>>Snapshot

Francine Brody

Actor & Voice-over artist

Equity

"The workshops have always been brilliant. It's interesting to meet new people and learn anything new. I have loved getting ideas from other people, many of whom I have stayed in touch with."

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

I came to London to train at RADA where I won the Flora Robson prize. From there I did repertory in Newcastle, fringe theatre, television and film work. During a lull, I taught English as a foreign language.

I later got into editing and spent six years at Weidenfeld & Nicolson (part of the Orion Publishing Group). I continue to work as a freelance editor as well as doing voice-over work, including audio books and ADR (automated dialogue replacement) for film and television. My audio books include the unabridged version of Bridget Jones's Diary and Italian Fever, which won a bronze SWPA award. My very first audio book made Book of the Week in the Guardian, which was very encouraging.

I also do English language teaching tapes and equality and diversity work for corporate clients as well as the odd film and commercial. I grew up in America and I speak Italian, which helps, in that I get offered a broader selection of work.

What do you like most about your work?

I get such a thrill from the variety and the adrenalin of acting. I love the people I meet. ADR involves a lot of improvising and can be stressful, but I love it. When recording ADR for scenes in an Afghanistan hospital, I had to learn realistic medical jargon. I so enjoy the challenge of it. I always feel like I am going to a party when I go to work. I am so lucky to be paid to do this.

What are the biggest challenges of maintaining a freelance career?

The all or nothing aspects of this life can be very stressful. Managing cash flow and multiple deadlines can be tough. You have to learn to juggle everything and to deal with the emotional aspects of it.

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

I learned to juggle (balls, not jobs!) and I play the cello, both of which I have used on stage. A high point was playing cello in Liverpool in a musical about the Beatles called Imagine. I've learned ballroom, ballet and tango dancing, not to mention yoga and children's photography.

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

Money and time are the biggest obstacles to learning. I'm always interested in learning and would learn everything I could if I had the resources.

What FEU Training courses have you attended?

- Finance for Freelances
- Get Noticed
- Confidence Building
- How to run a social media campaign
- Click into Instagram
- Mobile video Kickstarter

What are the most important skills that you've learned and how have you used them in your work?

All the workshops I have attended have been incredibly useful. I've gained many tools I didn't have before.

Get Noticed was my first FEU workshop and it drew me in. Getting another person's view on my CV was really useful. The Build your Confidence day was helpful too. I've passed on many tips to other people from that one.

I've put into action much of what I learned on Click into Instagram and have trained others to use it too. This workshop really helped me to get more attention. People started to find me

>>Snapshot

Francine Brody

Actor & Voice-over artist

Equity

out of the blue and I have to assume that was because of my increased and more effective online activity.

I picked up many little tricks on the Mobile Video Kickstarter day around editing and improving quality. I went straight out and got myself a microphone and stand, so I can produce better self-tapes, an essential requirement to get work now.

All I have learned has come in really handy and not just for me, I'm currently helping a friend with their social media campaign.

What has encouraged you to attend FEU training sessions?

The workshops have always been brilliant. It's interesting to meet new people and learn anything new. I have loved getting ideas from other people, many of whom I have stayed in touch with.

Access to these workshops has been a real bonus of being in the Union - amazing value. I've attended training I just couldn't have done otherwise. I am always raving about your courses to other people.

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

No.

"Access to these workshops has been a real bonus of being in the Union - amazing value. I've attended training I just couldn't have done otherwise. I am always raving about your courses to other people."