# Principal of a Design Consultancy

**SALARY RANGE (2018): $64,000–$86,000**

Running my own design consultancy has always been my dream. I like the variety and the independence it provides. I care deeply about my work, choosing clients who share my values and solving problems that challenge me. One of my early goals was to grow the business revenue to the point that I could hire a small team of collaborators; I now have 11 employees. Today, I focus less on doing and more on solving client's problems.

**The Tip:** Don't get a mentor. Get mentors. No single person has all the answers. I find the real learning isn't in what they agree on, it's what they disagree on. This is where you can really start to ask hard questions.

**PRIORITY KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS**:

**Management Skills**

- Manage the design process
- Manage multiple workflows
- Develop and implement program schedules
- Manage budget and financial issues
- Manage internal and external stakeholders
- Act in a responsible manner with regard to the needs of people, their communities, and society as a whole

**Research & Insights Skills**

- Apply a deep knowledge of human behaviour to understand usability
- Systems mapping and knowledge transfer

**Communication Skills**

- Translate content into meaningful information
- Apply content management strategy
- Use specialized software to prepare, edit and distribute content across multiple platforms
- Leverage social media

**Design Skills**

- Design branding and visual identity systems
- Apply visual design fundamentals
- Apply data visualization
- Build prototypes out of a variety of materials
- Critique and improve design artifacts
- Use current digital design tools

**Core Transferable Skills**

Be an expert at all core transferable skills:

- Thinking skills
- Communications skills
- Organizational skills
- Interpersonal skills
- Technical literacy

**BUILDING BLOCK EXPERIENCES:**

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| **Education & Learning:**<br>• Bachelor of Communications (information design) with a minor in business administration<br>• A commitment to be a lifelong learner. I read one book a month.<br>• Listen to the Stanford Social Innovation Review [SSIR podcasts on design thinking](#) | I took a minor in business administration. I now consider myself a driven entrepreneur, where learning something new every day is my job. |
| **Employment Experiences:**<br>• Retail sales during high school and university<br>• Did a work term as a design coordinator for a small design agency<br>• At graduation became a junior designer at a global UX agency and was promoted to the London office<br>• Became the principal of my own design consultancy | After spending eight years advancing through a large global design agency in Canada and the U.K., I founded my boutique design consultancy. In three years, the firm now has eleven employees. I have the luxury of only working with people and clients I am passionate about. |
| **Community Experiences:**<br>• Active as mentor in alumni association<br>• Was president of the Information Design Student Society<br>• Since my second year of university, I have spent one week a year volunteering at a school overseas | Being in a leadership position in a university club taught me key networking skills. A passionate professor in university introduced me to an international field school program, where I continue to mentor young entrepreneurs and designers. |
| **Contextual Experiences:**<br>• Worked in both big and small organizations<br>• I am a passionate believer in Margaret Mead's principle that "…a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." | By starting my own design agency, I can manage my own schedule and time. Now that I have staff, I can create more opportunities for more freedom and "me" time. |
| **Relationships:**<br>• Had a senior mentor at an agency early in my career | My career map isn't for everyone because it can create personal and professional stress. Balance is difficult, but my spouse and mentor are my rocks. They push me back on course when I lose balance and perspective. |