

## 10 top tips for going contracting:

The prospect of leaving permanent employment to become a contractor can be daunting if you haven't done your research. So, we've put together 10 top tips for going contracting to help you make that all-important decision.

### 1. Check your skills:

Before you jump into the deep end and start applying for roles, make sure that you have the necessary skills to make the leap. Most of the time you will have these skills, but it is a good idea to do your research into the contracting market beforehand to see if your particular skills are in high demand.

### 2. Understand the payment structure:

When working as a contractor, you can either use an umbrella company or, more commonly, start your own limited company. It is a good idea to set this up before you receive your first contract offer to avoid delays further down the line. It is relatively simple to do but make sure that you do your research beforehand and don't be afraid to ask for advice.

### 3. Get to grips with IR35:

Tax legislation, such as IR35, primarily affects contractors who are working via a limited company, so it is vital that you have a basic understanding of how it works. It is important to do your research and get your contracts reviewed by a professional lawyer.

### 4. Find an accountant:

It is a good idea to seek out a specialist accountant who can ensure that you meet all HMRC and statutory deadlines on time. They will save you money and time, provide advice and give you reassurance that your finances are being looked after.

### 5. Know your rate and how to negotiate:

It is important to research the market that you'll be working in and deciding on a competitive rate that meets your financial needs. Most contractors are paid on either an hourly or daily rate so it is important to tie this in with your financial situation. Don't undersell yourself.

## **6. Update your CV:**

This may seem like an obvious point but it is important to update your CV to suit the needs of the contract market. A high impact CV is going to be essential for getting noticed by agents. Make sure that you change your CV to fit each contract position that you apply for to make maximum impact.

## **7. Hone your interview skills:**

As you would do for a permanent position, it is always important to do your preparation for an interview. However, interviewing for a contract role is more like a sales pitch. You are now the product and it is up to you to sell yourself well to a potential employer. Prepare a short and concise pitch that summarises who you are and what skills you can bring to the company.

## **8. Plan ahead:**

Planning is particularly important if you're contracting within an ever-changing market such as IT. The need for skills in businesses changes on a regular basis and you might find that you will be without work for weeks or months so it's important to plan your income ahead of time.

## **9. Stay in touch:**

Contracting is a people business so it's especially important to market yourself. Try to keep in touch with other contractors, regularly update your LinkedIn and make yourself as visible as possible.

## **10. Do your research:**

As with anything, doing your research is key to success. The move from permanent employment to contracting is a big one so it's important to do your research and having an understanding of the necessary steps to take into becoming a contractor.