

>>Snapshot

Shai Hussain

Writer

WGGB



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"I got lots of great advice, and I've put much of it into practice. I now have a five-year plan and a one-year plan. It might not work out, but I have something to work with that lets me measure and monitor my progress"
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Can you tell us a bit about your career to date?

I am a writer and DJ. My first love is script writing. My work has been performed on BBC Radio 4, BBC Asian Network and optioned by NBC Universal. I created the web series Three Shades of Brown, which I also directed and produced. I am also Film Editor of a web magazine called The-NRI.com.

What do you like most about your work?

I love to be creative. It keeps me entertained and entertaining. The buzz from people enjoying themselves is just fantastic. It's important to me to entertain but also to educate.

What are the biggest challenges of maintaining a freelance career?

Money has to be one of the key challenges. However, the Finance for Freelancers workshop really helped me there. I always had a good long-term plan, but learning to set bite-sized, short term goals has made an incredible difference to me.

The other challenge is finding investors for my projects, and learning to effectively pitch to them. I missed the last pitching workshop, and really hope that you run it again as it would help with both of these issues.

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

I have learned how to use Final Cut Pro and Photoshop, how to use a DLSR camera, how to create my own website, directing, producing and music production.

Learning all of these things obviously saved me money, and gave me opportunities and flexibility I wouldn't otherwise have had, but my real motivation was interest. I love to learn, I have an absolute thirst for knowledge. I want to learn languages next.

It's been a massive learning curve using persuasive skills to get established actors and others to participate in my web series and then finding leadership skills to bring

it together. My next challenge is learning not to do it all myself.

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

Confidence can be a challenge, but I find that Google and YouTube have so many free resources, they're great to give you a nudge to get you started.

What I enjoy about the FEU Training courses is that they are much more intensive, and working in a group is so much better. I've found that it's vital that you use what you've learned immediately otherwise you just forget it all.

What FEU Training courses have you attended?

I've attended Running a Social Media Campaign, How to Drive Traffic to your Website, Negotiation and Finance for Freelancers.

All of the workshops have been useful. Finance for Freelancers taught me so much about setting achievable financial goals and knowing your worth. That really helped me. The negotiation workshop helped me realise it's not all about the price and that there is value in looking after the relationship.



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

I got lots of great advice, and I've put much of it into practice. I now have a five-year plan and a one-year plan. It might not work out, but I have something to work with that lets me measure and monitor my progress.

In my script writing, I now look for more achievable projects for selling on, rather than just focusing on the passion projects.

My website is nearly done and I am building followers on Facebook and Twitter, or rather I am building relationships on-line, which is helping me sell Three Shades of Brown. Before the workshops I saw social media as an 'add on' but now it's an integral part of my marketing.

Since the negotiation workshop, I am much better at saying no to unpaid work, or at least negotiating to get something else out of it, that benefits me.

I've gained a lot of skills I didn't have before I attended these courses, and that has lead to more confidence.



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What has encouraged you to attend FEU Training sessions?

I can't believe that this is included in the Writers' Guild membership fee. It has to be one of the biggest benefits. It's so good to network with actors, filmmakers and musicians, and I have stayed in touch with quite a few.

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

No.