

The Creatives Pledge - Draft 1

Introduction

The Creative's Pledge is a document that aims to set some standards for ourselves already in the industry and those looking to embark on a career within it.

It shouldn't be too late to benefit from some of the changes and standards we hope to set if you're already well established in the industry, and it should absolutely help to remove some of the "rites of passage" that have been normalized in the past for those who will carry the baton into the future.

Our hope is that every creative will sign the pledge, share it with others, make it a part of their curriculum, their first day handbook, and keep it as a handy note of guidance to look to when things get a bit tough.

This document is just a starter. I'm sure that as you're reading this you'll have ideas and make suggestions to improve it. The plan is to release this as our first pledge by July 1 2018. That gives plenty of time for the community to continue to grow and to bat our ideas back and forth. I truly expect the final version to look very different to this first draft. For example, you'll see some numbers around working hours, I'm very interested to hear what is too much and too little here, and if we should be looking at hours, level / type of workload / time since a day off etc.

Where we struggle to reach consensus (bearing in mind it will be impossible to please absolutely everyone) we'll go back to the group on Facebook and conduct polls to get to the solution.

Please make your comments in this document as suggestions so that they're easily tracked and we can work on compiling efficiently.

Future drafts will be released every week or two as suggestions and feedback is received.

The Pledge is created in XX parts. It may not end up in this form - in fact, I fully expect it to change and evolve, but it has helped to think of it in this way to cover some of the issues we face. The content has been drawn from discussions we've already had in the Facebook group, conversations and comments at events, and from past experience. ***A version for clients will follow shortly.***

The parts are:

1. Your mental health and wellbeing
2. Looking out for others
3. Valuing your creativity
4. Client relationships
5. The future of your and our creativity

1. Your mental health and wellbeing

As a creative...

I'll never work more than 60 hours in a week for more than 2 consecutive weeks, so that I can keep myself fresh.

I'll never work more than 3 consecutive weekends without taking at least 1 day off to recover so that I can pursue other things in life that I love and enjoy.

I'll do at least 1 activity a week that's designed purely to stimulate my creativity and keep me excited about being a creative.

I won't sit at my desk for longer than 4 hours in a row, I know I'll be more productive if I get up, walk around, get some fresh air and clear my head.

I'll give my colleagues, friends and / or family a heads-up if I'm starting to feel tired, down, blocked and unmotivated about work and life in general.

I'll summon the courage and do my best to speak up and take a break if I'm feeling tired, down, blocked and unmotivated about work and life in general – knowing that I have a community around me to support me.

I'll be honest and realistic about my workload. Taking on what I can, and speaking up when things are getting too much to handle.

I know that exercise, diet, yoga and meditation are good for my creativity, my body and my mind — and I'll do my best to live a healthy life, especially when work, clients and my workload can be challenging.

If I'm experiencing poor treatment in the industry and / or an unhealthy workplace culture I'll speak up and I'll reach out to the community for help, guidance and advice.

2. Looking out for others

As a creative...

I'll be mindful of those around me and what they might be going through – knowing that their mental health and wellbeing is more important than work and business.

I'll offer an ear, a walk, a coffee, or any way to let someone who's given me a heads up know that I'm here for them if they'd like to talk or just take their mind off work and life for a while.

I'll make sure that if I work inside a business, the business is aware of how it should be looking out for its employees, have a mental health policy and help them to be a better place to work.

I believe in an inclusive and diverse industry and will work with others to make sure that everyone is given opportunities to succeed, regardless of who they are, where they come from, what stage in life they are at, or what they believe.

I'll be mindful of the examples that I set others through my own behaviour. If I'm staying or working late, others may feel like they have to do the same.

3. Valuing your creativity

As a creative...

I will not give my work away for free in order to compete against other creatives.

I will invoice clients up front for work that I'm doing in order to minimize the gap between work being done and fees being paid.

I won't hand over final work until it is paid for or that I'm confident that I will receive full payment within a maximum of 30 days.

I will value my own time, knowing that time to myself or time to be inspired and be with others, is just as valuable as time spent "on the tools".

I will constantly evaluate the value of my work, looking back at past projects and judging how much they were worth to my clients, in order to estimate how much my work should be valued at in future.

4. Client relationships

As a creative...

I'll help to educate clients on how long projects take, what the process involves and therefore how much a project is likely to cost.

I'll always be firm and fair with clients, respecting their point of view, whilst clearly communicating the rationale for my ideas and solutions.

I will not communicate with clients (within reason i.e. if a project relates to deliverables during an event or different time zone) outside of the hours of 8am and 7pm. Most things can usually wait until tomorrow.

I will be clear with clients on what the likely deliverables are for a project (and / or phases of a project) in order to manage their expectations and ensure that invoices can be sent and paid on time.

5. The future of our creativity

I will actively contribute to the community as and when I can to help others, share experiences and expertise, to build a stronger, fairer and more creative industry.

I will use this pledge to educate and empower those around me, whether they be fellow creatives or clients.

I'll never stop learning. The world isn't going to stop moving and changing, and as a creative, neither will I.

I will work on my balance of confidence and ego. I will not let the traps of imposter syndrome hold me back (knowing that there are many others just like me), but I will also not let my ego get in the way of the right solution or giving others a fair voice.