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Content Specialist = Blaine
#Intro to _ Tattoo Artist

Data Friendly Version



With Blaine

Lesson One

Intro to a Tattoo Artist

Meet the talent

Blaine is a tattoo artist and owner of a private tattoo studio called Migration Tattoos (Pty) Ltd.

"Tattoos allow for individuality. People get to visually express their experiences, values, and beliefs on their bodies. Tattoos also represent sacrifice. After going through such a process, you cannot help but feel empowered. As though there was a weaker version of yourself that you left behind in the session."

Check out Blaine's amazingly talented work through his social media sites – It may just inspire you to get your own creation! Reach out to Blaine and Migration Tattoos to get your unique piece made permanent!

<https://www.facebook.com/migrationtattoos/>
<https://www.instagram.com/migrationtattoos/?hl=en>

Targeting my market

My primary target market would be South African tattoo collectors between the ages 21 – 35.

My overall Ambitions are to have the most recognised tattoo brand in South Africa. I want to be able to create job opportunities for the next young, up and coming tattoo artists. The dream goal would be to start a digital tattoo school that offers a compact and comprehensive learning experience to aspiring tattoo artists.

A realistic objective within the tattoo industry would be to work on maintaining a fully booked schedule for 6 months at a time. I find an important element needed is to always remain a student of the game.

What drives the passion?

I enjoy the feeling of making people happy. The intimate relationship of creating a tattoo allows me the opportunity to get to know people in a very real way. Clients become vulnerable during these lengthy and painful sessions. We get to learn a lot about each other, often sharing meaningful experiences and advice. ***I call it "pain therapy".***



A TATTOO IS
MORE THAN JUST
ART

It is an
expression of
your journey
in life

Lesson Two

Benefits and Struggles of the job

The enjoyables

The entire process of creating a tattoo for a client is rewarding. From brainstorming the design to revealing and wrapping up the final product. The artist is challenged throughout. You cannot simply be a tattoo artist by having good visual art skills. You have to be extremely disciplined, empathetic and goal driven.

Discipline assists in carrying out the process consistently.

Empathy allows you to tap into the client's way of thinking. Thus, you're more likely to please them with the design composition, having compassion throughout the gruelling session. Being goal-oriented allows you to have foresight when building the tattoo from stencil into beautiful body art. Overall, the process leaves you with more than you have given. It makes you a better human being. Eventually, when your client list is big enough, you are able to make a good living off of something that ends up feeling effortless.



Truthful struggles

I find many South Africans are price sensitive. This can leave a bitter taste in your mouth when dealing with client's day to day. Often people try to negotiate discounts. This may feel as though your services are constantly being undervalued. Supplies in South Africa are also very expensive relative to first world countries. This is because most of the supplies are being imported. It ends up being very costly to run a sustainable operation.

It takes years to build a client list that can sustain your business. In the beginning you will do a lot of free or discounted work to build your portfolio and prove yourself. The industry is very competitive, with a lot of tattoo artists to compete with, especially in cities like Johannesburg and Cape Town. You won't get much help from other artists. However, there are some really helpful people, you just have to find them.

Public perceptions

Most of society still has a very old school, backwards view on tattoos. For the most part, tattoos are still very much taboo. Especially in more formal environments. However, we're slowly starting to see that change. Some workplaces are allowing employees to have visible tattoos.

Lesson Three

Steps in the right direction

Informal - Breaking into the field?

A great place to start is by finding an apprenticeship opportunity at a well-established tattoo studio. If you are unable to get an apprenticeship, find a comprehensive online tattooing course to start learning. Draw every single day, you cannot get enough practice. Study artists whose work you admire, copy them in your drawing practice until such time that you are able to formulate your own style.

Do research on tattoo machines and other equipment used in the process. Deep dive into tattoo videos on YouTube, there are tons, watch all of them. Ink Master and all the other shows are entertaining, but sometimes highly unrealistic. Don't use these for learning. They are more for motivation to get your artwork to those levels.

Formal - Breaking into the field?

There are a number of artists who have created online tattoo courses. It may be worth your time investing in some of these and getting to understand how different artists operate. Apprenticeships are by far the best way to get acquainted with the skills needed to become a tattoo artist. It is a hands-on, practical learning experience. Just make sure that your mentor is someone whose art you actually admire. There's no point learning under someone whose work you do not enjoy.

In the beginning you will have to do a lot of free tattoos. Do not be afraid to invest time and money into this. This is your ultimate schooling. Nothing prepares you more for tattoos than actually tattooing on human skin.

Final suggestions for individuals wanting to make it a career?

Just start. Don't ever stop, EVER! Utilise all of the free social media platforms to market your services. Be nice to people, even when they aren't nice to you. Patience will get you to the finish line, even if it seems too far away. Slow and steady. Do not get roped into being "fast". **Your work will do the talking for you**, so make sure your work is at the highest level you are capable of producing at the time.

