



AN ESCAPE GUIDE TO:

LEAVING LONDON

TO START A BUSINESS, FIND A JOB
OR GO FREELANCE



London.



The roaring city. Immortalised on the silver screen. Entrenched in the dreams of millions. From a young age, many of us learn to revere London as the epitome of success – a Goliath on the world stage. The place you should be if you want to ‘make it’.

But there’s a strange underbelly to this perfect city. Discontent, loneliness and anxiety; intensity, stress and, well, sadness. These feelings have fuelled a growing movement of Londoners looking for the door. And the arrival of covid-19 has only increased the trend. Forced out of jobs, furloughed or now working remotely for the foreseeable future, thousands are beginning to open their minds to new career opportunities outside of the capital.



The pandemic has allowed us the opportunity to pause, take stock and ask what we really want our lives and our work to look like. For many, it would seem, it's no longer enough to leave the metaphorical 'rat race' of meaningless promotions and unfulfilling career ladders. We're realising that you can 'make it' in the countryside, or by the sea, or from a campervan and still do work that matters to you.

Whilst uprooting your home and work life at the same time may not be for everyone, we know that Escapees ready for change are always up for a challenge. And we're here to help you do it.

IF YOU WANT
DIFFERENT,
YOU HAVE TO
START
CHOOSING
DIFFERENT.





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LEAVING LONDON TO START A BUSINESS



Maybe you have an idea that you just can't shake. Or the feeling that you'd love to start your own thing. We call this 'the entrepreneurial itch'. It might sound unpleasant but in actual fact many Escapees have been here before you, and many have gone on to start successful businesses that they still lead today.

The good news is, nowadays you can pretty much start and run your business from anywhere in the world with nothing more than a decent Wifi connection. So if your entrepreneurial aspirations have you dreaming of swapping London for a digital nomad life, a kitchen table business, or a fast scaling startup here's how you can get started.

LEAVING LONDON TO START A BUSINESS

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When you know your own values, you can use them to make better decisions about how to live your life.

01

Identifying an opportunity

Before embarking on your escape, it's essential to identify your unique motivations. Defining your values is the best way to start discovering what motivates you, so you can pinpoint an opportunity that will leave you feeling fulfilled.

Chances are that when you started your career in London, success – measured by money and status – may have been a top priority. If this is the case, ask yourself if you still feel that way. If the answer is no and you're feeling unhappy, it's likely that what you're doing and the way you're living isn't matching your current values.

When you know your own values, you can use them to make better decisions about how to live your life. And the same applies to identifying business opportunities that are right for you.

Here's an exercise – straight from our Startup Accelerator course – to help you discover what those values might be. Spend as much time as you need on this, as it'll shape everything that comes next.

01

Identify the times when you were happiest

Find examples from both your career and personal life. This will ensure some balance in your answers.

- What were you doing?
- Were you with other people? Who?
- What other factors contributed to your happiness?

Identify the times when you were most proud

Use examples from your career and personal life.

- Why were you proud?
- Did other people share your pride? Who?
- What other factors contributed to your feelings of pride?

02

03

Identify the times when you were most fulfilled and satisfied.

Again, use both work and personal examples.

- What need or desire was fulfilled?
- How and why did the experience give your life meaning?
- What other factors contributed to your feelings of fulfillment?

Determine your top values, based on your experiences of happiness, pride, and fulfilment.

Why is each experience truly important and memorable?

Use [this list of common personal values](#) to help you get started and aim for about 10 top values. As you work through, you may find that some of these naturally combine. For instance, if you value philanthropy, community, and generosity, you might say that service to others is one of your top values.

04

05

Prioritise your top values

This step is probably the most difficult, because you'll have to look deep inside yourself.

It's also the most important step, because, when making a decision, you'll have to choose between solutions that may satisfy different values. This is when you must know which value is more important to you.



- Write down your top values, not in any particular order.
- Look at the first two values and ask yourself, "If I could satisfy only one of these, which would I choose?" It might help to visualise a situation in which you would have to make that choice. For example, if you compare the values of service and stability, imagine that you must decide whether to sell your house and move to another country to do valuable foreign aid work, or keep your house and volunteer to do charity work closer to home.
- Keep working through the list, by comparing each value with each other value, until your list is in the correct order.

Reaffirm your values

Check your top priority values, and make sure they fit with your life and your vision for yourself.

- Do these values make you feel good about yourself?
- Are you proud of your top three values?
- Would you be comfortable and proud to tell your values to people you respect and admire?
- Do these values represent things you would support, even if your choice isn't popular, and it puts you in the minority?

06

Hopefully, you will now be clearer on what your values are. At the very least this will help you approach future decisions with renewed confidence and clarity, which should help on the next step – formulating an idea.



Generating an idea

Some entrepreneurs are lucky. Carrying a natural flair for the eureka moment, bright ideas light up their mind like Einstein.

For the majority of us, it's a little tougher. Building new ideas can be a struggle, with inspiration sometimes difficult to come by.

Fortunately though, there are some techniques you can use to escape the inertia. One good place to start is by looking at problems that people have, or needs that exist in the world. Pick a target customer or demographic, and think about all the needs that particular person or customer might have. If you have your target destination in mind try to factor in the demands of the local community. But, if you're not sure of this yet, don't worry, as the needs you identify can help to pinpoint an area where they are most pronounced.

On a piece of paper, write down 25 problems that your chosen person or demographic faces. Put yourself in their shoes and consider the challenges they confront on a day-to-day basis. The more specific you can be about their challenge, the greater the chance you'll have of solving it.

Once you have your 25 problems, pick out the top three based on which are the most intriguing to you. For each of the three, come up with ten solutions to these problems, so you have 30 ideas to play around with. (This is a useful exercise even if you already have an idea in mind).

Talk through these ideas with someone until you have something that feels interesting and feasible to execute. Take into account the skills and money you'll need to get your idea off the ground.



It may be that during this process you come across an existing idea that doesn't quite hit the needs of a certain demographic. Identifying a gap in the market can spur many ideas that have the potential to succeed – after all, every successful business you can think of has filled some sort of market gap. If you know where you're thinking of setting up shop, have a look at the existing businesses in the area. Read reviews of potential competitors and see where the opportunities lie, check Tripadvisor to see what people think are lacking in the area, chances are there's a lot more opportunity than you might initially think.

The more time you spend analysing the markets for growth opportunities, conducting market research, or researching industry trends, the more knowledge you're ultimately absorbing to inform your next big idea.

They always say time changes things, but you actually have to change them yourself.”

Andy Warhol





Trends for 2020 & beyond

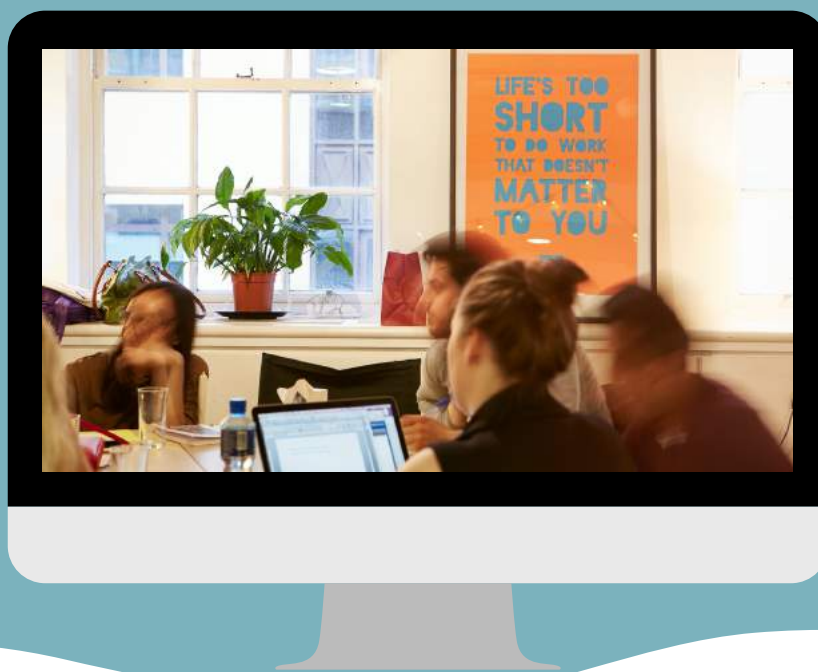
One final thing to consider when identifying an opportunity is the current societal trends. The coronavirus pandemic and all its repercussions has changed the way we interact dramatically, bringing with it not just challenges but also opportunity.

Just look at the startups born out of the last recession – Uber, Whatsapp, Instagram, Pinterest, Slack and many others. Even if your ambitions are not as lofty, as a nimble and adaptable startup you'll arguably be best placed to address new challenges and exploit the opportunities. Certain sectors have already seen significant growth since the beginning of the year from food subscription services to self improvement and online learning.

You can keep an eye on evolving trends with tools like [Google Trends](#), or the [Exploding Topics](#) newsletter.

The pandemic has also provided us with an opportunity to right old wrongs and rebuild in a better, more sustainable way. If you're looking to start a business that solves some of the world's pressing problems (and we hope you are), you might want to start with the [UN's 17 sustainable development goals](#), which have been designed to act as a 'blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all.' What could you do to help move the needle in the right direction for one of these global goals?

Have you been sitting on an idea for a while but haven't had time, money, or confidence to start it?



Our evening online workshop 'How to Start a Side Hustle' will give you tools, tricks, and inspiration to set up your businesses whilst remaining in employment.

You'll receive:

- Tactics, tools and strategies to start your own side hustle
- Tools and systems to make your startup life easier
- Support building a financial strategy for your idea
- Inspiring stories of people who have done it before
- A jumpstart to propel you into the next phase of your life
- A fun, inspiring evening of getting clear!

Various dates available.

JOIN US



Testing your assumptions

We'd go as far as to say that 99% of startup mistakes are based on misplaced assumptions. These are the things you are banking on being true, in order for success to follow.

No business is immune: Google assumed people wanted to be walking down the road wearing camera-wielding glasses. Sky assumed millions of people would want to watch 3D TV at home. They both bet a lot of money on some very simple assumptions - and lost. Some assumptions are more conscious than others. There are some basic things that you might find you're assuming to be true, without even realising that your assumption is just that - an assumption. These are the most dangerous blindspots of all.

The success of your business idea is determined by how true your assumptions are. Which means it makes sense to get really clear on what they are, how you'll test them, and what you should work on first - so there's no stepping forward in the dark.

How to understand your assumptions

01

Step 1: Brainstorm all your assumptions

What are you assuming to be true in order for your idea to work?

Assumptions normally fall into 5 categories:

- Your users i.e who yours users are, what they want, what they'll pay for
- Your product i.e which features are most important, how the product will be used, how it solves the customer's problem
- Your business model i.e what your costs will be, how much you can charge, what your repeat custom will look like, how quickly you can scale
- Your marketing i.e what customers want to hear about, where to find them, how much it will cost
- Your operations i.e how the supply chain or ecosystem works for your product/service, how you and your team will work, any logistical or insurance considerations.

Make a list of all your assumptions. The first 10-12 will be easy - but don't stop there. Dig a bit deeper to make sure you're getting to grips with the assumption blindspots that are harder to notice. Make sure you're covering all areas, the canvas below will help prompt you.

Step 2: Rank your assumptions in order of risk

Some assumptions are more critical than others, knowing which ones are critical gives you a priority order to start working on. Some of the riskiest ones (i.e. I can scale this [insert idea] and still make a margin) you can't tackle straight away but some of them will be fairly quick or straightforward to work on. Look at your list and find the riskiest one you can start working on straight away.

02

03

Step 3: Design tests to work on your riskiest assumptions

Design tests to help answer your riskiest assumptions. They may be research, speaking to customers or building minimal viable products to solve your customers' problems. All tests should take between 5 minutes to a week or 2. If they are taking longer than 2 weeks to find out, the tests are too big and you need to scale them back. The trick is to learn fast. The faster you learn / fail the more likely you are to succeed as it is very rare (almost unheard of) to be right about your assumptions from the start.

Getting to grips with assumptions

Testing assumptions might feel a bit foreign to you at this stage, and when you look at your list it'll make you feel a bit uncomfortable. Identifying your assumptions is essentially picking holes in your idea and understanding all of the reasons why it might not work. Whilst it might feel a bit difficult and unnatural at first, it's the single best way we've seen to quickly understand if an idea has legs without exposing you to any unnecessary risk.

The ability to identify and understand assumptions becomes a superpower, giving you the advantage of being able to spot risks before they ever occur, and will help you stay on the right track. It also gets you in an experimental mindset which is crucial for any business owner. Every time you think of launching a new product or service, list out your assumptions, see which ones really are the best for you to run with. It takes a bit of practice, but will save you a lot of time and energy in the long run, and will give you huge boosts of confidence once you start testing your assumptions and find that really you are onto a winner.

OVER TO YOU:

Take a look at the example assumptions canvas and complete one for your idea.



