



A GUIDE TO FREELANCING

Kickstart your freelance career

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Freelancing is fantastic if you want to dip your toe into different areas of the industry. If you're someone who likes change, or can easily adapt to different brand personalities, then I'd definitely push you to give it a try. It's given me so much experience and flexibility with my day-to-day life too!

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Katie Hopkins

Education, Communications and Events Manager at New Talent Fashion

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Kickstart your freelance career

This guide has been built to help you achieve your career goals in freelancing and share the steps to take as you enter self-employment.

See it as a whistle-stop-tour – the basics to get you on your feet, or use it to discover whether freelancing is the right path for you.



We'll cover:

- Growing your network
- Self-promotion
- Preparation
- Where to find freelance roles
- Invoicing 101
- Registering as self-employed
- Setting your rate
- Keeping on track
- Case studies
- Pros v Cons

So, get stuck in, enjoy, and we hope it provides a helping hand to your freelance future.

GROWING YOUR NETWORK

Establishing industry connections in a crowded landscape

Gaining a network of industry professionals that you can reach out to or establish a relationship with, is crucial as a freelancer. Jobs are offered through word-of-mouth and given to creatives they trust, so you need to get the hang of networking if you're going to succeed.

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

In this day and age, it's easy to send a quick DM, give something a like or make a supportive comment. Not only will this help your visibility on social networks but it will start to get you integrated into an online community.

Outside of the digital world, if you work with someone, go to university together or meet them in the creative space, ask for their email or more simpler, connect with them on LinkedIn. This way, you'll start to build up your contacts and gain more exposure to new opportunities coming onto the market.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Use social media to your advantage, we've already touched on the value of networking in the digital space, but by setting daily goals you'll be on the way to a curated selection of creative contacts in no time. Make an effort to spend a small amount of time each day engaging, sending a few DM's, looking at popular hashtags in your industry and following new businesses/prospective clients on the platform. An easy 'Follow Friday' can do wonders for your outreach. Don't underestimate the small things you do everyday.

CONTACTS

Once you're happy with a healthy bank of contacts, don't be afraid to send a personalised email introducing yourself formally and enquiring about any future positions/freelance jobs - you don't get anywhere in life if you never ask.

SELF-PROMOTION

In the fashion industry, selling yourself is just part of the job

FINDING YOUR NICHE

There are countless roles within the fashion industry, so you need to pinpoint where you fit into the creative space. Whether you're wanting to go into copywriting, pattern cutting or social media, make sure you specify your niche and build on your skills to deliver trust for your clients. Think about your talents and those you want to progress in for the future of your business, document your progress on social media channels and further develop your toolkit. Getting confident using features like Instagram Stories and pushing your work online (and in person through conversation) will not only build your self-belief, but put you in the public eye.

PITCHING

Having a document ready when you see a call-out or opportunity is the best way to be seen first. Condense your portfolio, edit your cover letter and bounce a few ideas across in your interest email – the extra effort goes a long way. If you want to reach out to companies instead, compliment their brand and share why you'd appreciate the chance to speak to them further, give them a reason to call.



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I became a freelancer/SMM after working 9–5 every single day and realising it just was not for me! I became a part-time teacher and started my freelance business, mostly just for the freedom. I have been so fortunate to work with amazing clients and grow my business since last year! I would 100% recommend starting your own freelance business or working with freelancers.

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PREPARATION

Organisation and time management need to be your best friends

Here's our straight-talking top tips for expert planning...

- Get yourself organised before going into freelancing. Have your documents ready, a plan in place, a detailed description of the services you offer, social media accounts/website live and a drive for success!
- Make an effort to send weekly check in emails or calls with your clients when onboard – be professional and gain your clients' confidence.
- Hold yourself accountable. There will be no one making sure you're on track, or to nudge when work is due, set reminders and key points in your project to work towards.
- Productivity and being proactive is key. You'll progress a lot quicker and grow your client base if you're always on the lookout for opportunities and keep up to date with the industry.
- The industry will change, Instagram will change their algorithm and new skillsets will appear. Adapting with the industry and constantly upskilling is crucial for future-proofing your business.
- Use a contract template to get started whilst you learn the basics of freelancing, sites like www.pandadoc.com/freelance-contract-template/ can help.
- Create a standard proposal/pitch document. It can be more formal like a written letter or as creative as you like. Include a description of the work you will complete, estimated prices, timescales, your creative ideas and payment information.
- Use our weekly and daily planner downloads for a helping hand when planning your time!

WHERE TO FIND WORK

Are you looking in the right place?

