

The Next Step: Workshop Preparation

The Next Step workshop uses practical exercises to help you make decisions about your creative business. The following exercise will help you prepare for the workshop. It will help you;

- focus your thinking
- reflect on your current situation
- identify your motivations and achievements in reaching this point
- identify the activities you would like to be undertaking in the future
- establish which skills, relationships, profile and rewards connect your experiences to date and support your future choices

You are going to create two ‘maps’; one detailing your history and current situation, the other exploring your future opportunities. The exercise usually takes a minimum of an hour and can be as thorough or as brief as you see fit. Your maps may be drawn fluidly like mind map or set out in a grid; they can be as colourful or minimal as you like. You will need to bring your maps with you to refer to in the workshop.

Map 1: Current Activities

- Down the centre of a sheet of A4 paper, list all your current professional activities. (You might not be making an income from all these activities but they should be things that you consider to be part of your working life and/or supporting your professional aspirations.)
- On the left hand side of the list, map your journey to these activities
- On the right hand side of the list, map the outcomes



What led you to do them?

What do you get from them?

For instance, one of your current activities might be showcasing your work at festivals or trade events. You might have been motivated to do this to

- build relationships with stockist / to find a distributor or venue for your work,
- to raise your profile by showing work
- get critical / audience / client feedback about your work
- get bookings / orders and sales

Your skills will have allowed you to participate and the recommendation of peers in your industry might have helped you decide where to showcase. However, the actual outcomes and achievements from taking part in events might have been different to your initial expectations.

Map 2: Future Activities

- Down the centre of a second sheet of A4 paper, list all the activities you'd like to see feature in your future work, e.g. activities you'd like to sustain or improve, and potential new opportunities.
- On the left hand side of the list, map your motivations and the skills, relationships, resources and profile you will need to carry out these activities and access new opportunities
- On the right hand side of the list, map what you think you could gain from them.

Finally

Bring the 'maps' with you to the workshop so you can discuss and compare them. We will then help you explore sticking points and plan possible journeys between your current and potential work.

“This [exercise] was really useful. The most enlightening bit highlighted the gaps between my creative motivating factors and the skills demanded by my business.”