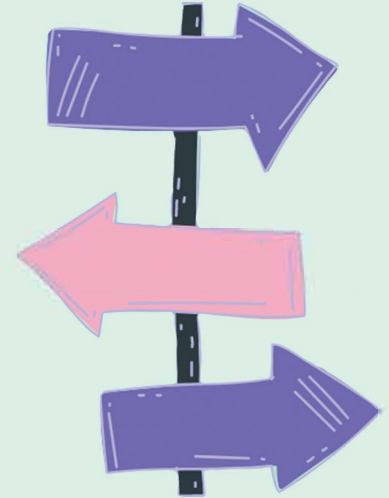


Working out which way to go

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We said in our [Could vs Should: Strategy and Tactics quick read](#) that the process of identifying the right strategy was about moving on from all of the things you COULD do to focus just on the things you SHOULD do. We also said that working up a strategy is a bit like trying on lots of different outfits in a changing room, and that you'll end up with lots of discarded ideas (or clothes!) once you've made that decision. But how do you know what to discard and what to keep hold of? Or in strategy terms, how do you know which is the right way to go?



You need to get into the INS and OUTS of it all!

To work out which are the right strategies for you, you need to get into the ins and outs of what's going on. You need to think creatively and come up with a set of decision making criteria that work for you. Here are some things that you might want to consider:

- Which strategies play to your **strengths**, and which to your **weaknesses**? How do they relate to any **opportunities** or **threats** you see in relation to your freelance career or business? (If you need help working on those, head to our [From SWOT to TOWs exercise](#).)
- How does each strategy reflect or respond to **what you see going on for your customers or audiences**, or in **the world at large**? (Check out our [Read the Trends exercise](#) if you need help thinking about this.)
- Think about know **how much of these you have** (the INputs):
 - **Time:** Be aware things probably take longer than you think!
 - **Audience attention:** Remember the law of diminishing returns, so spend this wisely
 - **Budget:** the analogy we use at the hub is that there's no point planning a 3 bedroom house if you only have budget for a 1 bed flat
 - The relevant skills: Particularly important if the strategy involves doing something new
 - **Goodwill:** Help you can call on
- If the answer is 'not enough', think about **how you could potentially plug the gaps**

- Then think about the **impact** each strategy could have, in terms of the following (the OUTputs):
 - **Reach:** How many people this would reach/impact
 - **Depth:** How much impact would this have, how big would the shift or change you want to see be?
 - **Length:** How long will this strategy have the impact you want?

The trick is to prioritise a few ways forward that'll have biggest impact, but that also most realistically take into account the resources you have. We think of this as balancing the INS (what you'll put in) and the OUTS (what will come out the end/impacts).

You can't do everything, especially if you want to stay creative

The bottom line is that you won't be able to do everything, and neither would it be smart to do so. Most of us in the creative sector work far too hard, so you need to be a smart cookie, really think hard about where to spend your time and money and deploy them where they'll make a real difference to you and your audiences or customers. That way lies sanity, and the chance to get some of that much talked about, but often elusive, work-life balance. Obvious really, but still a process that takes time and brainpower. Time for a cuppa maybe?!