

What it is

AND HOW IT WORKS



SUPPORTIVE OFFBOARDING

Research has shown that people working as freelancers in the TV sector frequently refer to feeling 'alone' and 'unsupported'. This has been particularly acute when it comes to the individual's personal and professional development. For various reasons, there has often been an absence of feedback (in both directions) at the point at which contracts come to an end – sometimes without so much as a 'thank you'.

Supportive Offboarding was developed at Bournemouth University (initially in

collaboration with the company, Fremantle) supported by The British Academy. It was devised as a simple, practical and modest intervention intended to help freelancers feel more supported. It is a one-to-one conversation with a freelancer at the point at which their contract is coming towards its end. The process is optional, confidential, facilitated and conducted by someone at arms-length from the show, and includes the opportunity for feedback, some career reflection and the expression of thanks.

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FOUR ELEMENTS

1 GRATITUDE
Our gratitude as a company to the departing colleague.

2 FEEDBACK FROM US
The option of some feedback (or feedforward) to the colleague.

3 FEEDBACK FOR US
A chance for us to learn from the departing colleague before they go.

4 CAREER CONVERSATION
Connecting, signposting and supporting for the next step.



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POSITIVE & APPRECIATIVE

A SUPPORTIVE OFFBOARDING

conversation takes, as its starting point, the principles of strength-based management (SBM) in preference to the more traditional problem-solving approach to appraisal. It aims to promote positive feedback (in both directions) and gratitude, prioritising affirmation over criticism, and highlighting success – ie. focusing on what people do best. It encourages a mindset focused on building strengths rather than fixing weaknesses and when weaknesses need to be addressed, focusing on finding ways to manage them rather than attempting to eliminate them. Research suggests that this positive approach promotes higher

levels of engagement resulting in more motivated and productive workers.

By the same token, promoting gratitude practices in a corporate environment fosters a culture where workers feel valued, appreciated, and motivated. A culture of expressing gratitude boosts morale, improves job satisfaction, and promotes retention. Gratitude strengthens workplace relationships, builds trust, and cultivates a positive organizational culture characterized by respect and collaboration. Integrating gratitude into the culture contributes to worker well-being both within and beyond the workplace.

PILOT PROJECT

This modest, specific, and practical intervention was designed, developed and tested with Fremantle in 2024-25 and funded by The British Academy. It is not intended to be a silver bullet but to make a contribution to the well-being of freelancers. For further information about this

initiative, you can download the project report ***Supportive Offboarding: Report on the design, development and testing of an intervention to improve the way the TV industry supports its freelancers*** by Dr. Richard Wallis of Bournemouth University – <https://doi.org/10.18746/shkc-1383>

Feedback from team

As production clear-up periods have become squeezed it is easy for freelancers to find themselves leaving without the opportunity for any feedback about their work. This can make it difficult for an individual to navigate their own learning and development, which is so essential to managing a freelance career. Supportive Offboarding is a way of ensuring that some (optional) feedback is offered. The facilitator communicates this as a third-party to allow for some distance and objectivity in the process.

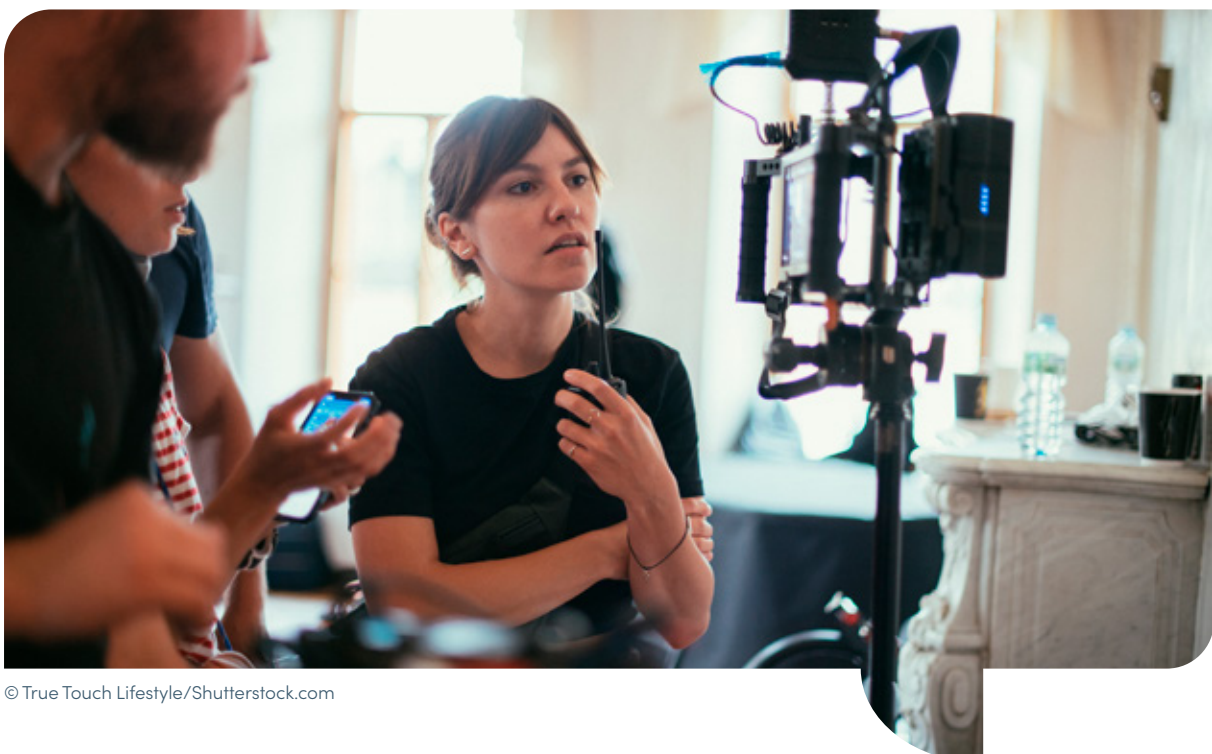
Feedback for company

The Supportive Offboarding process allows the opportunity for departing colleagues to share with the company any thoughts based on their experience with us. As with other aspects of this conversation, it is important that such feedback is treated in strictest confidence (unless the colleague requests otherwise). As with feedback in the other direction, the facilitator being

arms-length is intended to encourage openness and honesty. This may be entirely positive, or it may provide the moment for a colleague to get 'something off their chest'. Unless 'red flag' issues are raised, feedback should simply be noted and communicated via the appropriate channel in a general and anonymous format, framed (as far as possible) as positive suggestions.

Career conversation

Freelancers seldom get the opportunity to talk about their own career aspirations. Supportive Offboarding is not a career counselling session but simply a chance for a short conversation focused on the freelancer rather than the project. The colleague will have been invited to spend some time reflecting on their own contribution to the team and their own career goals before the meeting. This might prompt the facilitator to make a connection, signpost to some training or provide some guidance based on their own knowledge or experience.



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