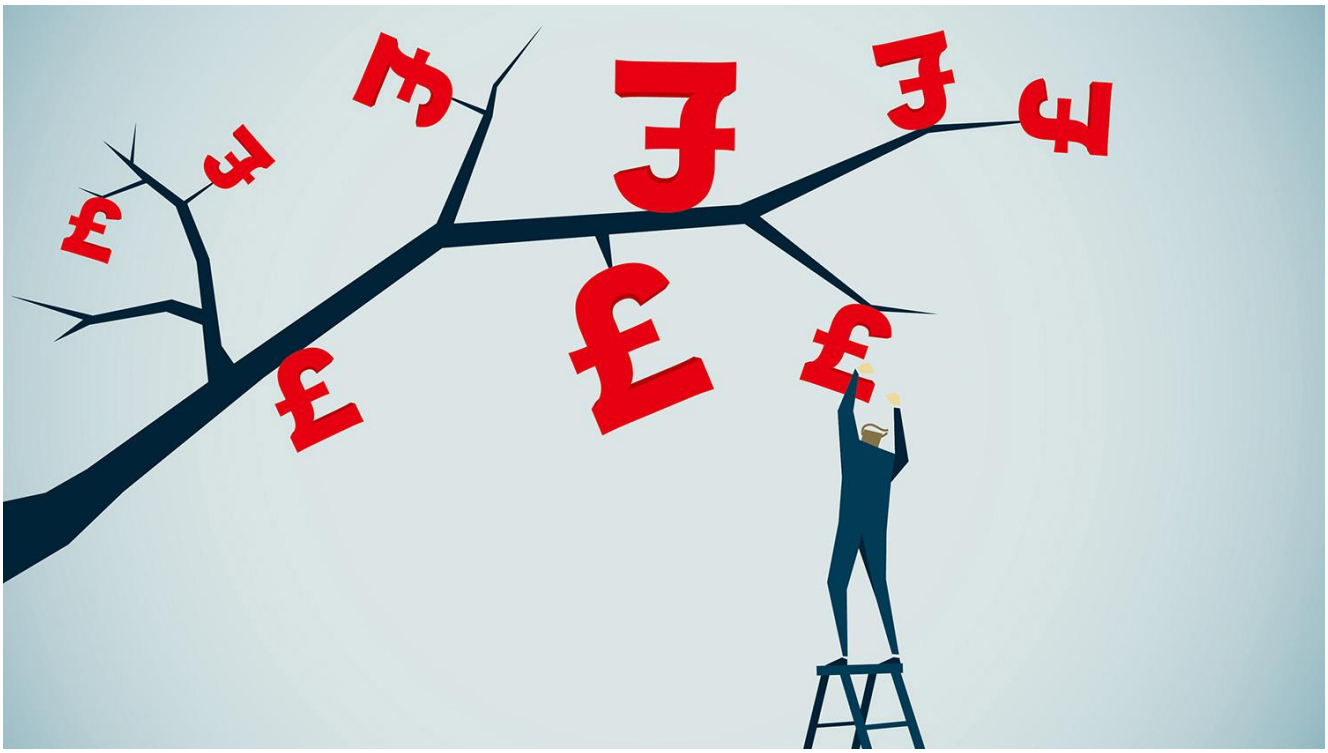
Illustrators react as the AOI pulls pricing advice for members – and the AOI responds



Recent news of the Association of Illustrators dropping its price assistance service has caused debate in the illustration world – we speak to the Association and highlight the decision's impact on artists.

The Association of Illustrators (AOI) has long been a champion of illustrators navigating the murky terrains of freelance work and ensuring a decent wage from commission work, but there was surprise with last week's revelation that the trade association has pulled its pricing survey and bespoke pricing guide from all membership options.

The news came out when screenshots of the emailed announcement sent to members were shared on Twitter, revealing the pricing assistance that proved so invaluable to members

had been pulled due to “legal advice” recommending such support be changed in how it’s offered to illustrators.

> *pic.twitter.com/39qsdYk179*
>
> *— Tom Hovey (@tomhoveyart) January 10, 2019*

The decision proved controversial, with many artists like Rebecca Strickson and Sonny Ross pointing out this service was the main reason why many joined the AOI in the first place.

> *Just got that @theaoi pricing survey email- their advice over many years has been so valuable and helpful-It’s very worrying they seem to have been legally advised to stop providing this service. This is terrible news for us illustrating folks. Why has this this been advised?*
>
> *— Rebecca Strickson (@beckystrick) January 8, 2019*

> *Early on I was shocked when I ran a job past the AOI to find I should have been payed almost 6 times the amount for the work. The clients know this too and some will absolutely take advantage of the inexperienced.*
>
> *— Sonny Ross (@sonnyrossdraws) January 8, 2019*

On the other hand, many on social similarly highlighted that despite the bad news, the AOI still supports illustrators in so many other areas, with fashion illustrator Miss Magpie rallying to the Association’s cause.

“I’d 100% say stick with them until more news in Feb,” she tweeted. “They have supported illustrators for years, I think now it’s our turn to support them back if possible. It’s clearly not their choice.” This was a sentiment shared by intricate people-and-landscape mapper Rod Hunt.

> *Illustrators! @theaoi pricing advice news today was a*

> *surprise, but they've supported us so lets be patient & give our support as they work on an alternative. Pricing is important but only part of their support- Campaigning, contracts, licensing, negotiation etc #StrongerTogether*
>
> *— Rod Hunt (@rodhuntdraws) January 8, 2019*

Support lent to the AOI was also shared among fellow illustrators, especially to assist new blood getting into the industry who may not have a clear idea on how much they deserve to be paid for their work. As cartoonist Stephen Collins wrote, "other illustrators' experience is only a direct message away" on Twitter, whilst Miss Magpie tweeted a recent podcast sharing her advice on fair pay in the industry.

> *Lots of illustrators (amidst @theaoi news) calling for people to openly talk about money / earnings / fees then I do.*
> *Here I am being interviewed by @meandorla on just that.*
> *I've been a full time illustrator for 3 years now.#illustration #aoipricing https://t.co/FGdKx8FKVx*
>
> *— miss magpie (@miss_magpie_spy) January 8, 2019*

Reaching out to AOI for a response, we spoke via email to CEO Ren Renwick, who told us the organisation was working through its next steps.

"We keenly appreciate the impact for illustrators," Ren tells us. "Supporting individuals' careers – especially those starting out – as well as the industry itself is at the heart of our thinking.

"Certainly we will need to work together as an industry and we are humbled by the support that members are offering us around this.

"Meanwhile the help desk is still open (so) please do get in

touch; we are helping members with queries on contracts, licensing, client negotiation, self-promotion and more. Feedback is positive and while in some areas the support is different, its value continues to be appreciated."

Read next: How to Succeed as a Freelance Illustrator feat. the AOI's Derek Brazell and Rod Hunt

https://www.digitalartsonline.co.uk/news/illustration/illustrators-react-as-aoi-pulls-pricing-advice-for-members-aoi-responds/