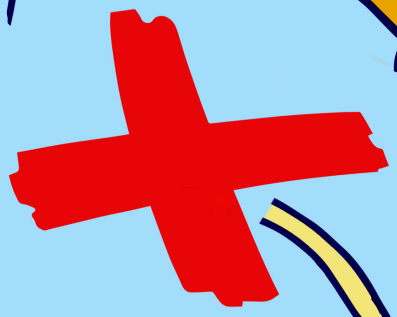




A GUIDE TO
FREELANCE
ILLUSTRATION



THE WHAT, WHO, WHEN,
AND HOW OF THE
FREELANCE WORLD

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What to Have

Artist cards (elctronic or printed) are part of your professional package that also includes your website, business cards, and social media presence. There are several ways to make your own artist card, but there are some set standards.

Image Choose a dynamic and memorable piece of work. If there is more than one, you can choose two or three so you have some variation. Have the whole image take up space on the card, since cropping can be tricky. Consider choosing an image with color.

Name Have your name on the front or back of the card. Or, if your website incorporates your name have your website information on the card. If you list your website, make sure it can be easily found on the internet.

Logo A logo can be an icon you create that represents you in some way or can be type of font or color scheme that you choose. Make it consistent and true to your personality.

Electronic E-postcards have a reasonably sized image that links to your website and social media.

Optional Sometimes a handwritten note can be a nice touch when you send the card to a specific person or company, i.e. "I would love to work with you someday!"

Here are some examples of artist cards:

Shadra Strickland



SEOKKIM

seokim.com seokim20@gmail.com 912.308.7361





Social Media and Online Presence

Having a presence online is also an important component of your promotional materials package. It is great promotion because it's free! In addition to your website, consider joining these popular sites and building your online profile:

LinkedIn
Facebook
Twitter
Behance
MICA Portfolios
Pinterest
Tumblr

You can follow companies and talent you like on these sites. Be an active follower and update frequently by reposting, reblogging, and participating in the scene. Promote anything you have published.

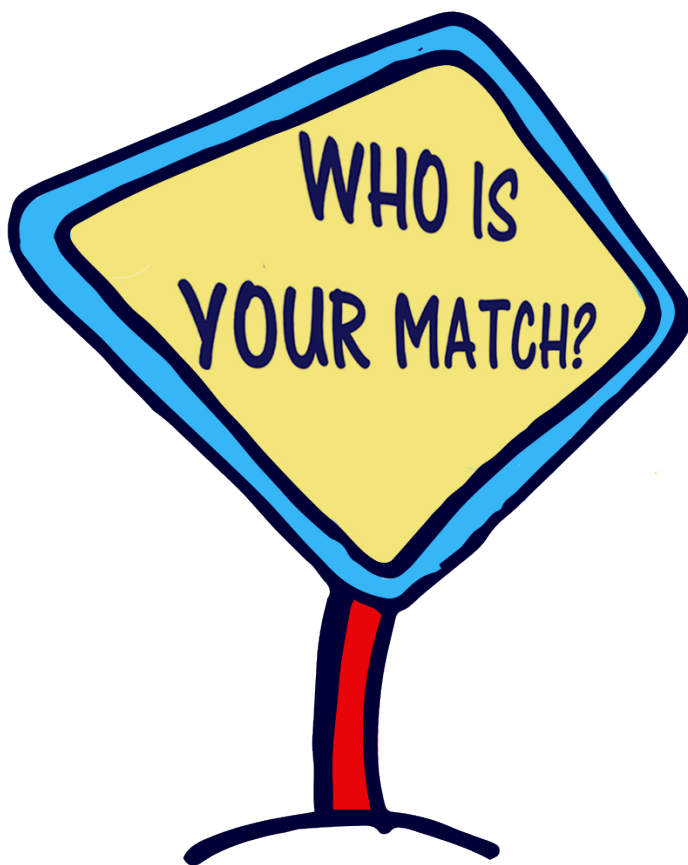
Who to Contact

After you have designed your artist card, it is important to send them out to potential employers or clients. A good rule is to mail an artist card twice a year to a target list of 25-30 people or companies.

You can also call companies and ask when they have drop off dates, which is a time where illustrators can take physical copies of their work and drop it off at the company's office. Being proactive and taking the extra step can go a long way.

Think about what type of illustrator you are and what type of clients you would like to work with. Once you identify what area you want to be in, it can help you in your client search. Consider these categories:

- Book Illustration
- Editorial Illustration
- Advertising/Product Illustration
- Medical Illustration
- Graphic/Informational
- Fashion Illustration
- Storyboard Art
- Concept Art
- Portraiture
- Historical Illustration
- Political Cartooning



Where and How to Network

Meeting people face to face is a great way to gain some networking experience and open even more doors. Here are some ways to get involved:

Conferences

Volunteering or attending conferences are good ways to meet people you admire and would like to connect with. You can bring physical copies of your portfolio for people to see and have your artist card for them to take.

Society of Children's Writers and Illustrators Conference

www.scbwi.org

ICON Illustration Conference

theillustrationconference.org

IlluXcon

www.illuxcon.com

Circles Conference

circlesconference.com

AIGA Conference

www.aiga.org/national-events

Pictoplasma

www.pictoplasma.com

Nuts and Bolts

www.nutsandboltsconf.com

Small Press Expo (SPX)

www.spxpo.com

Competitions

Putting your work in competitions can get you recognition and you could be invited to their gallery show openings if selected. **MICAnetwork** is a great place to browse through various Calls for Entry.

