>>>Snapshot



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

I've been writing songs since I was 12 when I got my first guitar. I played in school and university bands and then in the 80s helped form Team Ten, a nine-piece Soul Jazz outfit. We were relatively successful, played some of the largest and trendiest venues in London, released one single Mission Impossible and were part of a 1986 Channel 4 Soho Jazz Festival documentary. Despite attracting interest from CBS, Paul Weller and Gilles Peterson, we eventually disbanded and my subsequent focus moved firmly into

I gained an MMus Masters degree in Songwriting and a further education teaching qualification. For the last five years I have facilitated the London Songwriters group workshops and retreats.

Running concurrently, I have also had a successful 28-year career in IT. Two and a half years ago I took redundancy to focus on music full time, and although the transition has been a tricky one, it is a decision I am very happy with.

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

It is exciting to follow one's passion and to write, teach and work with other creative people. It has also been useful to learn new marketing and administrative skills. I enjoy being involved full-time in the creative world in a way that I have always wanted to be, as well as the freedom of being my own boss.

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

One of the biggest issues is having the discipline to manage time well – balancing creativity with accounts and administration for example.

Other challenging areas are maintaining motivation and, of course, the uncertainty of income that comes with the freelance life.

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"Meeting and sharing experiences with like-minded creatives as well as learning motivational and productivity tips from knowledgeable and experienced facilitators has been invaluable"

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

Getting my teaching qualification added to what I could do and gave me additional credibility in this area. I did courses on facilitation and community music leadership, all of which allowed me to expand what I could offer.

The FEU Training courses have given me lots of general business skills including how to set up good financial practices. These, and many of the motivation tips, have really helped me through the transition.

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

I have to say that I've not really experienced any difficulties in learning any of the skills that I have needed. The issue has been more about putting them into practice!

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

I have attended several including Finance for Freelances, Negotiation, Stress Busting and Business Motivation for Creatives.

## What are the most important things that you've

I have learned so much from all of the workshops I have attended. I still use many of the financial templates from Finance for Freelances.

I used what I learned on the Social Media workshop to create a timetable of Facebook and Twitter posts as part of a coordinated marketing campaign. This produced tangible and measurable results, as it helped me sell out three songwriting retreats from a standing start, increasing my income on each one. I definitely got a much better response because of it.

The Business Motivation workshop helped me re-focus on my own songwriting and I had a song featured on a World Cup compilation album and a Soundcloud contact led to a

## Snapshot

# Murray Webster

Musician

## Musicians' Union

Eurovision submission.

I have learned to focus more on my achievements, relax a bit more about having so much to do and to relabel some of the boring stuff to make it easier to tackle. I can honestly say that what I have learned has helped me to introduce more of my own creativity into my business.

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

All of these workshops have been a fantastic perk of my MU membership.

Above all, meeting and sharing experiences with likeminded creatives as well as learning motivational and productivity tips from knowledgeable and experienced facilitators has been invaluable.

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It's good to know that we are not alone in facing similar challenges and I would urge FEU members to take advantage of these fantastic opportunities if they can!

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

