

# >>Snapshot

**Lorraine Bowen**

**Musician/Entertainer**

**Musicians' Union**



**Can you tell us a bit about your career to date?**

I started my career in The Dinner Ladies band, and in the 80's was spotted by Billy Bragg, who I then toured with. Billy heard some of my songs, and encouraged and inspired me to go it alone.

Since then I've done everything from fringe festivals, clubs, radio film and shows. I've also produced five CDs of original songs. More recently I was on Britain's got Talent, where David Walliams used his golden button to secure my place in the semi finals.

**What do you like most about your work?**

I like that my work is so unpredictable and varied. If you didn't enjoy this lifestyle and lack of certainty, you'd work in an office. I love that I have my notebook with me all the time – it's full of ideas and lists. It's your life... it's everything!

**What are the biggest challenges of maintaining a freelance career?**

Creating time and space for yourself can be challenging. With the need to constantly plan and regulate your activities, you are always working. I have piles of A4 planning notebooks. It sometimes feels difficult to find the time to create. Your drive needs to be amazing. You need a GCSE in 'Drive'! It can also be tough dealing with the emotional side of the business, especially if you start to compare yourself to others.

None of the skills you need to run a freelance career are taught at school, so it's vital that organisations like FEU Training are able to continue offering this invaluable support.

**Have you added new work/skills to your portfolio over time?**

I have learned how to pre produce all my albums myself after attending some great courses with City Lit. This involved getting familiar and comfortable with the

.....  
***"None of the skills you need to run a freelance career are taught at school, so it's vital that organisations like FEU Training are able to continue offering this invaluable support"***  
 .....

technical side, which was a bit of a leap to start with. Then, the more you do, the more you realise you can do.

The incentive has been financial, but I also think it's very important to go through life learning new things. You have to do professional development to move forward and keep up to date. It's important to nurture and stretch yourself so that you're not left behind.

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

When you believe you can't do something, that's a real challenge. Then you see someone else manage it, and you think, 'well, why can't I?' It's really about learning to get out of your own way.

I work in comedy, which is male dominated. It also feels like there's an element of sexism when it comes to learning some skills. In my experience women are not expected to be as proficient on the technical side as men, but this is something I've really embraced and now feel competent in, particularly with my own mixing desk.

**What FEU Training courses have you attended?**

I've attended Developing Resilience, Running a Successful Media Campaign and Business Motivation.

All the FEU Training courses give you a hoick up into a better sense of yourself! They take you from feeling that it's all too tough to realising how much more you can do,



# >> Snapshot

**Lorraine Bowen**

**Musician/Entertainer**

*Musicians' Union*



and that it is all worth it, and so you keep going. On one course that I attended, a fellow musician who was on the point of giving up, turned her thinking around completely because of the workshop, and left inspired to continue with her musical career.

The course that had the biggest impact for me, and it was a massive impact, was the social media workshop. I went from feeling overwhelmed, and in a social media whirl, to knowing that not only could I cope with it, I could use it to transform my on-line profile and create more work opportunities.

The tutor was fantastic and full of enthusiasm. I got so many great insights on that day. I was out on a social media limb and creating a social media campaign can be difficult and time consuming. However, the FEU Training workshop made it feel it was achievable and gave me the tools to do it.

These courses helped me take the decision to put myself back out there, to take a leap and be prepared to change myself again.

**What are the most important things that you've learned?**

The courses I did with FEU Training gave me the impetus and motivation to apply for Britain's Got Talent. And, because of the work I'd done on my social media platforms, I was lucky enough to be given an agent after the competition ended. I only got the agent because my social media accounts were so professional, and I had accumulated so many followers and connections. I have to say as a result of all this, the last six months have been brilliant.

During the semi finals of BGT, I noticed that Snoop Dog had instagrammed me, and it had 60 million views! The BGT social media team took this information, and incorporated it into the intro piece for me within a couple of hours of my performance.

.....  
***"All the FEU Training courses give you a hoick up into a better sense of yourself! They take you from feeling that it's all too tough to realising how much more you can do, and that it is all worth it, and so you keep going"***  
 .....

**What has encouraged you to attend FEU Training sessions?**

It really helps that the workshops are in London and free. However, I think they are so good, I would be prepared to pay for them – although it would have to be an affordable amount.

To be honest, I think a lot of people come to these workshops because they are at the end of their tether. What's great is that these courses pick them up, and set them going again. I've got a lot from every course I've attended. It's a fantastic resource.

I like that some are held at the MU. It's so interesting to meet other people in the same situation. It's really as much a networking event as it is a workshop. It's great that these events mix up musicians, writers, journalists and actors. It's like a creative think tank.

**Do you know any other organisation that offers business skills courses for creatives?**

No.