

Forum:[Hack Forums](#)

Thread: [Career Shift Advice Job + Freelance or Full Freelance Route?](#)

grahammiranda13 - July 31, 2025, 5:49 am

Hello everyone,

I'm a long-time member of this forum (since 2013) currently based in Germany. Until yesterday, I worked for over seven years as a Network /System Administrator, but due to recent company restructuring, my position was eliminated. Thankfully, I'm financially secure for the time being (a year) thanks to the German unemployment insurance system.

As a native English speaker who speaks German as a second language, I'm exploring the possibility of registering as a sole trader in Ireland (to leverage the English-language environment) while continuing to pay taxes in Germany. My plan is to transition into freelancing rather than immediately seeking another full-time position—or perhaps to combine a part-time role with freelance work eventually scaling into a standalone business.

I'd love to hear your thoughts:

Feasibility: Is registering as a sole trader in Ireland with German tax residency a reasonable approach?

Experience: Has anyone here pursued a similar setup? What challenges or advantages did you encounter?

Client Acquisition: What strategies have you found most effective for winning and retaining clients as an independent consultant?

Any insights, advice, or firsthand experiences would be greatly appreciated. Thank you in advance!

This is definitely not a cry for help but just feedback! Positivity would be great.

skull - July 31, 2025, 1:20 pm

Hi.

I know your thoughts, I have been in the same boat.
Its hard to go freelance, let me share my story how I did it.

First, I started a one-person company in Denmark, my country - with the only reason that that was where I expected my clients to be.

I did run this part time while working full time for a agency - that I worked with for 8 years.

The clients came slow in the beginning, so it wasn't a problem for me to keep up with both the full time job and my freelance.

But I was glad that I didn't quit my job to go full time freelancer.

It required a lot of time finding new clients.

My focus was to really ensure my clients was happy - which luckily enough they was.

I ended up with the same clients continuously, and maybe increasing with one new client every month.

It was hard to find clients, but easy to keep them.

Eventually, I had so many continuous clients that there was half a year roadmap for me, clients willingly waiting for me to have time.

That is when I decided it was time - and I quit my day job.

The clients was happy about it, I now had more time than ever, and they escalated their ideas bigger - knowing I know was able to take the time for it.

A few years went by, and with a salary 5 times higher than all my friends in the field - I went down - sick - with stress.

Working 12 hours a day, 7 days a week, for months - just because I couldn't say no - because I wanted the clients - wanted the projects.

All client projects was immediately put on pause - all communications put on hold.

I was out sick with stress for 8 months.

When I got back, I got a normal job with low ours - allowing me to do a few hours a-day of freelance gigs - mainly to explore whats out there.

I miss the feeling that freelance gave - the freedom to decide anything on your own.

But now I do like 2 hours freelance per day, and 4 hours for my day job - which makes it for me.

The real question is, what is in your heart to do - do you dream about being your own boss - then go for it - catch the dream.

Do you just do it for the freedom, then find a job that gives you that feeling.

Money, is it only for money? Well, find out which amount you need, and don't go above that - you will burn yourself out.

For client acquisition, the best one that worked for me, is mouth to mouth, my clients recommended me to others, that kind of trust - you cant sell that in social media ad or anything like that.

I cant talk about wether or not its a good idea to register as a sole trader in another country, the laws differ for each country - I would recommend a lawyer or accountant to assist with that - thats their specialty.

grahammiranda13 - July 31, 2025, 11:50 pm

Hey! Thank you so so so so so much for the reply. It really helped me. Can I just ask did you never wanted to hire people to help you or change it into a company? Like I have friends who I have worked with before and thought if it goes good I can involve them.

I have an appointment with a lawyer since all is the EU it is all the same just different languages.

(Jul 31, 2025 01:20 PM)skull Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) Hi.

I know your thoughts, I have been in the same boat.

Its hard to go freelance, let me share my story how I did it.

First, I started a one-person company in Denmark, my country - with the only reason that that was where I expected my clients to be.

I did run this part time while working full time for a agency - that I worked with for 8 years.

The clients came slow in the beginning, so it wasn't a problem for me to keep up with both the full time job and my freelance.

But I was glad that I didn't quit my job to go full time freelancer.

It required a lot of time finding new clients.

My focus was to really ensure my clients was happy - which luckily enough they was.

I ended up with the same clients continuously, and maybe increasing with one new client every month.

It was hard to find clients, but easy to keep them.

Eventually, I had so many continuous clients that there was half a year roadmap for me, clients willingly waiting for me to have time.

That is when I decided it was time - and I quit my day job.

The clients was happy about it, I now had more time than ever, and they escalated their ideas bigger - knowing I know was able to take the time for it.

A few years went by, and with a salary 5 times higher than all my friends in the field - I went down - sick - with stress.

Working 12 hours a day, 7 days a week, for months - just because I couldn't say no - because I wanted the clients - wanted the projects.

All client projects was immediately put on pause - all communications put on hold.

I was out sick with stress for 8 months.

When I got back, I got a normal job with low ours - allowing me to do a few hours a-day of freelance gigs - mainly to explore whats out there.

I miss the feeling that freelance gave - the freedom to decide anything on your own.

But now I do like 2 hours freelance per day, and 4 hours for my day job - which makes it for me.

The real question is, what is in your heart to do - do you dream about being your own boss - then go for it - catch the dream.

Do you just do it for the freedom, then find a job that gives you that feeling.

Money, is it only for money? Well, find out which amount you need, and don't go above that - you will burn yourself out.

For client acquisition, the best one that worked for me, is mouth to mouth, my clients recommended me to others, that kind of trust - you cant sell that in social media ad or anything like that.

