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# FROM PASSION TO PROFESSION: THE ARTISTIC JOURNEY OF LAHUSTRATIONS



Founder of Lahustrations, Ms. Hawwa Lahfa

In the vibrant world of creativity, one-woman powerhouse Lahustrations stands out for its exceptional dedication to illustration and design. What began as a small suggestion from a former boss has blossomed into a full-fledged freelance career. Today, Lahustrations is synonymous with creativity, professionalism, and the pursuit of artistic excellence.

*"It all started when my boss suggested I create an Instagram page<sup>1</sup> to sell my art," recalls Ms. Hawwa Lahfa, the founder of Lahustrations. "He recognized my passion for illustration and drawing, and that little nudge led to the creation of Lahustrations."*



Wedding card crafted by Lahustrations

It started as a simple Instagram page and since grown into a thriving business. Over the years, Lahustrations has achieved significant milestones, such as creating bespoke calendars for renowned companies in the Maldives, designing sticker packs that have become client favorites, and producing beautifully crafted wedding cards and mahrs.

1 <https://www.instagram.com/lahustrations/>



One of Ms. Hawwa Lahfa's artworks exhibited at Oaga Resort

When asked about her biggest achievement, she smiles, saying, *"Establishing a stable freelance career and earning a reasonable income was something I once thought impossible. But now, it's my reality."* One of her proudest milestones is exhibiting five of her artworks at Oaga Resort.<sup>2</sup> *"That was a defining moment for me as an artist,"* she says.

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## THE CHALLENGES OF FREELANCE LIFE

While Lahustrations' success has been impressive, thriving in the freelance world involves more than just artistic talent—it requires safeguarding against disruptions. Freelancers often face uncertainties, and Lahustrations recognizes the importance of having a plan for when things don't go as expected.

*"I don't have a specific disruption plan in place yet,"* she admits. *"My main option is to market my products more effectively. If the internet goes down, I can always explore alternative platforms to promote my business and make it easier for clients to reach me."*

This practical approach reflects her forward-thinking mindset, not just in sustaining her current business but also in anticipating and preparing for potential setbacks.

*"My biggest concerns are gadget breakdowns and power outages that could lead to missed deadlines,"* she admits. *"Additionally, bad weather can make it challenging to deliver physical products like wedding mahrs, especially to distant locations."*

To handle unexpected disruptions like illness, Lahustrations communicates openly with clients. *"When I get sick, I make sure to let clients know so they understand I'm human too. For urgent projects, I sometimes outsource tasks to fellow designers, providing them with clear instructions."*

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2 <https://oagaresorts.com>

One important lesson Lahustrations has learned over the years is setting boundaries with clients. *“Over time, I’ve learned my limitations and the number of projects I can manage simultaneously,”* she explains. *“After careful initial conversations with clients, I only confirm projects when I’m sure I can deliver. And if bookings are full, I inform them politely.”*



Artwork by Lahustrations

Maintaining work-life balance is another principle Lahustrations prioritizes. *“I used to make work more important than my well-being, working late nights and what not,”* she reflects. *“I stopped that about six years ago. Now, I make sure I’m well-rested, sleeping eight hours, and work comes second. My mental health and well-being come first.”*

Behind the success of Lahustrations is a solid support system. *“As an introvert, my primary support comes from my husband, family, and friends. I’ve also made a meaningful impact in the agency world, so I know there are people willing to help during emergencies.”*

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## ADAPTING THROUGH THE PANDEMIC

One of the biggest hurdles Lahustrations faced was the COVID-19 pandemic. While remote work became the norm for many, it presented unique challenges for designers like her. The flexibility of freelance work sometimes meant clients expected around-the-clock availability, a demand that became especially taxing during the pandemic.

*“It was frustrating when expectations included late-night work,”* she says. *“But the pandemic also taught me an important lesson: designers don’t need to be tied to a desk for eight hours. We can deliver our work just as effectively from anywhere.”* This realization inspired Lahustrations to take the leap and leave her job at an agency, choosing instead to pursue freelancing full-time.



Founder of Lahustrations,  
Ms. Hawwa Lahfa

A key factor in Lahustrations' success has been her unwavering discipline. She prides herself on meeting deadlines and maintaining clear communication with her clients. *"To date, I haven't missed a deadline,"* she says proudly. *"If I'm running a bit late, I always communicate with the client and negotiate an extension to reach a reasonable agreement."* Her professionalism and reliability have earned her a loyal client base, many of whom return to her for custom illustrations, wedding designs, and other artistic projects.



## FUTURE-PROOFING THROUGH SKILL DEVELOPMENT



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Like any good business owner, Lahustrations is always thinking ahead. Her biggest concern right now? Her trusted animator. *"He's one of the best in town, and I rely on him heavily for my wedding card designs. But if he becomes unavailable, I'm worried I won't have anyone of his caliber to work with,"* she confides.

To mitigate this risk, she has a plan in place. *"I plan to learn animation myself. That way, I can handle any project that comes my way without depending on others."*



## RESILIENCE AND GROWTH IN FREELANCING

Lahustrations' journey from a simple Instagram page to a thriving freelance business highlights not just her creative skills but also her preparedness and adaptability. As she continues to refine her skills, expand her client base, and anticipate potential disruptions, her story serves as a reminder that success in freelancing isn't only

about artistic growth—it's about building resilience and staying ready for whatever challenges come next.

She acknowledges the critical importance of documenting strategies to address operational disruptions, such as through a comprehensive business continuity plan. She intends to incorporate this into her future expansion plans, aiming to create a guiding document that entrepreneurs like her can regularly review and update. She understands that in emergencies, having well-defined protocols in place proves essential for maintaining seamless operations, ensuring customer satisfaction, and safeguarding long-term business success.

By being proactive and planning for the future, Lahustrations ensures that her business remains competitive and sustainable, proving that creativity combined with foresight is the key to long-term success in the ever-changing freelance world.

