

// career spotlight

// Ranica Brown
UX/UI Designer

My role focuses on designing engaging, intuitive and aesthetic digital solutions for clients.



// Day in the life

My day usually starts with reviewing my tasks for the day in order to create a rough plan of what I need to work on. When I am scheduled to begin a new project, I normally attend a team meeting where the project manager discusses the client's brief and what our roles are in the project.

Beyond completing my preparative tasks, my day is normally a mix of: wireframing and prototyping, talking with developers to help them bring my designs to life, animating assets to enhance engagement, reviewing my designs with my team lead and occasionally attending client meetings.

At the end of the day, I always assess what has been completed and make a new tasks list in readiness for the next morning.

// Types of projects

Most of the projects I work on are in the digital medium, including UX/UI design for websites, apps, and interactive training and marketing platforms. They also range from less complex projects like creating aesthetically pleasing PowerPoints all the way to more complex projects like designing interactive computer applications that track and display real-time data.

// Highlight project

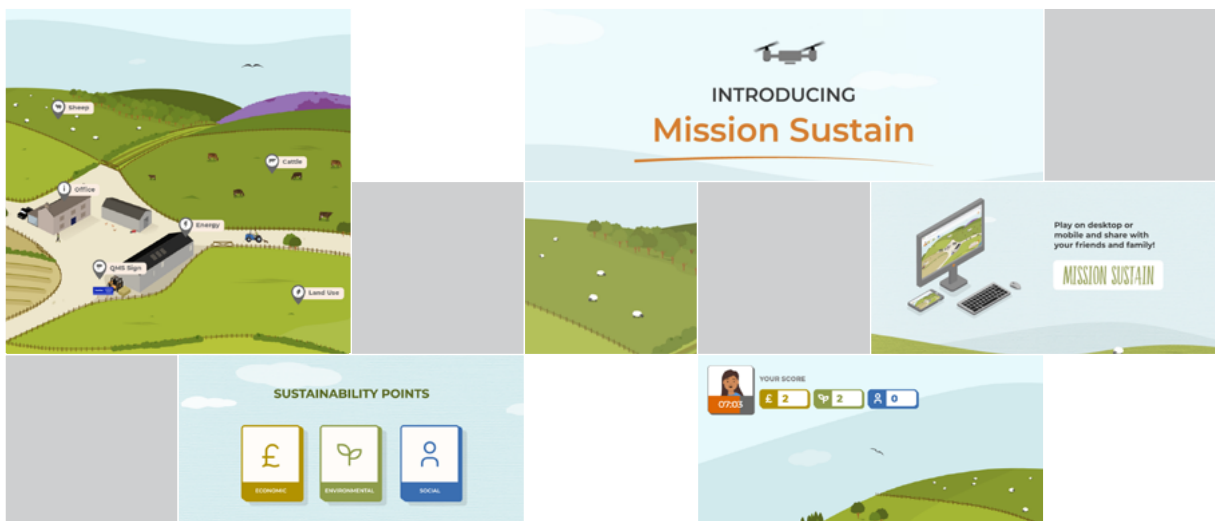
// Interactive educational game

Brief: To create a resource that can be used by schools and educators to teach young people how to be sustainable.

Why did you choose this: This project is a highlight because it was a highly creative project where I was able to produce bespoke illustrations and design a more

fun and colourful artistic style throughout. On top of this, I had the opportunity to generate and storyboard accompanying social media posts for their social media campaign.

At times it was challenging but the final result was imaginative and, most importantly, it accomplished the brief.



//Timeline

My route into the industry has been an invaluable process of learning and discovery. I have had the chance to develop and grow on the job and gain knowledge from experienced professionals alongside my studies.

2016

School

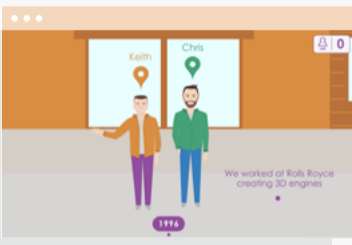
In school I studied Product Design, among numerous other subjects. This sparked an interest in following a design-focused career path.

During the placement week, I also learnt that they offered apprenticeships so I promptly enquired about how I could become an apprentice at Bloc.