User assumptions

GUESTS:

People are happy to rent a room from a stranger if it saves them X% vs a hotel

- Cheaper = -40%
- People will see the value/advantage of renting off a local rather than staying in a hotel
- People find hotels sterile & soulless and are looking for an alternative
- People are happy to pay less
- The extra hassle of arranging to pick up keys won't be a barrier
- People are ok to book via a messaging/ acceptance system (rather than a 'book it now' button)
- People will trust that the host is who they say they are
- They will trust that they will be there
- That people are happy to rent a shared room or complete flat

HOSTS:

Hosts want to earn extra money by letting out their spare rooms to strangers

- A lot of people have spare rooms
- Hosts are ok renting to strangers
- Hosts will trust us to connect them to nice people
- People are ok if we charge 25% on their letting
- Hosts find it hard to rent out their current rooms/ houses
- Hosts are ok making on average £X/night/room
- Hosts will trust us to transfer their money

Product assumptions

People will select their room via a website/ app

- The key information they need to know to make a decision is X, Y, X
- XYZ filters are important
- Search via Map is important
- The design is important
- Colour
- etc

People will upload their space onto a website

- People will have quality photos of their house/ room
- People can take photos themselves
- People can write good descriptions of their rooms
- People will be prepared to spend X mins uploading / setting up an account
- People will use a desktop to upload photos
- People can follow simple onboarding instructions
- People will book online using a major credit card

People will trust AirBnb to connect them

- People will gain trust via a testimonial rating system
- People will trust our verification system

Business model assumptions

I can turn this into a profitable scalable business

- People will stay on average X amount of nights
- People will need this service X amount of times per year
- There are X amount of spare rooms in any given city
- There are X amount. of people with my {[insert target market]}
- The industry is therefore worth £
- There will be an operational overhead of £X/100 bookings (website/ customer service)
- It will cost £X to obtain the first 1000 signups

Marketing assumptions

I can do this better than the existing options & I can create a remarkable experience that will lead people to referring and continuing to use this service

People will understand the name 'airbnb' and what it does

- It's easy for people to remember
- It's easy for people to spell
- It's easy for people to talk about
- It's easy to translate into different languages
- The domain is available and is cheap

Operational assumptions

- We can provide the level of customer service that is required
- People will want to work for us

ASSUMPTIONS

User assumptions

Who are your key users?
What are you assuming to be true about them?

Product assumptions

What are you assuming to be true about a potential solution?

Business model assumptions

What are you assuming to be true about the business model?

Marketing assumptions

What are you assuming to be true about attracting customers?

Operational assumptions

What are you assuming to be true about how the business will operate?



02

Determining demand

Once you have an idea, it's now time to shore it up and see whether it has legs. Fundamentally, you should spend more time speaking with your customers and less time and money on engineering and design, as only your customers can tell you whether there truly is demand for your product.

Think hard about exactly who your product is for and try to settle on a target customer, or niche. They should be easy to access, have a high pain point, and be able to give you lots of good feedback on your idea. You should challenge yourself to get to know your niche inside out. It's your job to understand:

- ✓ The nuances of what they need
- ✓ The specifics of their expectations
- ✓ The intricacies of their current behaviour



There are lots of tools you can use – like Typeform or UserTesting – to do one-off surveys or observe real user behaviour. Also consider what information you can capture from customers when they first sign up, or buy your product. And of course, don't neglect face-to-face virtual feedback.

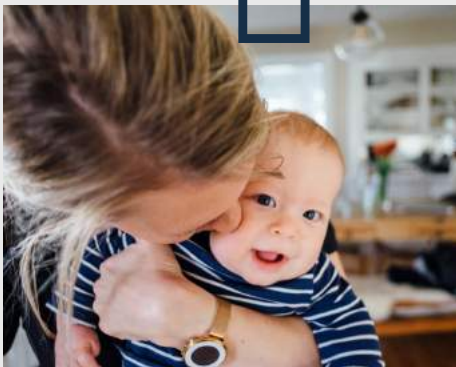
More on where to find potential customers and how to access them

Remember: your clients and customer base are real people too, and are already active on existing networks such as LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter and even ultra-local channels such as NextDoor. Tapping in to local interest groups on social media channels can open a wide audience for research and feedback, along with niche forums like Mumsnet and Reddit, depending on where you think your audience is most active. Spend some time searching for local groups on these channels and chances are, you'll find a whole host of people you can speak to to validate your ideas and better understand their needs.

There's five golden rules you should follow when conducting your research:

Speak directly to your niche

1



2

Ask about behaviours rather than opinions



3

Talk about value rather than price



5

Ask about problems rather than solutions



4

Ask about specific past behaviours



CHEAT SHEET

So long as you don't stray too far from these you'll maximise the reliability of your data. To help you on your way, here's some examples of good and bad questions to either embrace or avoid.

Bad question #1

Do you think it's a good idea?

- Only the market can tell you if your idea is good. Everything else is just opinion.
- Say you're building an app to help construction companies manage their suppliers. You might ask them to show you how they currently do it. Ask which tools they have tried. Where are they losing money with their current tools? Is there budget for a better one?

Bad question #2

Would you pay x for a product that did y?

- People are overly optimistic about what they would do and want to make you happy.
- Ask how they currently solve y and how much it costs them to do so. Ask them to talk you through what happened the last time y came up. Common wisdom is that you price your product in terms of value to the customer, not the cost to you. And you can't quantify the value received without prodding their financial worldview.

Good question #1


What are the implications of that?

- This distinguishes between I-will-pay-to-solve-that problems and that's-kind-of-annoying-but-I-can-deal-with-it problems.
- Some problems have big, costly implications. Others exist but don't actually matter. It behooves you to find out which. It also gives you a good pricing signal.

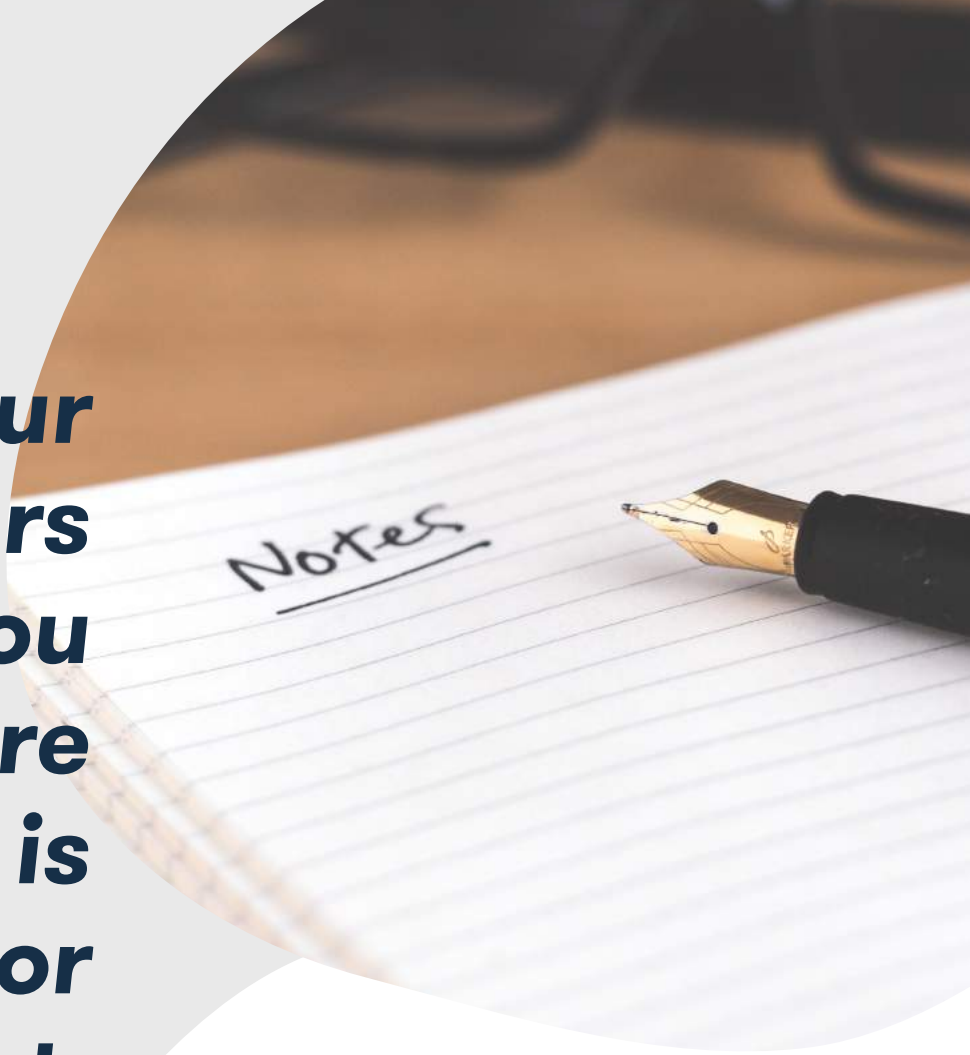
Good question #2

What else have you tried?


- What are they using now? How much does it cost and what do they love and hate about it?
- How much would those fixes be worth and how big of a pain would it be for them to switch to a new solution?



**only your
customers
can tell you
whether there
truly is
demand for
your product.**



Once you have a solid bank of questions, start reaching out to people online and if possible in person to identify if you're onto a winner with your idea. If you don't yet live in the location where you think you want to launch your business, use online groups and forums to get insights before you go. Look at the local demographics, what already exists in the area, and get as many insights from online groups as you can. Your goal is to speak to as many potential customers as possible to validate your idea and make sure that you're on the right track before you even plan your move and invest too much in this idea.



Business
Model

03

Building your business model

If you've tested your idea and you're beginning to believe your business could become a reality, it's now time to start figuring out what you're going to charge – and how much it will cost you to deliver your product or service.

Broadly speaking, there's around twelve different business models offering twelve different revenue streams. Your idea doesn't have to fit into just one – it could fit into a few – and there's no reason why you can't switch things up if things aren't working.

So first thing's first, let's take a look at each one in turn, along with some examples.

BUSINESS MODEL EXAMPLES



Product

You sell a one-off physical or digital product.
Examples: iPhone, Coke



Service

You provide professional support, rather than a tangible product.
Examples: Deliveroo, Uber



Events

You either host yourself or organise on behalf of a client, online or offline.
Examples: Tough Mudder



Subscription

You charge a subscription fee to give customers access to a product or service.
Examples: Headspace, Audible



Licence

You licence your product or brand to a second party whose responsibility it is to commercialise.
Examples: Virgin, Easyjet



Franchise

You buy or sell access to a successful business model that's already been developed.
Examples: McDonalds

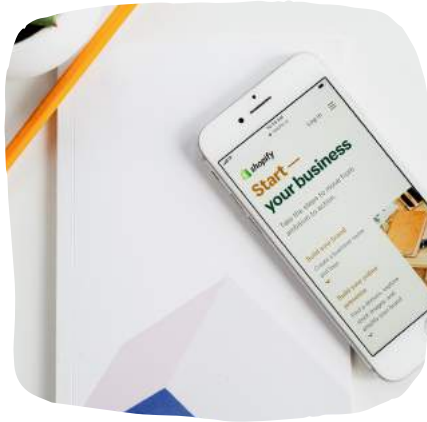
BUSINESS MODEL EXAMPLES



Intellectual property

You offer intangible property that is the result of creativity, such as patents, trademarks and copyrights. Operates in the market of technical knowledge.

Examples: DueDil, Dyson (in his first year sold his IP to a Japanese company)



B2B

You sell your product or service to other businesses, rather than individual people.

Examples: Salesforce, Shopify



Advertisement

You sell advertising opportunities to businesses who wish to target your customers.

Examples: Facebook, BuzzFeed



Affiliate

You sell other people's products or services and get paid commission on every sale you make.

Examples: Avon, Ann Summers



Freemium

You give away part of your product or service for free and charge for premium features or services.

Examples: Spotify, Dropbox



Sponsorship

You sell promotional benefits to other businesses using your product or service.

Examples: TED

Let's next look at a few applications of the business models to work out how they might apply across a single business.

Take a regular cafe, for example. Along with a selection of food and beverage products to be eaten on site, many opt to sell coffee beans they have produced themselves, which would further consolidate their product base.

They may also sell beans from another supplier, in which case they would earn a commission on every sale as part of an affiliate model. That same cafe might then rent out some of its floorspace as a coworking space, which would then be classed as a service, or they may run coffee tasting sessions – which would be events.

Laying out the full scope of what a business can offer can help you plan ideas around which sources of revenue may be open to you, safeguarding it against any unexpected circumstances or fluctuations that may arise.

Next, let's look at Tough Mudder, and think about how that one idea can be split into many revenue streams.

Over to you...

Complete the following exercise to see how your business idea could generate income from any of these potential revenue streams.

Business model/ Revenue streams



The toughest obstacle races in the world

Product (s)

One off obstacles race
Bespoke obstacle races
Merchandise, Gym, Snack bars,
Fitness book

Are there any products you can make that your customers are already using?

Clothing
Transport to races

Service

Can you sell a service to solve the problem?

Bespoke training

Market place

Can you create a marketplace?

Marketplace for trainers

B2B

Can you sell to a business?

Tickets for corporate teams
Bespoke events for corporates

Advertising

What is the advertising model?

Website advertising
Events advertising

Intellectual Property

Can you sell the IP?

Sell the IP of the obstacles

License/ Franchise?

Can you license this?

Yes - lots of cities around the world

Subscription

Is there a subscription offering?

12 month subscribe to a series of events

Events

Can you sell tickets to an event?

[see main product]
Big one off festival

Freemium

Is there a freemium model?

Free training videos
Training app
Weekly free flash fitness events in cities

Sponsorship / Affiliate

Are there affiliates/ Sponsorship opportunities?

Sports clothing
AirBnb for accommodation
Blah Blah car for transport
Miller lite for alcohol
Gyms for training

Business model/ Revenue streams

What is the value proposition?

Product (s)

What are the main products?

Are there any products you can make that your customers are already using?

Service

Can you sell a service to solve the problem?

Market place

Can you create a marketplace?

B2B

Can you sell to a business?

Advertising

What is the advertising model?

Intellectual Property

Can you sell the IP?

License/ Franchise?

Can you license this?

Subscription

Is there a subscription offering?

Events

Can you sell tickets to an event?

Freemium

Is there a freemium model?

Sponsorship / Affiliate

Are there affiliates/ Sponsorship opportunities?

Once you've worked out your key revenue sources, you can make a start on determining your revenue drivers. It's critical to gain a firm understanding of the main drivers of your business in order to make choices about your business strategy and financial model. These could include the number of stores, units of production or the price of your products.

