

Susie Fugle

Actor

Equity



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

I trained at LAMDA and moved to the USA, where I was a DJ on radio station WMUA in Amherst, Massachusetts. Then, I joined "Shakespeare & Company" on the other side of the state, playing outdoor Shakespeare in the grounds of "The Mount", a grand house in Lenox, which writer Edith Wharton built and in which she lived for many years.

After two seasons of outdoor theatre, I moved to New York City. Here I took numerous acting classes in Meisner, Improvisation, Voice, Clown and Contact Improvisation.

I formed an acoustic guitar based trio with residencies at the Swiss Chalet on the upper west side and The Alamo in the Village singing cocktail swing jazz numbers. I also joined another Shakespeare company "Theatre for a New Audience".

To finance all this creativity I worked downtown as a waitress. In this role, I learned about fine wine, nouvelle cuisine and not to goggle too much when waiting on tables of dining celebrities.

In 1983, I moved back to the UK and immediately landed two TV commercials, followed by theatre tours of "Under Milk Wood", "Canterbury Tales" and Rep at Plymouth Theatre Royal. Then roles in BBC Radio 4 dramas and in television - light entertainment with LWT and roles in TV series with BBC, ITV and HTV.

It was during this time, being a passionate cyclist and HIV/AIDS campaigner,

I co-created "The Lighthouse Bicycle Ride" with Paul Hobbs from Brixton Cycles Co-op. This fundraising cycle ride for the London Lighthouse, The Landmark and Great Ormond St Children's Hospital, ran from Richmond Green to Windsor Castle for 10 years.

Altogether 20,000 people, cycling 35,000 miles raised over £1million.

Time Out magazine called it, "A highlight in the cycling calendar" and, at a cheque presentation at the Lighthouse, Dame Helen Mirren said:

"It's events like these that make the world go round."

In 1996, I co-created an actor based production company "Fat Chance Productions". We produced a series of six programmes "West Walks" on celebrity walks and bicycle rides and a feature film "Monument" - all commissioned by HTV in Bristol.

Then opportunities enabled me to bring my performance skills into the world of business. I began facilitating communication, presentation and leadership programmes, working with organisations in the public and private sectors.

What do you like most about your work?

I love blending my skills as a performer and facilitator. I really love travelling and working with people from different cultures. My work has taken me from Delhi to Moscow, Milton Keynes to Istanbul and Berlin to Bucharest.

What are the biggest challenges of maintaining a freelance career?

Lining up the next work while doing the current work is the key in keeping the flow going.

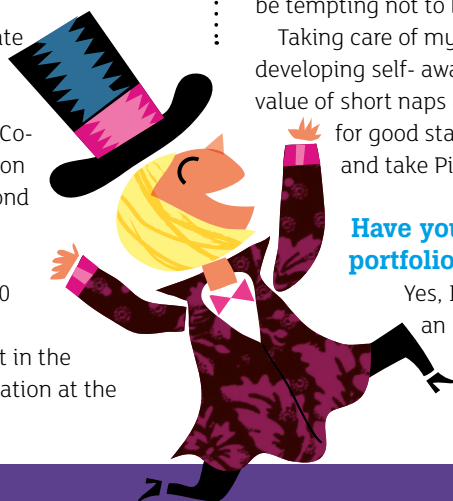
Rewarding myself with holidays, going on retreats, going to the theatre is important because as a freelancer it can be tempting not to block time out for fear of losing work.

Taking care of myself, learning to listen to my body, developing self-awareness is essential. I've learned the value of short naps and sleep to maintain my fitness levels for good stamina and vitality. Also, I cycle, swim and take Pilates and yoga classes.

Have you added new skills to your portfolio over time?

Yes, I love learning new skills. I qualified as an Executive Coach, accredited by the ICF (International Coaching Federation).

These skills chimed very well with being an actor. The listening skills



>>Snapshot

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and focus on presence in coaching are vital and relevant to a coach, as they are to an actor. Noticing, having insight into people and situations is also relevant. As an actor and a coach, it's important to be able to build relationships quickly - to recognise the chemistry between you and, if it's not there naturally, to find ways of building it.

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

Remembering all the great tips!

What FEU Training courses have you attended?

- Finance for Freelances
- Social Media for Work
- How to Run a Social Media Campaign
- Digital Marketing for Creative Freelances
- Writing for Business
- Marketing your Work
- Time Management
- Mobile Video Kickstarter
- How to make a Podcast

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

The time management workshop was very practical and I use the great tips in my day-to-day planning. All the social media workshops have been very useful and I use what I've learned in lots of ways. I particularly appreciated the Mobile Video Kickstarter day and managed to produce a self-tape, which was much more straightforward than I thought.

At the recent Digital Marketing workshop, the tutor asked us to identify "one thing you could do right now that would improve a job opportunity". I loved that and immediately wrote two emails. The next day I got a reply to one of those emails, expressing interest in a workshop I'd offered to run. So it looks like I'm going to get some work from taking this simple step!

These workshops have put me at ease with IT generally. I've gathered tips and tools and now I have more of a positive 'can-do' attitude.

The Finance workshop made the topic more approachable and the tutor David brought a great combination of fun, challenge and positive attitude that took away the dreaded 'putting off the inevitable' feelings towards income and expenditure!

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What has encouraged you to attend FEU Training?

The great opportunities to learn and expand my knowledge, the broad range of topics, and the knowledge and experience of the tutors on offer - all for free as an FEU Training member!

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As tutor on the Presentation Skills workshop, which due to the content is interactive and experiential, it's clear to see how people learn from each other. Networking opportunities abound too!

