



BECOMING FRACTIONAL: BECAUSE FULL TIME IS SO LAST SEASON...

So, you're thinking about becoming a fractional consultant, in other words, working with a handful of clients part-time instead of one employer full-time. Congratulations. You're stepping into a world that offers freedom, variety, and the chance to shape your work around your life, not the other way round.

But let's be honest: while "fractional" sounds sexy and flexible, there's some serious stuff behind-the-scenes... stuff you'll need to get right to make it work.

WHAT FRACTIONAL ACTUALLY MEANS

“After a year as a fractional consultant, I've loved the variety and autonomy. Working across different clients keeps me constantly learning, and I finally feel in control of my schedule without compromising the impact I make.”
Fractional CMO

Being a fractional consultant isn't the same as freelancing (but freelancing still exists in its own right!). You're not doing ad-hoc projects, you're not delivering tactical tasks (writing the copy and activating the campaign, for example) you're stepping into a *strategic* role for *multiple* clients on a part-time or retained basis.

Think "part-time Marketing Director" or "2-days-a-week Finance Partner", not "ad-hoc project delivery".

A Fractional Consultant provides senior-level value, without being on payroll

GETTING SET UP: THE NUTS AND BOLTS

LET'S ADDRESS THE PRACTICAL STUFF...

A. Legal Structure

Most UK fractionals operate as:

- A Limited Company (most common, especially if you're doing ongoing retained work).
- Or as a Sole Trader (simpler, but with less tax efficiency and less legal protection).

If you're serious about building a long-term fractional practice, go limited. It looks more professional to clients and gives you control over your income, taxes, and dividends.

B. Bank Account & Accounting

- Open a business bank account, it keeps your finances clean.
- Get an accountant who understands consultants. They'll help with VAT registration (you might not need it immediately), allowable expenses, and making your finances work efficiently.
- Consider tools like FreeAgent, Xero or QuickBooks to automate invoicing and track expenses.

C. Contracts & Insurance

- Use a solid contract template (ideally reviewed by a lawyer).
- It should cover scope, payment terms, confidentiality, IP, and notice periods.
- Get professional indemnity insurance and public liability insurance, clients often expect this.
- If you're working "fractionally", clarify availability and boundaries, it saves headaches later.
- Check your IR35 status. Use a trusted third-party platform to assess your determination, many also include insurance to protect you and your client if it's ever challenged



THE MONEY SIDE: PRICING & INCOME FLOW

Here's the honest bit:

Your first few months might feel financially... 'wobbly'.



Start with retainers rather than hourly rates, it builds predictability.

Think of your work as value-based, not time-based.

A good benchmark for senior fractionals:

between £500–£1,000 per day, often structured as 1–2 days per week/ month across a few clients.

Keep a cash buffer of at least 3 months' expenses - clients pay late, projects shift...and you'll sleep better!

FINDING (AND KEEPING) CLIENTS

Fractional work...

Lives and dies by relationships.



Your first clients will almost always come from:

- Your existing network.
- People you've worked with before.
- Referrals from other consultants or agencies.

Don't be afraid to tell everyone you're going fractional, LinkedIn posts, coffee chats, ex-colleague catch-ups. You're not "selling" yourself, you're offering value and availability.

Once you're up and running, protect your reputation like gold:

- Be clear, reliable, and outcome-driven.
- Under-promise, over-deliver.
- Stay visible, share insights online, join professional communities, and keep conversations going.



LEITMOTIF
PARTNERS

THE SOFT STUFF (THAT NO ONE TELLS YOU)

This is the bit that makes or breaks your happiness as a fractional.

Identity & Confidence

Leaving a full-time role can mess with your sense of identity. You go from "Head of Something" to "independent consultant" overnight, and it can feel disorienting. It takes time to adjust, so give yourself permission to rebuild that confidence.

Boundaries

You'll be tempted to over-commit ("Sure, I can squeeze in another client!"). Don't.

Fractional means focused impact, not doing everything. Protect your headspace.

Community

It can get lonely. You're not in a team anymore, so deliberately build one, whether that's a peer group, a networking circle, or a small mastermind of other fractionals.

Rhythm

Design your week with intention. Maybe Mondays are for admin, Tuesdays/Wednesdays for Client A, Thursdays for Client B, Fridays for thinking, learning, and life.

AND FINALLY... YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO IT ALONE

At Leitmotif, we work with a number of partners who support professionals making this transition: from the nuts and bolts (like setting up your company and finances) to the personal side (clarifying your positioning, managing change, and finding the right network). We are working with a growing Fractional community, jump on in!

The goal?

To make your shift from employed life to fractional life as smooth, confident, and rewarding as possible.