



Offset: Designing resources for creatives

David Hutton is the England-based mastermind behind the creative collective [Offset](#). With over 26 years of experience as a graphic designer, his impressive portfolio ranges from flyers to designs for corporates to freelance arts projects. Read on to find some amazing insights on creative work and achieving success.

David, take us back to how you started out in graphic design.

I studied graphic design before computers were even available. I've been designing commercially since my days at college in the mid 1980's. I started out creating flyers for local nightclubs, promoters, DJs and bands. These were made using Letraset, photocopiers and markers in a 'cut and paste' style. I also used to hand paint t-shirts with acrylics, which I sold as well.

I was then introduced to a guy who was designing using an early Apple Macintosh computer. Seeing what could be achieved using technology blew me away! I worked with him for a couple of years during which time I learnt how to design with computers using some of the original software including Quark Express and the first version of Adobe Photoshop.

I then worked freelance for a marketing company where I learnt all about the printing industry before setting up on my own. Designers such as Neville Brody and Vaughan Oliver were very influential and inspiring for me. Their work was very experimental which I related to and still do now.

What lead you to creating Offset?

In March 2013 I decided to focus more of my time on my own creative projects to 'offset' the corporate design work I was doing to pay the bills. Using the nickname Offset, this initially involved some creative collaborations, followed by exhibiting and selling some of my illustrations and art.

Then, I began creating graphic resources which I really enjoyed. Gradually the popularity of these projects grew and I started to see the potential of making these creative outlets my full time focus.

Now, the majority of my time is spent creating and selling resources. I sell these through various outlets including [my own website](#) which uses [Sellfy](#).



So what does your creative process look like now? Describe a working day in the life of Offset...

It varies really. I'm an early riser and most days I spend at least one to three hours in the morning online reading blogs, checking websites I have bookmarked and monitoring my online sales.

Then I'll head to work around 10am. I work in an old converted warehouse that my friend's printing company is based in. It's a unique space with lots of large format printers and old equipment including a lithographic press and a letterpress machine. It's a very creative environment to work in.

I spend a lot of time researching and experimenting with new techniques both digitally and also hands on craft type projects. I have a folder on my laptop labelled 'Work In Progress', which is full of ideas, concepts, experiments, photos, scans, notes etc.

Some of this content is developed into end products but the majority either doesn't make the grade or is incorporated in other projects like personal illustration or artwork. I also receive requests for specific types of resources which often leads to the development of a product.



What's your biggest challenge being a freelance designer and how do you overcome it?

I would say avoiding the 'creative block' that all designers, artists, musicians and other creative people experience at times. I think experimenting with new ideas regularly helps me overcome this.

I tend to go off in tangents whereby an idea I'm exploring leads to something totally different in the process. And now that I'm not working to deadlines or client restraints I'm free to focus on my own ideas.

Which of your projects are you most proud of?

I'm going to say I'm most proud of 'Offset' as a project, because what started as a personal outlet has now grown into something far more creatively and financially rewarding than the type of work I had been doing before. And the fact people like and buy my work is very satisfying.

Tell us a bit about how you promote your work to your audience.

I prefer to spend the time actually developing ideas and products, although I know I should do more promotion.

I promote my work via social media using Facebook, Pinterest and Twitter. I collaborate with other creative communities such as Design Cuts which has built an audience for my work. I also update [my Behance site](#) regularly with all of my products and I've been featured on a variety of design related blogs.

Periodically, I offer discounts on products, which generates interest.

What advice would you give to budding designers?

- Avoid copying the latest trends and other designer's products that appear successful. Strive to produce something that is different to everything else out there.
- Don't expect to make lots of money quickly and don't become discouraged if your products aren't an overnight success. I built my portfolio of resources slowly as a sideline to my freelance graphic design work.
- Collaborate with other designers and creative communities. Experiment lots!
- And most of all — enjoy what you do!