Society of Illustrators Student Competition

www.societyillustrators.org

Communication Arts Illustration Competition

www.commarts.com/competitions/illustration

American Illustration- American Photography

www.ai-ap.com

The Folio Society/House of Illustration's Book Illustration Competition

competitions.houseofillustration.org.uk

3x3 Magazine

3x3mag.com

Illustration west

illustrationwest.org

Creative Quarterly

cqjournal.com/callforentries

Annual Open Houses or Exhibitions

Even if you don't submit work for a competition or for juried work, you can still go to annual openings and gallery shows to get to know more people in the illustration world. To get more exposure google and research events and shows near you that are particularly interesting. To learn more about networking at openings check the *How to Market Yourself* pdf on Career Development's Career Resources page.

Do You Want an Agent?

When and if you think it is time to team up with an agency, here are some pros and cons to consider:

PROS

Spend Less Time (and maybe Money) Promoting

Constantly sending out cold emails, follow up emails, or postcards can be consuming and expensive. For a small commision, agencies promote artists to their contacts so the artist can focus on their illustration work. If you have your own idea for self promotion, some agencies might consider alleviating some of the cost.

Less Concern about Legal Contracts

Agents know how to navigate and read legal contracts and will have them ready for you when appropriate. They can protect you as an artist and your rights so you can get credit when it is due.

Billing,Pricing, and Collection

No more managing contracts and chasing down your clients for payment. Agencies will handle the billing and pricing for you. Although agents take care of price negotians directly with the client, you should still negotiate your fee with your agent whenever possible.

Access to New Markets

Certain markets rarely venture to hire freelance illustrators and many agencies can allow you access to different types of work.

CONS

Fees

Agents can charge you from 15-30% commission on individual jobs.

Constant Communication

Agents require constant updates when you're working on a project. To some, it may feel as though you constantly have someone looking over your shoulder while working.

Artistic Disagreements

Sometimes agents represent what they consider to be the most commercial pieces in your portfolio rather than what you think is your best work. That may disagree with your own personal artistic vision.

Job Rate

If your agents are not securing a lot of work for you, the wait for commission can be a much more harmful drain on your income.



MYTHS

You have to pay upfront fees to get an agent.

You should never have to pay any fees to have an agent. If they request this, that is a red flag and you should tread carefully.

The best agents will come to seek me out.

Even though some agents do come to illustrators and offer their services, not all agents are the same. That is why it is important to follow up, research, and interview people to make sure once you sign a contract, you are confident about your decision. You can always talk to them just to network and get experience meeting people, but most of the time you have to research and find the right agent for you.

My first agent will be the one I stay with for the longest.

Even though you should always research before signing with an agency, sometimes you won't know if the relationship will work until you start. If you find that there are too many disagreements and the agency is not looking out for your best interests, it's okay to try looking for another one.

An agency will do all of the work for me.

An agency is a partnership. There will be a lot of negotiating and communicating with each other to ensure you get the jobs and deals that work best for you. Continue to network by going to events and promote yourself through artist cards, e-cards, your website, and social networking.

FACTS

Investigation and research is key.

Thoroughly research different agencies to weigh your options. Be sure you are okay doing the kind of work they are involved with (publishing, advertising, etc.) If you are considering being represented, ask the agency as many questions as you can before signing on.

Come prepared to read over contracts and negotiate commission.

When agreeing to contracts, be sure to look over them carefully and have a clear understanding of the terms you are agreeing to. Note the length of time you are committing to as well as how to break/end the contract if need be. Be ready to give up 15%-30% per job, but recognize agents can bring in higher paying jobs.

Ask the agency how it works with their artists.

Ask the agents about their techniques for getting artists work. Do they rely on printed publicity? Are they proactive in getting you jobs? Ask how much they charge for advertising. Sometimes agents charge their artists (on top of commission) a percentage of the costs of advertising. Try to talk to the other illustrators that the agency represents to get their opinion about the company.

When you have an agent, you must keep open clear lines of communication.

Most agents require frequent updates on the progress of your work so they can continue to update the client. Having a steady flow of communication ensures that the agent knows what you want, so that they can get you jobs that best suit you. Agents know that commercial art is what sells, but it may not be what you want to do.



Books to Research Agencies

Artist and Graphic Designer's Market
Children's Writer's & Illustrator's Market

Online Sources about Freelance Illustration

www.folioplanet.com
www.illustrationage.com/15steps/
15 steps to Freelance Illustration
www.commart.com/columns/markets-illustration
45 Markets of Illustration
www.delicious.com/micacareerdevelopment

Printing Artist Cards

www.moo.com
www.4by6.com
www.VistaPrint.com
www.Uprinting.com
www.OvernightPrints.com
www.48hourprint.com
www.GotPrint.com
www.modernpostcard.com

Website Platforms

www.virb.com
www.cargocollective.com
www.prosite.com
www.indexibit.org
www.wordpress.com
www.carbonmade.com
www.squarespace.com