Try balancing these out in the following exercise, taking into account that the location of your business will have an impact too. These are simple, back of a napkin numbers, but they're important to consider when you're deciding which revenue model to pursue. Keeping in mind your business costs and trying to understand if you have a solid business case is crucial to know before you get too invested in one idea.

£ REVENUE DRIVERS

Key drivers business model

Revenue:

Unit price:

Ex VAT

Quantity:

Per day/ week/ month

Revenue:

Ex VAT

Direct costs:

All the costs associated to delivering the product or service

Other costs:

Salaries, office, internet, accounting, legal

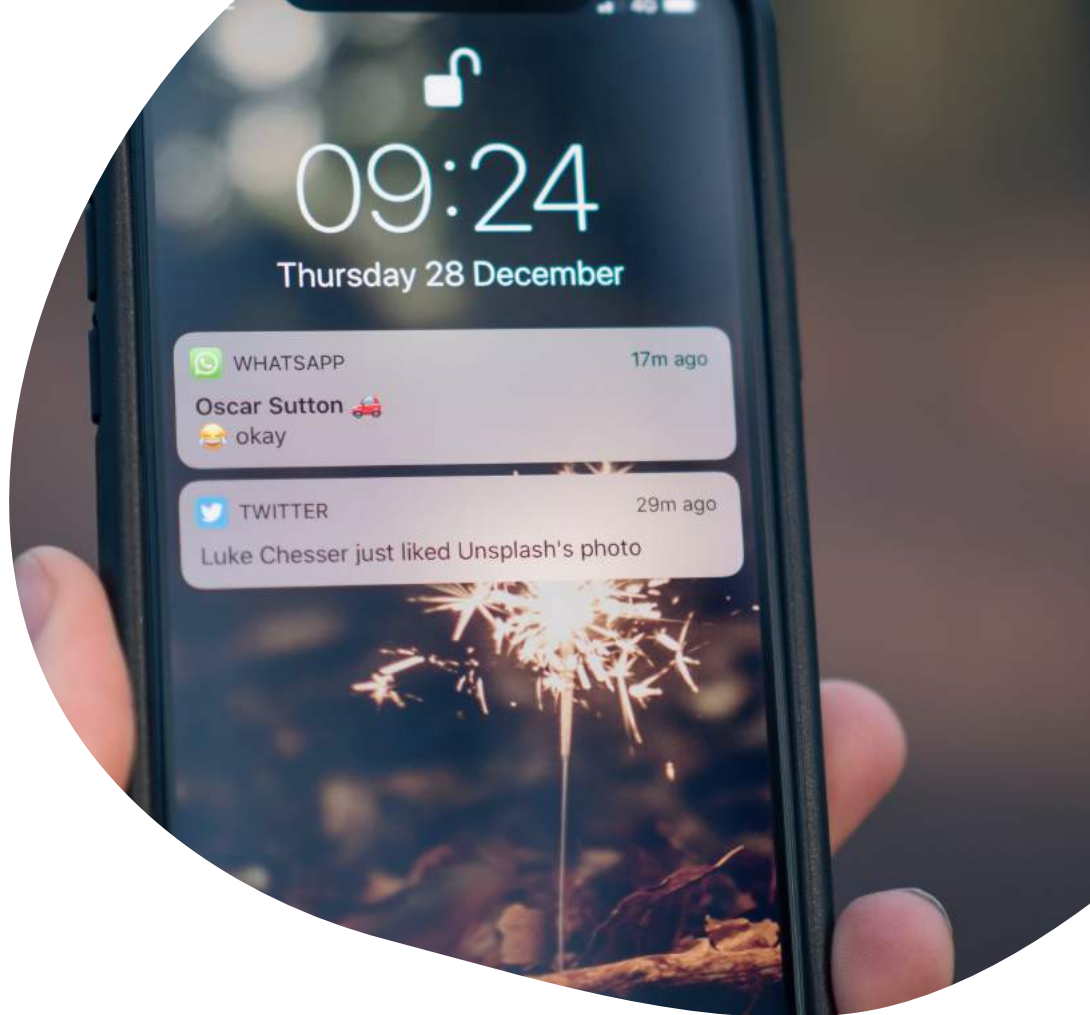


05

Deciding your destination

So – you’ve got an idea, and you’ve come up with a concrete plan to back it up. Now’s the time to look at where you might succeed most when it comes to putting it all into action.

From filling out your potential revenue streams you should have some sort of idea on how these may be impacted by your location. Do you anticipate more product sales in an area with higher footfall, for example? Or does your business offer a service to a niche demographic you’ll want to be geographically close to? Location is a key factor in any business model and a big determiner in where you end up. If your idea is marketed at students, you don’t necessarily have to live in a big university town, but doing so might provide you with greater insight into the market you are trying to reach.



Building a network in a new place

Although at the beginning you may be looking to cut costs, many Escapees before you can attest to how much your environment really matters at this crucial time. Unless you have a dedicated office space in your home, you should consider what you may be missing out on by isolating yourself from face-to-face time with potential clients and business opportunities.

Never underestimate the power of a network or community when it comes to starting your business. Amplifying what you're doing is best done in numbers – you only have so much leverage on your own – and you need others behind you. Join your local Chamber of Commerce, join the discussion surrounding your industry on social media (Twitter threads and Facebook and LinkedIn groups are chock full of resources and comments from experts), or head straight for networking events for some face-to-face interaction.

Organisations like Enterprise Nation and The Dots often list local business events that you can tap into. Plus it's worth searching events sites like Meetup and Eventbrite to make sure you're not missing useful networking opportunities in your new local area. Sites like coworker will help you to find coworking spaces where you might attend events or meet likeminded people. Check out Nextdoor where you might find people in your local area who are interested in similar things.

Getting things in place before you go...

Leaving the city and starting a business is a Big Deal, and you'll want a plan for the first three to six months before you go. Start by reaching out to interesting people in advance, making plans to tour a coworking space or getting involved in upcoming events. Get as much set up as you can before you actually make the move. You'll learn and need to adapt when you get there, but the more planning you can do in advance, the better you'll feel when you land.

If you build a financial plan for this time, double your costs and half your profits, so you have a plan in case the worst case scenario hits. Scenario planning is a secret weapon of successful entrepreneurs. Get clear on your costs wherever you choose to set up shop, and build out three financial scenarios to ensure that you're prepared for whatever happens when you arrive – a best case, a realistic case, and a worst case (just getting by).

With the industry impact of COVID-19 around the world still ongoing, every entrepreneur is having to think in this way to manage risk and keep themselves above water.

Preparing for the worst

The honest truth is that sometimes things don't work out. Maybe you don't like the area, maybe your idea doesn't work in your chosen location. Whatever it might be, it's good practice to think of these potential roadblocks ahead of time so that you can plan ahead and prepare for any bumps in the road.

One really useful activity for you to do is called fear setting, made popular by serial entrepreneur and author Tim Ferriss. Fear setting is the opposite of goal setting – it's a way to visualise all of the bad things that could happen to you, so you become less afraid of taking action.

Create a list of your fears, the likelihood of them coming true, and all the possible results of action or inaction. Then think of ways you can prevent those situations, and what you'd do to repair the circumstances if they did happen. Doing this exercise will help you have a backup plan in case things don't go as well as you'd like, preparing you for what to do in case you don't like the place you move to, your business doesn't work out, or anything else.

EXAMPLE FEAR-SETTING PAGE 1 FOR AN ENTREPRENEUR

DEFINE	PREVENT	REPAIR
1) I'M GOING TO RUN OUT OF MONEY (4/10 SETBACK)	- FREELANCE ON THE SIDE - REDUCE COSTS OF LIVING	- REACH OUT TO CONTACTS AND START APPLYING FOR JOBS
2) I WON'T BE ABLE TO SUCCEED WORKING ON MY OWN (3/10 SETBACK)	- WORK WITH A COACH - GET ADVICE AND FEEDBACK FROM MENTORS	- SAME AS ABOVE

Photo credit: Mindful Ambition



START
TODAY.

06

Getting into business

You should now feel much more equipped to generate ideas, gain valuable insights from potential customers, and figure out the best place to go in terms of your business, setting you up nicely for the greatest opportunities for a happy business and lifestyle.

If your first idea doesn't quite pan out, that's okay! Our goal at Escape the City is to help give you the tools you need early in the game, to prepare you before you leave. That way, you can move on to your next idea with all the knowledge and insights you'll have gained through your customer conversations and research – plus some lived, on-the-ground experience too.

”

There's still time to change the road you're on.

- Led Zeppelin



Launching an idea is all about removing the risks surrounding yourself and trying different things out to see how you like them and how they resonate with your values and your needs. Follow these processes to get as close to your dream before you dive in – and know that, whatever happens, you will always have the ability to generate new ideas, new revenue streams, and be able to respond to new opportunities.

Starting your own business is a challenging and rewarding experience, one that can allow you to live the life that's really true to you and gives you the opportunities to do things you wouldn't otherwise have. And don't forget you don't have to do it alone: you're part of a movement of people doing something different, and creating a life that suits you. By choosing an idea that's aligned with your values, understanding the financials and customers before you get set up, and getting yourself set up with local communities, you'll have the best chances of success. You can do this. Let us know how you get on, and happy escaping!



Escape Heroes

Stories from
those who
have been
there first

Tom Pugh-Jones

Sick of London, Tom left a career crossing magazine sales and underwriting super yachts to set up shop in Cornwall – where he now co-runs a recruitment business. He's also renovating a disused restaurant in Newquay, which he wants to transform into a community culture hub and workspace.



I started my career working in London, selling advertising for a luxury yachting magazine. After doing that for a little over a year, I actually ended up going into super yachts underwriting in the City. I did that for around three months, but overall I wasn't very happy in the capital so I just left. I didn't necessarily plan any sort of escape, I just kind of went back to Cornwall where I'd spent a bit of time previously, and found a job working in a pop up restaurant.

It was a huge change from where I'd been, but I loved it. I'm a lot happier out of the city. I ended up going back for a bit. My former employer offered me a remote position where I would spend around a week a month back in London, which I did for about a year. But I was working by myself day in, day out, which was quite isolating. Eventually I started applying for jobs in Cornwall again and got an interview with a recruiter.

Off the back of that, I realised that the process was quite straightforward. What I discovered was, there were quite a few growing companies in Cornwall in the last five to 10 years that were hiring. But there was either a shortage of talent in the area, or it just wasn't on people's radars that they could actually have a job working with great brands outside of London.

Now I've set up a company called Pentire, which is a SaaS sales recruitment company. We work with a lot of startups and scale ups within the tech space, mainly helping them find sales people, but also some marketing roles. Off the back of that, myself and my new business partner Anthony were looking for some office space, just before lockdown. We found a way to finance a disused restaurant with a mixture of private finance and funding to create a workspace within the centre of Newquay. We're working on taking it back to its former glory, and hosting it as a space for the community – where people can work, socialise, do all sorts of cultural events, that sort of thing.

I never had the same ideas when I lived in London as I do now. Money was a struggle – especially as a fresh grad – and there's not really any time. Here, I've got space to think. I can go surfing, I can go running. I think you've just got a lot more headspace to think about projects. And I've always had ideas, whereas in London I just burned myself out.



Tara Parashar

After spending ten years working in digital and social media roles across London, Tara decided to travel for a year and launch her own consultancy before COVID-19 hit. The pandemic cut her trip short, and forced her to fast-forward her business plans.

I went through the Escape Startup Accelerator in 2018, and developed this idea for my business. At the time, I was the social media editor at the National Theatre, which was a busy, busy job. And before that I'd held a number of jobs at the BBC covering big campaigns. At the end of 2018. I was like: I'm gonna quit my job. I'm gonna get out of the London rat race.

I decided to take a year out to travel and study, and joined a business apprenticeship at the Monastic Academy in Vermont, US. There, I woke up at 4am every day to start my day of meditation and chanting – we only got a couple of hours a day of free time. But it was a really important practice as I wanted my business to be an ethical social media consultancy, and my ethics are structured on the Buddhist practice I grew up with.

They foster a kind of start up style community there, while teaching you how to be a mindful leader so you know how to gain calmness and not make emotionally clouded decisions.

I was literally in the middle of these real transcendental reality-shifting, life-altering experiences, when a group of visitors brought coronavirus with them, and my Canadian friend was very suddenly driven home in the middle of the night. By the end of the week I was back at Heathrow. But my parents are high risk, and I'd already left my home in London, so I headed up to Liverpool where my sister lives and stayed in an Airbnb. I'd originally given myself this whole year to do business development, and take it really slowly, with a view to launching the consultancy formally in September.

But by the second week of April, I had already found my first client because I really needed the money. It was this really great community centre in London called the Arc Centre, and we worked on a campaign together and set up a food bank within five weeks. I'm very lucky because they were people that I knew before – they were one of my test clients back from when I was initially setting up the business.

That was my first step into doing a wider piece or strategy around social media to create positive social change. And even though I was working from Liverpool, I managed to recruit 100 volunteers, and we made over £1,000 in donations.

We also ended up building a community vegetable garden. Through them I also got my second client.

I have also had some experiences with clients that didn't go as well, and for a while I wasn't making very much money at all, but things have really picked up now and I'm even looking at buying a house next year.

I wouldn't go back to London now. You'd be lucky to find a studio flat in Zone 5 for £300,000 but that would buy you a two bedroom house in Birmingham. I have a dog now, and my mental health is so much better. I've just got so much more time to see things develop.



Marcia Finnie

Marcia worked in digital media and advertising for 6 years before first looking to leave London back in 2017. But her plans were put on hold when she lost her mum. The impact and stress surrounding her mother's loss led to a number of serious health scares for Marcia and her partner Ben, which forced them to stay in the city. Inspired by her mum's profound impact on her life, she's now in the process of moving to the Lake District to start an ethical, organic skincare business.

