

A comparison of two careers



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Graphic Design Employee or Fabric Design Entrepreneur? A Comparison and Recommendation of Two Careers Table of Contents

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Comparison and Recommendation of Two Careers Introduction You are

looking for assistance to decide whether you should take the leap into entrepreneurship, or look for a corporate position. You appreciate the perks of a permanent corporate job: stable income, health care and retirement benefits, as well as the daily interaction with co-workers and clients.

Although, you find dealing with the hierarchal culture exhausting, and these days the stability of a corporate job is not guaranteed, companies are consistently laying off even long-time employees and finally, the rigid schedule of a corporate job is tedious and not practical for many creative workers. Purpose, Scope and Limitations This report will compare the two careers that you are deciding between; Graphic Design with a corporate employer or Fabric Design Entrepreneur.

I will use the information gained from our interview, and the other areas of comparison (salary, work conditions, flexibility, location, stability) to set forth the criteria by which to analyze each career's potential to fit your specific needs. These criteria will provide the scope of the research and the report. I would like to point out the limitation in regards to the Fabric Design career choice, there was very little information about this specific career path available and on my first round of research I did not find a direct educational pathway to the career of fabric designer.

I utilized some other methods of information gathering and researched some blogs and other social network sites to provide a turn in the right direction. Sources and Methods Besides our original interview, I communicated with several people in the graphic design industry, and corresponded via email with a few entrepreneurial fabric designers. Other sources of information were found online, using sites such as [www. bls. gov/oco](http://www.bls.gov/oco) and www. salary. com, as well as these school information sites: www. mymajors. com and www. schoolsintheusa. om and several blogs, design schools and other graphic and fabric design websites were used to simply get an idea of what is involved in both graphic and fabric design. No specific information was used from these sites, but I have listed them at the end of the reference section. There was no listing in the Occupational Outlook Handbook for fabric designer, so I reviewed the information for “ Artists and Related Workers”, as this seemed more relevant to the career plan you mentioned than the information for Industrial and Commercial Designers, which I would have used had I been researching a corporate position for this particular career.

Report Organization The report begins with the requirements and criteria set forth by the client as well as the areas of comparison for the career choices. Following is a brief description/overview of each career, and then we move into the direct comparisons of each of the areas mentioned previously: salary, work conditions, flexibility, location and the stability vs. risk assessment. Finally, the report will conclude with my recommendation, along with my reasons for it; and will be followed by the reference section which will list my sources. Career Requirements

Your most important criteria is your need for a career that utilizes your creative, administrative and organizational skills and does not require you to sit in an office for eight hours a day. You stated, “ I am willing to take a lot more risk in my next career move, as the corporate experience so far has not been palatable, and it has not proven to be as stable as one would expect – 2 layoffs, and 12 temp jobs later, I am tired of being at the whim of corporate executives, and would be happy to take on considerable risk if it would mean independence from the corporate culture! ” (Squillante, 2)

Keeping that in mind, there are still certain practical needs to be considered, which we narrowed down to the following:

- Your minimum starting salary is \$40, 000 per year (plus benefits if working for a corporation.)
- A flexible schedule is important – the ability to work nights when not interacting with clients or co-workers
- Your preference is to telecommute, with minimal travel and office visits only when necessary
- You are not willing to relocate, or commute farther than the Bay Area in Northern California.
- If working on site, an ergonomic workspace is required

Career overviews

Graphic Design – Corporate position / Contracted worker In the Graphic Design field there is only average job growth expected, while competition is fierce, with animation and web skills being highly sought after. Graphic Designers work with everything from magazines to multimedia and web pages. They determine client needs, research the subject, consider the target and create designs or layouts for their clients. They make samples to share their ideas with their client, once approved, the designer will complete the design to the clients specifications and submit for final approval.

They may need experience in hand-drawn and/or computer-aided graphics and/or training to use specialized software. A graphic designer can be supervisory, running a design department; or, if a designer runs their own firm, they may also be doing administrative, IT, marketing or PR duties as well as actual design work. (Bureau of Labor Statistics, [www. bls. gov/oco](http://www.bls.gov/oco))

Fabric Design – Freelance / Speculative Designer / Entrepreneur An entrepreneurial Fabric Designer will create fabric designs on speculation, for sale on various fabric printing service sites and other selling sites, such as Etsy. om or eBay. com. They might also accept freelance or contract work to supplement their income, or shore up their income. In that case, they will work with several other designers, printmakers, etc. to help create a fabric design for their specific subject, apparel, home decorating, etc. They will create samples for the client, get approval and then work on a final design (there can be several back-and-forth sessions with various samples, approvals, new ideas, etc. once the final design is approved, the wheels are in motion – there may be a few more changes to the design, but it should still look like the original design, then the printing can begin and the

designer can go home. (MyMajors. com, [www. mymajors. com](http://www.mymajors.com)) Fairly new technology has opened up some amazing new avenues for all types of designers. The ability to print your own designs on fabric is an amazing new technology that is creating a whole new type of entrepreneur. Companies like Spoonflower ([www. spoonflower. com](http://www.spoonflower.com)) and Fabric on Demand ([www. fabricondemand. om](http://www.fabricondemand.com)), where you can upload your design into their program, and they will print it onto one of several different choices of fabric. Pricing is fairly expensive, but, customers receive a high-quality printed fabric in a design that is completely unique. There is already an online community around these services, with many entrepreneurial designers starting their own businesses online through sites like Spoonflower, Etsy, Cafe Press, and eBay. Not to mention, new craft-selling sites and fabric-printing businesses are opening up all the time. Direct Comparisons

