



THE
DIFFERENCE
COLLECTIVE

PROSPECTIVE MEMBER FAQ

#WorkDifferently



JOINING US

WHAT ARE THE MAIN ADVANTAGES OF JOINING THE DIFFERENCE COLLECTIVE VERSUS CONSULTING FOR A TRADITIONAL AGENCY?

Working for us is different than working for a traditional agency. You will be an independent consultant working flexibly on your terms, so you choose your hours and place of work. Rather than going it alone, you get the support and camaraderie of a virtual community, teammates and a pipeline of relevant work for your skills and aspirations. It's all the good stuff from the life and culture of a terrific agency without the ties and constraints:

- Premium project work opportunities
- Premium clients
- Purpose-built multi-talented teams
- Collaborative virtual working
- Industry-wide training
- Industry trends and insights
- A collective forum for idea generation and sharing
- Operational, HR, finance, IT, marketing and legal support
- Touch down working space
- Opportunities for in house and agency placements
- Collective social events

HOW MANY YEARS OF EXPERIENCE AND WHAT JOB TITLE DO I NEED BEFORE I CAN JOIN?

The Difference Collective is comprised of a broad pool of talent with expertise in different areas. Some will be PR professionals with agency backgrounds and others will be specialists, such as medical/science writers and social media experts, designers or copywriters. It is, therefore, difficult to specify a specific title or number of years' tenure as a prerequisite for joining the Collective. However, a degree of seniority is important, as is proven talent and a track record of delivering premium-quality work competently and efficiently. This is why a personal recommendation or endorsement from someone involved with the Collective is required prior to joining.

IS THE COLLECTIVE LIMITED TO HEALTHCARE COMMUNICATIONS?

For now, the Difference Collective is focused on delivering premium quality work for clients within the healthcare sector. However, if you have proven experience in communications and a transferable skill-set, for example, as a writer, creative or social/digital media expert, we would love to hear from you. In time, we hope to expand our remit and extrapolate our model to other sectors.



DO I NEED TO HAVE PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE OF FREELANCING?

No. You may have freelanced for years or you may be thinking of taking the leap into freelance work for the first time. Either way, you do need evidence of proven seniority in your career and a track record of delivering premium-quality work competently and efficiently.

If you are new to working independently, you can benefit from the support and encouragement of people who have worked in this way for years. Feel free to talk to us and use us as a sounding board as you weigh up the pros and cons of flexible working. As you make the transition, we also offer more formal coaching to help you define your goals and achieve your potential.

DOES IT COST ME ANYTHING TO JOIN?

No, there is no cost to join The Difference Collective. Occasionally, there may be a cost associated with a particular Collective social event or training session but this will be clearly communicated at the time and is entirely optional. Every effort will be made to ensure client-related expenses are covered in the project agreement form.

HOW DO I GO ABOUT JOINING?

STEP 1:

Complete our online application form

STEP 2:

A member of the Core Collective will get in touch to arrange a convenient time for a video call. They will delve further into your experience and motivation for joining The Difference and request the names of other professionals who can vouch for your skills and experience

STEP 3:

If successful, you will receive confirmation via email, submit a biography and photo (your profile), sign our associate agreement and become an Associate Member. You will be invited to join our communications network where you will receive notifications of new projects in the pipeline. If there is a project for which you would like to be considered, notify the Core Collective, highlighting your suitability and relevant experience. Once the client has accepted the proposed team and signed a project confirmation form, you will be asked for proof that you have public liability and professional indemnity insurance and will be set up as an Active Member of the Difference Collective. James Staples, Head of All Things Technical, will assist you in setting up a Difference email address and installing the relevant software on your home computer

STEP 4:

You will be introduced to the client and your team (if applicable) and away you go!





WORKING FOR US

HOW MANY HOURS MUST I TO COMMIT TO WORKING EACH WEEK AND IS THERE ANY FLEXIBILITY?

There are no quotas in terms of minimum or maximum hours you need to commit; The Difference Collective is all about professional choice and freedom. You inform us of your ideal working hours during the application process. It is only when we come to assign you to a project that you will need to stipulate and commit to specific time parameters according to client needs. It may be that a client is happy to agree a set number of hours per week and does not mind when they are worked as long as deadlines are met. Others may require those hours on certain days/time slots. All we ask is that you adhere to whatever working arrangement is agreed with the client and aim to exceed their expectations.

HOW MUCH CAN I CHARGE AND HOW AM I PAID?

