

## Contractor interview: getting off to a good start

This contractor started off straight into contracting and has never looked back.

### Right from Uni

Samuel Muwonge studied electronics at university, and planned to find a job in the field when he got out. But at the same time, he did a Cisco networking certification. So when he finished his degree and his certification, he compared the opportunities for permanent jobs and for contracting. Contracting offered a great deal more.

"I didn't know anything about contracting when I was studying, but I got lucky with an opportunity just out of school. I soon found that I was doing more interesting work, and a wider variety of work than I would have done in an entry-level permanent job," the 26-year old Muwonge says.

### Working With Agencies

Since then, Muwonge has had several contracts, all through agencies. First he did a stint at a company called Network Solutions. Currently he's working on the help desk at Alliance & Leicester.

"The great thing in contracting is the ability to move up the ladder rapidly. You've got to keep your skill set up-to-date. It's all about staying on your toes. You don't know where tomorrow is going to take you, so you have to stay in demand."

Muwonge is currently doing a higher level Cisco certification even as he works on the help desk. He's also looking for other ways to train and to break into new areas of IT. But Muwonge also appreciates the flexible lifestyle that contracting offers. "I get much greater control of my life by working for myself," he insists.

### ContractorCalculator Helped At The Start

Working with agencies, Muwonge soon found that he had to be careful. "Agencies need you, but they aren't there to help you. They're out to make money for their companies, and they follow their own interests.

As Muwonge found that the partners one takes on in contracting--like agencies, accountants, umbrellas, etc.--all needed careful attention, he turned to our ContractorCalculator website to find out more about how to deal with them. "ContractorCalculator helped me to structure my affairs, to make them better organised and more professional. For example, I learned from reading ContractorCalculator on what to expect from my accountant, what services I should expect in exchange for the fees I pay. Same thing for all aspects of contracting: ContractorCalculator showed me what to expect and what to look for. It's helped me to become more professional."

"I started with an [umbrella company](#)," Muwonge says. "But soon I found I didn't like it any longer. It was a dependency relationship--I was paying them to take care of my own affairs. Being a contractor teaches you very quickly to stay independent and to run your own business yourself. So I switched to running my own [limited company](#). It does take time--I find that I spend hours on the weekend taking care of all the administration, But it's worth it as I save money and I know exactly what's going on."

Muwonge is eager to grow as a contractor, and he is actively studying the market for the best opportunities. "I'm also learning more about [how to sell myself and negotiate](#)," he says. "Being independent, running my own business, I feel like all the work I invest in my business will really pay off."


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