

## Contractor doctor: am I good enough for contracting?

Dear Contractor Doctor,

I desperately want to give up my permanent position and move into contracting but taking the leap and actually handing in my 3 month notice is a tough decision to make. I am looking for somewhere where I can get an impartial opinion as to whether or not I have a chance in contracting. Can you help?

Thanks

[Name supplied]

Contractor Doctor says:

Pretty much anyone can go contracting. Contractors aren't super heroes or anything. Not being 'good enough' is one of the [myths about the disadvantages contracting](#) that is sometimes banded around by managers to stop themselves losing staff.

There are a number of types of contractor:

1. **High end:** Constantly reads and practices all the latest stuff and gets contracts based on clients needing someone with the new skills to kick start a project.
2. **Niche skill:** Learns a niche skills and capitalises on the supply and demand difference.
3. **Standard:** Just someone who knows their stuff and is required by someone for a short term contract where they cannot justify hiring a permie.
4. **Low end:** Someone who doesn't keep up with skills but is prepared to do the low end jobs that permies aren't prepared to do.

Granted, 4 is the worst one with the worst money, and 1 is the best one.

Personally, I've always gone for the high end or niche skill one. It gets you more money and is more interesting. The constant reading and learning takes up quite a bit of time outside of working hours, but once you to the top you then get more opportunity for learning stuff on the job. The phrase 'short term pain, long term gain' springs to mind.

One useful phrase I heard a while ago is '...to go contracting you only need to be just that little bit better than everyone else.' This is very true.

Your 3 month notice is a bit of a nightmare. No one will even consider you whilst you have that hanging over you. 4 weeks is the maximum and you need to have already handed in your notice.

Bear in mind the windows of opportunity for contracting are highest around Jan-Oct and pretty much dead around Nov-Dec. Suffice to say, you need to act quickly.

Good luck with it all.

Contractor Doctor

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