mediaindustries.net/> A very active NE networking group



NATIONALLY

www.tvwatercooler.org A forum for TV freelancers

www.broadcastfreelancer.com part of Broadcast magazine, an online recruitment resource

www.broadcastnow.co.uk Online version of Broadcast magazine

www.startintv.com Can post your CV here, also loads of good tips and info

www.productionbase.co.uk Via subscription, post your CV, upload showreel, access job lists. Also a really helpful forum www.productionbase.co.uk/members/forum/default.aspx

www.mandy.com an international film & TV resources, jobs etc

<http://shootingpeople.org> via subscription, advice, daily work bulletins, upload your films, networking etc

www.talentandproduction.com Free, jobs, networking, editing facility

<http://jobs.guardian.co.uk/jobs/media> Good place to review current rates of pay

www.talentcircle.co.uk

www.new-media-freelancers.co.uk

FACEBOOK

Other useful Facebook groups:

Productionrunners

Crew me now

The Unit List:[bit/ly/unitlist_2](https://www.facebook.com/unitlist_2)

Filmcrewpro

Talent and production

Women in Television and Film

7 Finally.....

For a final check list to see if you're now ready to the freelance life go to

"BE A SUCCESSFUL FREELANCER IN 26 STEPS"

www.skillset.org/uploads/pdf/asset_6879.pdf?