After a number of varying roles my partner and I were considering moving out of London in 2017. Sadly, my mum was diagnosed with terminal cancer and died shortly afterwards, turning my world upside down. I had taken part in Escape the City's Startup Accelerator in 2016 and had a business idea that I was ready to pursue, but that was all put on hold. I had a very hard time accepting the loss of my mum. I became deeply depressed and suicidal. The company I worked for at the time were very considerate of my mental health and allowed me to work from home on a part time basis throughout 2018. This was followed by a number of serious health scares for both me and my partner Ben resulting in us both having to undergo surgery in 2018.

After these traumatic events, I had time to reflect on what I wanted out of my life. At the end of 2018 my employer wanted me to come back full time working in the City. My heart just was not in it and I realised that my physical and mental health mattered more. I was made redundant and shortly afterwards fell pregnant with my son.

Ben and I considered leaving London at that point, and even looked for houses in the Lakes whilst I was pregnant, but we decided it would be best to wait until I had the baby.

Prior to losing my beloved mum, I gifted her a blank recipe book to log all of her wonderful beauty creams and wonder-balms she used to make. The intention was to start a tradition and keep those recipes in the family. I suffered with quite bad eczema at the time, and the only thing that cleared my skin up was my mum's cream. I started gifting samples to people I knew who also suffered from skin irritations and the feedback was amazing. I used to joke with my mum and say that her creams were going to help so many people and she'd see them everywhere one day.

It was a joke that turned into a promise after she died. I realised after all we'd been through, that all I wanted to do was help others. So I decided to start MumSaid, an all natural, organic, skincare range based on Mum's recipes. I have always believed in living as natural and sustainable a lifestyle as possible, and I wanted to do something that I am passionate about. Since I began building the business, I have expanded beyond Mum's legacy and developed a baby range too.

Ben and I have both had time to reflect on the type of life we want to live. He is also in the early stages of starting an ecommerce business, having left a career in broadcasting. With a young family, we both want a more flexible way of living and working, and appreciate how crucial our environment is to our mental and physical well-being. It has a huge influence on our ability to manifest what we are trying to build together.

Since I am not tied to a bricks-and-mortar store, I can work from anywhere. We looked all over the country for possible places to relocate, but the Lake District captured our hearts. It is unlike anywhere I have ever been. There is an instant sense of community, you are surrounded by unspoilt natural beauty, unpolluted air and you feel completely free from the fast paced, chaos of London where nobody speaks to one another. At the same time, it has the best of both worlds, with Manchester in easy reach and a direct train route to London if needed. Everyone is so friendly. It offers the lifestyle I want my son to grow up around. And it has all I need for running my business. It was the first place Ben took me after Mum died and it's where we scattered her ashes so I feel even closer to my mum there too.

LEAVING LONDON TO GO FREELANCE

So, you've grown tired of the standard nine to five.



Maybe you're seeking more control over your hours, more creative freedom, or just the ability to be your own boss. Well, you're not the first person to want to go it alone. The life of a freelancer is attractive to many, and there's little wonder more of us are escaping the capital to go our own way.

There's a great new world awaiting you outside this concrete jungle, with more freedom and flexibility than you can imagine. But if you want to step out on your own and go solo, there are a few things you're going to need to know first.

LEAVING LONDON TO GO FREELANCE

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**50% OF THE
WORKFORCE WILL
BE FREELANCE BY 2026.**

**WILL YOU BE
ONE OF THEM?**



01

Setting up as a freelancer

The way we work is rapidly evolving. No longer is the nine to five the norm – people are increasingly restructuring their careers to work for them by going freelance.

This might mean flexible hours, a four-day week, or being able to work from home. Becoming your own boss can offer all kinds of benefits, but it also means there's nobody else to hold you accountable and keep you motivated.

To find your focus, you'll want to start by sketching out your path. What do you really want freelance life to look like for you? What skills or expertise can you offer people? Answering these two simple questions can help direct you as you set up as a freelancer, and give you a sense of clarity amid the overwhelm.



Taking the leap from structured work to self-employment can be challenging, but the information and exercises that follow are designed to help you determine your starting point and keep you on track.

Get clear on your 'why'

What matters to people in terms of their work life has changed. A secure job with opportunities for growth was a great draw in days gone by, but 21st century careers are expected to fulfil a wider range of needs connected to impact, autonomy and wellbeing. In short, more people want more balance, they want creative control, and they want to know that what they're doing matters in the world.



There's a good chance your priorities, needs and values have changed drastically since starting your career in London. Before you embark on your freelance journey, you might want to ask yourself:

- What in your life is making you happy/unhappy right now?
- Why do you want to go freelance?
- What does your current definition of success look like?

It's important to think deeply about what it is about leaving London and going freelance that appeals to you. Start by thinking about your financial, mental, intellectual and environmental needs. Think about how your various needs are currently being met, and how this might change in the future. You can use your needs calculator to do this. It may look a little something like this..

IN ORDER TO FEEL WELL FINANCIALLY, I NEED...



Needs	%	What this means for future roles... (or for now)
Be able to pay for all bills easily (basics: rent, food, etc - £1500/mo)	100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Have at least £1500 income each month (£22,000k salary) - Look for two part time roles making £850 each / month - Look at ways of reducing monthly minimum
Be able to take 3-4 holidays per year (£xxx)	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Look at costings for ideal holiday year - Set up a separate account for holidays - Look at alternative ways of holidaying (housesitting, etc)
Have enough savings to live 6 mo / no work (£12k)	80	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Put away £200/ month for 60 months - Look at side income to generate extra money
Be able to live a comfortable existence (buy lunches, dinners out, etc - £500/mo)	30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Look at roles that are above £2000 take home pay (£30,000k) - Look at starting a side income / freelancing for disposable income - Look at current budget to carve out £500 disposable income.
Be able to pay for my kids to go to private school	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify a salary with a high commission / bonus structure - Look at ways of reducing other costs to make space - Find a role making £xxx (current salary + school uplift)

IN ORDER TO FEEL WELL INTELLECTUALLY, I NEED...



Needs	%	What this means for future roles... (or for now)
To be learning and implementing my learnings every day	60	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify skills / things I want to learn and create a learning plan - Look at roles where I can learn xyz skills - Look internally at projects I can do to learn xyz skills
Be able to work on things that are interesting to me	50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review role and tasks, see what elements I find the most interesting - Look at projects I could start that I find really interesting / exciting
To constantly see the impact of the work I do	80	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Be on the front lines of impactful work. - Look at roles where there's impact opportunities - Identify the type of impact I'm most excited about
To be creative	90	
Be able to work on other projects and have the time and energy to do that	20	Look at roles with opportunities for 4 day weeks, or orgs who encourage external project work.

IN ORDER TO FEEL WELL ENVIRONMENTALLY, I NEED ...

Needs	%	What this means for future roles... (or for now)
To feel connected to likeminded peers	100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify where these people might be hanging out, spend time identifying the type of orgs where they work. - Create a mastermind group
To be inspired by the people I work with and be learning from them	20	Look at organisations that prioritise cross-team learning.
Get to work without transport and in less than 30 mins	100	
Be able to work anywhere	20	Explore organisations who embed remote working policies or fully remote work.
Be able to be outside of the UK in winter	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explore organisations who embed remote working policies - Propose a sabbatical over winter with employer - Look at rearranging projects so virtual work is possible in Winter

IN ORDER TO FEEL WELL MENTALLY, I NEED ...

Needs	%	What this means for future roles... (or for now)
Opportunities for regular therapy	100	
Be able to switch off at the weekend (low stress)	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Look at taking on a role with less financial responsibility. - Look at dividing responsibility in current team / role
Have time to read or do nothing	80	
Have time and energy to volunteer	20	Explore 4-day working week.
Have the energy to get up early	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Make space for regular breaks / 4 day weeks. - Look for roles with larger team and more distributed responsibility

Create your own version using our template [here](#).

ESCAPE'S NEEDS CALCULATOR

IMPORTANT: Before you can edit the needs calculator you'll need to copy it to make your own version. You can do this by clicking "File" and then "Make a copy", the copy will then be editable.

Recognising your expectations and priorities when it comes to being freelance is a key part of setting goals and milestones – especially as you enter a working style with less stability than you’ve likely ever had in a regular job.

The upside of going freelance is the freedom and autonomy it can bring. However it can also be stressful and takes more hustle than being an employee. Having a clear understanding of how you like to work, and what matters to you is crucial before you step out of stable employment.

Of course, once you have a clear idea of these and still want to move forward, you can use them to inform and develop your personal brand.

Carve out your niche

Next up, it’s time to work out where you want to sit in the freelance realm. This doesn’t mean having a vague idea in your mind about a set of services you might want to explore someday, but establishing definite, quantifiable skills you can put a price on now.

01

Figure out what you're offering as a freelancer

Start by listing your existing skills, knowledge and experience. What challenges have you overcome? What parts of your work history have really excited you? Ask your friends to give you five examples if you get stuck. Perhaps there is a unique blend of skills that you can combine to help you to stand out?

Do you already have an idea of what you want to do? Something you're currently doing full time, but as a freelancer? Something totally new? Getting clear about what you want to do and offer as a freelancer is crucial. Write out 5 things you could offer as a freelancer.

Understand your market

Consider how valuable your skills are to the clients you're targeting. What do they want, and what are their worries or their dreams? What kind of competition is there; how can you make sure you stand out?

Look at your list of 5 things you could offer as a freelancer, how in demand are these? If you've identified a location and your work would be in person, is there an abundance of opportunity in your chosen base? If you plan to be totally remote, how will you find clients? What's the competition like?

02

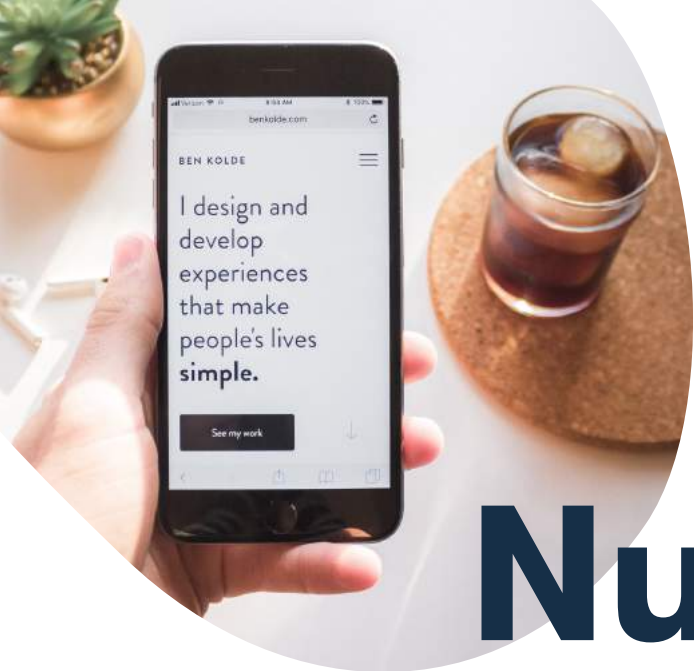
Use your needs calculator as a guide

How can you balance your existing skills against your 'bigger picture' needs and priorities?

Setting limitations around what you can and are willing to do for money will help identify your values and keep you focused on what matters to you most. They're also key if you want to tailor your brand.

Looking at your list of 5 potential freelance options, which feel most aligned with your needs? Which do you get most excited about? Which would provide the greatest opportunity for the quality of life you're looking for?

03



Nurture your brand

Most people don't realise they already have a personal brand. Take a moment to Google yourself and see what comes up. Perhaps old work profiles appear, maybe it's your social media channels. These are all methods clients and colleagues have of getting to know the 'real' you. The good news is you can adapt the narrative in your favour.


Consider the following three C's when it comes to your brand:

- Consistency – do my profiles make sense and have cohesion between them?
- Creativity – how can I be 'remarkable'? What can I do to make myself stand out?
- Credibility – Am I showcasing my experience, skills and networks credibly?

You should apply these guidelines to every channel or platform that represents you – from professional ones such as your CV, portfolio, website or LinkedIn, to personal ones such as Twitter or Instagram.

Ask yourself, what do you need to create to build out your brand so that your ideal clients can see what you can offer? Do you need to create a personal website? Update your LinkedIn? Make a list of anything you might need to work on to get yourself set up so you can start attracting clients before you make the leap.

Working freelance, you're going to have to convince clients time and time again to work with you. It's essential that you get it right. Although, if you've made it this far, you're ready to take the plunge.

A wooden clock with a light-colored face and dark numbers is mounted on a light-colored wall. To the right of the clock, a large, stylized red speech bubble contains white text. In the foreground, a potted plant with large green leaves sits on a white surface. A white lamp base is also visible on the right side of the foreground.

**Give me six hours to
chop down a tree and I
will spend the first four
sharpening the axe.**

ABRAHAM LINCOLN



02


Preparing your escape

Proper preparation prevents piss-poor performance.

Once you've got your personal branding and your priorities sorted, and have a few longer term goals in mind, you're almost ready to go. But we know you'll still have a thousand questions racing around your mind, and there are a few things we'd advise setting up well before you leave your job:

- Getting the essentials in order: consolidate your finances, networks, plans
- Building relevant skills: what's missing in your skillset?
- Find a routine: designing a new working pattern for yourself

The most time-effective way to prepare for this great change in your life is to pivot your existing resources – especially if you're planning on staying in a similar sector to the one you're working in now.



01

Harnessing your existing network can result in new leads

Reach out to people you know and have a professional relationship with, and update them on your plans. Even if they don't need the business or services right now, they may know someone who does and be able to offer a recommendation. Play it smart and you may be able to set up a couple of clients while you're still in your full-time role – even picking up a pro bono project can be a bridge to greater things.