SOCIAL MEDIA

When you've set up your professional social media accounts you may get approached for work, so be ready to answer DM's in a professional manner and transfer queries over to email. Likewise, brands in your industry may place call-outs online for freelancers – especially via LinkedIn – make sure you keep an eye on them and enable notifications so you don't miss out.

FREELANCING WEBSITES

Websites like Upwork and Fiver are freelancing platforms to apply for work. You need to be aware of the cut they take when you get paid for client work, as this can dramatically decrease your expected rate of pay. If you're wanting experience to build your CV however, this may be the route to go down – lots of freelancers use them on a daily basis.

PLACES TO LOOK, ACCOUNTS TO FOLLOW

Creative Access
creativeaccess.org.uk/

Fashion Workie
fashionworkie.com

Diary Directory
diarydirectory.com

Cision Jobs
cisionjobs.co.uk

Drapers
drapersonline.com

The Dots
the-dots.com/

Media Beans
mediabeans.io/

I like networking
[@ilikenetworking](https://www.instagram.com/ilikenetworking)

Run the check
[@runthecheck](https://www.instagram.com/runthecheck)

If you could jobs
[@ifyoucouldjobs](https://www.instagram.com/ifyoucouldjobs)

INVOICING 101

Invoice correctly and get that £££

One of the most important parts of freelancing... getting paid for the work you've done! Here's a sample of an invoice below to give you an idea of what the average one looks like. When working with clients, you may want to sign a contract to avoid any future misunderstandings too. Make sure to note on pay timescales (average 28 days after invoicing), charges for revisions, late fines and usage rights. They may not be the most fun things to write, but they may just save your back!

INSERT LOGO

Insert business address or contact details

INVOICE #
Add invoice number

ITEM DESCRIPTION	QTY OR TIME	PRICE	TOTAL
Insert your service here	add hours or quantity	add price	add total
Remove column if only 1 service/product	add hours or quantity	add price	add total

BANK DETAILS

Input relevant bank details or Paypal so they can send you the funds	TAX (Add on if charging for)	SUB TOTAL	£
		GRAND TOTAL	£

THANK YOU FOR WORKING WITH ME
Insert website
Insert social links

- Brand your invoice with your key colour palette, logo and include links to your website too.
- Insert your business address (if applicable) email address and contact details.
- Number your invoices for ease of documentation.
- Insert a clear description, quantity/time spent so you can evidence exactly what that particular invoice is for.
- Need a little extra help? This invoice generator makes it easy when you're getting started: www.invoice-generator.com

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For me, being freelance was such an easy choice – this doesn't mean it was easily attainable. As a creative, I'm constantly growing and developing in my practice and I knew that I needed to allow myself space to do this. Working for myself means that I'm in control of my own progression and direction.

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REGISTERING ON GOV.UK

Make sure you sign up as self-employed to avoid fines!

IS SELF-EMPLOYMENT FOR YOU?

Ultimately, being self-employed means sole responsibility for your earnings and job. You can be employed and self-employed at the same time, which is a popular route for those getting started with freelancing. You're probably working freelance if you have multiple customers, can decide when and where you work and charge a pre-agreed price for your service. If you've already started working for yourself, you need to register by 5 October in your business's second tax year to avoid fines (Gov, February 2021).

EASY AS 1, 2, 3...

1. Register as self-employed (more specially a sole trader)
2. Details will arrive by post to continue and give you your 10-digit UTR number
3. Complete self-assessment at the end of every tax year

Useful Gov links:

Set up as a sole trader - www.gov.uk/set-up-sole-trader

Registering for self-assessment - www.gov.uk/register-for-self-assessment/self-employed



SETTING YOUR RATE

Deciding how much you should charge can be tricky, let us help!

Setting your rate may feel daunting, but nothing is ever permanent and you don't need to charge the same rate for all your clients. Think about the value of your service as how much it will benefit and profit your client in the long term – this may change your initial rate benchmark.

WHERE TO START

A good place to start is documenting all your outgoings, these could be rent, utilities, technology, travel, tax, web fees, student loan or even a pension. Once you've worked out your monthly expenses, you'll be able to see how much you need to be making, then you can think about your profit margin.

You could choose to work on an hourly/day rate or project basis. This is completely dependant on the tasks set and the time you think you'll need for the specific outcome.

Take a look at your previous salary, or salaries in the industry from jobs that mirror your skills for a little comparison. Once you have an average figure, and have weighed this up against your outgoings, you can start thinking about your daily rate.

