

Cons Of Working For Exposure

For this presentation we were asked to explore the Pros and Cons of working for exposure and I have chosen to focus on the Cons. To try and answer the question 'Is working for exposure satisfactory for an up-and-coming creative artist?'

According to Matt Jacobs (2022) If someone wants to work with you for 'exposure' they do not intend to reimburse for the work because their goal is to promote themselves this will lead to your work being linked to someone else or a company and people rarely look into who created the artwork used, for example who created the Warner Brother logo? Matt Jacobs (2022) also states that in the case that 'free' is all they can afford they you won't gain from it the interest and demand for your work will remain low, as will the sales. Niliik Khimani (2022) states the exposure may be 'valuable but not continually' which makes sense because after you have made use of all possible chances to introduce people to your work you will need to start paying for materials and your time this would be a rinseable cut off from accepting exposure work.

A majority of creatives would upfront payment rather than complete possibly hours of work with no guarantee of recognition or payment (Matt Jacobs 2022), this leads to any dissection of commission work to begin with the dissection of payment and the artist to request a deposit or half payment first before any work is even scheduled to begin. Matt Jacobs (2022) states that it is common for this type of 'exposure work' to be offered during networking events or conferences to find people who are willing to work without payment guaranteed, so Matt Jacobs essentially states that during some networking events and conventions employers purposefully look for inexperienced people, this is the same as when an artist who has just starting out is given offers for 'exposure work' they are being taken advantage of by someone with more experience and being groomed to accept that 'exposure work' is all the art they produce is worth this may lead to the artist my feeling uncomfortable asking for payment in the future.

Another point that Matt Jacobs makes is that art should be viewed as an investment rather than something that should be given free "because it represents time and effort into crating something...". If you enjoy someone's art enough to own it, use it to advertise or to be part of a production then you'd want them to continue to make said art, similarly to if you enjoy a musician's music and want them to continue to make said music you by their album.

I also agree with the point that Lee Elliot Major makes, in a 2018 article from the Guardian, about the very idea of creatives providing free work should be challenged he equates the idea of working for exposure to unpaid internships, which themselves are slowly being phased out, he believes that working long hours for experience is contributing to "a culture of exploitation". In the same article a 26-year-old woman named Helen Zec, talks about how she had to give up on her dream of becoming a floral designer after she had taken exposure work at the start of her career because "people don't expect to pay". She then goes on to discuss the impact of people not expecting to pay by stating that she had to move out of her apartment for a smaller one presumably due to the fact she couldn't afford to pay, she then proceeds to open up about the fact that she had to borrow money from her family and friends, he couldn't spend her free time how she wanted. And all she describes her life at the time as horrible.

Alice Freeman, a costume tutor at the University of Wales Trinity St David, advised that at the start of a career it is a good idea to take on free or exposure work because in the theatre industry people

are likely to recommend you once they have worked with you before however she did mention that it's not advised for you to work with the same person for "free" more than once.

So overall I feel as if working for "exposure" is overall fine at the beginning of your chosen career, but you must be aware of your boundaries and the specific industry you're going to work in, as well as consider the pros and cons of each opportunity and if it will truly benefit you in the future or just become a burden on your current and future progress. As Alexander Lee-Rekers explains in his article for the website Stage Milk, which is mainly aimed at actors but is also true for backstage work, there are five main things to consider when being asked to work for exposure, I will only include four of the five he talks about as I believe they fit the industry of backstage more. First can you afford it? This is the most important thing to consider will doing the exposure work jeopardise paying opportunities. Who's asking? If the person offering you this job is a new to director, then it's a fair assumption to make that they are investing the same amount if not more, however if it is a seasoned director who is financially secure then the only one who is taking any kind of risk is you. The work itself if you simply believe in the production and want to be a part of it then as long as you consider the above points then there is no reason not to take part in a production that speaks to you, he says that this form of unpaid work is often the most rewarding. Another point Alexander Lee-Rekers makes that is an important aspect to remember is that you should never be afraid of talking about the aspects of an unpaid job "and bring up any concerns you may have about compensation or exploitation."

References

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