2017

Work experience

I was searching for a week's work experience placement in sixth form when I first encountered Bloc Digital. During my placement at Bloc, I experienced technologies like VR (Virtual Reality) and tried my hand at making both 3D and 2D animations. It was an exciting and illuminating placement because most of what I did was brand new to me.



2018

Apprenticeship

Once I completed my A-levels, I started my first apprenticeship in Bloc Digital's motion graphics team.

During this time, I learnt skills like animation and storytelling, and design fundamentals. I was able to not only learn through academic lessons but on the job too, enriching my experience and broadening my knowledge in the creative industry.

2020

UX/UI team

Following my first apprenticeship I moved into the UX/UI team because UX/UI design was an area that had piqued my interest. I liked that it was varied in its application and balanced design with strategy.



2020

Degree Apprentice

After being in the UX/UI team for almost a year, learning from my team senior about best practices and principles, I really wanted to deepen my understanding of the field. In order to do so, Bloc granted me the opportunity to undertake a Degree Apprenticeship in user experience (UX) design.



2022

Where I am now

Two years later, I am in my second year of university and am even more passionate about the design industry and my job role as a UX/UI designer.

My Degree Apprenticeship is strengthening my understanding of user research and theoretical frameworks and, as well as learning on the job, it is enabling me to put the things I learn into practice at Bloc Digital – making my designs even more optimised, engaging and effective.

//Q&A

// Why did you choose the apprenticeship route?

Before my placement I was originally planning on going to university. However, I hadn't properly considered design apprenticeships as a route into the industry until I discovered that one of Bloc's staff members had started as an apprentice. I enquired about doing an apprenticeship with the team because I knew gaining experience at a company like Bloc was priceless.

Having now been through an apprenticeship and started a Degree Apprenticeship, I feel it was the right route for me. I have been able to understand how the industry is developing from the front line, as it's not always easy to determine what a role will entail until you've seen it in action. I feel that if I had gone straight to university I wouldn't have been able to adapt to the rapid industry changes as effectively as I now can.

// What attracted you to Bloc Digital?

I was inspired by the work they created and the innovative approach they had to merging design and the latest industry technologies, particularly in Virtual Reality applications. The company stood out because they were unafraid of new possibilities and were willing to nurture my love of learning and design.

// What has it been like doing an apprenticeship, and a degree apprenticeship, at Bloc Digital?

It has been amazing. I have been given the opportunity to explore, grow and develop my skills in an exciting and progressive environment. Within this environment I have witnessed how teams from different disciplines work together to elevate the knowledge base of the company and the standard of work that is given to clients. Additionally, on my degree course I have met some incredible and insightful people that have stretched my viewpoint even further. It's really exciting to work at the forefront of the tech industry.

// What do you like best about your work?

It's a real mix of creative design and content creation. It may be getting a project off the ground or adding to its ongoing development and could be anything from designing how an app looks to animating graphics.

It's also a mix of independent working and collaborating with others as day-to-day I'll be liaising with the team and/or project managers on the progress of a whole range of projects.

Every day is different as the projects I work on cross over many departments which means constantly adapting to various working styles and processes.

// Do you have any advice for others looking to do an apprenticeship in your field?

Firstly, every designer is a kaleidoscope of experiences and abilities and this is what influences the work they create. With this in mind, I would say have confidence in who you are and bring it to the table because what you create cannot be duplicated by anyone else.

For practical advice I would say do loads of work experience and research how both the top designers and industry works – this will give you a firmer foundation for when you do move into the creative field.

Secondly, don't be afraid to approach companies you really like and see if they would consider taking you on as an apprentice even if they don't advertise it. I gained my apprenticeship after being on a week's work experience at Bloc Digital.

Lastly, if you do gain an apprenticeship (whether in this industry or not) make the most of every moment, ask questions and practise new skills as often as you can.

// What are your hopes for the future?

Fundamentally, as a designer my goal is to be in a position where I can influence the direction of the design industry and contribute to projects that will have a lasting effect on societies across the world. I also hope to continue to challenge assumptions and misconceptions about the digital and tech industry, and who works in it, through the work I create. I would love to work alongside other creatives to promote the industry as a whole to young people like myself.