

Why I switched from a freelance marketing career to in-house at MJ Hudson

Authors: Damian Clarke

It is a glamorous life for some – including me

Freelance marketing is nice work if you can get it. And I had it – some good clients and a flexible career that I could do anywhere, any time. I milked the anywhere anytime part for all it was worth – even at the expense of income. Apart from my office – above a pub, no less – I fulfilled contracts from my boat on Sydney Harbour, a balcony on Hamilton Island – actually, in front of water views in resorts, apartments and villas around the world – and a Manhattan hotel room so over-styled and dark that I had to read documents by the light of my phone.

A freelancer never says no

I originally moved into contract work for the flexibility to accommodate my wife's hectic travel schedule and look after my pre-school children. But, flexibility also included all-nighters at my desk because I took on too much work or a child needed me during the day. Every family holiday had days of grumpy dad at his computer when the kids wanted the Daddy Monster to chase them in the pool.

The quality of work is highly variable

Finally, there was the work. Sure, my best contract jobs were annual reports, CEO speeches, investor updates, editing business books, and writing for very cool startups and *The Fifth Estate*. But for all those jobs, there were also terribly paid, time-sucking gap fillers.

A quality house delivers quality work

I was enticed to MJ Hudson by two talented ex-colleagues, Jon Greene and Matthew Craig-Greene. when I returned to London after nine years in Australia. The more I heard about what we do here – full, end-to-end rebranding exercises, fund decks for innovative investors, ESG reports for forward-thinking companies and new websites to attract investors, I started to question how much the flexibility was worth to me.

It is hard to offer work of this calibre as a freelancer. As tempting it may be for a client to hire a few freelancers and commission the work themselves, few have the resources to do it properly. The level of organisation required to produce a quality result within a reasonable time depends on teams that know how to work together and top-notch project management to keep everything moving forward. To do work like this, you need an agency like MJ Hudson, where all these skills are in-house.

Looking at what was on the table, I realised I could work every day producing the results for clients that I could previously only manage a few times a year.

Access to incredible colleagues and clients

My choice has been more than vindicated. MJ Hudson's investor relations team is the best in the business – literally! JD David is one of the top 100 People in Finance according to *Top 100* magazine in 2019. Other colleagues are Oxbridge graduates, successful teenage poets, brilliant journalists and amazing designers. We have wildly diverse backgrounds, live in four different countries and come together to win awards all the time^{1,2,3}. Clients can't pull together teams like this using freelancers.

Speaking of the clients – just in the last few weeks I have worked with behemoths like CITIC, domain experts like ArcLight and niche disruptors like Leitbox. These are clients and contract jobs I would never have had access to in my freelance marketing practice. If I fill out a form to take holidays now, big deal. Because producing work like this, for clients like these, is a big deal!

1. The Private Equity Awards: Specialist Adviser of the Year
2. The Drawdown Awards 2021: Advisory/Consultancy: Marketing & Communications
3. Private Equity Service Awards: Marketing & communications agency

Tags: awards , freelance , in-house , marketing , team building