02

Levelling up your skillset can nudge your pay higher

You've already had a look at where your skills can take you, but can you take your existing expertise a step further? It's wise to diversify your offering, but investing in an evening class to boost your skillset now will pay dividends once you've left your regular job and are deep in the freelance life.

03

Switching up your routine early saves more hassle (and time) later down the line

Looking at what's working and not working in your existing routine can help fuel the habits you would like to bring into freelance life with you. Maybe you want extra time to go for a run in the mornings, or you've found you are really not a morning person at all. Perhaps you need to track exactly how long a particular task may take so you can microschedule your day. Do you know how dependent your productivity levels are on the time of day?

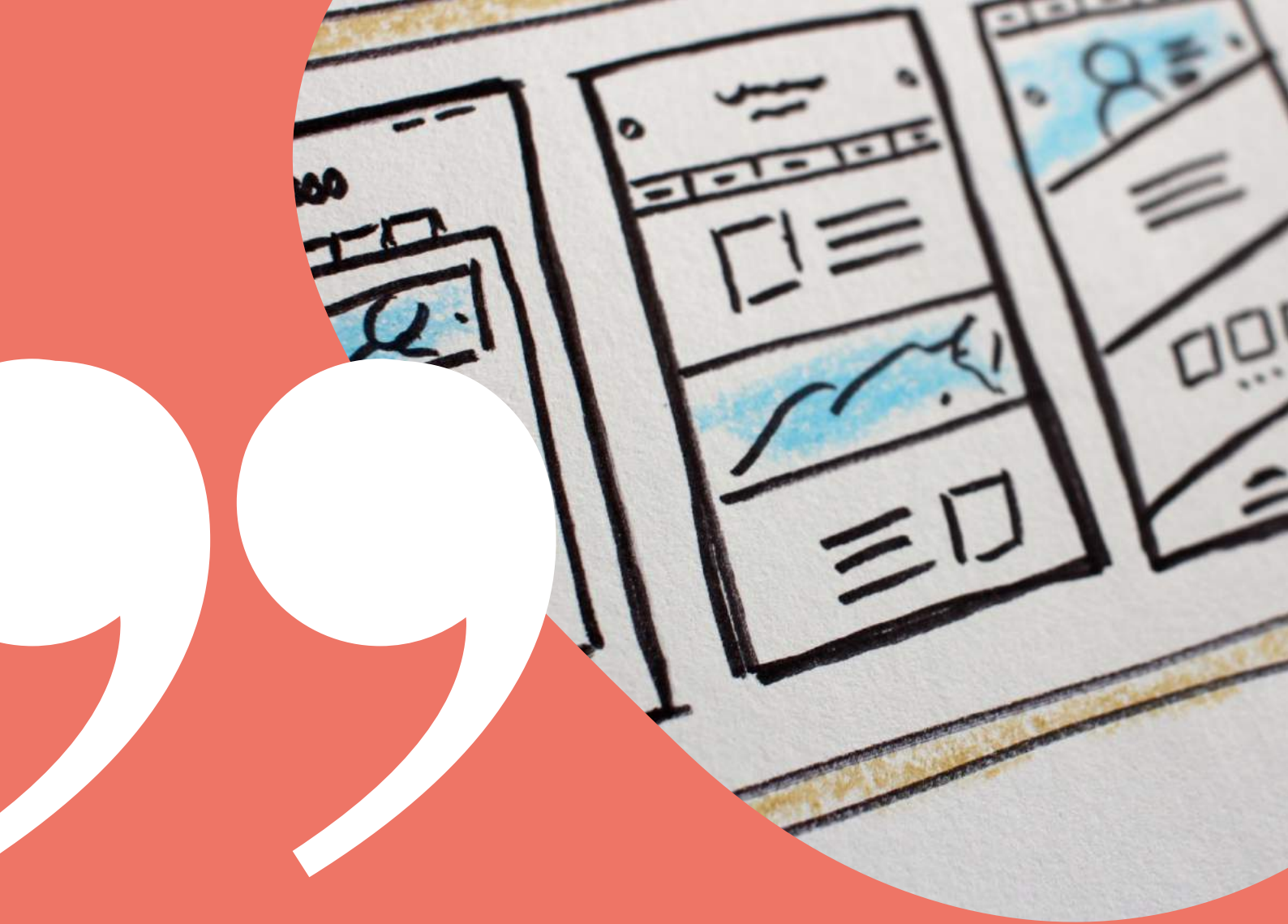
Try to work these out sooner rather than later if you can, so you can ease into a new work routine easily when you take the leap.

04

Future-proof your finances

It's perfectly normal for new freelancers to worry about money. Irregular income can be difficult to manage when you're not used to it, and it's recommended that people save a buffer of at least £3,000 before they quit their jobs to keep the pressure off (though you may need less – or more). Practising with a reduced budget to reflect the salary you think you'll start with will help lessen any blow that comes your way, but can also pave the way for some nice surprises financially when (not if!) you have a good month.

Remember: you're making a radical change to your life. Prepare now, making sure all your tools and resources are as sharp as they can be, and you'll transition to freelance life more effortlessly – ready to hook your first clients.



**YOU SHOULD ALREADY
KNOW WHERE YOUR
CUSTOMERS ARE GOING TO
COME FROM BEFORE YOU
LAUNCH YOUR PRODUCT OR
SERVICE.**



03

Finding clients somewhere new

It can be daunting setting up shop somewhere new, especially if your entire network is anchored to one city. But don't let it put you off – you'll be surprised where you can find and create connections.

There are three steps to putting yourself out there when you move somewhere new:

1. Getting your branding right
2. Figuring out your pricing
3. Marketing yourself and your services

We've touched a little on branding already, and it's really key you reinforce the same key message of what you do and how you do it. In regards to pricing, you're going to have to get used to talking about money around people, so best just to be transparent – if nothing else, it will win you respect from the get go.



What is absolutely essential when seeking clients in a new place is making yourself visible. Put simply, if you don't market your services, nobody is going to know they exist. Invest some time into presenting yourself within online platforms such as LinkedIn, utilising your existing contacts, and engaging with the local community. Not many guides would advocate a trip to the pub, but consider this a solid networking endorsement.

Getting a few gigs under your belt before your move will help stabilise your position while you adjust to a change of pace. Reach out to old employers, set up on freelance sites such as Upwork and Fiverr, and join Facebook communities (i.e. Freelance Heroes) or LinkedIn discussions. Then you can get a better idea of your financial starting point and take it from there.

When you're in your new location, reach out to local coworking spaces, attend meetups both in person and online, and share your story with people you meet. Identify companies in your locale who you think you can help, reach out and set up some conversations. An authentic freelance life is about sharing what you can do and being confident in your abilities and value. There's an abundance of opportunities for the brave. It takes practice, but you can do it!



3 types of client

Finding clients is easy – as long as you know how – but balancing them can be trickier. Clients should be like an investment portfolio. You'll want a combination of:

01

Blue Chips

Longer term; the core of your portfolio. Once you've landed a couple of these, set clear boundaries – you still need space and time for your other projects.

02

Growth Investments

Profitable opportunities. You may have to adjust your pricing to compete for these ones, but they can offer a great career stabiliser if you can secure them.

03

One shots & Long shots

Sign up to freelance hiring platforms such as Upwork, People per Hour and Fiverr. These should only account for a small portion of your portfolio as they're more volatile.

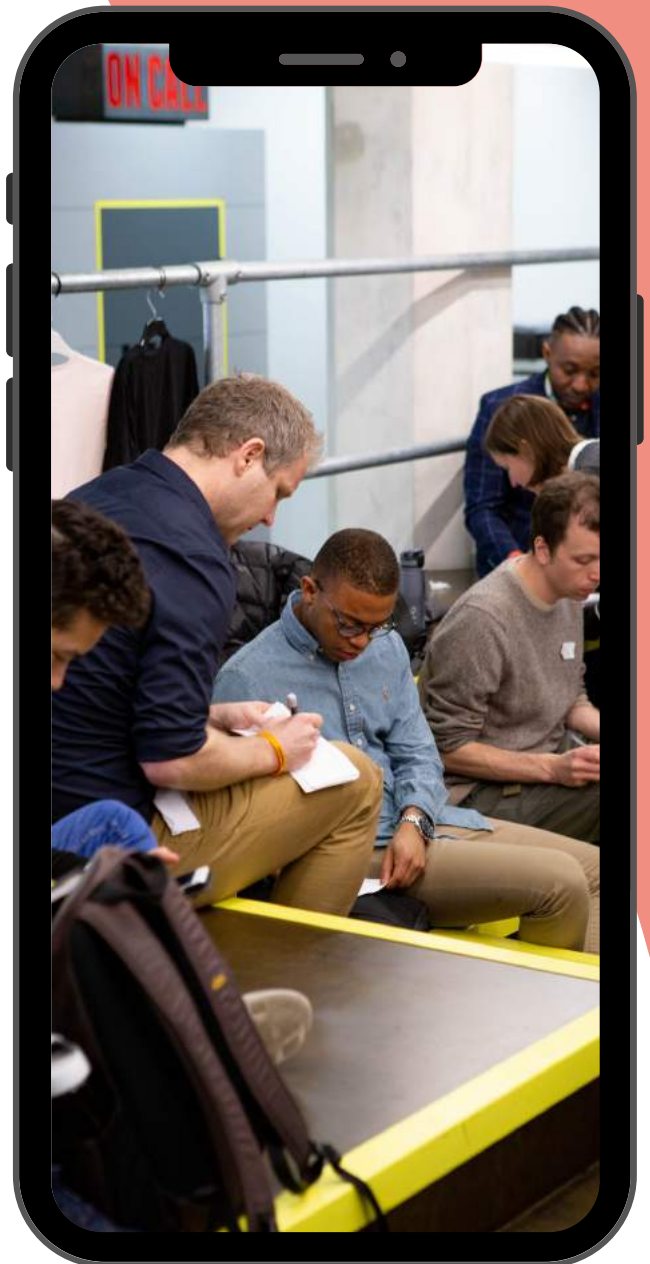
Navigating the world of freelancing for the first time can be overwhelming...

Our evening online workshop How to Build your Freelance Career will give you tools, tricks, and inspiration to make freelancer life work for you.

You will learn:

- How to design a work life around who you really are
- How to build resilience, to not give up when times are tough
- How to meet new people and find new opportunities
- How to structure your time
- How to sell yourself
- How to stand out from the crowd and be better than the competition
- How to avoid 'Freelance Fatigue'
- How to choose the right work
- How to manage your finances on the journey

Various dates available.



JOIN US



04

Getting on top of your finances

One of the greatest concerns around transitioning from full-time work to freelancing is finance. How can you guarantee a certain salary each month when you don't know where the money's coming from? This is what your client portfolio is for – but building this is only half the battle.

In our [Going Freelance webinar](#), founder of [Pachira Money](#) and escape Programme Leader Stacey Lowman gave the following tips for ensuring you're asking yourself the right freelance questions:

Are you...

- Committing to regular financial reviews?
- Owning your own schedule?
- Feeling comfortable talking about money?
- Adopting good personal finance habits?
- Setting up the right bank account?
- Taking care of Tax, National Insurance and VAT?

As a new freelancer, you should mark your journey by first setting up self-employed status with the HMRC, opening a business account (Starling, Monzo and Coconut are great for tracking business expenses) and completing an audit of your accounts. What are you earning/spending? Do you have a buffer? How long will that last? Try setting achievable goals and actioning them by spending less and saving more.

The next step is planning what your basic business model looks like – how you're actually going to get this money to come in.

Establishing your price

As a salaried professional, it's likely you didn't put much thought into what a single day's task was worth. You simply show up for your allotted hours, complete the day's tasks, and get a nice little packet at the end of the month. However, with client work, every task or hour spent on that project is billable, and you have to work out how to put a price on it.

Finance is incredibly personal, and a rule that works for one may not work for somebody else. It's therefore important to test different models to see which one works best for you. First you want to determine your reference points. Are they:

- Cost-based: cover ALL costs plus a markup percentage
- Market-based: use competitor prices/community/organisations as a benchmark
- Values-based: how much it's worth to the client



Then work out your fee. Would hourly or day rates work? What about a per-project fee, or unit/quantity pricing?

If you're unsure of your basic hourly rate, it should equate to the total of your last annual salary, plus your expenses and annual profit, divided by your billable work hours for the year. If this is a larger number than you're used to working with, remember you're not getting holiday or sick pay included, which should be accommodated by the pay increase.

It could be that different methods work for different clients, so don't be afraid to switch it up – but always be transparent. Once you've polished one stream of revenue, you may want to look at expanding...



Having only one revenue stream leaves you vulnerable



Create a basic business model

A lot of freelancers start their journey with only one stream of revenue. They might decide they have a product or a service they can offer really well, and it appears to be going successfully.

However, having only a single revenue stream leaves you vulnerable. Freelance life is full of fluctuations – whether it's seasonal, or determined by changes in the economy – and it's wise to look into multiple sources of income to safeguard yourself.

Have a look at the following revenue matrix and decide where you currently fall, and how much you can make from that source. Take as long as you need to fill out the other potential options for your freelance business. Maybe on top of your regular service you can offer exclusive, regular expertise or offers to premium or subscribing clients. It could be that you can run a paid virtual event with very few overheads. Implementing a plan to bring in multiple sources of income can help cushion your finances long-term and protect you from instabilities in the market.

Business model/ Revenue streams

What is the value proposition?

Product (s)

What are the main products?

Are there any products you can make that your customers are already using?

Service

Can you sell a service to solve the problem?

Market place

Can you create a marketplace?

B2B

Can you sell to a business?

Advertising

What is the advertising model?

Intellectual Property

Can you sell the IP?

License/ Franchise?

Can you license this?

Subscription

Is there a subscription offering?

Events

Can you sell tickets to an event?

Freemium

Is there a freemium model?

Sponsorship / Affiliate

Are there affiliates/ Sponsorship opportunities?



