

Skills Base

Assuming you are good at the creative side of being self employed (though development is essential over your working life), what are the other skills a creative business person needs?

Management Skills:

- Time management – you need the ability to be disciplined about using your time both for the creative side but also in your contact with clients, customers and organisations you deal with in a professional manner.
- Business management – essential in the professional handling of all the financial aspects of being creative such as costing your time and work, and the basics of bookkeeping. Financial planning is an essential skill, handling simple budgets and understanding cashflow underpin everything you do

Communication Skills

- Interpersonal skills – dealing with other people successfully is important when it comes to marketing your work and yourself. It helps also to know how to get the best out of other creative people that you may work with in partnership and on commissions.
- Telephone skills – Often the first point of contact with clients and galleries
- Presentation Skills – in some areas the ability to make a good presentation to a potential client is vital. You need to work on your verbal and body-language skills to make the best impression.

Marketing Skills

- IT Skills – Confidence in the use of ever changing IT skills helps; e-mail, word processing and most importantly handling image manipulation in programmes such as Photoshop, have rapidly become essential key skills. Creating a website, producing attractive leaflets and price lists, burning CDs for digital portfolios have become more and more important in all fields of the arts.
- Selling skills – Understanding the psychology of selling will help you make headway. Why should someone buy from you instead of another?
- Writing skills – constantly in use for writing press releases, CVs and statements about your work. You need to polish you written skills in such a competitive world.

Other useful skills

- Photographic – be able to record your work photographically for use in publicity to a professional standard (or be prepared to pay someone to do it for you).
- Driving – whilst this may not be important for some, in other areas such as being a blacksmith or photographer it is likely to be an essential skill to have.

- Languages – speaking foreign languages is a huge asset to possess in what is now, in so many ways, a global market.