

The Business of Origami Tung Ken Lam

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The Business of Origami

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Outline

- Context and strategy
 - Context
 - Strategy
- Options
 - Make / buy / sell things
 - Write books
 - Teach / run workshops
 - Consultancy / commissions
 - Creator / influencer
- Decision making
 - Earnings
 - Ansoff matrix
 - Give up the day job?





United Kingdom earnings (GBP)

Median annual earnings for full-time employees who had been in their job for at least a year were **37,430** for the tax year ending on 5 April 2024

www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/

Minimum hourly rates

National Living Wage (aged 21+): **11.44**National Minimum Wage (at least school leaving age): **6.40** for apprentice

https://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates

bulletins/annualsurveyofhoursandearnings/2024





Strategies for competitive advantage

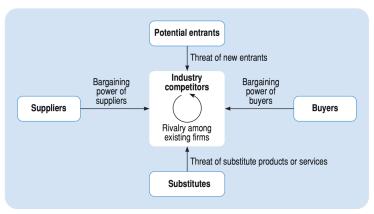
- Rare
- Appropriable
- Imitation-proof
- Ourable

When everyone has the same advantage, it is no longer an advantage.





Porter's five forces



Open University, B713, Block1, Session 2





Porter's five forces

RIVALRY AMONG EXISTING COMPETITORS:

- Number of competitors
- Diversity of competitors
- Industry concentration
- Industry growth
- Quality differences
- Brand lovalty
- Barriers to exit Switching costs
- BARGAINING

POWER OF SUPPLIERS

BARGAINING POWER OF SUPPLIERS:

- Number and size of suppliers
- Uniqueness of each supplier's product
- Focal company's ability to substitute

THREAT OF SUBSTITUTE PRODUCTS:

- Number of substitute products available
- Buyer propensity to substitute
- Relative price performance of substitute
- Perceived level of product differentiation
- Switching costs

THREAT OF NEW **FNTRANTS**



THREAT OF **SUBSTITUTE PRODUCTS**

COMPETITORS

THREAT OF NEW ENTRANTS:

- Barriers to entry
 - Fconomies of scale
- Brand lovalty
- Capital requirements
- Cumulative experience Government policies
- Access to distribution channels
 - Switching costs

BARGAINING **POWER OF** BUYERS

BARGAINING POWER OF BUYERS:

- Number of customers
- Size of each customer order
- Differences between competitors
- Price sensitivity Buver's ability to substitute
- Buyer's information availability
- Switching costs

Evaluation of strategy

When everyone has the same advantage, it is no longer an advantage.

Evaluate using De Bono's PMI method (Plus, Minus, Interesting)





Make / buy / sell things

Product/service: Paper, supplies, jewellery, art works Customers: origami enthusiasts, galleries/art buyers, collectors

P

- Well-known business model
- Established infrastructure (pay, ship, etc)

M

- Competition (commodification)
- Perceived value
- Timeconsuming

- Gaps in market?
- Marketing / Promotion is key





lake / buy / sell things

/rite books
each / run workshops
onsultancy / commissions
reator / influencer

Write books

Product/service: Manuscript, artwork, photographs Customers: Publishers, editors, readers, gift-givers

P

- Established business
- Prestige and validation (traditional publishing)
- Low barrier to entry (self-publish)

M

- Time (1500 hrs)
- Low returns
- Low barriers to entry
- Small market unless mass market
- Bargaining power of publishers

I

- Electronic media and new developments
- Resurgence of physical books?
- Reasons other than money



Make / buy / sell things Write books Teach / run workshops Consultancy / commissions Creator / influencer

Teach / run workshops

Product/service: Teaching and running workshops for the public

and specific audiences

Customers: Event organisers, participants, funders

P

- Service that cannot be copied easily
- 'Experiences are the future'

М

- Low barrier to entry
- Low rates?
- Exhausting?

Ī

- Customised workshops
 - Online / physical
 - Make trend
 - 'lkea effect'





Make / buy / sell things
Vrite books
each / run workshops
Consultancy / commissions
Creator / influencer

Consultancy / commissions

Product/service: bespoke services (and products)

Customers: clients of all kinds

P M

- Unique and interesting work
- Higher rates possible

- Hard to find work: who knows you?
- Secretive

- All kinds of possibilities: packaging, deployables, entertainment
- Negotiating with clients: avoid free consultancy





Creator / influencer

Product/service: entertainment for consumers Customers: Social media firms: 'the algorithm', consumers

P

- Low barrier to entry
- Your choice of content

М

- The algorithm
- 'Digital homesteading'
- Fickle audience

- Sponsorship and donations platforms: Kofi, Patreon, Kickstarter,
- Beyond big tech?

etc?





Context and strategy
Options
Decision making

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frite books
each / run workshops
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Other?





Artists' industry rates

New graduate, day rate with 5k overheads pa: 204
10 years' experience, day rate with 15k overheads pa: 377
For artists with more than 10 years' experience, their rate will depend on other external factors such as their art world track record and/or unique attributes and market forces.

 $\verb|https://www.a-n.co.uk/resource/guidance-on-fees-and-day-rates-for-visual-artists| \\$





Writers' industry rates

National newspapers typically pay...25p and 50p a word... Regional newspapers can pay an abysmal 60 per 1000-word feature or up to 120 a day...

One freelance colleague who writes regularly for women's weekly magazines pointed out that the **rate had gone down** considerably – from **500** for a DPS in 2019 to around **300** in 2023: 'Nothing ever seems to go up and, if you make a fuss, it's suggested that there is always someone else willing to do it for less,'

Georgina Fuller (2024). 'How to write features for the national and regional press' in Alysoun Owen (ed.) Writers' & Artists' Yearbook 2025, A & C Black





My books











2021



2022

2023

2023

foldworks.net/books

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Ansoff matrix

Products

Existing New

New

Market Development

new target segments, e.g. origami books for children, overseas territories

Customers

Existing

Market PenetrationModular origami books:

penetrate market by building up market share, more titles

Diversification

the most risky

new genres in new markets: popular science for US market

New Product Development

new genres, e.g. mathematics books with less origami content





Give up the day job?

'You can't hold down a job in a bank, and be Yoshizawa in the evening.'

Paul Jackson (quoted in The Paper, 54, Spring 1996)

Keep the day job:

- Diversify income sources
- You can say 'No' to work you don't want to do
- Keep some things for yourself (don't monetise everything)
- Turning your hobby into your job means losing your hobby?