Deciding your destination

It's a big leap moving from the big city where everything you could ever need is available right under your nose. But there's a reason you're here, whether it's that you're seeking more balance, fulfilment or freedom in your life, and being freelance frees you of many reins attached to working life.

But you need to be confident you're doing the right thing for you – and for your business. That beachside cabin might seem like the perfect writers' retreat for example, but is it isolating you from opportunity? It's important you weigh up your basic needs vs. your business ones.

Consider:

- Does my intended destination align with my compass? Is it the right base for my skill set?
- Does it have an active business community where I can network, cowork, and grow my career?



TRY BEFORE YOU BUY

Before you commit to upsticks and moving somewhere permanently, test it out.

The truth is, you can plan your destination down to a tee, but you still might not know how it's going to work out until you're actually there. Try to mitigate the risk by giving the area a trial run. You could work from an Airbnb for a month to get a feel for it, rent a flat instead of buying, or start engaging with a coworking space. There's nothing worse than committing to something long-term and then finding it's not compatible with your work style.

But sometimes you just have to pack a bag, follow your gut instinct and see where it leads you. Just ask the digital nomad community. If you're flexible when it comes to where you'll be based, it's worth checking out resources like [NomadList](#), [NoDesk](#) and [Spot A Home](#) to compare local rental prices, co-working spaces and remote opportunities. Have a look at Meetup to see what sorts of activities happen there, and use [coworker.com](#) to see if there are any coworking spaces and likeminded communities in the areas you're considering exploring.



Finding your tribe

Connecting with a new community is simple – as long as you know where it is. Don't focus too much on being 'the new kid', most freelancers are supportive of others and were probably new themselves once upon a time. Find local innovation centres and coworking spaces, join the area's chamber of commerce. Seek out Facebook groups and show up at networking events (even if you don't want to), and check out nextdoor.co.uk to see what's going on in those local areas.

Reach out to existing contacts and announce where you're moving to, and see if you can connect with anyone through existing contacts. The world is a really small place and chances are you could find some new friends and potential clients through your existing contacts alone – remember we're each only connected by a maximum seven degrees of separation.

”

**If you
want to
go fast,
go alone.
If you
want to
go far, go
together.**



This will also help you to become more visible to potential clients in those areas; an announcement that you're moving to a new city to do a certain type of freelance work is a good way for your connections to become aware of your new freelance lifestyle and potentially become clients or refer you to potential clients.

Visibility is vital in a new place, and your new connections can bring you much needed work or support while you settle in – or both.

Try to connect to people before you land so you have a few meetings or chats in the diary before you get there, this can help set you up in the right direction when you're new.

Taking the leap

After reading through these sections and completing the exercises along the way, you should be feeling more prepared for securing clients, working flexibly, and diving into the world of freelance. Your path is set, your priorities front of mind, and you're raring to go – the only thing that's left is to jump in.

If your first foray doesn't quite work out, or you find it takes some time to get going, fear not! Our goal at Escape the City is to provide you with the tools you need early in the game, to give you answers to all the questions you may have right at the beginning of your transition from a regular nine-to-five. That way, you can start your journey with confidence, and weather any storm that may come your way with the knowledge you're on the right track.

Going freelance is all about creating your own routine between work and home, and finding a sense of peace through freedom and flexibility. That said, it is full of stops and starts, and ups and downs, and it's important to prepare yourself for fluctuations in work load. By following these processes, you should be able to better safeguard your earnings against changes in the tide, and know that whatever happens you already have all the skills you need.

Going freelance means taking a huge chance on yourself, so be prepared to feel closer to the authentic you as you manoeuvre this process. Avoid the isolation that freelance life can bring with support from a strong community of like minded souls – both in coworking spaces and online. And, most importantly, have fun! Freelancing is often about experimentation, doing something different, and doing it well. Good luck and keep us updated!



A woman with brown hair, wearing a black and white striped shirt, is smiling and looking towards the right. She is sitting at a table with papers and a blue folder. In the background, other people are blurred, suggesting a community meeting or workshop. A red vertical bar is on the right side of the image.

Escape Heroes

Stories from
those who
have been
there first

Alex Phillips

Alex had been working in a steady design job for famous art auction house Sotheby's before she decided to leave London in 2009. She'd managed to save enough to cover a few months' expenses, and moved to the Isle of Wight with her partner where she began to work freelance. Now living in Salisbury, she balances her freelance work around family life.



I had been working for Sotheby's as a senior designer and studio manager when I decided to leave London and become a freelancer.

I worked there for three years straight from Uni before I went travelling, and then came back mid-2004 to a six month contract with them that then kept getting renewed. It was a great job but I had wanted to leave London for a while. However every time I thought "right, I'm going to leave", I got a pay rise or a promotion, which made it more difficult to leave. Eventually I was there for around four and a half years. My boyfriend at the time (now husband) wasn't in London, and my job hunting wasn't going anywhere – I was in my early 30s and looking to leave London and I think a lot of employers would have looked at my age and circumstances and thought I was ready for babies! When I saw my boyfriend painting full time, and working a lot with freelancers at Sotheby's, I thought I would give it a go!

I was quite naive going into it, however I saved money so that if I didn't earn anything for a few months I would be okay. I finally left London in January 2009 and moved to the Isle of Wight where we stayed for around a year and a half and then to Salisbury. The Isle of Wight was not practical for us really and we only moved there temporarily.

I have never regretted leaving London and I'm so pleased I did what I did. I was told by a couple of people I was mad – especially because I did it early 2009 after the global stock market crash in 2008.

I am still working freelance now 11 years on. I have looked for part and full time design jobs now and then when times have got quiet, however it suits me to be freelance now so I can be more flexible around my child and be able to go to things at school.

Since starting freelancing, I haven't earned quite as much as I did when I was working – however my life costs a lot less. The challenges at the beginning were getting the first few clients and marketing myself, and doing everything for myself. After a few months I was also asked to freelance for Sotheby's. Now most of my clients are through recommendation and people I know asking for design. The massive pro of being freelance for me is the flexibility, and the downside would be the peaks and troughs of work and not knowing what I will earn month to month.



Lisa Gust

Working long hours and an expensive commute prevented Lisa from being able to enjoy life in London properly. She'd been helping out with translation and copywriting as part of her job, and decided to jump ship – taking her skills with her. Lisa now provides copy and translation services to digital marketing agencies and teaches German as a second language in Manchester.

I'm originally from Germany and I've always had a love for all things British, so when I was given the opportunity to work in London for two internships in 2013 I jumped at the chance. I fell in love with the city. The internships were with two different companies who were both amazing, and the second company actually offered me a job. I declined at first, and returned to Germany to finish my degree, but once I was done I reached out to the company again and applied for a job they had as the CEO's executive assistant.

When I got the job, I thought I'd hit the jackpot – everything was all falling into place, at least so I thought. I found somewhere to live, though it cost an absolute fortune, but it was a little cramped and we didn't all get along. I suddenly realised how much I had to work in order to afford even being able to live there. My commute took ages, and

I spent so much money on public transport and rent that I had no work-life balance. After some time, living in London was stressing me out more than anything, it was a totally different experience to what I'd had before.

My job was very demanding, and I had no time to enjoy London because I was either working or I was knackered from working. I realised quite quickly that it wasn't the job for me. And I also realised quite quickly that London, actually once you live and work there for a while, can start to lose its charm. Fortunately, the company that I was working for had a big client base in Germany, and part of my role was to support the marketing team with translation and copywriting. Every time I've got to do that, I totally loved it. My degree was in English and German Linguistics and Literature, and languages were always my thing; this part of the job just sparked something in me.

I'd never thought about getting a full time role in translation and writing before, but when I looked into it I realised it was something I could do – so I decided to leave the company to go freelance. I was incredibly lucky in that my dad is self employed, so he was able to give me some advice. Going freelance was something I always knew I wanted to do eventually, but the experience I had spurred me on. I decided to move to Brighton to go freelance, and find a part time job to supplement my wages. But I couldn't find a part time job at all. Fortunately I had savings for about two to three months, and I just decided to put all of my energy into trying to build my freelance life.

In summer 2017, I launched my freelance business, starting out in translation, copywriting and proofreading. I don't live in Brighton anymore – I moved to Manchester – and it's definitely developed and evolved since then. I now work with a couple of digital marketing agencies on large fashion brands and a well-known audiobook company, and I teach German as a foreign language at a language school in Manchester on a freelance basis. It's funny that my job in London and my freelance work aren't really related.





Claire Trevien

Two years ago, Claire swapped her life in London for Brittany, France. In London, she'd never have been able to afford a home, and was tiring of spending a fortune working between two offices; she now owns her house outright. Working freelance on a project basis, Claire also runs her own coworking space in her picturesque hometown.

I was working as the head of content marketing for a startup called Passle, which was based in both Oxford and London, and had been flitting between their two offices. Essentially I was in charge of all marketing activities whether digital or offline. I was happy there for a time but after nearly three years it had stopped feeling challenging. I was sleepwalking through life, my mental health was a hot mess. I then came into some money through my grandmother's death and while the sum seemed huge to me, it wouldn't help me buy anywhere in Oxford or London, so I started looking elsewhere.

My employers weren't open to me working remotely so I decided to go freelance. I bought a two bed flat in Quimper in Brittany outright with the inheritance (it cost £57k) so that gave me some stability. Every step towards the move felt counterintuitive – French admin is daunting. I kept being offered permanent non-remote roles in London, whereas Brittany seemed to only have marketing internships on offer. I was making the move alone and, apart from some family I had no friends in France... Overall, it took about seven months from going freelance before I eventually moved to France – and I've been here ever since.

Fast forward to two years later and I'm so glad I made the leap. My mental health is so improved. I live so close to nature and the sea, I have two mischievous cats, and a good support network here. With freelance work, I've been lucky so far to go from one interesting contract to another. I've also opened a cooperative coworking space in my town as a way to meet other freelancers and support each other!

Lisa Matzi

Already a seasoned freelancer, product and UX designer Lisa turned down a full-time role in London this year to embark on a life on the road. Since then she's embraced the lifestyle of a digital nomad – working in her home country of Austria, in a bus in a Cornish field, and across the UK – with plans to buy and live from a van in the coming months.

I arrived in London from Austria in 2014 to study at the London College of Communication, and started a freelance job at IDEO shortly after finishing my studies. I was only there briefly, but it kind of really gave me this idea of designing digital products like apps and websites for people.

When I left, I felt like I was already on the freelance path so I kept going. I got my first real long-term freelance project by emailing a startup and telling them I could make their app better. I'd never done anything like that before. But it worked. It was bold and naive, but they took a chance on me. I was there for a year on a contract basis.

I managed to find projects in FinTech, data, lifestyle and wellbeing... Generally I'm quite curious to explore new fields if I've never heard of them before, so I did that for a couple of years before I found my dream job building an app based on sexual health for women. It was one of the biggest projects I've had but when they decided to relocate to Los Angeles, I decided I didn't want to follow them.



A couple of years ago I started working freelance for a company who then wanted me to go full time with them, but having a four day working week is so valuable for me. Before COVID-19 and lockdown, I was weighing up my options, and the safest bet seemed to be to go full time – I was never going to get more freelance clients in a pandemic. But then I also started working a day a week for a hormone tracking app as a UX consultant and I stuck with it.

I began the nomad life in March, when me and my boyfriend took a trip to Cornwall. We ended up living in a little bus in a field for three months because we couldn't really leave once the pandemic hit. Since then, buying our own van to live in has been the dream. But it's difficult right now because as it turns out I'm not the only hipster who's had that idea this year.

What I love about London is it's great to meet new people from all walks of life, and there's always stuff going on. But during COVID, the city's been stripped of this, and it doesn't feel like you can justify the rent now. I still feel in this transition phase but the digital nomad lifestyle has always appealed to me. I just don't feel bound to London anymore.

LEAVING LONDON TO FIND A JOB

So, you're looking for pastures new.



The pandemic has given many of us a unique opportunity to reevaluate our core needs and values. For you, it's led you here. Maybe you're tired of the ever-growing 'presenteeism' in workplaces across the capital. Or it might be the increasing rent prices atop an hour-long commute. Either way you're looking for pastures new – and to restore a little bit of balance into your work life.

The good news? It is possible. In fact, a growing number of people are eschewing London and other cities for somewhere smaller. But leaving the capital – where opportunities are available in abundance – for a new job elsewhere can be daunting. If you're looking to leave London in search of greener pastures, here's what you need to know first.

