

# Thriving as a Solo Designer

AKACHI OGBONNA

## INTRO

In August 2017, I started working with RelianceHMO. This was barely 4 months after I finished my internship. I had only worked for about half a month. I didn't have much experience but I was hired as a designer. Which was great.

## INTRO

**It's a start up and I'm the only designer. Which is perfect for someone who's just starting a career.**

**Being the only designer in the firm  
means...**

## PROS

**You'll learn a lot in a short period of time**

**There's a lot to be done and you have very limited time.**

**most start ups are fast paced so you'll be up and running.**

**You'll have to wear multiple (design) caps and become**

**jack of almost all trades.**

## PROS

### **Your work belongs to you**

Since everything is all you, you have full flex over your work. you can follow any direction you please and take full credit too. You can create a design system for everyone to follow and keep your work in one direction. You get to experiment things because no one holds you back.

**On the flip side...**

CONS

**You'll have to bear every burden alone**

**You do everything and you are your own critic. There's no one to share your mistakes or anything with.**

## CONS

**You become stretched out**

**You find out that you are doing everyone's work and most times they don't contribute to your KPI**

## CONS

### **It's stressful**

**You sometimes do not know the limits to experiments and this can burn you sometimes, you tend to overwork yourself, you are already struggling with plenty tasks but you still want to prove yourself.**

CONS

## **Overlooking details**

**You tend to overlook things because theres a lot to do and you might not have time to stress over details.**

**How do we flourish?**

THRIVING

**Learn to document everything you do**

**Remember that you are doing and learning a lot of things.**

**If you don't document what you have done, its easy to lose sight and feel like your are just doing too many things and nothing at all.**

THRIVING

## **Communicate**

**Tell/show how your work brings value. Don't see any pushback as a battle, you are all working towards a common goal. And even when they refuse to hire another designer or a UX researcher or wont support your ideas, its alright, do the best you can do.**

THRIVING

**There is always a better way**

**There will always a better way to do anything. Everything can be done better so don't beat yourself over your past work. Also being done is better than it being perfect**

THRIVING

## **Learn to say 'NO'**

**'No, I can't do this right now, I have something else I'm doing, I will work on it when I'm done'...'No, I don't have any new ideas right now... I will ask around and get back to you'**

THRIVING

## **Work smarter**

**Sort out tasks based on priority and take advantage of free tools online. There are tons of tools you can use to speed up your work process. There's a lot to do and you don't have enough time.**

THRIVING

**Take advantage of other people / department**

**Ask others working with you to review your design/work.**

**They might see things you don't see and could be very helpful.**

THRIVING

## **Teach others what you know**

**This will really help you save time. You don't have to do everything all by your self. Introduce other people in your office to tools like Canva. You can create a team, set up brand colours, edit a few templates and share with them. Let them do it themselves... save yourself time and stress**

THRIVING

## **Take care of yourself**

**Creative people don't have to be overworked to produce their best work. Eat well, sleep well, read when you can, listen to podcasts, keep your self updated, stay inspired(if you can), replenish yourself, learn to manage your time and create some time for yourself.**

THRIVING

## **Find a tribe**

**Have a tribe of good people and good designers. As a solo designer, you don't have any 'senior designer' monitoring your work and giving you proper feedback, so have people or friends that can help you review your work.**

THRIVING

**You are where you are because you do what you do**

**You might not be the best but it's a journey and you are on your way to being the best. You are not a fraud, you are where you are because you do what you do so own it.**

**Give yourself time. One day you will realise while working how much progress you have actually made. Keep going!**

**Thank You!**