

COMPONENT TWO

IS WORKING FOR THE 'EXPOSURE' A SATISFACTORY SITUATION FOR AN UP-AND-COMING CREATIVE ARTIST?

WRITTEN SUPPORTING MATERIAL

In my opinion, working for exposure is, for the most part, exploitation of creatives, but there are certain situations where it would be satisfactory. Lo Harris (2023) has a framework of questions to ask yourself before taking an unpaid opportunity as it is best to do so "sparingly and with specific intentions". When the work is on your terms, an unpaid role can be a key step towards getting paid work in your chosen field. You must think about the benefits it will bring you other than exposure - will this opportunity give you the chance to develop a key skill? Diversify your portfolio? Give you the chance to put something on your CV that will set you apart from other candidates? Gaining experience is extremely helpful in the creative industry and oftentimes you will need a certain level experience to get to a stage of adequately paid employment. Working for exposure can also help you to get contacts, make yourself known to other professionals and prompt collaborations. If this is something that you're looking for, it's perfectly acceptable to go after it. Seeking work for exposure because it will be beneficial to you is vastly different to being offered payment in the form of exposure.

I think it would be important in such a case not to disclose your wage, or lack thereof; working for exposure obviously isn't a means of income and while a few circumstances may push your career forward, taking on unpaid work and thus giving others the impression that your work has no monetary value may hinder you professionally. According to Morin (2017), there are two other situations in which working for exposure will be beneficial to you, the first of which being when the cause is something you believe in; sometimes work will be about giving something rather than gaining something, in which scenario you may not be concerned about profit or how it will benefit you. In small doses, this is fine, but make sure to set a limit for yourself and communicate this with employers.

The second is if the exposure you're promised is legitimate. Matt at Film Lifestyle (2021) states "If all they can afford is [to have you work for] "free," then demand will remain low - and so will sales" meaning that the employer's exposure may not aid you at all. It is important to ask the right questions and find out how many people your work will be exposed to, and in what way. Ask yourself how many of those people fit your target audience. "Exposure" is a word with a broad definition, and the benefits may not be as significant as you expect, so it's vital that you establish every detail in writing before agreeing to anything. Find out as much as possible about how you will be rewarded and exactly what they expect of you in terms of labour and deadlines.

WORKING FOR EXPOSURE IS A WASTE OF TIME. THEY CAN SAY 'I'LL STICK YOUR LOGO UP HERE', BUT IT COULD BE IN A LITTLE CORNER WHERE NOBODY CAN SEE IT. YOU'RE NOT GUARANTEED ANY REWARD FROM IT. PEOPLE WANT THINGS FOR FREE, SO JUST BE CAREFUL... YOU COULD END UP DOING MORE THAN YOU PROMISED FOR NOTHING. THEY'LL TAKE ADVANTAGE.

(Greychon, 2023)

If the employer *can* offer you satisfactory exposure, then begs the question of why they can't pay you. If your employer has a large enough brand or is widely known, enough to offer you exposure that could actually be advantageous to you, then why can they not afford to pay you for your work? It is advisable to ask this question to your employer – know the value of your work and what you are providing for them even if your employer does not. The harsh truth is that creatives are asked to work for free because careers in the creative industry are viewed as hobbies in comparison to more “practical” jobs, meaning that our talents and skills are invalidated and undervalued on an unbelievably large scale.

Employers that offer to ‘pay’ in exposure are typically fully aware they are taking advantage of your business when, in reality, creative skills are just as serviceable as those of people in aforementioned “practical” careers. A survey conducted by the Association for Independent Professionals and the Freelancer Club showed freelancers working in the creative industries lose as much as £5,394 every year through working for no pay. (Young-Powell, 2018) Even those of us with less experience do not deserve to be undermined; this is perfectly put into perspective by King (2021), who says “Just because my business is new, does not mean my skills are”. You are providing the employer with a service they seemingly cannot provide for themselves, so there is no reason why you should not be rewarded for doing so simply because your craft is not taken seriously.

Think about how it will affect others in your field. By accepting unpaid labour, you are endorsing the behaviour that has been normalised in the creative industry for years; you may in a comfortable enough position and be willing to work for ‘exposure’, but this may paint you as an advocate for unpaid work- your employer may believe it's always going to be acceptable to hire creatives without paying them adequately.

Though many will say we should do our job because of our passion for it, ‘passion’ does not pay bills. I would like to pursue a career in a community where my passion is rewarded and respected as much as any other hardworking individual. I do not think this is an outrageous demand. In conclusion, working unpaid can have its perks and aid you in pursuing paid opportunities, but more often than not, asking to be paid in exposure is a disrespect to your own talents and the creative industries as a whole.

[component two powerpoint: ER EH AB EG](#)

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