

>>Snapshot



Peter Footitt

Musician

Musicians' Union

Can you tell me a bit about your career to date?

I've always loved music and have played the guitar since I was ten. After 30 years in the public sector, I decided to plan a new business for my retirement and signed up for an Open University course in music.

I started my business three years ago and have gone from teaching individuals at home to having my own studio where we have space for individual tuition, group rehearsals and recording.

There's another teacher involved too and on top of my many regular individual pupils I work with 30 bands and solo artists, some of whom I am the agent for and manage. The whole focus and ethos of the business for me is about developing people and raising the profile of musicians.

What do you like most about your work? Why is it so satisfying?

I love teaching and seeing people develop from the point of walking in with their instruments through using the rehearsal space and then sometimes carrying on to recording. It's great to be able to offer the full life cycle and friends liken my setup to an incubator. I love being able to support the development of people because it's all about so much more than the music.

What are the biggest challenges of maintaining a freelance career/being a creative freelance?

The admin has been a challenge because finding time for accounting and record keeping can be tough.

The other challenge is acquiring a good knowledge of the music industry in relation to managing performers, and keeping that knowledge up to date.

Have you added new work/skills to your portfolio over time? What prompted you to do this?

Apart from getting to grips with the admin side of running a business, the majority of skills I have learnt are ones

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relating to the music business. The Open University course I am doing has been excellent. I've been learning theory, technology of music and composition.

What is the biggest challenge of learning the skills that you need?

Money is always a limiting factor. Also organising the transport and accommodation I need to attend training can be tricky. I also think it's important to get good useable notes so I can retain the information and continue to work on a continuous basis.

What FEU Training courses have you attended?

- Finance for Freelances
- Driving traffic to your website
- Run an effective social media campaign
- Time management
- Diversify your portfolio.

What are the most important things that you've learned? How have you used what you have learnt in your work and how has it helped?

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that's had the biggest impact for me is Finance for Freelances. Going from employed to self-employed was a huge leap, and this workshop gave me great advice on all the ins and outs. How I did my accounts from that point on dramatically changed.

The 'Drive traffic to your Website' was an eye opener too. I realised how much work I needed to do to my own website. With all the information about Google spiders, metadata and the like, I now have quite a few new items on my 'to do' list. Applying the social media information is also on going.

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What has encouraged you to attend FEU training sessions?

I've attended workshops because of a desire to develop myself. I find the organisation extremely professional. All the presentations are well paced in a great learning environment.

I love the mix of actors, writers and musicians at the FEU. It lets you see how similar issues effect other creatives in parallel industries, and helps you appreciate how others work and what their solutions are. It's a great way to get yourself out of your own bubble. I've really enjoyed networking with all sorts of different people, and have made great contacts.