I cant talk about wether or not its a good idea to register as a sole trader in another country, the laws differ for each country - I would recommend a lawyer or accountant to assist with that - thats their specialty.

skull - July 31, 2025, 11:56 pm

(Jul 31, 2025 11:50 PM)grahammiranda13 Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) Hey! Thank you so so so so so much for the reply. It really helped me. Can I just ask did you never wanted to hire people to help you or change it into a company? Like I have friends who I have worked with before and thought if it goes good I can involve them.

I have an appointment with a lawyer since all is the EU it is all the same just different languages. I did plan to hire, just never got to it.

Dennis - August 9, 2025, 7:00 am

(Jul 31, 2025 05:49 AM)grahammiranda13 Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) Hello everyone,

I'm a long-time member of this forum (since 2013) currently based in Germany. Until yesterday, I worked for over seven years as a Network /System Administrator, but due to recent company restructuring, my position was eliminated. Thankfully, I'm financially secure for the time being (a year) thanks to the German unemployment insurance system.

As a native English speaker who speaks German as a second language, I'm exploring the possibility of registering as a sole trader in Ireland (to leverage the English-language environment) while continuing to pay taxes in Germany. My plan is to transition into freelancing rather than immediately seeking another full-time position—or perhaps to combine a part-time role with freelance work eventually scaling into a standalone business.

I'd love to hear your thoughts:

Feasibility: Is registering as a sole trader in Ireland with German tax residency a reasonable approach?

Experience: Has anyone here pursued a similar setup? What challenges or advantages did you encounter?

Client Acquisition: What strategies have you found most effective for winning and retaining clients as an independent consultant?

Any insights, advice, or firsthand experiences would be greatly appreciated. Thank you in advance!

This is definitely not a cry for help but just feedback! Positivity would be great.

If you are in Germany and want German customers. Register a company in Germany. Why even think about doing anything in Ireland? Makes no sense to me.

I have worked as a freelancer for almost 10 years in IT on and off with and without a fulltime job.

If your German is bad but your English is great, consider that most of your customers will be in or around Berlin. Startups are very open to being English only.

If your German is pretty decent, talk to Hays, Gulp (now Randstad) etc.. Getting customers with no portfolio in the current market is crazy hard.

Lots of people are starting side gigs as freelancer in addition to their current jobs.

I did almost exactly what you did like almost 15 years ago. Started freelance on the evenings/weekends in full stack webdevelopment and transitioned later in a full time freelancing position. Built a portfolio of 150+ projects where I was involved in some sort and later managed to get in contact with a fortune 300 company that kept me busy with gigs. Eventually so many that I managed to hire 2 offshore guys to work for me so I can focus on different things. Been doing that for a couple years now.

As for social security in Germany. Arbeitslosengeld 1 is great. I have 2 tips in that regard.

1) You can register a company for 20€ish but tell your ARGE guy that you are just trying things out to see if you can find somebody to hire you that way. Very important to tell that you arent expecting any income short term.

This way, if you find somebody you can work freelance for, you can do it. Since you need to be able to provide an invoice. And when you are done and need to create an invoice, you can sign off for ONE DAY on Arbeitslosengeld.

Example: You get 100€/day Arbeitslosengeld. You work 2 weeks on a gig, ready to earn 1500€. The month has 30 days, you take one day off. You earn 2900€ Arbeitslosengeld + 1500€ from your

gig. You do not need to provide any reason why you are taking a day off, they don't care. If anything, say you have been hired as a freelancer for a day. I've done that in the past myself and on some months net over 10k.

2) If you do not want to bother with 1), then you can also apply for Gründungszuschuss. That's a pretty big topic, with the essentials being that you get your Arbeitslosengeld 1 as a grant as well as 200(?)€ for health insurance.

grahammiranda13 - August 9, 2025, 1:56 pm

(Aug 9, 2025 07:00 AM) Dennis Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) If you are in Germany and want German customers. Register a company in Germany. Why even think about doing anything in Ireland? Makes no sense to me.

I have worked as a freelancer for almost 10 years in IT on and off with and without a fulltime job.

If your German is bad but your English is great, consider that most of your customers will be in or around Berlin. Startups are very open to being English only.

If your German is pretty decent, talk to Hays, Gulp (now Randstad) etc.. Getting customers with no portfolio in the current market is crazy hard.

Lots of people are starting side gigs as freelancer in addition to their current jobs.

I did almost exactly what you did like almost 15 years ago. Started freelance on the evenings/weekends in full stack webdevelopment and transitioned later in a full time freelancing position. Built a portfolio of 150+ projects where I was involved in some sort and later managed to get in contact with a fortune 300 company that kept me busy with gigs. Eventually so many that I managed to hire 2 offshore guys to work for me so I can focus on different things. Been doing that for a couple years now.

As for social security in Germany. Arbeitslosengeld 1 is great. I have 2 tips in that regard.

1) You can register a company for 20€ish but tell your ARGE guy that you are just trying things out to see if you can find somebody to hire you that way. Very important to tell that you aren't expecting any income short term.

This way, if you find somebody you can work freelance for, you can do it. Since you need to be able to provide an invoice. And when you are done and need to create an invoice, you can sign off for ONE DAY on Arbeitslosengeld.

Example: You get 100€/day Arbeitslosengeld. You work 2 weeks on a gig, ready to earn 1500€. The month has 30 days, you take one day off. You earn 2900€ Arbeitslosengeld + 1500€ from your gig. You do not need to provide any reason why you are taking a day off, they don't care. If anything, say you have been hired as a freelancer for a day. I've done that in the past myself and on some months net over 10k.

2) If you do not want to bother with 1), then you can also apply for Gründungszuschuss. That's a pretty big topic, with the essentials being that you get your Arbeitslosengeld 1 as a grant as well as 200(?)€ for health insurance.

Thank you for the advice! (Ich Danke dir :))