Remember, with 365 days in a year, minus weekends, bank holidays, annual leave and sick days, you come out with around 220 working days in the year (dependant on your personal plans).

GROWING YOUR BUSINESS

Never cut yourself short! In order for your business to grow, you want to always be making a profit. With the flexibility to adapt your rates as you progress from a junior to a senior, your rate will fluctuate over your working life. Finally, for projects that require a fast turnaround, think about raising your fee for prioritising client work too.

KEEPING ON TRACK

Numbers can be confusing, here's a few tips to make them simple

One of the key elements of freelancing is keeping on track of your finances, business and all other admin and HR tasks. When registered on Gov.uk, your tax and national insurance will be covered, but think about whether you need insurance or want to set up a limited company in the future. Hit the link below for a little guidance. But remember, one step at a time.

www.gov.uk/limited-company-formation/register-your-company

ORGANISING YOUR FOLDERS

A quick tip that can save you lots of time when saving documents is keeping everything in a specific 'client' area on your laptop. Keeping 'work in progress' and 'approved' work in separate areas is key to avoiding confusion.

DOCUMENTING EXPENSES

You need to keep receipts for business expenses to submit with your self-assessment, this will ensure you can claim against anything you've had to buy to support your business. This could be petrol, stationery, laptops/software, fabrics etc. Ledger books or Quickbooks could help you document income and outgoings so you're organised when submitting your self-assessment comes around.

TIMESHEETS

Timesheets are a great way to keep track of the time you spend on client projects and evidence the duration of specific tasks, this can be supplied to your client upon request, as an extra verification of the work completed. Set up a simple excel spreadsheet and note down the minutes spent on a project, in multiples of 5 minutes for ease. You can even create a countdown/total using simple SUM formula to be aware of the time left on a project if a budget has been set.

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Going from a permanent job to freelancing is a scary step to take, but it also comes with a considerable amount of perks: the satisfaction of seeing your work come to life on your terms, the flexibility of trying different things at your own pace, the chance of meeting amazing people working from anywhere you desire. For me, all of the above are priceless.

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CASE STUDIES

Get more clients by showcasing your previous work

CASE STUDY CREATION

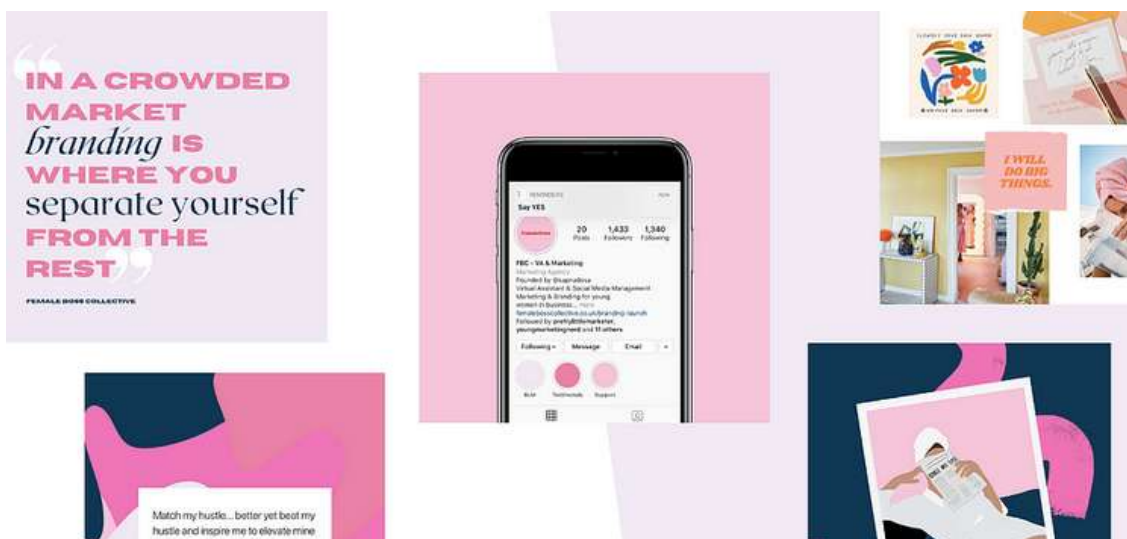
Case studies are a means of promoting your previous work and gaining new client projects. A brief synopsis, client wishes and work examples can be displayed in a creative manner, for ease of sharing across social media and your website (see graphic example below).

TESTIMONIALS

Asking your clients for testimonials is a fantastic way to share your achievements and increase brand loyalty. Informing your network of your success stories may motivate your audience to reach out for work of their own and gain industry credibility too! Share these on your social media and with your case study on your portfolio.

