



Create Your Own Work

By Stephanie Nijhuis

Want to “work for yourself”? Interested in being able to do your job from anywhere in the world? Freelancing could be for you.

A freelancer is generally someone who has a specific skill set which they sell as a service to individuals or companies. Employers will often hire a freelancer for a single task or project, or for a contracted period of time.

According to Canadian statistics, by 2014 there were already 1.8 million workers in a form of temporary job. In the U.S., independent workers (or freelancers) make up at least 15% of the workforce.

Work roles that are able to translate to freelancing can range from photographers to engineers. Potential sectors that often involve freelance work include writing and content development, copy editing, sales and marketing, structure design and engineering, graphic design, web design, programmers, software developers, accountants, personal assistants, and data entry, just to name a few! Some freelancers hire their skills out for specific projects, working for a variety of organizations at the same time, while others might work on one or more projects for a longer period with one organization. Flexibility is one of the hallmarks of freelance work and as such, can be a great option, especially for new graduates, who might still be exploring their career interests or even where they want to live.



C. Hilary Smith BAH'14

Hilary Smith (BAH '14 Film and Media Studies) turned her experiences and her degree from Queen's University into a freelancing career. During her undergraduate degree, she was already taking on freelance jobs. Then, and since her graduation, Hilary has been doing post-production, editing short films, commercials, corporate videos and weddings. Recently she also branched into assistant editing for TV and film.

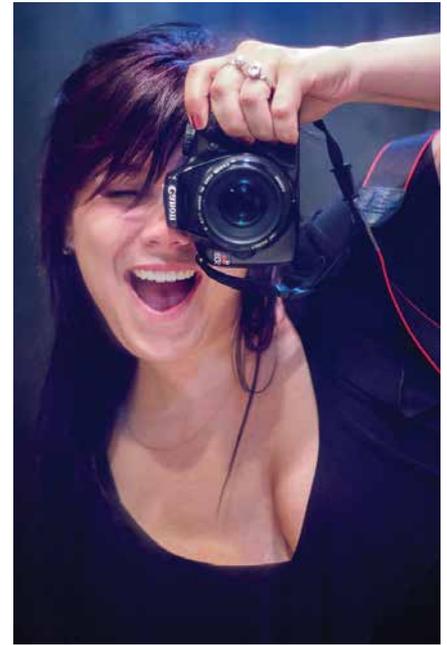
While completing her degree, Hilary tested out her career path, "As a film student, freelancing was kind of my way of life. I knew I wanted to get into post production, but I wasn't able to find any full time opportunities, so I began taking individual projects here and there," she said. In addition, she became involved with Queen's Videofactory (now part of Studio Q) where she was able to learn skills and develop work experience.

Since she's been freelancing, Hilary has developed some insights into finding projects. "Every job I've ever had has been by knowing someone who knows someone", Hilary explained. "I've found that my best career move was deciding what I wanted to do, and telling everyone I knew".

Kendra Pierroz (BA'16 Drama and Media Studies) is another student who began her freelancing career during her time at Queen's. While learning elements of lighting and design through a theatre perspective in her drama classes and taking courses in media theory and design, Kendra was able to expand her knowledge and skill-set.

In addition to her studies, Queen's provided her with the extracurricular opportunities to pursue photography and expand her network. Kendra was able to get a job as a Photo Editor with the Queen's Journal, which led her to an internship opportunity with the Kingston Whig Standard. In addition, Kendra began her own photography business called Dockflower Media, specializing in weddings and engagements.

As with any career path, freelancing comes with some challenges. Freelancers not only have to build their resume and portfolio, but also source jobs to apply for. "I've done quite a bit of pro bono work in order to boost my network and build my portfolio," says Kendra. She also noted, "Many freelancers will also be faced with a period of time without any work."

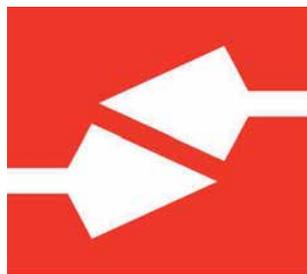


Kendra Pierroz BA'16

Kendra is thankful for the Kingston community and the resources available to her, such as the KEDCO small business development centre and KEYS. They were great places to turn to when in an employment lull, as well as when facing her biggest challenge. "I was listening to the negative Nancy permanently roosted in my head as opposed to the wealth of support,

continued

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right outside my Kingston window," she said. Kendra has learned to remind herself to stay focused on and connected to the helpful community around her.

While freelance work can take many forms, Kendra feels that, "confidence and perseverance are essential to success". Although her degree wasn't in photography or business, the skills she learned through her time in university as well as her extracurricular activities were pivotal building blocks in Kendra's freelance path. "Professional development, personal growth and endless networking in university were what gave me the opportunities to launch my business." she said.

Types of Freelance work

Independent contractors The "traditional" freelancers. Many of these workers do not have a single employer, they work on their own and they frequently do work on a project-to-project basis.

Moonlighters Someone who holds a "normal job" working for an employer during specific shifts which accounts for much of their income. However they freelance their skills out to other employers when they're not scheduled at their regular job (eg. weekends).

Diversified workers This includes people with multiple sources that make up their total income. They rely on both a part-time, traditional job, however they make up the rest of their income by freelancing their skills out.

Temporary workers This is a single worker that will work for only a single employer, or client working on one project for a contracted period of time. The freelancer may or may not have benefits or job security, but they are contracted for a specific project or a period of time to a single employer. They are then able to continue to freelance or contract their skills to other employers afterwards.

Freelance business owners This includes a 'freelance business' in which one person who begins freelancing themselves then compiles a team (usually of 1-5 employees) with the same skills to build an agency. While they still market themselves out as a freelancer, there are more employees to take on jobs.



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