LEAVING LONDON TO GET A JOB

- 90** Preparing to leave the city & choosing where to go next
- 97** Testing it risk-free: take your new life on a date
- 99** Finding organisations aligned with your values
- 107** Meeting people somewhere new
- 112** Escape Heroes: Stories from people who have done it



01

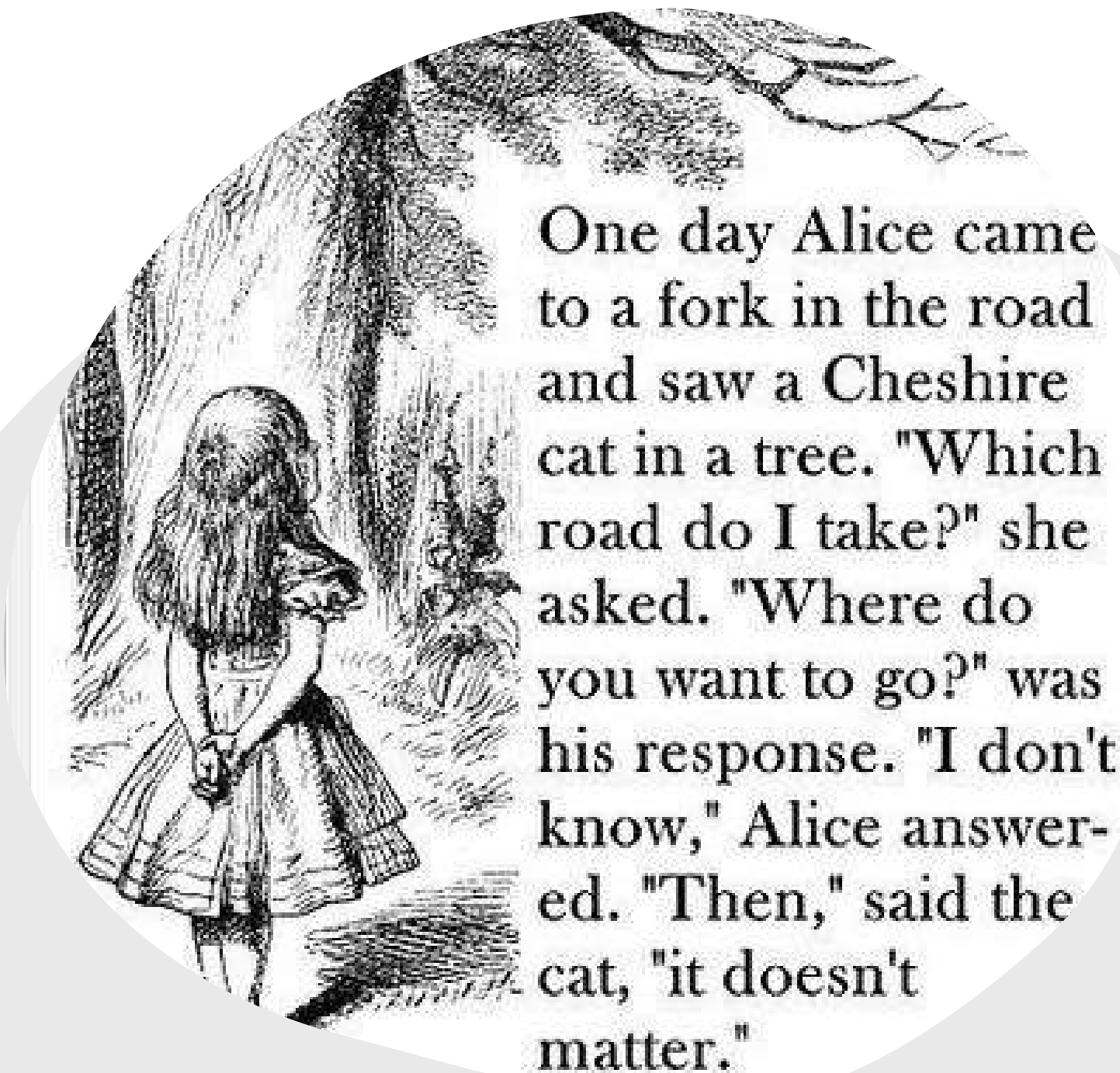
Preparing to leave the city

Filling a removal van with your belongings and making your way somewhere unknown can mean huge upheavals in each aspect of your life. You're effectively switching up everything that has become familiar, from your home to your work, to your "third place".

Sometimes needs must and a move is necessary for you to go after what you really want, whether you're looking for different opportunities, a change of pace or just a change of scenery.

But that doesn't mean you're not leaving something behind. It is possible to minimise the overall impact on your social, personal and business lives by quickly building these aspects up elsewhere – but to achieve this, you have to prepare first.

Working out just what you want for your future should be your first activity as you prepare to leave London. The following steps will help you take stock of what's really important to you, so you'll be able to take the first steps in living a life that's truer to yourself and find a job that's right for you.



One day Alice came to a fork in the road and saw a Cheshire cat in a tree. "Which road do I take?" she asked. "Where do you want to go?" was his response. "I don't know," Alice answered. "Then," said the cat, "it doesn't matter."



Identify your needs

It's normal for our priorities to change over time, and you may be finding the very things that drew you to London in the first place are no longer at the top of your list.

More and more talented professionals are fleeing the capital, citing a lack of work/life balance, extortionate rent prices and their work having a negative impact on their mental health.

Maybe you already know why you want to leave London, but it's worth taking the time briefly to revisit your reasons. Ask yourself the following questions, and try to come up with five answers for each:

- Why do you want to leave London?
- What are the five biggest things you will miss about the city? (whether personal, career-based, or something trivial such as your favourite coffee shop)

Big changes in our lives can feel overwhelming, and we can start to second guess ourselves. Is this really what we want? Wouldn't it be easier if we carried on as we are? These feelings are completely normal, and to avoid making rushed decisions about big life moves it's therefore vital to really take the time to assess not only your skill set but also your needs and values, before figuring out how they might come together to influence your decision.

Fill out the following needs calculator to ascertain first the point at which your present needs aren't being fulfilled, and then what you might do to fulfil them, taking note of the compromises you're willing to make to satisfy any conflicting needs (e.g. being by the sea is important, but you also need to be close to friends and family – what would you do?).

Important: To edit the Needs Calculator you'll need to make a copy and create your own version.

ESCAPE'S NEEDS CALCULATOR

Lay out your skillset

Though you might be desperate to leave the city, reigning in your impulses to make a quick exit will help set you up for what you really want in the long term.

Not knowing how, where or when to start is extremely common – life would be a lot easier if someone would just tap us on the shoulder and deliver our dream job, our eureka moment, our 'passion' to us on a silver platter.

Unfortunately, everything we've learnt about job searching and career-changing points to that not ever being the case. You may be wondering how to avoid going merely “somewhere” like Alice in Wonderland, and the way to achieve this is to first work out how your skillset can begin to inform a place or role that really matters to you.

To get this thought process moving, you'll want to make a list of the following:

- Your skills and strengths – everything in your bag of tricks, not just in your job but all areas of your life
- Your curiosities – the things that really excite you, and that you feel a natural attraction towards
- Your invisible expertise - the skills or characteristics you have that help you get things done more efficiently, bring in customers or excite people. Laying out these things will help you start building a picture of your unique blend of strengths.

SKILLS & SUPERPOWERS

SKILLS I LIKE TO MAKE USE OF

List out the skills that you love to use, and that you'd be happy to use daily. This could be a mix of personal and professional skills.

SKILLS I DON'T LIKE TO MAKE USE OF

Make a list of all the skills you don't enjoy as much, but that are in your bag of tricks. Be sure to include skills from all parts of your life.

MY 'INVISIBLE EXPERTISE'

Look at the skills you've listed and ask yourself:

- Did you save money, make money or get new customers?
- Was it more beautiful, safer, more innovative, more efficient?
- Did you do it faster or more effectively?
- Did it win awards, get attention, excite people?
- Did it produce a near-perfect result despite chaotic circumstances?

List out any of the skills that fall within these categories, as these make up aspects of your invisible expertise.



Work out how it all comes together

The lists of skills and strengths you've made, along with your needs will together act as a compass to help you identify the types of roles, organisations and locations that will be a good fit for you. Do you notice any patterns?

This should help you at the very least develop a better idea of:

Where you want to go

City or countryside? Beach or mountains? Do you need your morning flat white to function? Or space in nature to clear your head and restore balance in your life?

What kind of career you want

Do you want to sidestep from your existing career, or divert your path completely? Or would you take a pay cut for a more fulfilling role with more flexibility?

Leaving London is a huge opportunity to carve out the path you want to live, and to shift your life's direction for the next 5-10 years (or even longer!). Taking your time to make decisions is the best thing you can do for your journey, before taking on the job seeking process and whittling down where your base is going to be.



Choosing your base

By now you've already got a sense of your different needs, and perhaps have spotted a few conflicting priorities that might require a compromise for at least the short term.

When it comes to choosing a location, you'll most likely fall in to one of two categories:

- Location first: Your desired location is fixed, but your other needs can be re-ordered to achieve this.
- Lifestyle first: Your location is more flexible, but other elements of your lifestyle and work are not.

If you're unsure of how to prioritise your needs, a simple exercise is to place them in order along a spectrum ranging from 'nice to haves' to 'must haves'. Try to think about the impact each need will have in the short term, and for future roles.

With a clear compass, you can now dive into researching. To help you get a sense of opportunities and lifestyle in a local area you might take a look at:

- Local/ regional recruitment sites and jobs boards
- Co-working spaces
- Facebook groups or meetups to do with your area of interest
- Chamber of Commerce for the region



Taking your new life on a date

Making the move out of London requires a huge leap of faith, but there are many ways to test out a new location without committing completely. Instead of buying or renting a new place long-term, why not try being based in an Airbnb first? If you're a homeowner, you could even rent out your place before committing to selling it. Not a homeowner? Look at short-term lets using a site such as [Spot a Home](#) or [Trusted Housesitters](#).

You could even try to negotiate a period of doing your current job remotely to see how working in a new environment feels, without having to take the pressures of a move and a job change all at once.

Treat it like a date – 'date' a location for a month to see what it's like to actually live there. Cyber stalk your location by looking at Facebook groups that are aimed locally, and don't be afraid to ask locals there for advice – this could cover the job market in your area, how competitive the rental or buying property market is, and social opportunities too. You'll start to get a sense of the place and how it might meet your needs.

”

Full human potential is realised only when people are in a position to use their greatest talents. Great performance is found when people are in roles that match what they naturally do best.

Gallup Business Journal



Removing the stress from a full lifestyle change and breaking it up into pieces will allow you to measure how you feel about each change as you go, and allow you space to adapt and adjust those changes to suit you.



03

Finding organisations aligned with your values

Once you feel clearer on what you want and need in your next phase, then it's time to start the search for the kinds of roles you may want to have.

Finding an organisation whose values are aligned with your own is essential for job satisfaction, so it's worth taking the time to research which brands share your ethos.

Start by finding 10-20 organisations that you feel excited about and would be interested in working for. You could find these by searching through [Escape 100](#), Tech Nation award recipients, Sunday Times' Best 100 Companies list. You could even look at the list of companies who have a permanent office in coworking spaces where you're wanting to move to, search on LinkedIn, or ask friends for recommendations.

Then trying to connect with people who work there, getting an understanding of their needs and where you might be able to fit in or help – whether it's now or in the future.

IDEATION

10 ORGANISATIONS I'D LIKE TO WORK FOR

Start thinking more proactively about where you might like to work in the future. List 10 organisations you'd like to work for.

Include information about the type of role or work you'd like to have and the value you can offer this organisation. Think also about practical information like where the company is based and if they offer remote roles.

Contacted? Organisation details

☐☐☐☐☐

IDEATION

10 ORGANISATIONS I'D LIKE TO WORK FOR

Contacted? Organisation details

☐☐☐☐☐



Applying for roles somewhere new

Dissecting what you have vs what they want

Now that you have a pretty good idea about the kind of role you'd like to apply for, it's time to make sure your application really stands out. Your competition is likely vast and full of applicants who are local - but that doesn't mean you can't still have the edge.

Really knowing your strengths so you can present them with confidence to a prospective employer is key when finding a new role. From the exercise in the previous section, you should now have a pretty compelling list of skills.

What comes next is being able to communicate those skills effectively. Take a look at the following sections for tips on how to best position yourself when job seeking...

The next step of this is to map your skills to an opportunity. When people look for jobs, they tend to scan opportunities for certain criteria. Does it pay what you want to earn? Is the location perfect? Do you have the right qualifications or experience for the role? But what we don't often do is really think about what the organisation is actually looking for.

We might look at the job requirements or description, and feel like we don't measure up. But it's important to realise that when somebody writes a job advert what they're really filling out is a wishlist of their ideal candidate. Instead, what we don't think about is that we might have eight out of ten of the skills listed, but we may still be the best applicant for the role. The moral of the story? If an opportunity sounds good to you, apply anyway! But make your application great.

3 levels of a great job application

01

The CV and cover letter

There are three steps to a great CV, and they all involve really taking in what is on the job application. Next time you find a role you want to apply for, take a sheet of A4 and divide it into three columns.

- In the first column, write down all of the job's core competencies. What is the job description telling you that the organisation wants?
- In the second column, write down all the relevant skills or experience you have relating to those competencies. Think about examples in both your day job, and other experiences you might have. If they want creativity, and you're a keen artist, write it down!
- In the final column, you want to list the proof that you can back up your talents. Maybe you went to art school or completed a coding course, or you worked on a project where you could put your skills to good use. If you find one or two gaps in your skills or experiences, then how can you show intent? Are you enrolled in an online course to grow your skills, for example?

Draw up your CV with these columns in mind, going into extended detail on your core competencies for the role in your cover letter. Be sure to show potential employers the value you can bring by including key metrics from your prior experience. The idea here is to show your value, not list skills. To stand head and shoulders above other applicants, you may want to go one step further and provide...



The proof

02

Providing evidence of your work can go a little step further in cementing your experience in the minds of an employer, and helps demonstrate your dedication and suitability for the role. The opportunity for you to do this depends entirely on the application process, and you may even have to create the opportunity yourself.

Perhaps you have testimonials about a certain project, or notable outcomes, or articles that feature your name in them. If you can, attach them along with your CV and cover letter in a “supporting documents” submission with your application. You might even create a personal website highlighting projects you’ve worked on or skills you’re learning.

03

Show don't tell

This is the chance to really demonstrate that you can do what you say you can do. This approach is very rare among applicants, but can go very well for the one person out of a hundred that tries it.

It’s one thing to provide evidence that you could do the job, but actually proving that you can do it takes that notion a step further. Pretend you have that job, and identify how you might go about carrying out certain tasks, or addressing certain challenges. Say the role is a marketing job and they’re looking for creative campaign ideas, you might create a mockup campaign or microsite and send it to them to demonstrate your skills. Maybe the role is as a recipe editor for a food magazine – you might provide a recipe for them that you’ve made from scratch, with the photography to accompany it.

By giving employers an example of what you would do if you were already working there, they’re getting a better idea of your active skills and ideas, and how you might perform when you start in the role.

