

Comic School

*A consultancy brief for a new Creative industries Educational,
Skills and professional initiative*

MAY 2007



Equal



Introduction

Hi8us Midlands wishes to commission a feasibility study to evaluate the potential of establishing a national Comic School and scheme.

This is part of an on-going programme of work in ITM, an Equal Development Partnership led by Hi8us Projects.

Further details at: www.hi8us.co.uk and www.inclusionthroughmedia.org

Background

Since the first Stripsearch scheme in 2003, a further two comparable schemes have been run successfully— the current activity is supported via Hi8us's Inclusion Through Media programme targeted specifically at hard to reach groups. We anticipated that the last two schemes would recruit and support the remaining talent in the region but, this has not been the case — the schemes have unearthed even more talent, not least from women who are extremely rare in the mainstream comic publishing industry. The recent schemes attract an almost equal number of applications from both men and women.

We are convinced that comic illustration is a route for talented people, from a wide and diverse range of backgrounds to gain employment in the creative industries. There is currently little or no training available for these young people and Hi8us is now looking to extend the reach of Stripsearch to meet latent demand. We believe a national Stripsearch scheme and associated Comic School is a feasible option that merits serious investigation.

There are no other Comic Illustration courses or schemes in the UK. The subject is covered as part of a couple of degree courses: Bournemouth Institute of Art & Design and the University College for the Creative Arts.

In contrast to these, Hi8us's scheme is run entirely in collaboration with professionals from the industry and is heavily focused on enabling participants to increase their employment potential or become employable. Enabling direct access to industry is a key element of our approach. Applicants are not expected to possess any qualifications to gain entry on to the scheme and are not expected to remain committed for the length of a degree course, but most do.

Successful comic artists from industry and the freelance environment have provided the inspiration as well as the skills. Crucial to comic school will be the participation of industry professionals to give credence and credibility to the skill that is comic illustration. As well as a wide range of comic creatives those engaged in the business of comic publication and distribution should also be offering their experience, insights and skills.

There is clearly latent demand for Comic Illustration training and we need to explore the best way to realise this.

Hi8us has identified two possible ways forward:

1. The establishment of a Comic School;
2. The establishment of a franchise scheme, which could take place in any part of the country, co-ordinated by local youth or educational organisations.

Both ways forward could work together, but a feasibility study is required to explore these options. There may be further possibilities.

We are now looking for a consultant (individual, team or company) to investigate these options.

Consultancy Brief

The Consultancy should explore the following questions:

Learning

1. What would it take to establish a Comic School within the formal 14 –19 vocational education system? The focus of the study will be on providing individuals at risk of social exclusion with the skills needed to access the workforce.
2. Stripsearch has already been delivered with adults of 16+. It also lends itself to the 14-19 year old curriculum. What potential is there for it to be delivered in the following sectors:
 - a. FE
 - b. HE
 - c. Courses for different levels of skills
 - d. Courses for those outside the formal educational system
3. If targeted at different ages, will the outcomes to be achieved be different e.g. Primary may use it as a tool for fulfilling other remit such as Expression etc.
4. Who would deliver the curriculum e.g.:
 - a. Professionals?
 - b. Educationalists?
 - c. Mentors?
5. What curriculum areas, structures, diplomas will Comic School offer?

6. What might be the best structural balance between education, training and mentorship?
7. Could qualifications be based on Publications, Comic School Showcase(s) instead of degree shows?
8. What is the best method for Enrolment to ensure that it is wide-reaching but still based on talent?

Market

9. Identification of the labour markets for comic illustration. In addition to the comic industry, this would include an exploration of other labour markets that offer employment for people with comic illustration skills such as Advertising, Illustration, Films etc.
10. From the markets identified, broadly, what are the routes to the different markets for comic illustrators?
11. Explore different output mediums for comics: print and digital.
12. Explore the potential for animation and storyboarding for: film, television and web markets.
13. In addition to the networks already established within Stripsearch, are there a body of comic book artists and illustrators who could be engaged in delivering comic school?
14. Investigate formal links to industry including partnerships.
15. Investigate links to international competitions, markets, events and festivals.

Operational

16. Investigate what scope there is for delivering beyond bricks & mortar:
 - a. Franchising to other Institutions
 - b. e-learning modules
 - c. Virtual provision
17. Identify the best governance model / structure for Comic School.
18. Identify the best operational structure.

Finance

19. Investigate funding streams including the following: LSC, DfES innovation, SkillSet/14-19 Creative Media Diploma, LEA's, vocational colleges; Local HEIs & FEIs; Skills agencies/RDA's; Arts Council; BFI; EU; Commercial publishers; Commercial Animation companies; Sponsors; any others.

20. Indicative costings for different models including income and revenue projections.

21. Advice on VAT status.

Options Appraisal

The final report should identify and explore up to three different models for taking this project forward.

Fee: The fee available for this is £12,000 including expenses.

Deliverables: 15 Bound copies of report. Electronic version as pdf and word. Terms and Conditions are attached.

Management and Reporting

Consultant will report to a Steering Group including Kulwant Dhaliwal, Jonnie Turpie, Mark Dunford and Pat Cross from the Creative College. This group is expected to meet four times to do the following:

1. Agreement of Brief
2. Review of Research Findings
3. Review of Draft Report
4. Agreement of Final report

Kulwant Dhaliwal will be the primary point of contact for Hi8us.

Timescale: Draft report to be submitted to steering committee by July 2007 with final report to be submitted by September 2007.

SUBMITTING YOUR TENDER

If you wish to tender to deliver this feasibility study please submit a proposal of no more than 6 pages, which should incorporate your methodology for delivering it.

Separately, please provide CV's for each person involved in undertaking the study, naming the key contact.

DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING YOUR TENDER

5pm Tuesday 15th May 2007.

RESPONSE TO TENDERS SUBMITTED

If your tender has been shortlisted, you will be notified by Friday 18th May 2007. If you have received no response by this date, please assume that your tender was not shortlisted.

INTERVIEW FORMAT & DATE

Interviews for shortlisted candidates will take place on Thursday 24th May 2007.

As part of the interviewing process, shortlisted candidates will be required to deliver a 5 minute presentation to outline their proposal.

DECISION DATE

The successful candidate(s) will be informed by Tuesday 29th May 2007.

Please send your proposals to:

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