

Business **Plan**

by robin viken

1 – Business Summary

1.1 – Business Overview

The business idea is I, Robin Viken, working freelance as a Character Animator, 3D Designer and generalist. By employing me the employers will get an employee with great overall skill that works quickly and efficiently and can deliver the finished product on time by working extra hours if necessary.

The plan is to advertise myself as a Character Animator and 3D Designer and generalist if required, to companies in Norway and England. In the next few years the goal is to climb the grades and achieve a noticeable name amongst the freelancers and to get larger and more difficult jobs on a regular basis.

1.2 – Services Features

I will be offering a service as a freelance Character Animator and 3D designer and generalist to small and large companies and to private persons. I am prepared to work from home or to travel and work on site, based on what is desired.

1.3 – Market Analysis

There are several potential employers in Norway and England. Most positions is competed for by several freelancers looking for work. Getting a permanent position seems to be a much safer career choice.

1.4 – Marketing Strategy

My strategy will be to stand out from the rest of the freelancers in several ways. This will be achieved by creating a professional website along with a professional showreel. These will be designed with a good first impression in mind. Business cards will also be designed and produced to give the employees a more professional impression of me. All of these will follow a recurring visual theme. In addition I will be using various social networks to promote myself and to keep in touch with potential employees. I will be living in London to further strengthen my access to information and to gradually improve my showreel.

1.5 – Key Objectives

The key objective is to get jobs on a regular basis and gradually getting a better showreel and CV to show new potential employers, eventually leading to higher quality and more respected jobs.

1.6 - Financial Overview

Initially a loan is required to get the necessary hardware and software, but general costs after that should mainly be living expenses. I expect limited travel expenses and rather stable living expenses.



Figure 1: Example of the CD design for Character animator

2 – Detailed Plan

2.1 Market Analysis

As a freelance character animator my services will be offered to all companies, small or large, that have use for a Character animator or 3D designer. Getting the first jobs as a freelancer is very difficult as it is a highly competitive market. I cannot be picky about what I chose. A good showreel is generally the key for landing a job.

Companies will generally employ an animator for a particular project. Often you will receive just a few shots, from that particular production. In many companies you often start of as a runner for a few months before getting to start in a small position as an animator. The contract length for a freelancer often varies a lot depending on the size of the project. A commercial might land me a contract for just a few weeks, while a feature film could get me a contract that might be for over a year, though this is rather rare.

There is relevant work to be found with companies doing Commercials, TV series, Feature Films, Short films and Games. In Norway Funcom and Storyline Studios are big companies, and there is also smaller ones like Bug and Gimpville. In London there are Framestore and Double Negative and smaller companies like Seed and Be animation. All of these are potential employers.

2.2 – Competition

The animation industry is a very competitive line of work. Most of my main competition will come from other graduate students trying to get into the business. Other newly started artists will also be trying for many of the same positions as I. Establishing and maintaining contact with possible clients will be important to give me an edge in comparison to my competition. Starting with a lower pay grade is also a possibility to get into the business. Living in London will give an edge, but most important my market strategy and skill will allow me to get jobs ahead of my competition.

2.3 – The Service

My skills as an animator will be offered to all relevant companies. In addition to this I can also do design, modeling, texturing, rigging and lighting if needed. I will be starting off with a low salary to more easily get jobs. As my skills and experience develops my salary will also go up. The salaries will vary depending on

which country I work in, but in Norway a beginner salary in a permanent position is about 35000 pounds a year. By living in the UK I will allow myself to accept much lower paid jobs than what I could do in Norway, because I would have much lower living expenses.

I expect to be working long hours under a tight time schedule to complete the various projects on time. I'm a hard worker, a fast learner, and work quick under pressure. I am also open to develop new skills and learn new software for tasks where this is required.

2.4 – Location

In the beginning I will be located in London. London has a great variety of companies of all sized and are also the base for some of the leading companies in the world like for example Framstore and Double Negative. The plan is then to work up a good CV while living in London before moving back to Norway and working for one of the larger companies there, for example Bug or Funcom. It is not financially responsible to live in Norway and take jobs in other countries because of the high living costs there. Still I want to go back sometime in the future.