PORTFOLIO BUILDING

Having a strong portfolio and pdf file to send to prospective clients will make your case to work with them stronger, each time you add another completed project. Take a look at your favourite freelancers, look at their portfolio and see how you can take any actionable inspiration.



PROS V CONS

So, do you think freelancing is for you?

You're informed on all things freelancing, now's the time to weigh up the pros and cons. Some points outweigh others, but your choices are completely personal and can differentiate from person to person – take a look.

PROS	CONS
Remote working – less money spent on commuting and other daily costs	Lack of security with work – projects may not be consistent
Flexibility with your time	Sorting out your own finances
Be your own boss	No paid time off
Get to work on lots of different projects, variety can be exciting	Working alone
Focus on your interests	Irregular payments and chasing invoices
Professional independence	Making the jump into full-time freelancing can be daunting, from both a financial and life changing perspective
Ability to work from anywhere in the world	Clients may not understand your vision, but you have to take their points on board
Can work alongside an employed job/your studies until you've built up a client base	

Now fill out your own table (see print-out). Put your thoughts onto paper to help you decide if freelancing is for you. Let the above act as a guide.

LET'S RECAP

So, do you think freelancing is for you?

We hope this guide has given you an insight into life as a freelancer, opened self-employment up for discussion, or maybe crossed it entirely off your list – our mission was to be straight-talking, but supportive.

A freelance career isn't for everyone, but in our current reality where work-from-home life has entered normality, working for yourself has certainly become a hot topic.



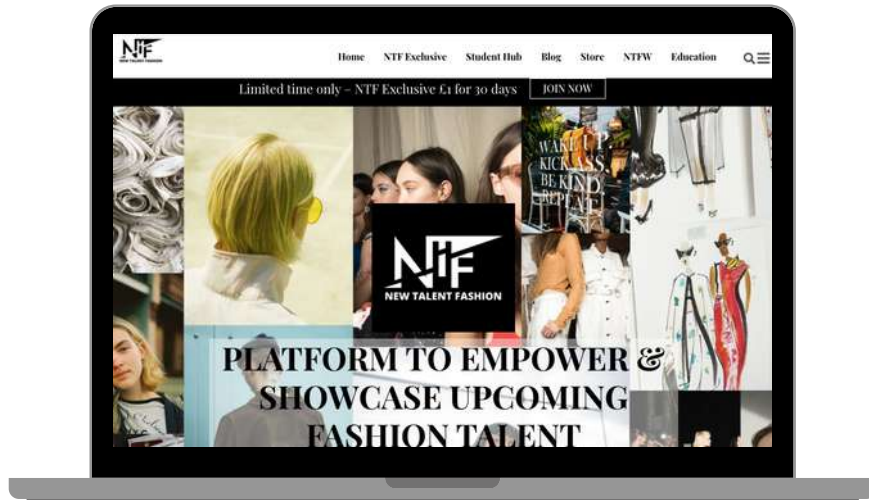
You may be only just entering the industry – in which case, freelancing is a clever way to work alongside your studies, so your CV is packed full of experience by the time you graduate – or maybe you're thinking about changing career path and making that step into self-employment.

Whatever your situation, know that New Talent Fashion is here for you – a community to share, learn and showcase your skills, where your opinions and questions are valid and most importantly, answered in truth.

For more support on freelancing and information on many areas within the fashion industry, head to our website to discover more exclusive content – we've got you!

WHERE YOU CAN FIND US

Connect with NTF to further your employability!



Discover more from New Talent Fashion over on our website and explore all we have to offer – from our Student Hub, NTF Exclusive subscription, and the NTF Store.



We're active on socials too! Follow us on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter, to keep up to date with all-things New Talent Fashion, wherever you like to see us in your news feed.



Don't forget to follow us on LinkedIn too to add us to your network!



Our Youtube shares designer spotlights, tips on careers in the fashion industry and snippets from our podcast. We cover topics from your perfect capsule wardrobe, to making the most of fashion school.




If you're looking for inspiration, our Pinterest is where to go for creative CV's, style, editorial photography and an overview of our 'Fashion In Society' blog.



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I chose to go into freelance personal styling to follow a passion, but also to diversify my skill set following uncertainty in the job market. It has given me the ability to find a niche customer network which isn't currently catered for, and work around my existing schedule.

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A guide to freelancing
By New Talent Fashion

WWW.NEWTALENTFASHION.CO.UK