Remember – for anyone recruiting for a role, the person they choose is ultimately a huge risk. But by providing them with everything they need, you remove that risk in hiring you.

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

IT'S NOT ABOUT ME

How am I going to make my application about the value I'll add and the problems I can solve for them rather than about what I can do + what I want?

DELIVERY METHOD

How am I going to apply?

How will I stand out and contact them in different and innovative ways?
e.g. Email, tweeting the hiring manager, sending via post, etc

MY CHECKLIST

Am I ready?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am showing them I can do the work | <input type="checkbox"/> I have an innovative distribution strategy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> My social media supports my application | <input type="checkbox"/> I have focused on how I can help them |
| <input type="checkbox"/> My personal site demonstrates my knowledge for the role | <input type="checkbox"/> My CV looks good & highlights key experience & skills |

Get expert career support for the new world of work

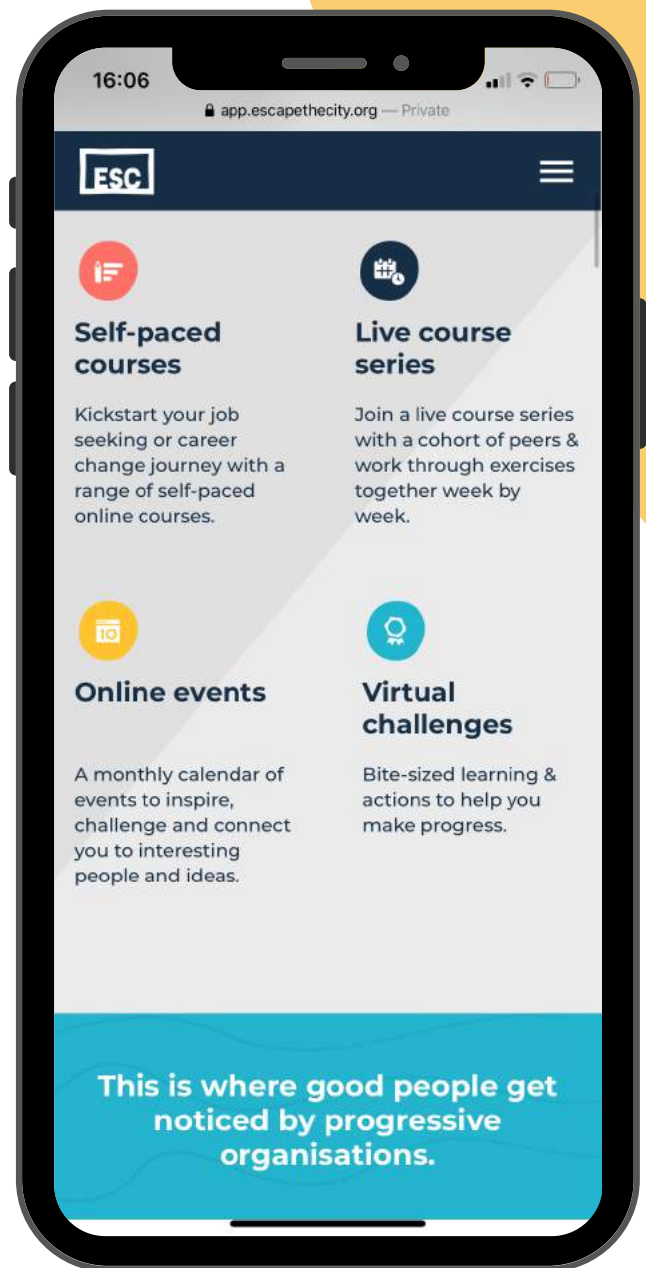
Building a career for the new world of work is hard. Make this step in your journey more enjoyable, rewarding, and doable with The Escape Club.

Your monthly membership will include:

- Live and self paced courses on a range of career change and job seeking topics
- A global network of like-minded peers
- Virtual events and challenges
- 100s of opportunities with progressive employers

From £29/month

JOIN US





04

Meeting new people

Taking the time to build and nurture a solid support network in your new area of work can help relieve some of the pressure from moving.

But we hear you: it can be difficult to make friends and network in a new location, and these things can often take time. Especially as many of us are still working remotely - forging new relationships on Zoom can be a struggle.

Just because you haven't yet met your neighbours or colleagues doesn't mean you can't get the ball rolling before you settle in.



Make yourself visible

You may already have an established professional presence in London, but you'll have to shift this level of visibility online and to your new local network if you want a boost with settling in.

You could start by:

- Changing your location on LinkedIn, letting recruiters know you're open to opportunities
- Joining and engaging with local community groups on Facebook and LinkedIn
- Reaching out to your existing network to see if they can introduce you to anyone in your new location

You have to enter the room you want to live in – and you have to start somewhere. Perhaps there are groups talking about social impact, and you're really interested in getting involved in those conversations. Start by just getting involved, connecting with people and meeting people and start to have conversations. Opportunity manifests through people, but don't be afraid to ask for help or support from your existing network in the beginning.

Making genuine connections

We know: networking sucks. Fortunately, you can start making connections with people in different ways, which will not feel quite so painful and may even lead to more authentic, meaningful connections.

Whether it's through content, discussion, or sharing things online, being honest and open about who you are and what you're interested in can lead to opportunity. And this can be professionally or personally.

There are people everywhere that have a need for your niche, who care about the same things that you do, you just have to find them. Think about what you enjoy, and join local groups both online and offline. Is anyone doing anything locally that you think is really cool? Reach out and let them know! The key to networking is not to think about networking at all; likeminded people are everywhere: at the pub, in local cafes, in libraries. Just reach out to people in a genuine way, without asking anything of them. Often, all it really takes is to start a conversation.

EVERY DAY HEROES

PEOPLE I CAN REACH OUT TO

A good way to make genuine connections is to reach out to people you admire. Write down 3 people or groups you can reach out to before or shortly after you relocate and why you admire them or what you have in common.

POTENTIAL WORK CONNECTION:

Name

Why I admire them/ what we have in common

POTENTIAL PERSONAL CONNECTION:

Name

Why I admire them/ what we have in common

POTENTIAL GROUP:

Name

Why I admire them/ what we have in common

Dive in!

With your needs and values aligned against all possible decisions regarding starting a life outside of London, you should now be feeling prepared to embark on your next adventure. Whether that takes you to another city, the countryside, or even abroad, there's no end to the opportunities you open yourself up for once you identify the things that are most important to you.

At Escape the City, we're here to provide you with the support and tools you need to make key decisions for a fulfilling life – even if that means you have to shake it up a bit. If you get a little stuck along the way, don't panic! You're far from the first person to defect from the capital to satisfy new priorities, so just return to these exercises, remember what set you on this path in the first place, and why leaving London is the best choice for you.

Now you're ready to start writing the next chapter of your life, go on: dive in!





Escape Heroes

Stories from
those who
have been
there first



Dylan Ferguson

After arriving in the UK from Canada, Dylan worked for a coworking space for a number of years before moving with his partner across the country to Bristol. They're now seeking a move to the countryside, joining many of their peers who have grown tired of city life.

I'm originally from Canada and came to the UK around six or seven years ago. I started working in a coworking space, and was living comfortably with my partner in the outskirts of London – enjoying all the things London had to offer. After some time though, I came to realise London wasn't the place for me long-term, and in general it didn't offer me what I wanted. In the last year of living there, it became really apparent when most of my weekends were spent driving out to the countryside and enjoying walks and going to the beach in Kent, rather than staying in the city.

London's a great place to live in for a while, and it has a lot to offer in terms of museums, bars, restaurants, but if that's not what you feel kind of engages you or excites you, then you start to wonder why are you paying a premium to live there. Everything has an extra cost that you don't have when you're living outside London. So my partner and I came up with this plan to leave. But we still wanted some of the perks of London – you don't want to have to sacrifice everything, you might want the best of both worlds.

In the UK, that can be really difficult, but my partner's family live in and around Somerset so at first we decided to be closer to her family. We decided to visit Bristol and see what kind of city it is and whether it would fit what we were looking for. We felt like it had a really good music scene and great food, and it was a good balance of what we wanted versus how we thought life should be. My partner got a teaching job, but I didn't have a job lined up when we moved – I just handed in my notice and we left.



I tried to find a job that reflected my skill set when we moved to Bristol but nothing really fit the culture I was looking for. But then I came across a company called Curve, which is a London FinTech company, who had opened an office in Bristol. I was offered a job as a manager and I've been there for a little over a year now.

We're actually now looking to move down to the Somerset countryside – about an hour outside of Bristol. Curve has been amazing with working from home due to the pandemic, and having the space made us realise it was something we wanted to prioritise; to try to live outside of a city and somewhere that makes us happier. It's really important to realise it's possible to be successful both in your career and in the things that interest you outside of work.

Sometimes I would talk to people at the coworking space I was working at, and it would almost feel like a competition as to what you had done at the weekend – everyone was looking to one-up each other. It put a lot of pressure on your work and your spare time, which I don't feel like I have anymore.



Sam Allen

Sam lived in London throughout his twenties, forging a career in nurturing businesses in members' clubs and coworking spaces before he helped grow luxury fitness club Equinox in the UK. After missing the coast and with nature always a priority, circumstances led him to having to move back to his hometown of Seaford and find a job...

I moved to London after I graduated from Uni, as I'd studied photography and knew that I would have to start assisting photographers if I wanted to build a career in that field, and London is the best place to do that. I started doing that for a while, and then to subsidise my lifestyle I also started working for Soho House.

I was there for around three years and really fell in love with hospitality as it played off of a lot of my natural strengths. Ultimately, the photography stuff kind of got left behind as I grew in my career, as I went from reception supervisor to reception manager, then members relations manager before I got the opportunity to help launch their new site in Istanbul.

I also worked with WeWork when they came over to the UK in 2016, and in operations for a startup called Second Home, and I realised then what I really love doing – leading projects within a business, training teams, setting up systems, and getting other people really excited about working for a particular brand. My mission became to diversify the different industries that I was working for, and I started working for US luxury fitness space Equinox when COVID-19 hit.

From there, I was made redundant and had to think fast on my feet. I'd missed the coast for years, and decided to make the move back to my hometown, where I found a role at Brighton coworking space Projects. What's interesting about the move is that my career was specifically in London, and the opportunities were there, but I never really benefited from everything London had to offer. I had my home in East London, and I lived within that bubble and rarely ventured away from it.

Now, I'm enjoying being closer to nature – as someone who grew up close to the beach that's always been important to me, and there's so much more space to walk or hike outside of London. I'm still kind of finding my way in Brighton – my friends are all still really in the capital and it's really early days so I'm still on the way towards finding my tribe here. It's really strange not having the same access to the LGBT community that I had in London. I know it's here in Brighton too but with everything being closed it's more difficult to connect with. I'm really grateful for my job because I really get to feel I'm part of something, which I've always valued.



Nicci Wright

Nicci lived in London for eight years working in technology sales before she made the move back to her hometown of Salisbury. Now living in the South West, she works remotely for London-based online therapy company The Circle Line – a role she found through Escape the City.

I'd been thinking about leaving London for a while, but that feeling was really cemented during lockdown. When I first moved to London when I was 20, I was a completely different person – I really wanted to live somewhere busy and fast-paced, where there were lots of things to be doing. I guess it suited my mentality and who I was then, in my head I was very busy and fast-paced, ambitious and high-achieving, but not present – I was always looking forward. I think also growing up in a very small and predominantly white place, I wanted diversity and culture, and the excitement of London gave that to me. I loved the anonymity of the city. But as I got older, I really felt like I wanted more of a community of people who know me.

In lockdown, I felt community-wise in London everything was a bit blank. There were nice moments of hope and humanity but also hostility which I guess is a fear

response – it felt more like everyone was against each other. I realised my time in the city was up. I'd lived eight years in London which is a really long time, and I realised what I wanted more in my life which was to be around nature a bit more. The person I was and the things I enjoyed at age 20 have obviously evolved as I have – the lure and glamour of cocktail bars and eating out, partying and shopping and burning the candle at both ends really – are completely different. Now I'm more about slow living, balance, being present, exploring creative pursuits, shopping and living sustainably, looking after my mind and body and managing stress with meditation and therapy. I joined The Circle Line in March 2020 and it's all remote, which gave me the flexibility to move out of London, so I moved back to my hometown in Salisbury to gather myself. When things are a bit more stable (after COVID), I'm planning to then move to Bristol.

I really don't think I'd ever move back to London now. The transition to somewhere new is difficult at times – I'm still only six weeks in – something like: but compared to how life could have been working in the corporate world with my foot constantly on the gas, doesn't align with my values. Working in a start-up is still 24/7 but it also feels nourishing because it's purposeful -when I compare life to some of the people I've worked with, I'm glad to be out of the rat race. I had worked in technology and software sales for a while but was looking for a more meaningful role. When I took the role initially with The Circle Line I was working for free – for equity in the company based on the time I worked with them – which was a huge sacrifice and a big risk because you don't know how well things are going to work out. But I have faith in what we do and the investors are coming. My priorities were also so different and feeling mentally well was at the heart of everything I did – and that's still the case in what I do now. When I was working in more corporate jobs I felt this real anxiety and panic which I don't have any more, so the risk really paid off. Both in a financial and mental or purposeful sense, leaving London and having this role for me has been great.



NEW TO ESCAPE?



Hello. We're Escape the City. We're on a mission to help 1 million ambitious and talented professionals to do work that matters to them and the world.

Over the last decade our community has proven that corporate drudgery is as outdated as the fax machine and that meaningful careers are available to anyone. Wherever you are on your journey, here you'll find a community of likeminded people and plenty of guidance and knowledge to help you start building a life on your terms. Do take a look around the website to find out more about our courses, events and programmes. Or to browse hundreds of opportunities with progressive employers. Welcome to Escape!

escapethecity.org



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