2.5 – Marketing Strategy

Due to the competitive nature of the animation industry an excellent showreel is an absolute must to get any good jobs. The main focus will therefore be on creating a great showreel. By locating myself in London I will be neighbor with many of the largest companies in the world, this is something I can benefit greatly from by being active and visiting and contacting them for the possibility of work.

I plan to make a professional website with a blog that is updated regularly with my recent work. The page will aim to give a good first impression by providing high quality work on a professional layout. It is important that it is clean, yet still interesting to grab the attention of the visitor. The website will also be an easy way to contact me via mail, Skype or telephone.

I will also design my own business cards (Figure 2) and CD covers (Figure 1) that can be used on the showreel. These will be made through <http://uk.moo.com/> and <http://www.cddesign.com/>. By having a nice appealing look with recurring theme (from website, through cd covers and business card) I'll hopefully stand out from the pile of others applicants. I will also separate my designs for my character animator from the 3D designer and generalist marketing materials.

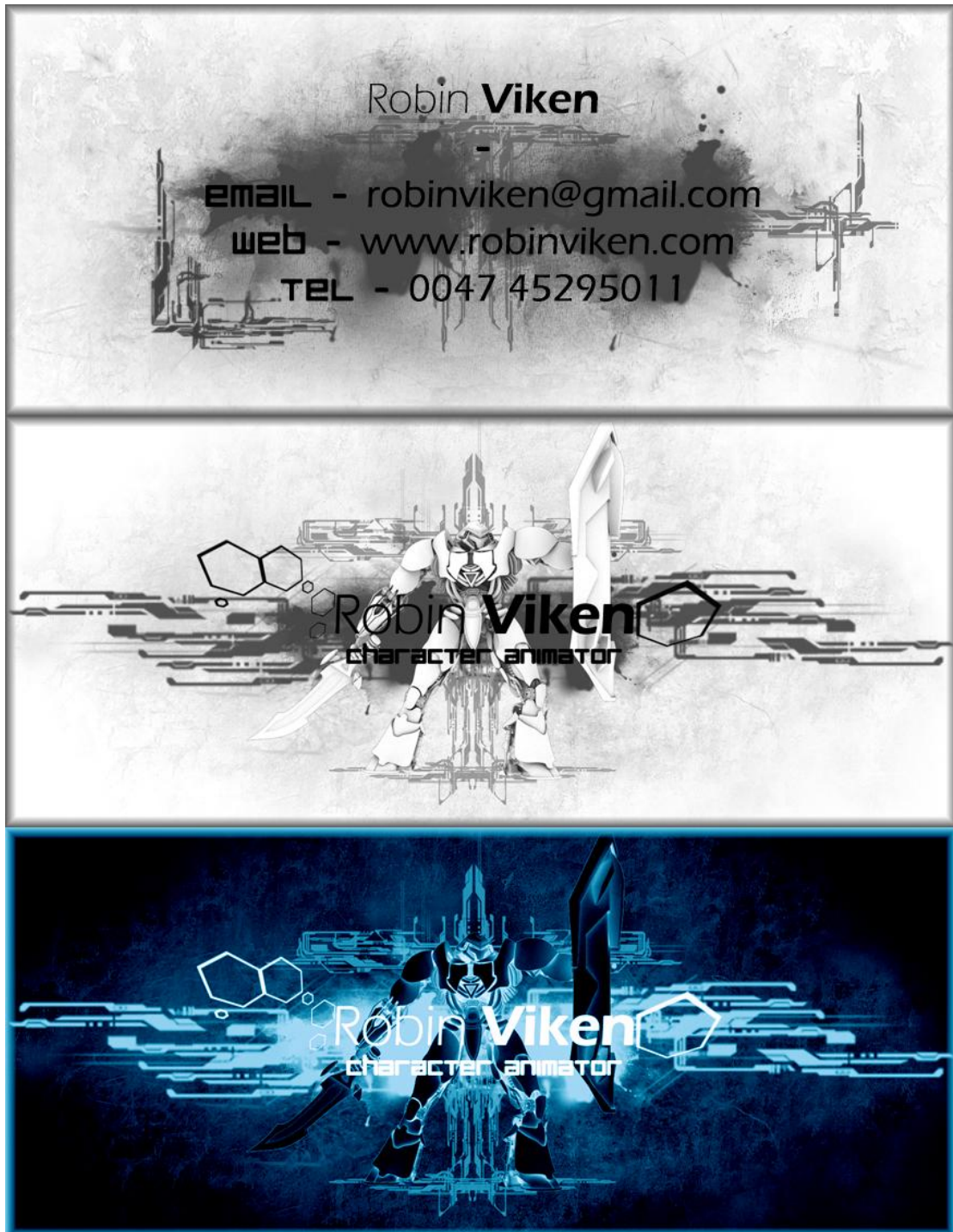


Figure 2: Business Card designs for Character Animator

In addition to these things I will try to be active on the internet. I have joined Twitter and Facebook and connected to several companies. I have also created a profile on LinkedIn which I can use to promote myself and connect with people in the industry through friends and acquaintances. I will stay active and update myself on all activities on all these networks. Lastly I will always act professional and use proper language when contacting possible employers no matter if it is on phone, mail or through a social network.

2.6 – SWOT Analysis

Strengths:

- I am a hard and dedicated worker and can work several hours over what is normal, also during weekends. I am also open to move location and country to get work.
- I have experience working with larger projects stretching over 6 months both in group and alone.
- I have a good understanding over the necessary software and I am open to learn new software if required.
- I am able to keep tight deadlines.

Weaknesses:

- I have no previous experience working with 3D or animation.
- I do not have a master's degree.