Salary According to the Occupational Outlook Handbook, on the annual salary for a graphic designer ranges between \$26-74 thousand, depending on the type of position, level of experience, etc. The higher salaries are held by art directors and multimedia artists and animators. Working in a corporation would provide you with at least the commonly held benefits, such as dental and health care. (Occupational Outlook Handbook, [http://www. bls. gov/oco/ocos090. htm.](http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos090.htm)) The salary range for “ Artists and Related Workers” was much wider than the one for “ Graphic Designers”.

As a fabric design/ entrepreneur, you are like to make anywhere from \$13. 6 thousand a year to \$84 thousand a year. As an entrepreneur you are solely responsible for the salary you will make. You will also be responsible for your own dental or health care. (Occupational Outlook Handbook, [http://www. bls. gov](http://www.bls.gov))
<https://assignbuster.com/a-comparison-of-two-careers/>

gov/oco/ocos092. htm.) Working Conditions Working conditions will vary from corporation to corporation, but many companies will provide you with an ergonomic workspace if requested; within reasonable limits, of course. As an entrepreneur, you would need to provide those for yourself, as well as any office supplies or materials.

Many newer companies, especially those in or near big cities, where traffic is an issue, are trying out flexible schedules and telecommuting options for their employees. It may not be an option as you are first starting out, but once you have been with a company, and completed your probationary period, you may be able to negotiate yourself a more flexible schedule, but there are no guarantees. Working as an entrepreneur, you would make your own schedule, so no worries about flexibility there. Educational

Requirements (Degrees & Certification)

Most graphic design positions require at least a bachelor's degree in graphic/multimedia design, which are available at most universities and art schools. Although most fabric design positions require a graphic design degree, few specifically require a textile design degree or certification, which are not as easily available. There are not as many programs available specifically for fabric design, but you can find some type of program in most of the art &/or design schools, such as Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising (aka FIDM), the Art Institute, and the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD).

Many people fall into fabric design from other avenues, such as graphic designers, quilt artists or fashion designers, so a specific degree or

certification is not always required by employers, if the experience is there. Some schools offer associates degrees or certification in textile and surface design. Location, Telecommuting and Travel There are many opportunities in your area for a graphic designer. There are more designers than there are jobs, so competition is fierce. You will likely need to work your way up from the top, so telecommuting may not be an option right away, or at all.

These may be considered perks you will need to earn over time, unless you work for a very progressive company. There are also very many new opportunities for entrepreneur/freelance fabric designers, but they are not all traditional " jobs. " As an entrepreneur, you will need to be extremely competitive, and offer very diverse products/designs. As a freelance, entrepreneurial designer, you may have to go onsite to meet clients, or travel to work onsite for the duration of a job, trade shows, and expos will require travel as well.

As a corporate employee, you may be required to travel, how much would depend greatly on the type of company and your position. Stability vs. Risk Level Working in a corporate environment can feel secure, but no job is completely secure, even in a healthy economy. That being said, a corporate position does offer more job stability and substantially less financial risk than an entrepreneurial career. As an entrepreneur, your stability will depend solely on you; the risk is all on you. That can be a daunting prospect, but there are things you can do to minimize your risk, such as: incorporating as an LLC • diversifying your skills and products, • get people or companies to invest in your business Even so, there is still significant risk to your finances, and no guarantee of success. Recommendation / Conclusion Although your

qualifications, experience and personality could very well help you climb the corporate ladder in the graphic design industry, which would still utilize your creative skills, there is no guarantee of a flexible work schedule or the opportunity to telecommute.

There is not an expectation of huge growth in either industry, but there is huge competition in both. Neither career starts out making a lot of money, you will have to struggle the first couple of years, especially in the entrepreneurial career. I have considered all the factors, weighed the riskiness of an entrepreneurial career against a more stable corporate career, compared salaries, working conditions, education required and also took into account your distinct distaste for the corporate culture and your desire to have more control over your income and your work.

My final recommendation is that you give the Entrepreneurial Fabric Design career a chance. With your plan to combine contract and freelance work with your entrepreneurial venture, to provide a somewhat stable stream of income, I believe that you can find that balance between work and life that is so important to you. It will be difficult, and you may struggle for a while before reaching your minimum desired income, but your practicality, combined with your determination and talent can make the difference if utilized properly. Resources Works Cited

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