You decide your daily rate and we will do our best to secure this on any project you work on. Revenue for the Difference Collective comes from an additional 25% which is added on top, so your daily rate is not compromised. While there are no guarantees, there is no reason why budgets should be squeezed by clients any more for the Collective than a traditional agency, especially since our model eliminates many of the traditional agency overheads. It is useful for us to know if there is any flexibility at all, for example, if you would be willing to work for a reduced rate for a charitable organization or to gain particular experience. There is also the possibility of working for the Collective between jobs on a reduced rate, assisting us with our own PR and other aspects of business development. You are asked to submit your invoice on the last day of the month or on completion of the project, whichever comes first, and you will be paid within 30 days.

CAN I SUBSTITUTE MYSELF WITH ANOTHER INDEPENDENT CONSULTANT IF NECESSARY?

If you have agreed to lead or work on a project then we would ask that you do everything possible to fulfil your brief, particularly given the emphasis we are placing on our members having a proven track record as dedicated and trusted professionals. In the event of illness or unforeseen circumstances that prevent you from fulfilling your role we would ask that you notify your project lead and Angie at the earliest possible convenience, so a suitable replacement can be found from within the Difference Collective with minimal disruption.

WILL I BE EMPLOYED BY THE DIFFERENCE COLLECTIVE?

No, you won't be an employee. All of the individuals in our community are independent consultants working flexibly on their own terms as either a sole trader or a limited company.



AM I FREE TO WORK FOR OTHER COMPANIES ON A FREELANCE BASIS AT THE SAME TIME?

Yes. We can't guarantee work for our members and so all are welcome to work for other clients outside of the Difference Collective. However, we would ask you to be transparent and keep us in the loop, so we have a clear picture as to your availability and to ensure there are no conflicts of interest.

HOW IS A CLIENT ASSIGNED A COLLECTIVE CONSULTANT OR TEAM AND WHO DECIDES?

A core member of The Difference Collective will capture the brief in a project confirmation form and notify Associate Members via our Collective hub. Associates are invited to submit an expression of interest on working on the business together with their relevant experience/suitability for the role. In some cases, the client may be presented with a couple of suitable candidates to select from and in others one recommendation will be made. Once the client has reached a decision, all relevant parties will be informed and James Staples, Head of All Things Technical will upgrade your access to the Collective, so you become an Active Member and can access all relevant files and systems.

DO I NEED TO RECORD MY TIME?

No. All of our work is charged on a project, vs by the hour, basis and is based on each project members day rate. Budgets are agreed with team members and clients in advance of work proceeding.

IF THERE IS NO PHYSICAL OFFICE OR WORKSPACE, HOW DO TEAMS COLLABORATE AND WORK EFFICIENTLY?

The Difference Collective uses an online project management tool through which we communicate with all of our members and manage projects. As well as providing an efficient and effective means of managing team projects, it also creates a platform for our virtual community where we can collaborate, share ideas and bond as a Collective. If a team or the Collective needs a physical office space, we hire it for the time it is needed but we find that video-conferencing fulfils our requirements on most occasions. As the name suggests, we #WorkDifferently, but it is our belief that by cutting out the overheads and empowering our members to work collectively and on their own terms, productivity is increased resulting in superior outputs.

HOW DO YOU MAINTAIN HIGH STANDARDS OF WORK AND MANAGE QUALITY CONTROL ACROSS THE COLLECTIVE?

The Difference Collective only accepts senior, talented and personally recommended talent to ensure that quality lies at the heart of everything we do. Each project lead will manage client liaison and take responsibility for quality control. However, major documents will also be reviewed by a member of the Core Collective prior to being sent to the client.

AM I EXPECTED TO UPDATE MY SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS, EG, LINKEDIN AND IF SO, WHEN?

We would encourage all of our Associate Members to add The Difference Collective to LinkedIn and other social media profiles once you are accepted. You do not need to wait until you are an Active Member. You will be provided with copy to use at your discretion.



ARE THERE ANY INCENTIVES FOR INTRODUCING CONSULTANTS OR BRINGING WORK INTO THE COLLECTIVE?

The strength of the Difference Collective lies in the wealth of experience and expertise of its Associate Members and so we welcome recommendations of talented individuals who share our values and commitment to flexible working. While there are no incentives for introducing someone to the Collective, ultimately, we all benefit from recommendations of consultants who can further enrich our creativity and broaden our appeal. If you bring business to the Collective the following incentivised payments are offered to say a HUGE thank you!