- I have limited experience animating 4 legged creatures.

Opportunities:

- I have a strong and varied showreel.
- I can do several different jobs within 3D. I am not limited to Animation.
- I have 2 good contacts in Norway that can assist me in getting a job.

Threats:

- The Animation industry is highly competitive.
- I might be disappointed if I do not get somewhere in my career over the next years.
- Getting freelance jobs can be very hard, especially for a freshly started freelancer.
- It is hard to predict the future of the industry.

2.7 – Business Structure

The first thing I will do is to register with HM Revenue and Customs and declare myself self-employed. Since I am alone I will work as a sole trader. I will accept longer contracts if necessary, but I will not permanently join a company. I will operate under my own name, not a business name, even when working for a company. This will help me easier build a recognizable name. I'll be looking for jobs everywhere, on company websites, through friends and acquaintances and through social networks and advertisements. Potential employers will be given my marketing materials when I apply for the positions.

Every time I am finished with a job I will be checking with the employer for possibilities for more employment later. I will also keep in touch with all clients to increase my chances of getting invited back. As my client base builds up I will hopefully get enough offers so that I will be able to choose the ones that are most tempting. I will continuously update my showreel and CV online as I finish new projects.

2.8 – Key Objectives

My goal is to gradually work up a good client base and then also improving my Showreel and CV. Within the first year as a freelancer I hope to earn enough money to be able to live on the money I make. As I get more experience I will aim for more difficult and more respected jobs in larger companies. Within the first 3-4 years I aim to be working for a large company in Norway as an Animator.

During my career my goal is also to work on a video game for a large company like for example Funcom, BioWare, Bethesda Softworks or Blizzard. Video games are not my main priority but it is something I would like to do. Even though it might take a long time, my ultimate goal is to eventually travel to America and work for one of the leading animation studios in the world, like for example Walt Disney, Pixar, Blue Sky or DreamWorks on a feature film.

