

Case Study: Starting your own business

Lucy Teasdale, Brand Designer, Galaxy Media

Tell us about your career path, how you got to owning your own business, and key milestones...

I have always been a very creative person, in school my favourite class was Art & Design, so much so I would stay hours after school to work on my sketchbook. This love for the arts led me to study Art & Design at Lakes College, where I learnt to embrace digital media, including graphic design film & photography.

After completing a 3-year Filmmaking course at the Manchester Metropolitan University in 2018, focusing on production design and freelance filming on the side, I went travelling for a year and when I came back, I moved to Manchester to get a digital media related job.

Unfortunately the pandemic hit and I was forced to move back home. But as I did not want to stall my career development I decided to start freelancing under the name 'lucy digital design'. I promoted myself on Instagram and Facebook to family & friends and noticed that a lot of requests were coming from people starting their own business (logo designs, business cards etc...). I had found my niche! I was taken on a freelance basis for a brand designer in Carlisle where I was professionally trained and for 6 months I worked on building my own brand 'Galaxy Media' which launched on the 25th December 2020. Since then I have worked with a variety of clients including personal trainers, beauticians, restaurants, bars, online retail stores, plumbers, builders... you name it! Now I have hit over 2000 followers on Instagram and have a long list of loyal clients.

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What does a typical day look like as a business owner?

Busy! Very busy! I work full time as a Digital Marketing Coordinator for The Centre for Leadership Performance. When I finish at 5, I work 1-2 hours on designing for clients. That can be anything from a menu to a new logo, but a lot of my time goes on brand research and replying to client requests and questions, this is most evenings (as well as early morning). It's a good job I love what I do!!

Whose support have you relied on when running your own business?

My parents have been amazing. When I first started freelancing I didn't have a job to fall back on as the job I had in Manchester came to a close due to the pandemic. It was a rough few months, scraping pennies together but they put a roof over my head and supported me to make sure that I built a career that would make me happy. After all, we work for approximately 35% of our total waking hours! My parents both own their own businesses and have experience with freelance so they have taught me how to keep track of my income and expenses. Now it's my turn to pay them back.

As well as my parents, the support from my friends and family have been amazing and crucial to my success. I have one friend who referred me to one of my best repeat clients, others have shared my posts on Facebook which has led to multiple enquiries. You don't need to spend money to support your friends/family's small business. A simple like, share, or recommendation goes a long way.

Did you have to do any additional training?

Most of what I have learnt so far has been self-taught. It has been a matter of absorbing all the information I can, from successful brand designers in the industry or local businesses owners... my brain has been somewhat of a sponge.

I have also completed a variety of short courses on the likes of LinkedIn Learning, these courses have helped me to develop my skills in digital marketing along with graphic and web design.

My biggest source of training was from the brand designer that I worked for in Carlisle, he taught me not just the technical aspects of brand design (photoshop, illustrator etc..) but also the client relationship. As he would say to me 'people buy into people'.



What's your greatest fear, and how do you cope with fear?

I'm not a fearful person to be honest, mainly because I'm very impulsive and don't think too far into the future. I think initially I found it scary sending my designs to a client as it was all new and I wasn't that confident in what I had produced. Now however, I feel very confident when pressing that send button, and if they don't like it... well they're crazy! No, in all seriousness, you cannot please everyone, as long as you do your very best that is all you should expect from yourself. The golden rule is to learn from your mistakes and take as much feedback as possible.

What makes you a good leader, and how do you make sure your staff and colleagues are looked after?

At present I haven't hired anyone to help with Galaxy Media so I cannot comment on that, however in my role for The Centre for Leadership Performance as a Digital Marketing Coordinator I work very collaboratively with a small team of people. I try to make sure that the team feels comfortable coming to me when their marketing workload is too much to handle, or they are confused with something and need a bit of help, or a call to explain in more detail.

What's your top tip for other prospective young entrepreneurs?

Go for it! Drop the excuses! If you can't afford to do it full time then do it after work, alongside your day job. Don't be scared of what people think. If you feel you don't know enough about the job or industry, learn! Life is too short not to be doing something we love every day.