- £2,500 - £4,999 we will give you £150
- £5,000 - £9,999 we will give you £250
- £10,000 - £20,000 we will give you £500
- If over £20,000, wow, let's discuss!





SUPPORTING YOU

WHAT SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE ON A DAY-TO-DAY BASIS, BOTH IN TERMS OF WORKING PRACTICES AND ACCESS TO CORE MEMBERS?

One of the main strengths of the Difference Collective is having a wealth of experience, specialisms and support at your fingertips, which you can tap into at any time. As well as providing an efficient and effective means of project management and virtual communication, Basecamp will also house various materials relating to working practices and 'how to' guides. A member of the Core Collective is always on hand for advice or support.

WHO CAN HELP ME GET EVERYTHING SET UP, EMAIL, ACCESS TO DRIVES ETC?

We have a robust Core Collective team who can assist you with all aspects of setting you up as a fully-fledged active member of The Difference Collective. This includes James Staples, Head of All Things Technical, who will be on hand to help you with the on-boarding process, so you have access to and feel comfortable using all the software.

DOES THE DIFFERENCE COLLECTIVE HAVE A LIST OF PREFERRED SUPPLIERS?

We have a small list of preferred suppliers which is expected to grow over time. One of the main advantages of the Collective is having a variety of specialisms and expertise all housed under one roof. All members are encouraged to share recommendations of outstanding third party suppliers who share our passion for excellence.

HOW DO DIFFERENCE COLLECTIVE MEMBERS STAY IN TOUCH?

We know how daunting working remotely can be, especially if it is your first time. That is why here, at the Collective, we keep in constant touch, support each other and get together regularly so that no one feels unnecessarily alone! Because, although we all love being independent consultants, we enjoy the benefits and camaraderie of working together as a team and working differently.

Keeping in touch

The Core Collective feels that it is very important to keep in touch with our Associates and Active Members, regularly. Yes, we are a Collective of independent consultants and we know you choose to work on your own, for yourself and without the typical 'company ties', but it can get sometimes feel a little isolated or lonely! We will be in touch regularly via our Collective Hub to see how everything is going and make sure that you are enjoying being a part of the Collective!



Our Collective Hub is where you can go to:

- Identify new projects that match your expertise and interest you, as they come in, so that you can put yourself forward for them
- Talk with others in the Collective, whether it be to say 'hi', to get some advice on a project, share some creative thinking or discuss latest industry developments
- Form groups for individual projects so that you can discuss work separately from the rest of the Collective
- Share exciting news and anything that you feel relevant for all to know

If we need to get in touch with you urgently on anything we will put a note on the hub, but a member of the Core will also be in touch by phone.

Be Collectively Brilliant

We appreciate that everyone has commitments outside of the Collective, but we do organise the occasional face to face event that sees us all come together Collectively. Let's be honest, this will always include some form of social catch up and a definite alcoholic incentive - but we know how precious your time is so we also have guest speakers come along and use the meet ups to provide useful training and insight too. It is not in any way compulsory to come along, but we would love to see you there and we promise it will be fun!

In addition to our occasional 'real-life' meet ups, we also try to get together at least once a month on a Collective video conference. This gives our core team a chance to update the wider Collective on business plans, new business opportunities in the pipeline and ongoing projects, as well as introduce new members, share key learnings and hold training sessions.

DOES THE DIFFERENCE COLLECTIVE OFFER ANY TRAINING?

With a core value of 'Live Curiously' we know how important continual training is and the role it plays in both your ongoing professional development and the success of the Collective.

Some of the programmes and software we use will be new to you so, for those who need it, we run training sessions via video conference on how to use them effectively, and share top tips and short cuts, as well as updating you on the latest apps that might support you to #WorkDifferently. We also keep our Collective members up to speed on changes in legislation that affects independent consultants, such as GDPR.

Other training sessions you can expect includes social media management, media relations in a dynamic environment, regulations updates, creativity in a cynical world, core copy writing for success, and so much more! If you would like to run a training session for us let Helen, Head of Curating Talent and Culture know.

Occasionally we may run sessions requiring an external trainer, such as ABPI and PAGB updates. For these we will book a space somewhere so that we can all come together for it – and of course have a drink or two after!

All sessions will be recorded, so if you can't make them live you can always watch them at a time that suits you.





GET IN TOUCH!

+44 (0) 3302 230 646

info@thedifferencecollective.com

www.thedifferencecollective.com



#WorkDifferently