2.9 – Financial Information

As a Freelancer most of my expenses will be on Software and Hardware. I expect this to be covered by a loan in the bank. Software and Marketing material prices are gathered from their respective websites and the workstation is a rough estimate:

| First Priority purchase | Price |
|--------------------------------|--------------|
| Autodesk 3D Studio Max | 2150 £ |
| Adobe Photoshop CS5 | 660 £ |
| 400 Business Cards | 53 £ |
| 500 Designed CD's | 360 £ |
| Website Domain, 10 years | 100 £ |
| Workstation items and PC | 3000 £ |

| Second priority purchase | Price |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Pixologic ZBrush | 430 £ |
| Adobe After Effects CS5 | 110 £ |

In addition to these costs I also have to consider living expenses. These vary a bit from month to month, but in general should not go over 1000 £. Since I will be located in London my travel expenses will most likely be limited.

I will also have to consider the possibility of investing in plugins to my 3D package which can help me reduce production times on specific projects. An investment into such plugins might benefit me greatly over time.

3 – Appendix

3.1 – Appendix A: Marketing Material for 3D designer and generalist



Figure 3: CD design 1 for 3D Designer and generalist promotion, Main design



Figure 4: CD Designs 2-7 for 3D designer and generalist promotion



Figure 5: Business Cards for 3D designer and generalist

3.2 – Appendix B: Marketing Material for Character Animator

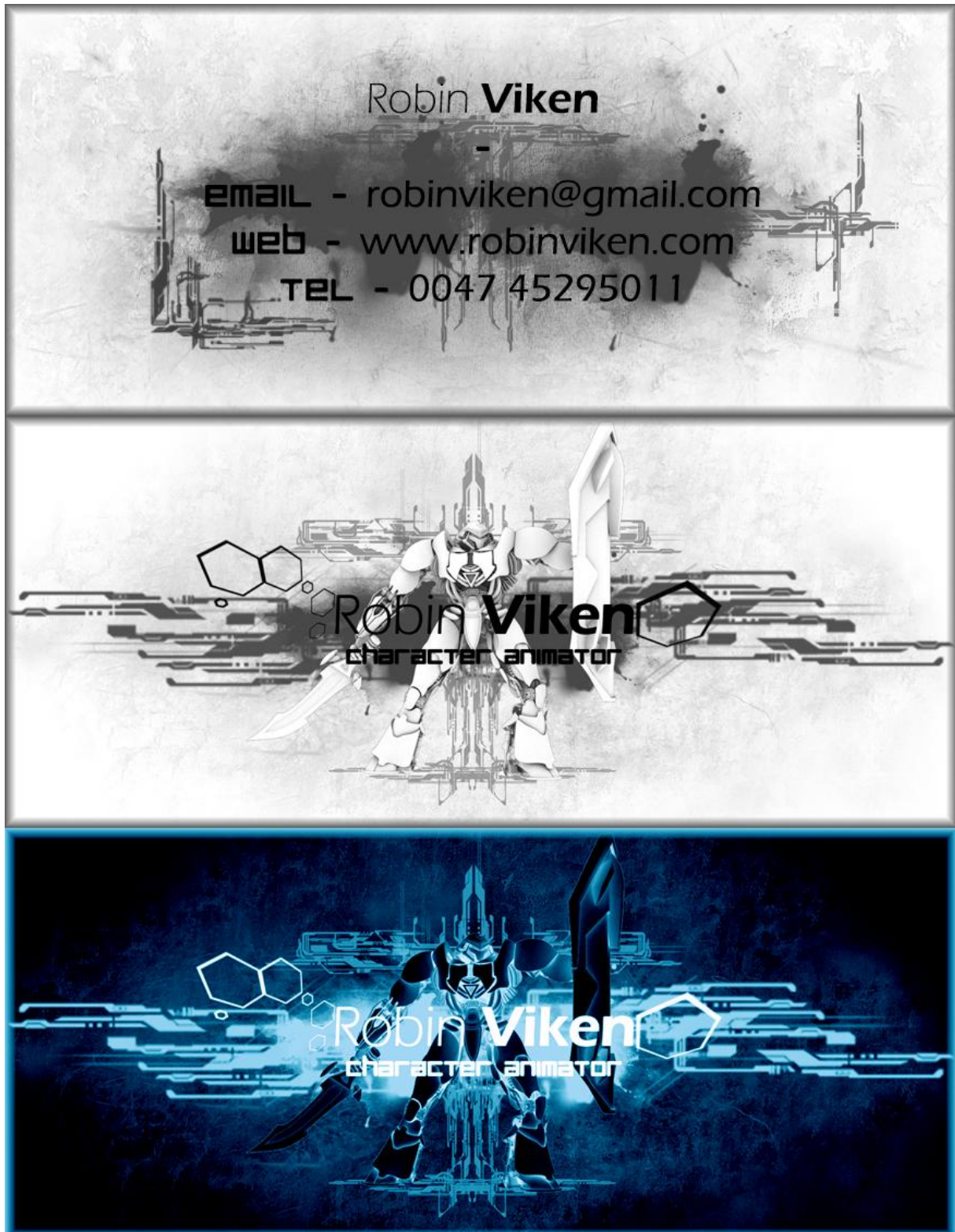


Figure 6: Business Cards, Character Animator



Figure 7: CD designs, Character Animation

3.3 Appendix C: Website design (picture)

<http://robin-3d.weebly.com/>



Home

Portfolio

Blog

Links

Contact

Welcome!

My name is Robin Viken and I am 23 years old. I just finished my bachelors degree in BA Digital Character Animation at Teesside University. I am currently taking freelancing jobs in 3D Animation and Design. You can find my portfolio here, and I will also be updating this page regularly with progress in my career. Here you can also find my contact info. Enjoy!

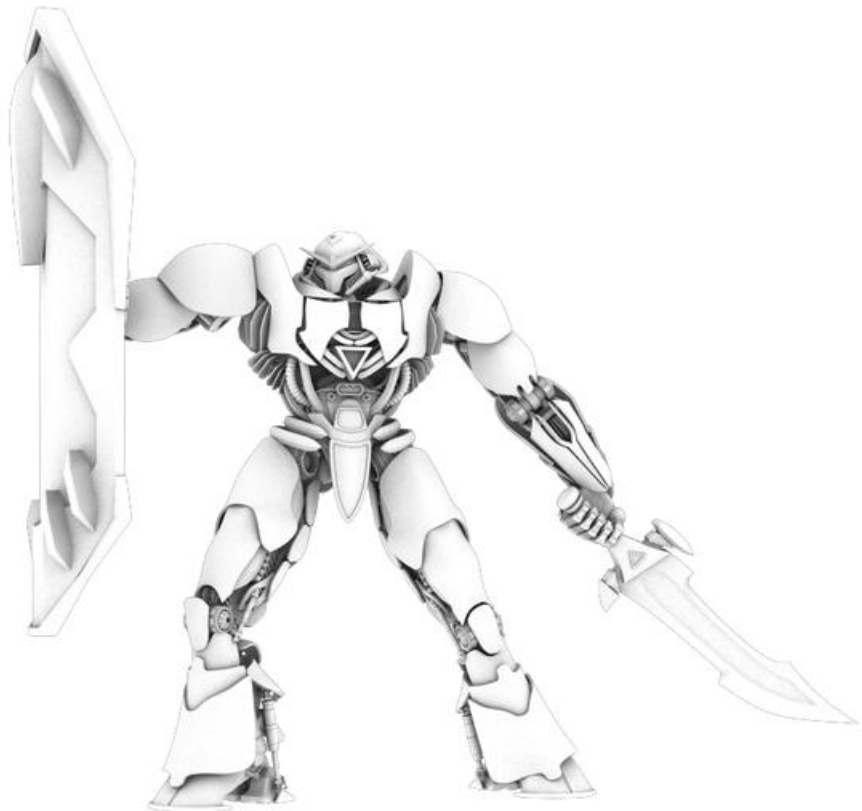


Figure 8: Website Design