

## IT contractor loves travelling, which the contracting lifestyle provides him

IT contractor Tim Jones is a classic example of a contractor who revels in the flexibility of the contracting lifestyle. He gets to enjoy long spells abroad, but by keeping his skills up to date, emailing agents and checking job boards, he finds work quickly on his return.

Most contractors choose to go contracting for one of three reasons: first, to get away from office politics and corporate management; second, for the chance to earn more; and third, because contracting offers flexibility that permanent employment never can.

"I've not had a permanent job since the eighties, when I left my post at an insurance company," says the veteran website developer. "During the recession at that time, I hitch-hiked to France and worked in a ski hotel for board lodging and minimum wage."

Jones tried a huge number of casual jobs during the nineties, and spent much of the decade travelling, as the recession had not hit the rest of Europe quite so hard and there was plenty of work to be had for a hard working all-rounder.

### Developing a skill set and portfolio

"I was a cash in hand white van man, beer festival coach tour guide, ski guide and, for a while, even travelled around Europe fixing hotel mini-bars," says Jones. "I realise this is not the most conventional way to start a career in IT contracting!"

Then, in 2000, Jones bought a second-hand computer and started setting up websites for friends as a hobby. "I gradually realised I not only had a valuable skill set, but also a decent portfolio of successful projects," he says. "I got a twelve month contract as a webmaster for the police in 2004 and I've been contracting ever since."

Jones now specialises in creating websites, mainly for blue chips and their marketing agencies, when speed is of the essence: "Since I am able to relocate anywhere for immediate starts following telephone interviews, I tend to specialise in projects approaching their deadlines that need my experience."

### Finding contracts

According to Jones, work tends to come from one of the many recruitment agencies with whom he is registered or via job boards such as Jobserve.com.

"I could get a call at any time from any of the dozens of agencies that have my CV and I always try to get telephone decisions," explains Jones. "Companies who require face-to-face interviews can be hundreds of miles away, attending interviews can therefore be expensive and the clients are slower to make decisions."

Jones tends to work on shorter contracts and always finds himself based in client's offices, where he can be close to the project team: "Whilst most of what I do can be done remotely, because projects evolve so quickly, I generally have to be based on-site so I can liaise directly with the media agency or client."

### Umbrella contracting helps with travelling

Jones' early web development work was as a freelancer, and he was able to work for a while as a sole trader. But then as his contracting career progressed, this was no longer a viable option.

"I didn't know about umbrella companies when I first started contracting," he explains. "I was delighted with the whole concept and have stuck with it. Now I agree the deal over the phone and my umbrella handles the contracts. Then, when invoices need to go out and payments require chasing, my business manager handles it all. All I do is get my [timesheets](#) signed and complete my expenses forms."

In order to keep on top of income tax and National Insurance Contributions, Jones explains that he has stuck with the umbrella option – he is currently with [Tarpon](#) – because it suits his particular needs. "I travel frequently between contracts, so I'll typically work for a couple of months and then head off abroad for a while.

"If I was running a [contractor limited company](#), I would be tied down with paperwork and every quarter I'd be completing [VAT](#) returns or updating accounts, all of which would seriously cramp my style. With an umbrella, they're there when I am working and can look after my interests when I'm travelling."

### Advice to contractors

Based on his experiences, Jones has some clear advice for new contractors: "Anyone considering a career as a contractor should just do it and not worry about uncertainty," he says.

"My lifestyle has improved enormously since I started contracting. I keep my skills up to speed by training on the job and reading books when travelling. Through agency contacts and job boards, I can always [find a contract](#) when I return to

“  
Anyone considering a career as a contractor should just do it and not worry about uncertainty  
”

Tim Jones

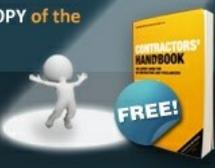
the UK.”

## Contractor Spotlight

Share your contracting experience and ideas with our readers via an exclusive one-on-one interview with ContractorCalculator.

We'll then send you a **FREE COPY** of the *Contractors' Handbook*.

Whether you're a first-time contractor seeking to share your start-up experiences or an old hand willing to pass on your tried and tested contracting tips, we'd love to hear from you.



[Find out more >](#)

Published: Thursday, August 20, 2009

© 2016 All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without permission is prohibited. Please see our copyright notice.



ABCe verified website - last audit confirmed 134,482 monthly unique visitors

© Copyright 2016 Byte-Vision Limited UK. All rights reserved [Copyright notice](#)